

SHIRE OF MERREDIN

PUBLIC PIAZZA

- INFORMATION BOOKLET -

BACKGROUND

During the COVID Pandemic, social distancing at Merredin's local supermarket was required, resulting in Barrack Street being temporarily closed to allow for queuing outside the supermarket. Feedback from the community was positive as it encouraged interaction and conversation and created a safer pedestrian environment.

Recently, the Shire undertook a major consultation to review its Strategic Community Plan. General community sentiments centred on reinvigorating the town centre with a more enhanced setting for shopping, communal gatherings, and supporting our local businesses. Consultation revealed that creating a pedestrian mall, picnic areas, public art, as well as maintaining the storefronts and footpaths were high priorities.

Though this is a short term project, it is anticipated that this pilot piazza will bring a range of social and economic benefits to the district by creating local business opportunities (during construction and through the life of the pilot), additional greenery within the CBD, cross-collaboration between a number of community groups, a reduction on the reliance of roads in return for people orientated spaces to interact and socialise, and a safer environment for pedestrians.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Shire of Merredin and RAC are partnering to deliver a Public Piazza Pilot Project as part of RAC's Reconnect WA initiative, of which Merredin is one of eight successful local governments to receive funding. RAC's Reconnect WA initiative was created to help revitalise streets and public spaces to better connect people and places.

The project will see a four-month closure of part of Barrack Street in Merredin to create a 'public piazza' with the desire to create a public community space in the Merredin CBD.

The purpose of this pilot project is to act as a catalyst for the imminent future improvements to our CBD and test ideas and options for the final CBD redevelopment design.

"The [piazza] project aims to inspire collaboration within the community and support our local business community by increasing flow of pedestrians down our main street" - Shire President, Julie Flockart

The first major event to be held in the piazza will be Gala Night, which will be held on Thursday, 17 December 2020.

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FAQ'S

Q. What will the Pilot Public Piazza be used for?

The piazza is a place to catch up with friends and loved ones, whether dining or relaxing in the seating area. During the pilot period, the Shire is will aim to run a number of free community events, and also welcome other community groups to run an event in this space. If you would like to use this free space for your event, please contact the Shire for further details.

Q. Where will the Pilot Public Piazza be located?

The piazza will run along Barrack Street from the corner of Bates Street, heading east towards the Pharmacy and carpet store. There will be no alterations to car park access adjacent to Barrack Street.

Q. Who can use this space?

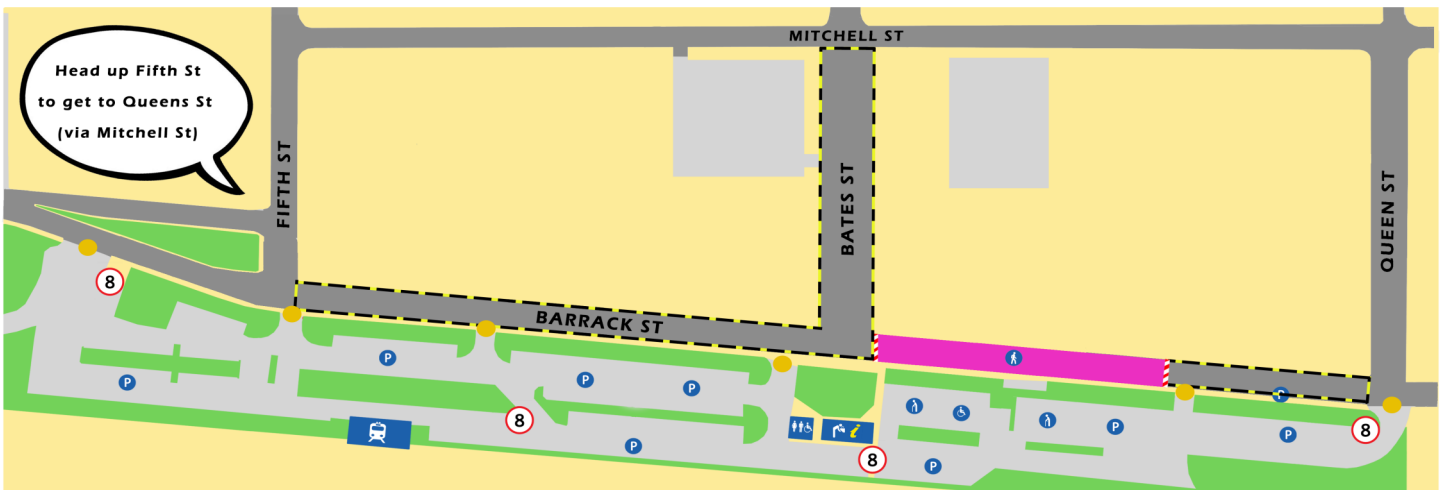
The piazza will be a public space, free for use by all members of the community. You do not need to be a customer of any of the fronting stores to sit and dine within the space, or to use the play spaces for kids. Members of the public are encouraged to use the space however they choose, and as often as they like.

Q. How does this impact me?

As with any town centre transformation, the piazza will bring some changes to the way you currently move through and interact in the CBD. There will be a temporary road closure from the 7th of December 2020, through to early April 2021 (Date TBD).

To facilitate this road closure, east and westbound traffic will be diverted to Mitchell Street. As a result of this road closure, there will also be changes to the Barrack Street car park. With potentially increased traffic in this area, we are introducing traffic calming measures for pedestrian and vehicle safety.

We will be making changes to the car parking bays in order to create priority parking bays closest to the shopping strip for seniors, mums with prams, and those with disabilities.



MAP LEGEND

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Road Closures | Train Station | Public Toilets |
| Piazza | Drinking Fountain | Visitors Centre |
| Roads | Parking | Car Park Entry Point |
| Car Park Areas | Pedestrian Access | |
| Modified Intersections | Seniors Parking | |



Q. How is the project being funded?

The Shire of Merredin has been granted a generous \$58,197 from RAC as part of the Reconnect WA initiative, and the Shire will contribute an additional \$20,805 towards the project.

The public piazza is part of a larger program of work being progressed by Council to enable economic development and growth in the region.

Q. What will the piazza look like?

The temporary installation will contain a number of features to including:

- Parklets which include dining and public seating areas
- Vibrant street art;
- Catenary/Festoon lighting;
- Greenery including sensory gardens;
- Play and event spaces; and
- Umbrella's and other shading.

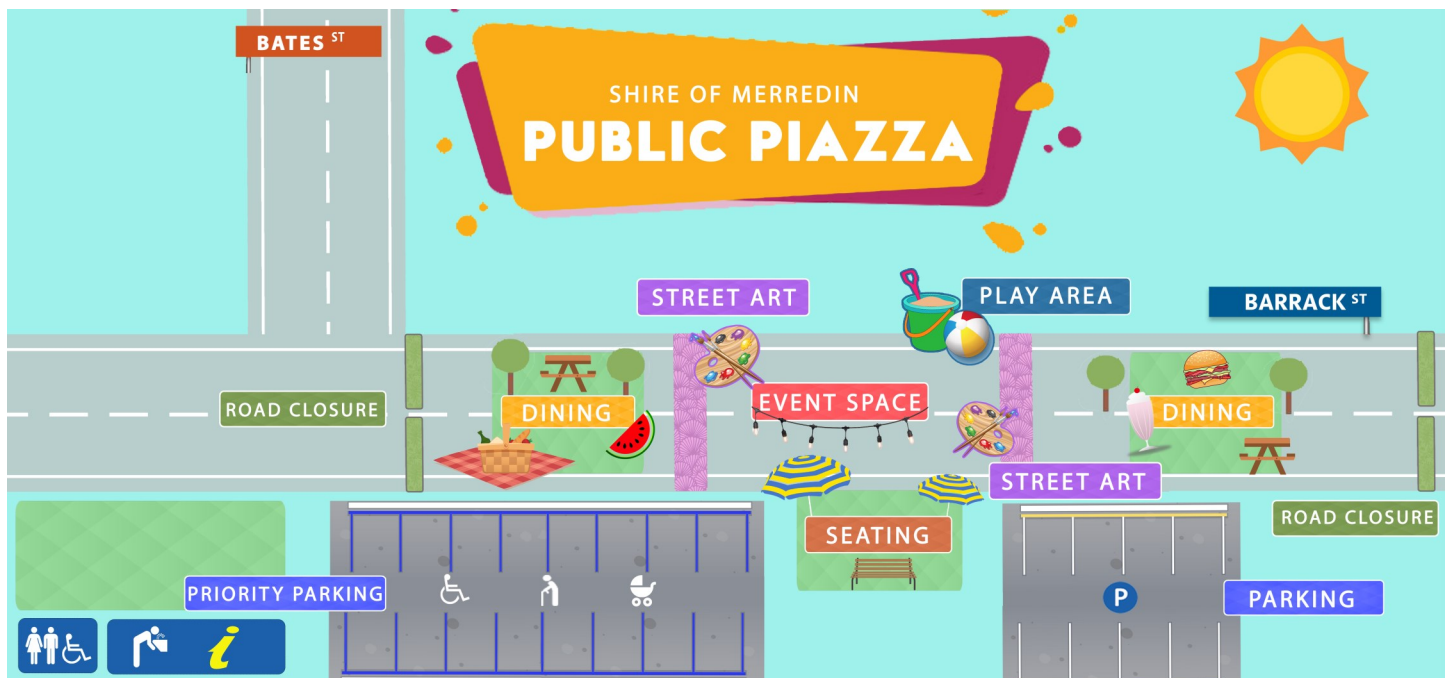
The piazza infrastructure is temporary in nature. Future CBD development will be designed to a concept and constructed to a higher specification to be permanent.

Q. Will there be parking for those with disabilities and for the elderly?

The Shire will be creating more disabled and priority parking bays in the carpark opposite IGA as well as along Barrack Street.

Q. What will the parklets be used for after the project is complete?

The parklets will be placed around town in front of our food businesses to use at their leisure. An expression of interest will go out closer to the end of the pilot project.



TIMELINE

To minimise disruption to members of the public, elements of the public piazza are currently under construction off-site. In early December, the road will be closed off, commencing a four-month road closure period. To allow for installation of the piazza, there will be disruptions to foot traffic for a period of up to one week.

We anticipate that the piazza will be available for use by Friday, 11 December 2020 and the first major event that will be making use of the piazza space will be Gala Night on Thursday, 17 December 2020.

YOUR SAY

Q. Does Council plan to move ahead with the plans for the CBD redevelopment?

Plans for the CBD Redevelopment are high on the Shire's priority list of projects. While there IS no intention to significantly modify the plans developed, this funding has provided the Shire with an unexpected, but welcomed, opportunity to test a new concept for the final CBD designs.

The Shire is committed to listening to the community's views and considering all feedback on the public piazza.

Q. How can I have my say on the Public Piazza?

There will be a survey running for the entirety of the project. There is a QR code (see below) located on signage that you can scan to complete the survey online, or there will be hard copy forms available for collection at the Central Wheatbelt Visitor Centre, Library, and Shire Administration Office.



Q. What happens after the community consultation regarding the Public Piazza is complete?

We will consider community feedback prior to making any final decisions regarding the proposed redevelopment. We are focused on delivering a vibrant CBD where locals and tourists are enthused to visit.

Q. When does consultation close?

We are encouraging the community to have their say on the project before **21 March 2021**.

PROJECT BENEFITS

- Enhance social outcomes through encouraging social interaction and increasing community cohesion and pride;
- Support the local economy through generating additional flow of pedestrians along Barrack Street and utilising locally available skills, talents, goods and services;
- Investigate the potential for a permanent Piazza;
- Provide opportunities for the community to be involved in re-invigorating Merredin; and
- Showcase Merredin's unique characteristics in a fun and attractive way.