

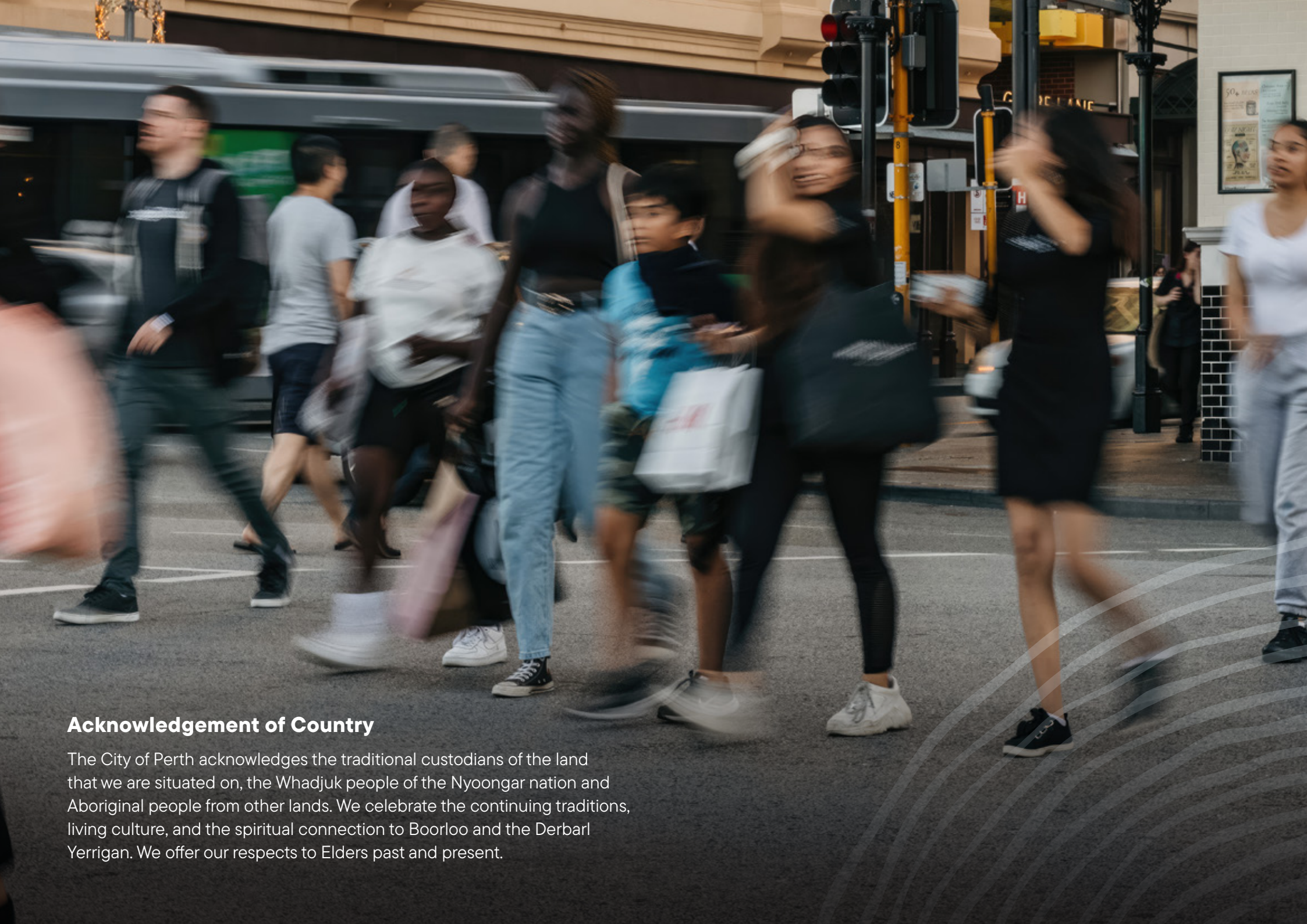


**CITY OF
PERTH**
City of Light

Walking in the City Plan

2025-2035





Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Perth acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land that we are situated on, the Whadjuk people of the Nyoongar nation and Aboriginal people from other lands. We celebrate the continuing traditions, living culture, and the spiritual connection to Boorloo and the Derbarl Yerrigan. We offer our respects to Elders past and present.



Image: Wellington Street, Central Perth

Contents

Introduction	4
Purpose of the Walking Plan	4
How has the plan been developed?	4
Keeping it current	4
Strategic context	4
Why is walking important in the city?	5
Benefits of a walkable city	5
A Walkable City	6
What is a walkable city?	6
What do we have?	7
Where are people walking?	8
Pedestrian priority	10
Reducing road trauma	11
The City's challenges and opportunities	12
What are other cities doing?	14
Planning for walking	15
What do we want to achieve?	15
Proposed projects and initiatives for future consideration - 2025-2035	16
Bibliography	17
Appendix A:	17
What did the community tell us?	17
Consultation on the Draft Walking Plan	19

Introduction

Purpose of the Walking Plan

Walking is a vital component of city life. The pace of walking allows people to connect with others and to the rich layers of the city environment.

Some of the most memorable streets in the world are made up of simple elements; pedestrians are prioritised at intersections and wide footpaths are lined with street trees, lighting, beautiful buildings and active shop fronts.

The purpose of this plan is to highlight the important role walking plays in the city. It provides a practical guide for planning, advocacy, and funding (including grants) over the next 10 years to ensure the walking environment is prioritised.

How has the plan been developed?

The plan has been informed by findings from:

- Community and key stakeholder engagement.
- Data collection and analysis including pedestrian counts across key city locations.
- A high-level review of current best practice.

Keeping it current

The plan will be reviewed every four years to incorporate community feedback and align with current best practices, state policies, and legislation.

Strategic context

The following high-level diagram outlines how various endorsed strategies underpin the Walking Plan:



Figure 1: Integrated planning framework



Image: William Street, Central Perth



Why is walking important in the city?

The City of Perth has a population of about 30,000 residents. According to 2021 Census data, 16.4% of these residents walk to work, compared to just 1.6% in the greater metropolitan area.

In addition to its residents, the city attracts over 200,000 people on a typical workday, including a workforce of more than 170,000.¹ Tens of thousands of people use the city's bus and train stations daily. For example, the Elizabeth Quay Train Station alone records up to 14,000 boardings on a typical workday.

The City's Local Planning Strategy (2023) has set a target of 55,000 residents by 2036 and 90,000 by 2050. The increased population will activate and diversify the city to help it meet its full economic and social potential.

These targets, coupled with major new development projects such as the new Edith Cowan University campus, are predicted to also contribute to higher overall numbers of people.

As the city's population continues to grow, it is important to prioritise the walking environment and address areas of overcrowding to improve safety and comfort.

Benefits of a walkable city



Health and wellbeing



Vibrant and safe active streets



Environmentally sustainable



Social connection



A more productive city

A Walkable City

What is a walkable city?

A walkable city is one that is friendly to pedestrians and characterised by its accessibility and inclusivity, accommodating people of all abilities. It is vibrant and enjoyable, fostering a welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike.

Focusing on walkability helps to create and maintain safe and comfortable movement through high-quality streets, squares, and parks.

“The General Theory of Walkability explains how, to be favored, a walk has to satisfy four main conditions: it must be useful, safe, comfortable, and interesting.”

- Jeff Speck



Coherence

Clear, organised footpath layouts informed by the function of the street and its land use patterns. They should connect important destinations with uninterrupted travel paths and have wayfinding signage and clear lines of sight. Consistent footpath materials help to unify the network and assist with wayfinding.



Balance

Striking a balance among various transportation modes is crucial to accommodate and promote pedestrian activity on the streets. This includes acknowledging the significant place value of downtown areas of cities and neighbourhood town centres.



Safety

Pedestrian safety is prioritised by protecting them from cars and bikes and offering ample time to cross intersections with minimal interruption. Slow speed environments reduce the risk of injury. Good passive surveillance and lighting provide a safer night-time experience.



Comfort

Footpath widths should be proportionate to pedestrian volume with well-maintained and safe paving for people of all abilities to use. Footpaths should accommodate a range of uses and activities typical of a diverse urban environment with trees and awnings providing shelter.



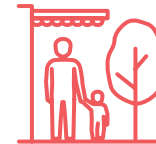
Accessibility

The opportunity for all individuals to use the pedestrian environment as fully as possible.



Efficiency

Simple, flexible, robust, and cost-effective design and function of all public spaces.



Attractiveness

Clean and well-maintained streets and public spaces with adjacent shopfronts and activities such as outdoor dining to improve street life and interest. A mix of functional and creative lighting to provide an enjoyable night-time experience.



Fun

Fostering social cohesion by providing spaces for people to gather and enjoy. Public art can also add elements of surprise and intrigue to these public spaces.

Figure 2: What makes a walkable city

What do we have?

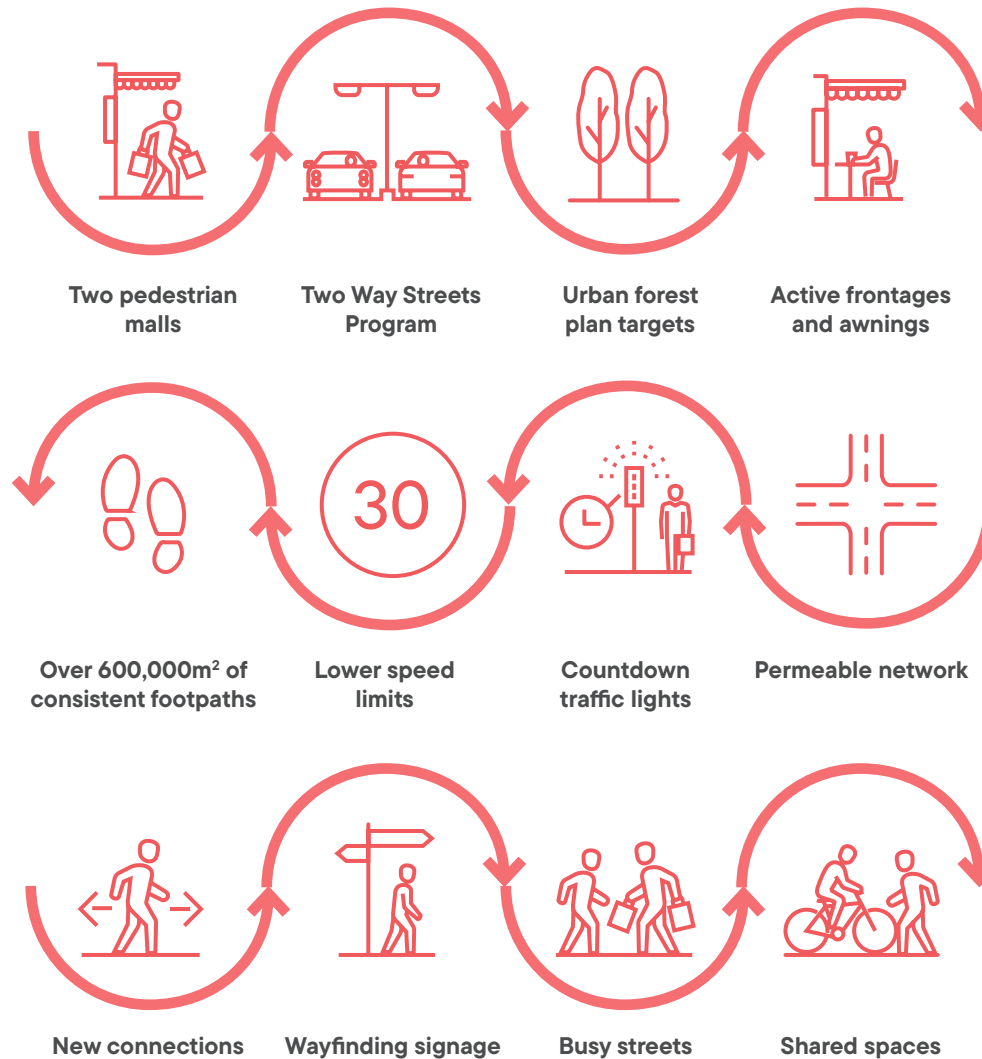
The city has been developed with a strong emphasis on creating spaces for people, especially in the last 50 years.

In 1974, Hay Street – between Barrack and William Street – was converted into a pedestrian mall. The conversion was a first of its kind in Australia. This was followed by Murray Street Mall in 1988.

Since the early 2000s, significant projects have been undertaken throughout the city to improve walkability. These include the redevelopment of Forrest Place, upgrades to malls, streets, and laneways, as well as extensive lighting enhancements and tree planting programs.

Traffic speeds have been reduced to 40 km/h to ensure Central Perth and Northbridge streets are safe and pleasant for everyone. The conversion of one-way streets to two-way has made getting around the city easier, and intersections have been modified to make walking more convenient and less interrupted.

Walk Score - a large-scale, publicly available "walkability index" - have rated Central Perth as a 'walkers paradise' with a score of 92 out of 100. This is due to the proximity of transport hubs and parks and the high number of errands that can be made on foot. Overall, the city has some of the most walkable neighborhoods in the metropolitan area.

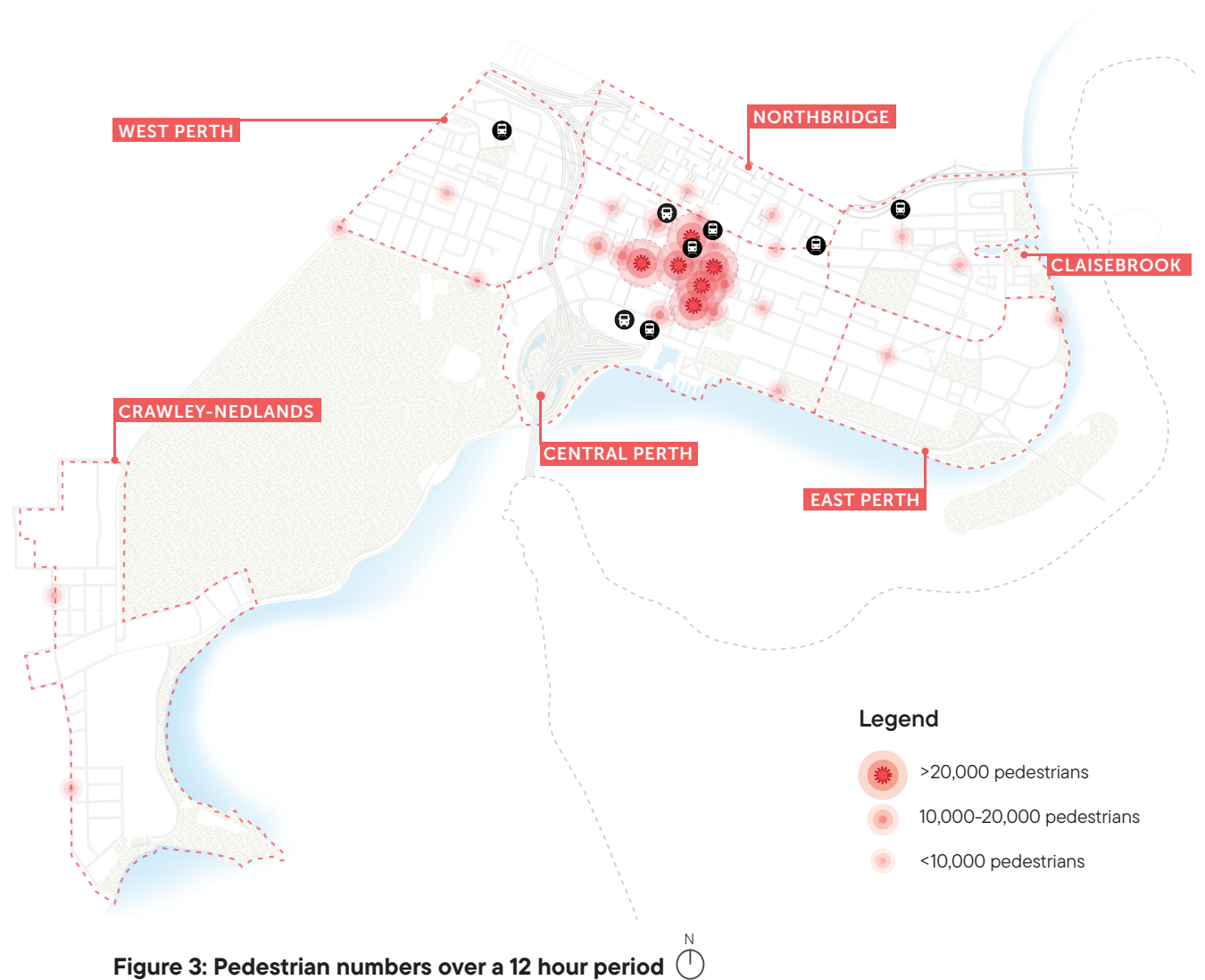


Where are people walking?

Each week the city sees up to a million walking journeys. These often begin and end at public transport stations, bus stops or carparks, and throughout the day, people walk for many different reasons including leisure.

In November 2023, the City conducted pedestrian counts to better understand movement patterns on a weekday (Figures 3 and 4).

The data indicates that the greatest concentration of activity is in Central Perth along William Street, which also correlates with delays experienced at intersections, and the highest number of incidents involving pedestrians. The malls, St Georges Terrace, and the streets west of William Street are particularly busy during the morning peak as people commute to work.



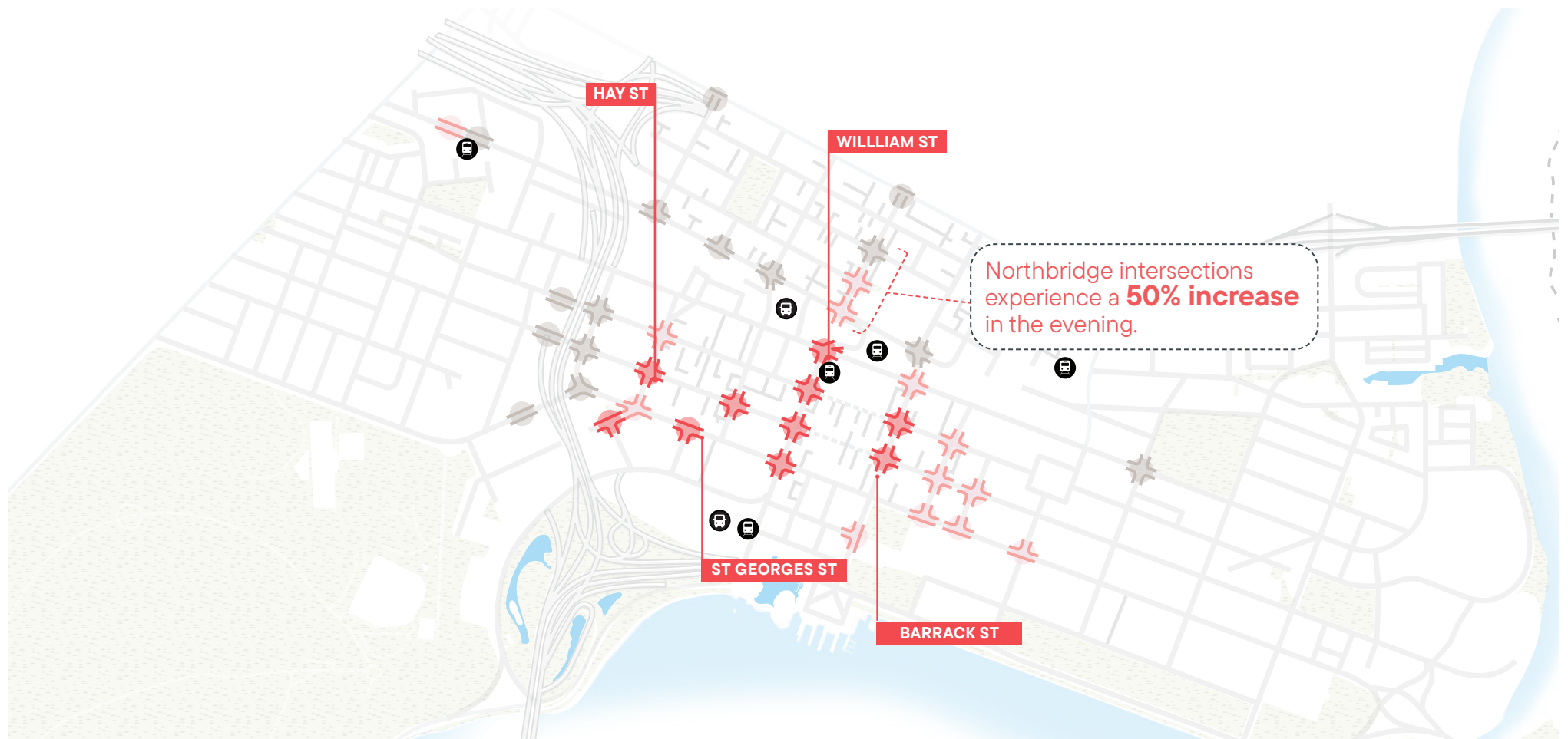


Figure 4: Pedestrian numbers at key intersections in the morning peak hour

Counts were collected on Wednesday 14 June 2023 and Thursday 16 November 2023 from 7:45am to 8:45am.



Legend

-  >1000 pedestrians
-  500-1000 pedestrians
-  <500 pedestrians

Pedestrian priority

The City's priorities for pedestrian access is shown in Figure 6 and is consistent with the City's Transport Strategy 2017* and Local Planning Strategy 2023. It also aligns with the Perth Parking Policy (PPP). The Policy aims to reduce traffic congestion, increase pedestrian and rider safety, and improve the transport system for those travelling to, from and within central Perth.

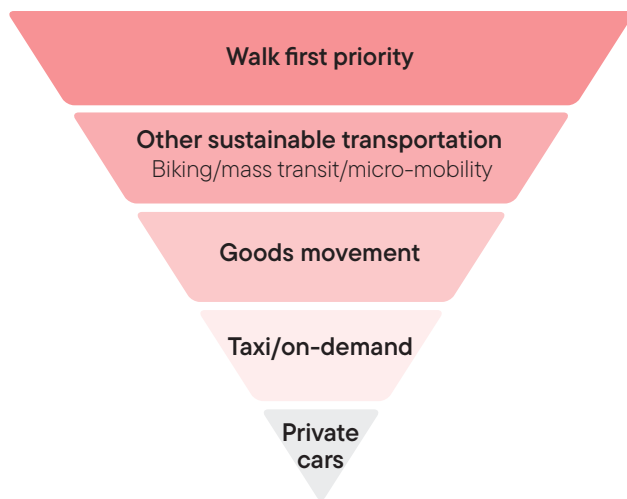


Figure 5: Pedestrian priority hierarchy

**Strategy to be updated in 2025*

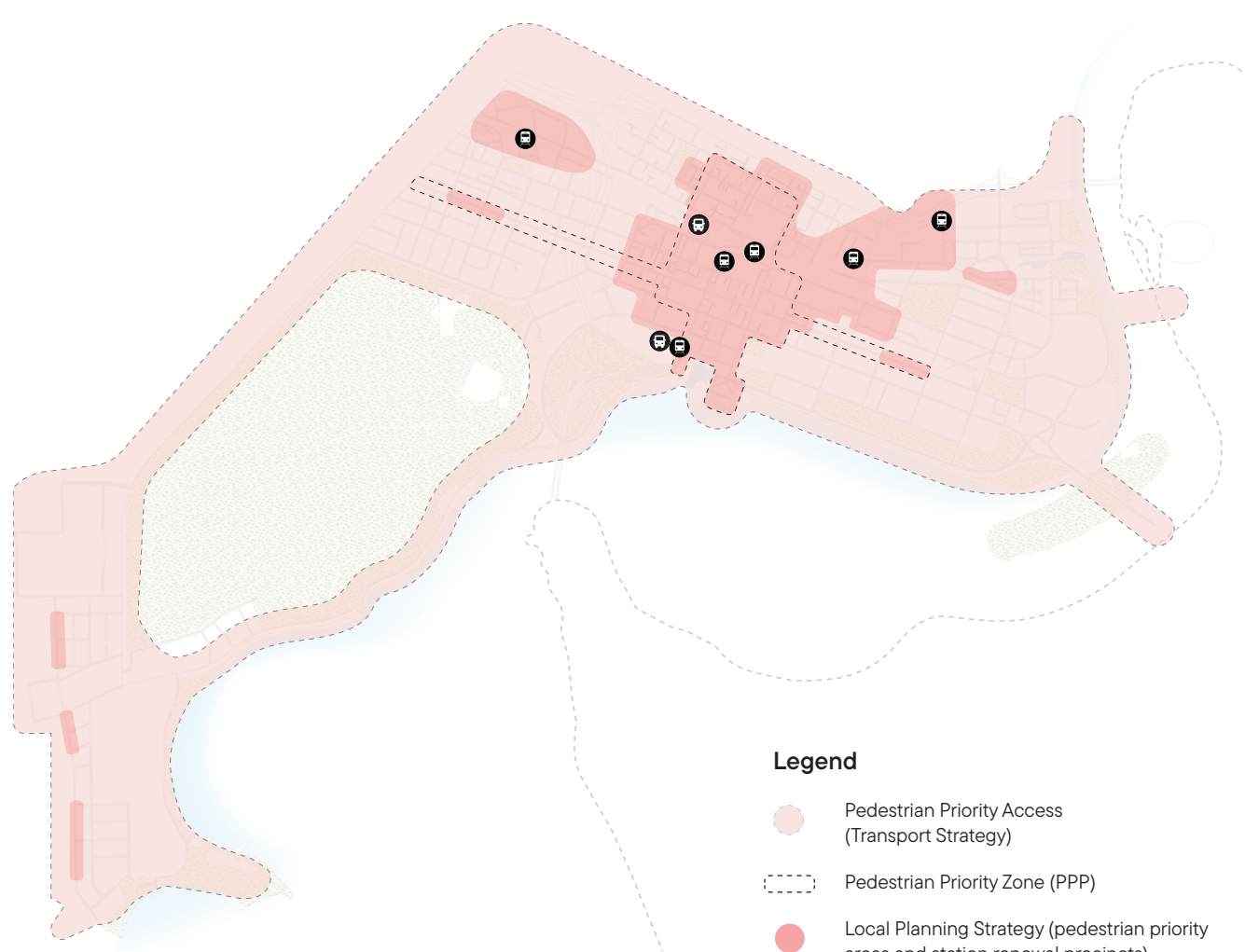


Figure 6: Preferred walking network (City's Transport Strategy 2017 and Local Planning Strategy 2023)

Reducing road trauma

Walking should be safe for everyone regardless of age or ability.

The National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 aims to deliver significant reductions in road trauma with the aim of "Vision Zero", which is zero deaths and serious injuries on our roads by 2050.

It sets out Australia's road safety objectives for the next decade and includes key priorities underpinned by the Safe System approach that involves all elements of the road transport system including speed management, road users, vehicle types, planning and road function.

Lower speed limits reduce the severity of crashes and increase the likelihood of survival in case of a collision. Vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists have less chance of severe injury when speed limits are reduced to 30km/h.

Between 2018 and 2022, there were 155 incidents involving pedestrians in the City of Perth (See figure 7). Among these, two pedestrians lost their lives, and 14 were hospitalised. This represents 2.8% of all killed or seriously injured pedestrians in the Greater Perth metropolitan area, noting the high volume of pedestrians and vehicles in the city centre each year.

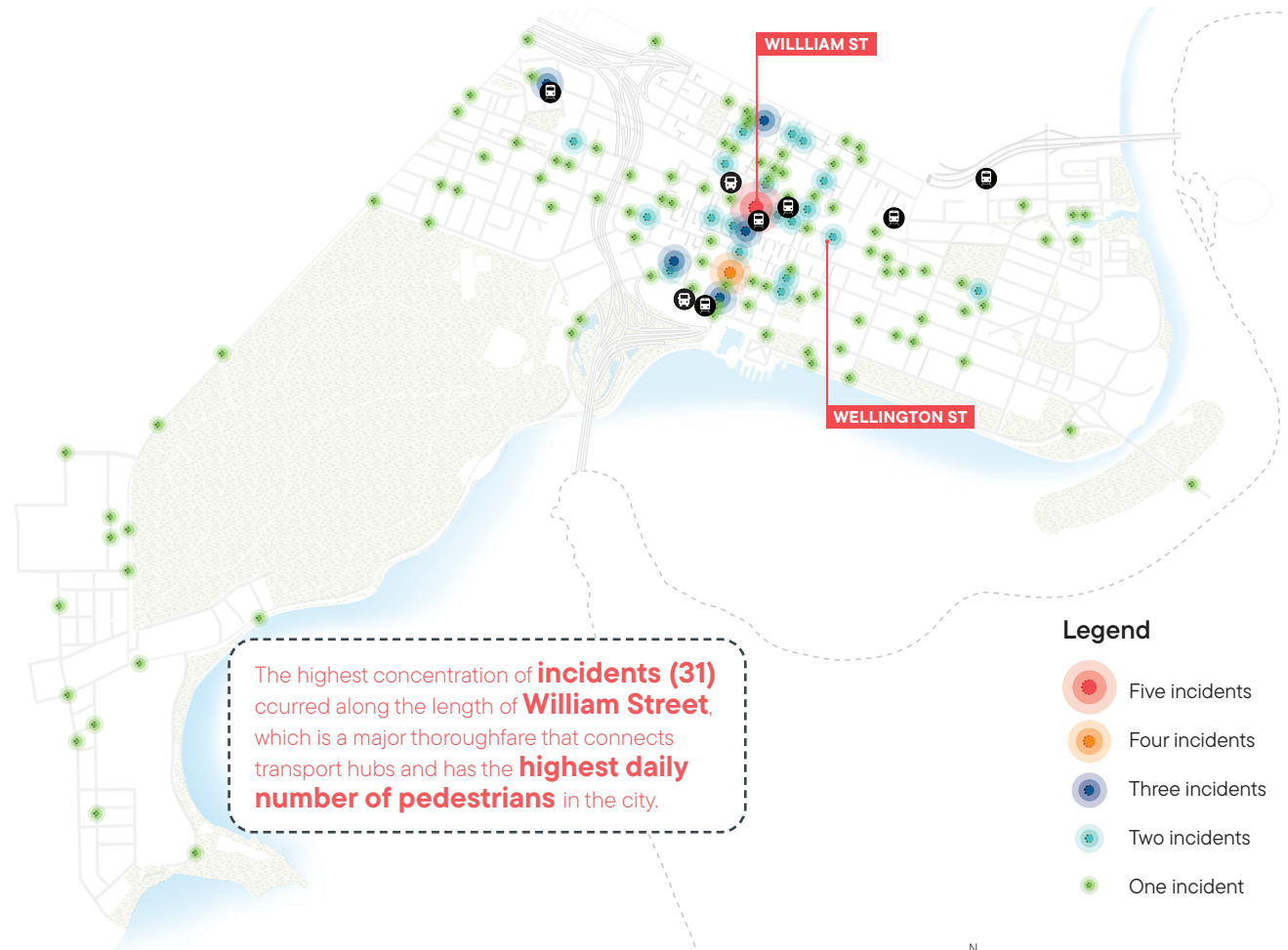


Figure 7: Crash hotspots between Car and Pedestrian (MRWA, 2018-2022)



Figure 8: Extract from the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030

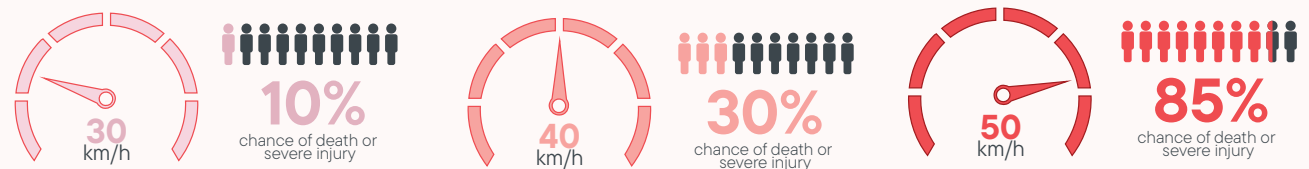


Figure 9: Relationship between vehicle speed and risk of fatal injury to pedestrians.



Image: Barrack Street, Central Perth

The City's challenges and opportunities

As the city's population grows, it faces challenges that will impact its neighbourhoods, some of which are currently the most walkable in the State.



Ageing population

Western Australia's population is rapidly aging with people living longer than ever before. Currently about one in eight Western Australians are aged 65 and older. This figure is anticipated to rise to nearly one in five (18%) by 2050. In the next decade, the older adult demographic is projected to surge by 50%, from 340,000 to 518,000 people.²

This demographic shift suggests a significant increase in elderly visitors to the city in the coming years.



Experience and reputation

Given that most visitors prefer to explore a city on foot, the quality of Perth's walking environment could affect its status as a global destination and its economic vitality. It's important that everyone can access the city safely and that our spaces are of a high quality befitting a capital city.



Accessibility

The 2021 census indicates that more than 600 people in the City of Perth have profound or severe core activity limitations and need assistance in their daily lives in areas such as self-care, mobility, and communication.

In Western Australia, one in five people (or 411,500 people) experience disability.³



Safety

Recent research by Monash University's XYX Lab shows that women, girls, and gender-diverse people experience high levels of harassment particularly while seeking recreational activities. The 2016 ABS Personal Safety Survey found that 25.6% of women felt unsafe walking alone at night compared to 4.2% of men. Although lighting can be a key factor in making people feel safer at night, the level of maintenance and cleanliness also significantly affects people's sense of safety.

The city also experiences its highest concentrations of pedestrian road trauma in its busiest streets.



Footpath widths

The city's economic growth will continue to attract large numbers of people to central areas.

However, cluttered and narrow footpaths at key intersections near the city's transport hubs and other areas can make for uncomfortable walking environments.



Delays at intersections

Pedestrians are frequently given insufficient time to cross, experiencing long delays at traffic lights, particularly on streets connecting major transport hubs. Delays at intersections can increase people's willingness to take risks when crossing roads.



Competing demands for street space

Perth, Western Australia's capital, serves as the central hub for business, government, transportation, culture, and entertainment in the metropolitan area. Prioritising walking by allocating ample space for relaxation, enjoyment, and ensuring safety and comfort is crucial.



Heatwaves

Increasing urban heat caused by climate change is a major challenge for the city. Thermal imaging taken during the January 2024 heatwave revealed temperatures reaching 71 degrees Celsius in unshaded Central Perth streets compared to the ambient temperature of 38 degrees Celsius.



Emerging technology and regulation

Disruptive technologies like app-based ride sharing and GPS controlled micro-mobility schemes will continue to emerge and evolve. As regulation has not always kept pace with new technologies, the city will need to adapt to ensure that any negative impact to the walking environment is minimised.

Ultimately, striking a balance between accommodating various modes of transportation and ensuring pedestrian safety presents a significant challenge. The recent changes to legislation allowing cycling and e-scooter use on footpaths will require review, especially as pedestrian numbers continue to increase in Central Perth.

What are other cities doing?

Some of the most memorable streets in the world, such as La Ramblas in Barcelona, are simple in their design. Wide footpaths, active shop fronts, pedestrian priority, and trees along its full length make for a very walkable experience. Cities globally share challenges in promoting active transport. These global best practices and trends can help guide Perth in adopting the right approach.



Priority at intersections

Adjusting traffic signal timing to allow for longer pedestrian crossing times can enhance safety and accommodate slower walking speeds, especially the elderly and those with poor mobility. By minimising wait times, it encourages safer behaviour and less overcrowding.



Mass transit projects

Cities across the world are constructing new metro lines and expanding existing ones. Metros are unrivalled in their ability to transport large numbers of people quickly over short distances while using minimal land. Their high frequency and segregation from other modes of transport make them one of the most convenient ways to move around city centres.



Low car streets

"Low car streets" typically refer to low speed urban streets that prioritise pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport over private car usage. These streets are designed to limit or minimise the presence of cars, creating a more pedestrian-friendly and sustainable urban environment.



Courtesy crossings

In Fitzroy, Melbourne, as well as in London and Copenhagen, footpaths are designed as a continuous surface that extends over the entrances of minor streets. Vehicles are required to stop and yield to pedestrians as a matter of courtesy. This provides a comfortable and less interrupted walking experience.



30km/h streets

In early 2021, the World Health Organisation (WHO) launched a campaign to make 30 km/h streets the norm for cities worldwide. The push was to improve road safety and reduce noise pollution. Since the WHO's campaign was launched Barcelona, Paris and London have implemented lower speeds. Streets with a 30 km/h speed limit create a safer and more inviting environment.



Shared spaces

Shared spaces are low speed environments which aim to create an inclusive environment by reducing traffic control measures and fostering a shared responsibility among all road users. This approach is ideal in narrow laneways and streets where space is a premium.



Image: Murray Street Mall, Central Perth

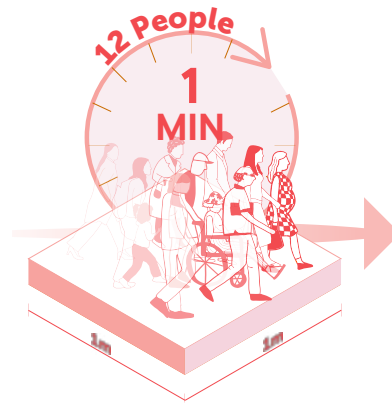


Planning for walking

What do we want to achieve?

Streets designed with people in mind bring vibrancy to the city.

Perth's narrow streets may limit multiple transport modes but prioritising pedestrian space will become crucial to improving and maintaining a liveable city. Walkable neighbourhoods have a focus on connecting residents, workers, and visitors to local destinations such as shops, public transport, schools, and parks.



“The footpath width required to comfortably accommodate 12 pedestrians per minute. Anything above this limit is considered overcrowding.”

- Gehl Architects

This plan aims to prioritise the walking environment for the next decade to ensure public spaces are safe, convenient and enjoyable.

This includes:

- **Planning for future growth** – ensuring the City's streets and public spaces can accommodate more people.
- **Reducing delay** – making walking in the city an enjoyable and quick way to move around.
- **Addressing accessibility** – streets and public spaces that can be accessed by everyone regardless of ability or age.
- **Improving safety** – road and personal safety day and night.
- **Street management** – Guide the future form and function of city streets.
- **Prioritising where the people are** – matching the level of service to public spaces where pedestrian volumes are highest.

Proposed projects and initiatives for future consideration - 2025-2035

Capital works projects

Increase space for pedestrians through all street renewal and upgrade projects; prioritise the Neighbourhood Town Centres, Central Perth, Northbridge and around transport hubs.

Reimagine and redefine William Street as a place for people, increasing walkability, amenity, and street life.

Design intersections to optimise the flow of pedestrians, improve safety in areas of high pedestrian volumes and reduce pedestrian delays.

Deliver universally accessible streets, parks and other public places which integrate with the public transport network.

Ensure green open spaces have footpaths that connect to the wider street network.

Install formal and informal crossings to address gaps in the walking network in each City neighbourhood.

Continue to deliver on the recommendations of the Forgotten Spaces Laneways Strategy including sign posting City owned laneways as shared spaces.

Remove clutter that interrupts pedestrian movement on city streets.

Continue the roll out the City's wayfinding signage, Open Space, Lighting and Urban Forest Plans.

Advocacy

Continue to advocate for signal operation and enforcement to reduce vehicle blockages at intersections.

Continue to advocate for changes to e-rideables and bike legislation regarding footpath use.

Advocate to MRWA to reduce traffic signal cycle times from 120 seconds to 90 seconds, to align with world best practice.

Advocate to expand the Pedestrian Priority Zone map in the Perth Parking Policy.

Continue to work with neighbouring Local Governments to improve connections into the city.

Continue to advocate to PTA to balance the number of buses crossing the city centre from the north and south with the overall functionality of the street.

Continue to support PTA with the delivery of accessible bus stops across the city.

Planning

Ensure masterplans, precinct, structure plans and two ways street conversions deliver an enhanced pedestrian network.

Embed best practice in planning public space upgrades including the needs of children and different genders and abilities.

Create new pedestrian friendly areas with lower speed limits.

Continue to work with MRWA to expand the 40km/h speed zone on local roads across the City.

Work with MRWA to introduce a 30km/h speed limit to Hay and Murray Streets east and west of the Malls and in the Neighbourhood Town Centres.

Prioritise high volume busy streets in Central Perth and Northbridge for a higher level of service and maintenance.

Apply a hierarchy to city streets to direct their future form and function.

Create Streetscape Design Guidelines to provide consistent and high-quality treatments befitting of a capital city for use on future projects.

Minimise footpath obstructions such as veranda posts, switchboards and bollards.

Engagement

Include travel behaviour change management processes into the scope of large-scale City projects.

Promote international walking days and related events.

Continue to promote, enhance and increase access to walking trails within the city.

Bibliography

1. <https://profile.id.com.au/perth/workers>
2. Department of Planning WA. WA Tomorrow. Perth; 2015.
3. A Western Australia for Everyone State Disability Strategy. 2020

Appendix A:

What did the community tell us?

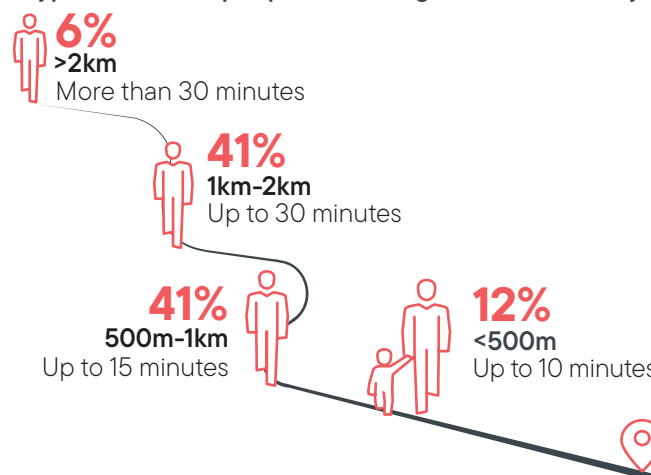
The City conducted two community surveys: an initial one to understand where and why people walk, and a second one to gather feedback on the draft plan.

The survey in October 2023 provided a snapshot of walking in the city to inform the development of a new Walking Plan. A total number of 330 survey responses and 237 place pins on the mapping tool were received.


A total of 57% of respondents identified as female, 39% as male and 4% as other or preferred not to say, with the 25-54 age group representing over three quarters of all respondents.

The majority of walking in the city accounted for people working (60%) followed by residents (20%). 1% identified a requirement for a mobility device or aid to walk in the city.

Typical distance people are willing to walk in the city



Top 5 preferences in choosing a route to walk

- 1  Streets with trees and building awnings
- 2  Prefer to walk on busy streets with good lighting
- 3  Busy streets that have interesting and active shopfronts
- 4  Prefer direct and easy access with little interruption to my walk
- 5  Streets with good passive surveillance including vehicles passing by

Top 5 negative experiences walking in the City

- ⊗ E-scooters sharing footpaths pose safety concerns

- ⊗ Pedestrian crossing times at traffic lights is too short or infrequent

- ⊗ Drivers not giving way to pedestrians at intersections

- ⊗ Cyclists sharing footpaths pose safety concerns

- ⊗ Construction work causes inconvenience such as closing footpaths

Other feedback

Loose pavers and pavers sticking up can be a trip hazard.

There is too much emphasis on cars. Less space for cars, more for cyclists and pedestrians.

The laneways provide great short cuts and are full of street art.

Some sections of footpath are far too narrow for the pedestrian volumes.

Love the pedestrian countdowns!

Favourite places to walk



Tree Lined Streets

- Mount Street
- Harvest Terrace
- Royal Street



Activated laneways

- Shafto Lane
- Wolf Lane
- Prince Lane



Wide footpaths

- St Georges Terrace (Central)
- Hay Street (East)
- Pier Street (Central)



Nature (Park/Lakeview)

- Wellington Square
- Claisebrook Cove
- Mounts Bay Road



Heritage buildings

- London Court
- Queen Street
- King Street

Least favourite places to walk



Antisocial behaviour

- James Street
- Murray Street (East)
- William Street



Long wait at traffic light intersections

- Wellington/William Street
- Barrack Street/St Georges Terrace
- Wellington/Beaufort Street



Car/bus dominant

- William Street
- James Street
- Causeway



No Shade

- Forrest Place
- Elizabeth Quay
- Perth Cultural Centre



Narrow footpaths

- Hay Street (West)
- St Georges Terrace (West)
- Barrack Street (South)

Consultation on the Draft Walking Plan

On the 1 July 2024, a second survey was launched to gather feedback on the draft to help shape the final Walking Plan. A total number of 282 responses were received from 317 visits to the Engage Perth platform.

The majority of respondents were female (58%), followed by male (38%), non-binary (2%), and 'other' (2%). The respondents included 51% workers, 33% residents, and 19% metro visitors.

When asked about the City's 10-year walking environment improvement commitment, 97.5% were in support, 2% were not, and 0.5% were unsure.

Other feedback

The footpaths around the City of Perth are often uneven.

The City has the power to create more permeable road, pathways, alley, crossing city blocks.

Support reduced speed limits within CBD where appropriate.

The draft plan is incredibly vague with no firm commitments. road, pathways, alley, crossing city blocks.

Enjoyable to read and I feel like it hits the mark. road, pathways, alley, crossing city blocks.

Look forward to seeing improvements at traffic lights. appropriate.

Priorities to improve the walking environment in the City:

-  Improving pedestrian crossing times at traffic lights.
-  More pedestrian friendly areas with lower traffic speed limits.
-  Removing clutter from footpaths such as bollards, unnecessary signage etc.
-  Widening footpaths wherever possible.
-  Improving accessibility for those with mobility or visual impairments.
-  Improving driver behaviour - e.g. giving way at intersections.

Key themes from the feedback:

-  Shade
-  Driver behaviour
-  Separate walking from cycling and e-scooters
-  Footpath maintenance and clutter
-  Poor perception of safety



97.5%

supported the City's commitment to improving the walking environment over the next 10 years.

This publication can be requested in alternative formats:
audio, braille, Word or accessible PDF.



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