



Rural Interface and Growth Area Road Upgrade Strategy (RIGARUS)

MELTON CITY COUNCIL





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Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2018, Melton City Council initiated the Unsealed Road Network Upgrade Strategy. This comprehensive project aimed to identify all unsealed roads within the City of Melton and determine which roads required sealing. By 2020, the strategy was revisited, leading to a revision of the scoring matrix to redefine the priority list for these roads.

RIGARUS

Building on this foundational work, the Council has now introduced the Rural, Interface, and Growth Area Road Upgrade Strategy (RIGARUS). This new strategy extends beyond merely sealing unsealed roads. RIGARUS focuses on a broader range of improvements and has identified and prioritised various works and policy to be undertaken in the coming years.

Technical Analysis and Community Engagement

The RIGARUS strategy employed a robust technical analysis, integrating data and modelling, alongside extensive community consultation.

This approach was instrumental in strategically planning a safe and efficient transport network to meet the needs of our growing community.

Strategic Insights and Community Benefits

This project conducted a thorough review of roads in our growth areas, considering all modes of transport. It has revealed that current infrastructure is lagging behind the needs of our community. Through this review, we have gained a clear understanding of the existing infrastructure and identified what developers are set to deliver through current planning permits.

This comprehensive understanding of the current and future infrastructure enables the Council to ensure that upcoming developments provide the necessary infrastructure to meet community needs promptly. It also facilitates the completion of transport connections for all modes beyond the immediate development sites, promoting a more integrated and accessible transportation network for the entire community.



Background

The City of Melton's road network spans over 1,450 km and includes:

- 1,230 km of urbanised roads
- 105 km of unsealed roads
- 65 km of narrow sealed roads

Of our 105 kilometres of unsealed roads, some are in rapidly developing areas with significantly increasing traffic volumes. This is causing additional pressure on Melton City Council's maintenance teams and posing potential health and safety risks to the community.

More than 22 kilometres of these unsealed roads are within the urban growth boundary in approved or future PSPs, which means these roads will ultimately be urbanised by future private developments.

There are also 13 kilometres of roads that are narrower than 5 metres, which means that oncoming vehicles typically need to drive with the two left wheels on the unsealed section of road. Again, this causes safety concerns, especially when wet, and needs additional maintenance due to high volumes of cars and trucks using the unsealed section of road.

Addressing Development Challenges

Due to the segmented nature of development in our growth areas, with some developers operating several hundred metres away from the nearest established areas, a significant portion of our road network serves well-established communities but remains at a rural standard. This discrepancy highlights the need for targeted improvements to bring these roads up to the required standard for a growing and modern community.

There is approximately 88 kilometres of road network in our urban growth boundary that is still considered a rural standard. Figure 1 shows the roads and their category investigated through RIGARUS.



Study Area

RIGARUS investigated 117 kilometres of rural roads, 48 kilometres of interface roads, and 101 kilometres of growth area roads. Figure 1 shows the combined 270 kilometres of rural, interface and growth area roads investigated through RIGARUS.

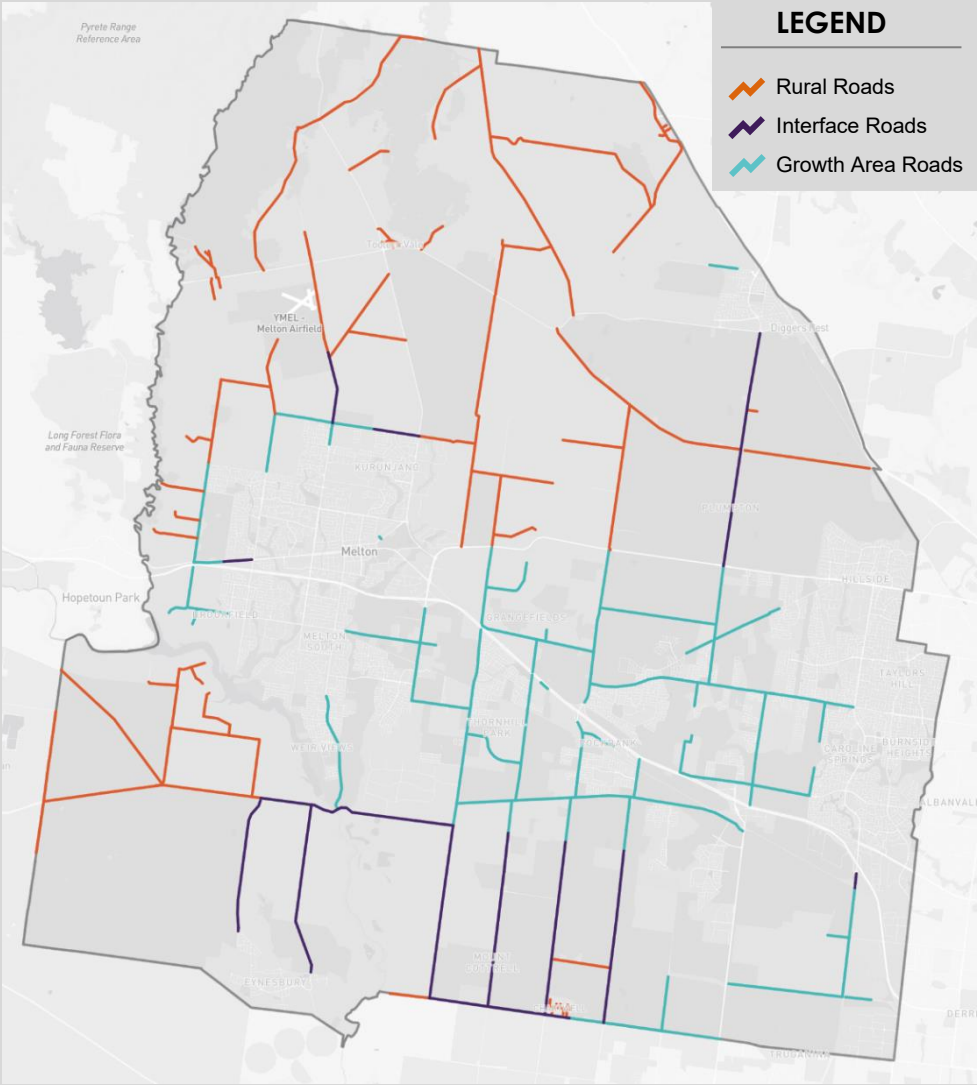


Figure 1: Road Category Map

Road Categories

Rural Road

A rural road is an isolated road with little to no through-traffic and low traffic volumes, typically surrounded by large farmland properties. More than 117 kilometres of Rural Roads have been investigated.



Interface Road

An interface road is still a rural environment, but due to the nearby growth in the area it is being used more frequently by through traffic and is outside the Urban Growth Boundary so will not be upgraded by developers in the future. More than 48 kilometres of Interface Roads have been investigated.



Growth Area Road

A growth area road as identified by this strategy is an existing road that was formerly built to a rural standard but is now being developed to an urban standard as developers complete new subdivisions. More than 101 kilometres of Growth Area Roads have been investigated.



Existing Conditions

To understand the deliverables of RIGARUS, we undertook an analysis of the existing conditions for our road infrastructure, pedestrian infrastructure, and bicycle infrastructure.

The existing road conditions investigated through RIGARUS are shown in Figure 2, and pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure are shown in Figure 3.

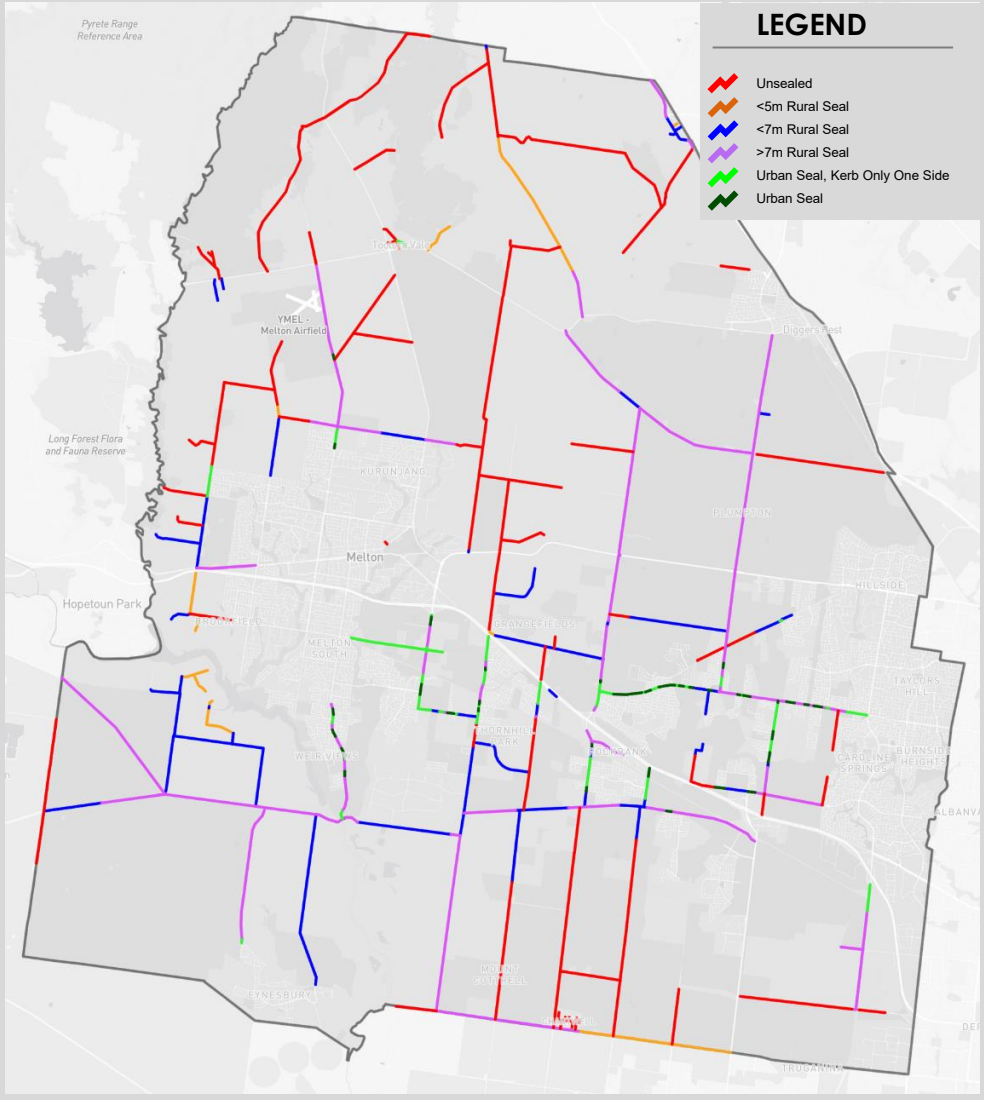


Figure 2: Road Existing Condition Map

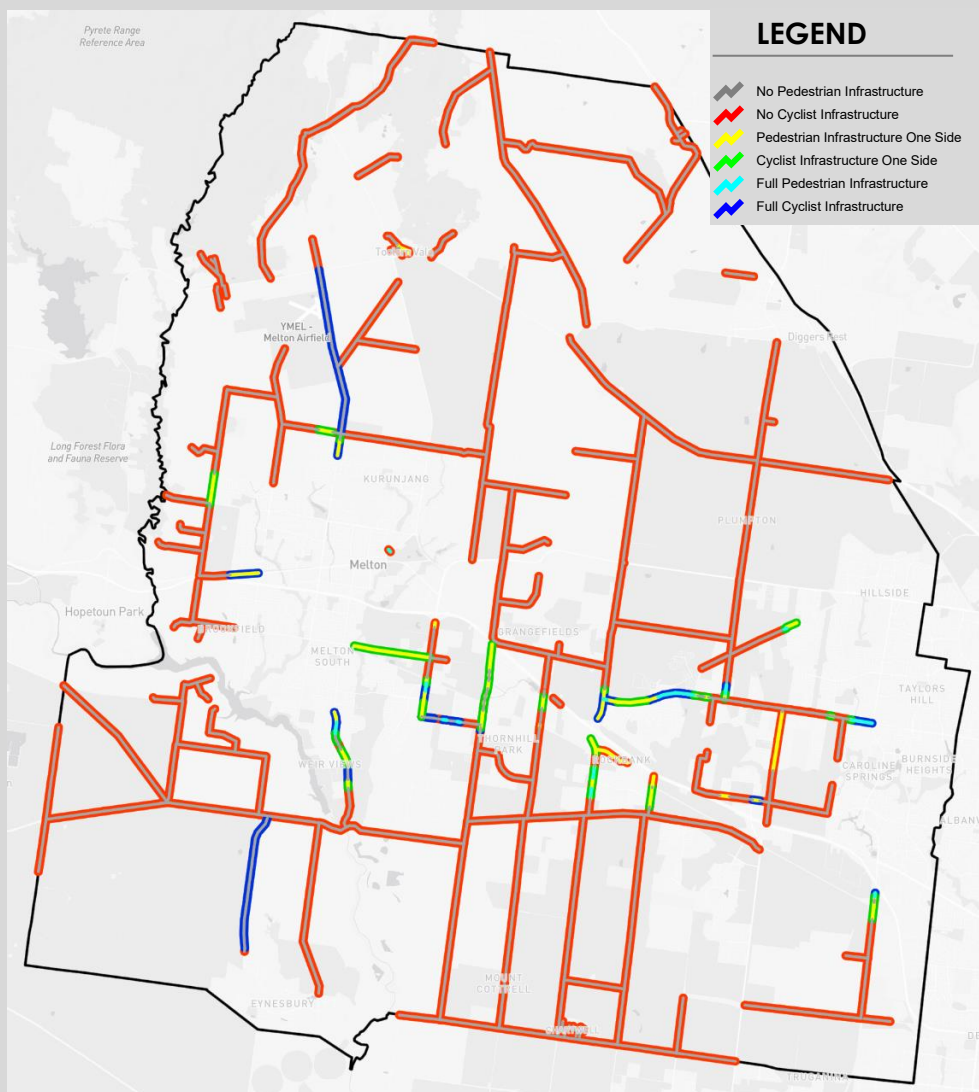


Figure 3: Active Transport Existing Condition Map

Some issues in our current transport network include:

- Rural roads are handling more traffic due to nearby developments, increasing maintenance, and posing safety risks.
- Out of sequence development creating gaps in urban infrastructure for roads and active transport.
- Some existing road reserve widths in growth areas are too narrow to deliver even interim solutions such as shared paths or wider roads.
- Drainage and flooding issues in rural areas.
- Public lighting is lacking in rural areas.

Key Pillars

To achieve an efficient and safe transport network for all modes of transport, with infrastructure appropriate for our community use, there are three key pillars needed to achieve this goal.

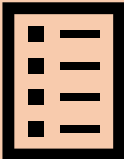
Advocacy

Advocacy to State and Federal Government and neighbouring Councils to upgrade our arterial road network, public transport networks and boundary roads.



Action Plan

Analysis and delivery of upgrades to Council-managed roads.



Development Policy

Updated policies and procedures to collaborate with developers to ensure early delivery of our growth area roads in accordance with Precinct Structure Plans.





Figure 4: Melton City Council's Advocacy Platform: www.movingmelton.vic.gov.au

Methodology

RIGARUS reviewed the existing transport infrastructure in our Rural, Interface and Growth Areas and analysed the transport network with two key approaches based on the function of each road to achieve the appropriate road and active transport conditions across our network.

Rural and Interface Roads

- Create a priority matrix based on existing and modelled traffic volumes, maintenance and crash data, and community feedback to determine which roads require upgrades to suit the needs of the community or where infrastructure is fit-for-purpose.

Growth Area Roads

- Identify upcoming works committed by existing private developers through current planning applications to identify the remaining gaps in our urban transport network. Identify the remaining gaps in the urban transport network to inform policies and procedures to ensure future developments are held accountable and deliver required infrastructure early.

Priority Matrix

For our Rural and Interface roads, Council developed a priority matrix to establish an action plan for upgrades to our road network. This matrix ensures that essential improvements, which will not be addressed by developers, are systematically prioritised and implemented by Council.

Two separate priority matrices were created, one focused on the road pavement and one on the public lighting. The road network considered several factors, while public lighting was focused on traffic volume and crash history at intersections.

Roads

Traffic Volumes



Current recorded traffic volumes and modelled 5-year growth.

Maintenance Data



Unscheduled maintenance tasks.

Crash Data



Recorded crash history.

Community



Support from the community.

Public Lighting

Traffic Volumes



Current recorded traffic volumes and modelled 5-year growth.

Crash Data



Recorded crash history.



Gap Analysis



For our Growth Area roads, a gap analysis was undertaken to determine missing links in the urban road network and pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure. The gap analysis involved identifying the existing conditions in all areas identified in current or future Precinct Structure Plans within the Urban Growth Boundary.

Once the existing conditions were known, all current planning applications were reviewed to understand where existing gaps in the networks will be addressed by private developers as part of their upcoming subdivision works.

This provided Council with an understanding of where the key gaps remain in our network and will be used to inform policy and procedures to ensure we better manage out-of-sequence development and hold developers accountable for early delivery of urbanised roads and pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure to provide connections across our communities, not just within an isolated development site.

Community Consultation

After completing the technical analysis for RIGARUS, we engaged the community to understand their concerns and suggestions for our transport network.

Council provided an online interactive map for our community to place pins where they believed there was an issue or an opportunity for improvement. This online consultation can be found at <https://conversations.melton.vic.gov.au/RIGARUS>

The consultation had the highest participation rate of any engagement on Melton Conversations and was one of the highest participation rates of any clients using the social map tool.

Between the 22nd of April and the 20th of May 2024, over 600 contributions were received from our community regarding our Rural, Interface and Growth Area Road Upgrade Strategy.

Of these contributions:

- 184 were related to already committed or identified Council works in the 23/24 and draft 24/25 budget.
- 115 were related to arterial roads not managed by Council

Figure 5 shows a map of all submissions received as part of our community consultation.

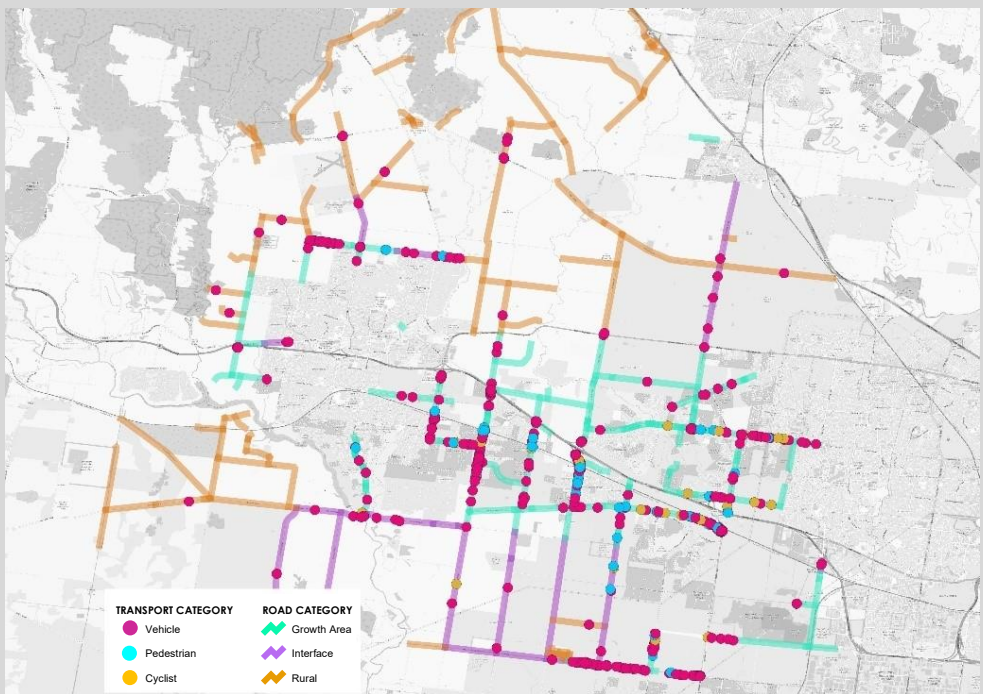


Figure 5: Community Contributions Map

Figure 6 and Figure 7 provide a summary of the feedback we received from our community based on road category and transport category.

Our community made it clear that many concerns are regarding Growth Area roads, in particular relating to vehicle infrastructure.

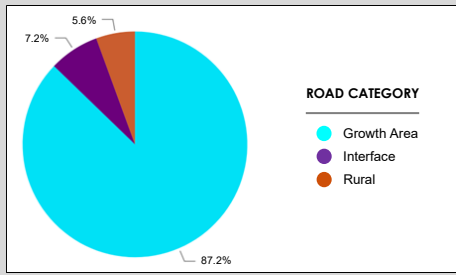


Figure 6: Road Category Feedback as % of Total Value

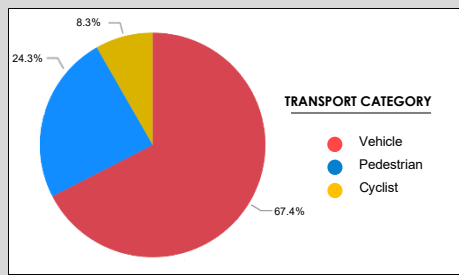


Figure 7: Transport Category Feedback as % of Total Value

The most frequently identified roads were within our growth areas, with Taylors Road, Leakes Road, Mount Cottrell Road, Paynes Road and Minns Road being identified the most. This shows a clear indication that our community is not satisfied with how developers are delivering transport infrastructure, and we need to ensure we hold them accountable to deliver the necessary infrastructure early to meet our community needs and expectations. Figure 8 highlights the locations of concern on Growth Area roads.



Figure 8: Community Contributions on Growth Area Roads

After reviewing the community feedback, Council has identified recurring issues or concerns raised and provides the below responses in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1: Summary of Community Concerns Regarding Vehicle Transport and Council Responses

Subject	Community Concern	Council Response
Arterial Road Infrastructure	Safety and capacity issues on arterial roads and intersections including Melton Highway, Western Highway and its interchanges, and Hopkins Road.	The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) are responsible for the upgrade of arterial roads and intersections. Council is advocating for state government to deliver upgrades for our community. Visit Council's advocacy website at www.movingmelton.com.au
Railway Level Crossings	Safety, congestion, and lack of active transport connections.	The level crossings at Hopkins Road and Ferris Road are being removed by state government by 2026. Council continues to advocate for these roads to be duplicated as part of these works. Visit the Big Build website at https://bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/level-crossing-removal-project
Road concerns in growth areas	Maintenance concerns	Council will continue to maintain our road network in accordance with our Road Management Plan and ensure developers maintain roads affected by heavy vehicles as part of their development permits.
	Inadequate/ late delivery of necessary road infrastructure to match growing community needs	Council is currently reviewing policies and procedures when reviewing development applications and working with developers to ensure early delivery of road infrastructure extending beyond their development site.
Road concerns in rural and interface roads	Unsealed or narrow sealed roads not meeting community needs	RIGARUS has completed technical analysis and has reviewed community feedback to determine warrants and priority for road upgrades. Note, not all roads require sealing if the current conditions are considered appropriate for their rural environment.
Public Lighting	Poor or non-existent public lighting makes it harder to see when driving at night.	Developers will install street lighting as they urbanise growth area roads and RIGARUS has identified a strategy to deliver public lighting at intersections for our rural and interface roads.

Table 2: Summary of Community Concerns Regarding Active Transport and Council Responses

Subject	Community Concern	Council Response
Safety	- Narrow, unsealed, and congested roads are unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists to use. - Unsafe road crossings - Poor lighting makes paths unsafe at night	Council is working with developers to deliver walking and cycling paths, safer road crossings and public lighting in our growth areas to provide a safer pedestrian and cyclist network, not reliant on using roads and nature strips to travel.
Missing Paths	Some areas lack walking and cycling paths not connecting residential areas to train stations and other key points.	Council is delivering additional paths and road crossings to address gaps in our established areas as identified in the Pedestrian and Cyclist Plan. Developers are also delivering paths and crossings in growth areas as identified in the relevant Precinct Structure Plans.

Summary

The Rural, Interface, and Growth Area Road Upgrade Strategy (RIGARUS) represents a comprehensive review of our transport networks, extending beyond established areas to ensure our roads meet the evolving needs of our community.

Rural and Interface Roads

In our Rural and Interface roads, Council has created an action plan to achieve:

- sealing of unsealed roads,
- widening narrow rural seals,
- strengthening pavements,
- addressing drainage issues,
- providing public lighting at intersections and
- working with neighbouring Councils to upgrade boundary roads.

Growth Area Roads

Council has completed a gap analysis to:

- Identify of missing links in transport networks,
- Identify the need for improved processes and procedures to collaborate with developers to ensure early delivery of necessary infrastructure for all modes of transport in future development applications.

Arterial Road Improvements

Through community consultation, it was also raised that our arterial road networks need improvements, and Council will continue to advocate for these improvements through www.movingmelton.vic.gov.au and ongoing negotiations with state and federal governments.

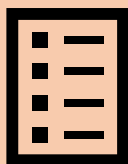
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Advocacy to State and Federal Government and neighbouring Councils to upgrade our arterial road network, public transport networks and boundary roads.



Action Plan

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Development Policy

Updated policies and procedures to collaborate with developers to ensure early delivery of works on our growth area roads in accordance with Precinct Structure Plans.



LEGEND

 Council Advocacy Priorities for State Government Delivery

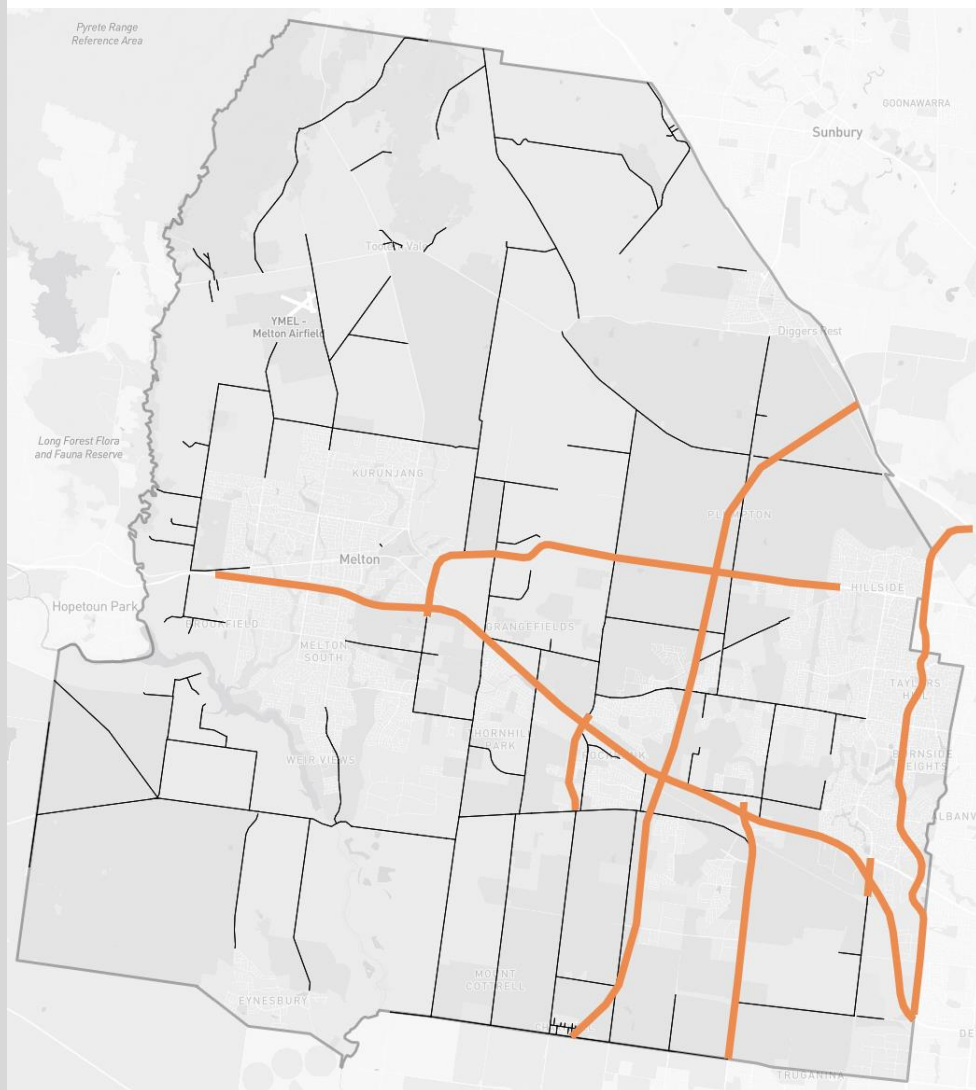


Figure 9: Council Road Improvement Advocacy Priorities for State Government Delivery

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 Path Construction

 Road Sealing

 Road Renewal

 Road Duplication

 Road Upgrade – Unsealed Condition

 Traffic Signal Construction

 Bridge Upgrade Works

 Roundabout / Turning Lanes Construction

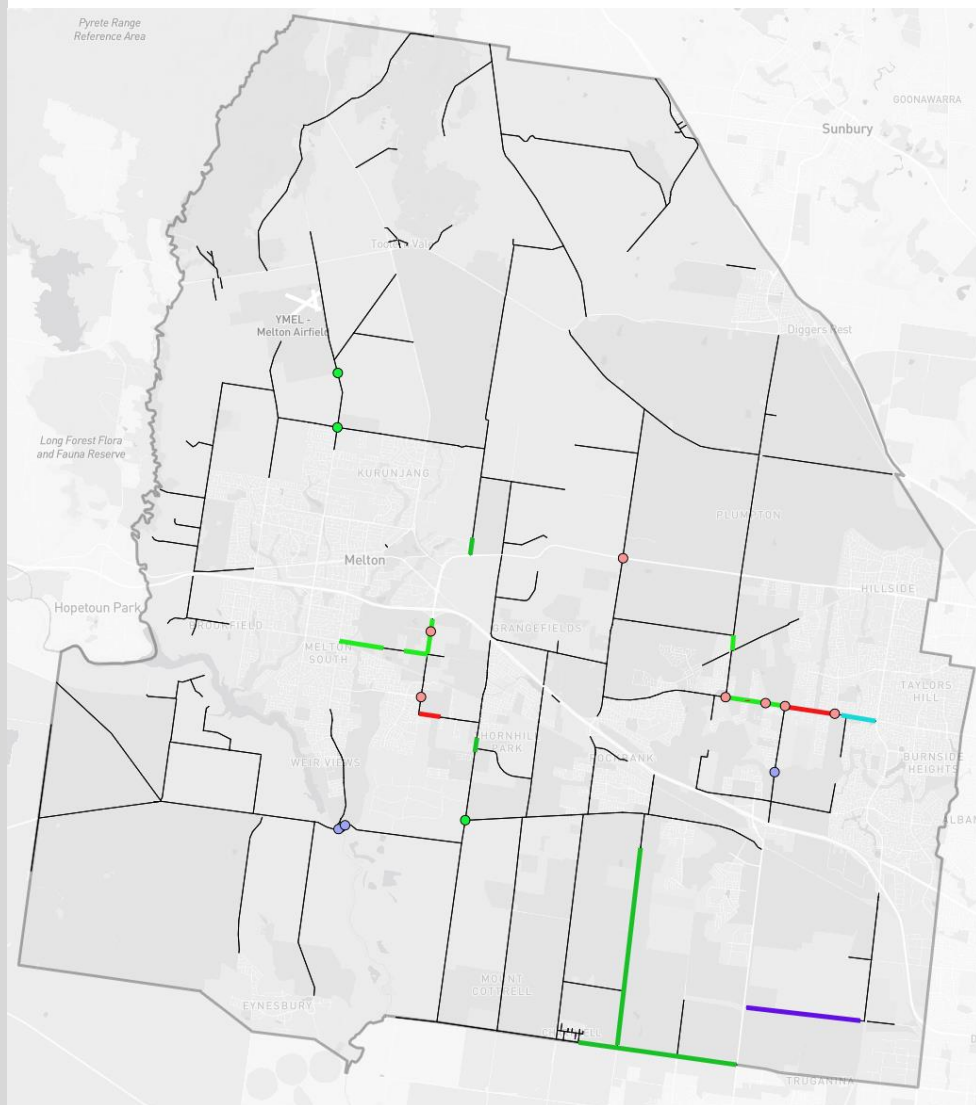


Figure 10: 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 Council Funded Road Upgrade Projects for RIGARUS Roads

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 Seal Unsealed Road

 Widen Narrow Sealed Road

 Pavement Improvements

 Drainage Improvement

 Seal Court Bowl

 Intersection Upgrade

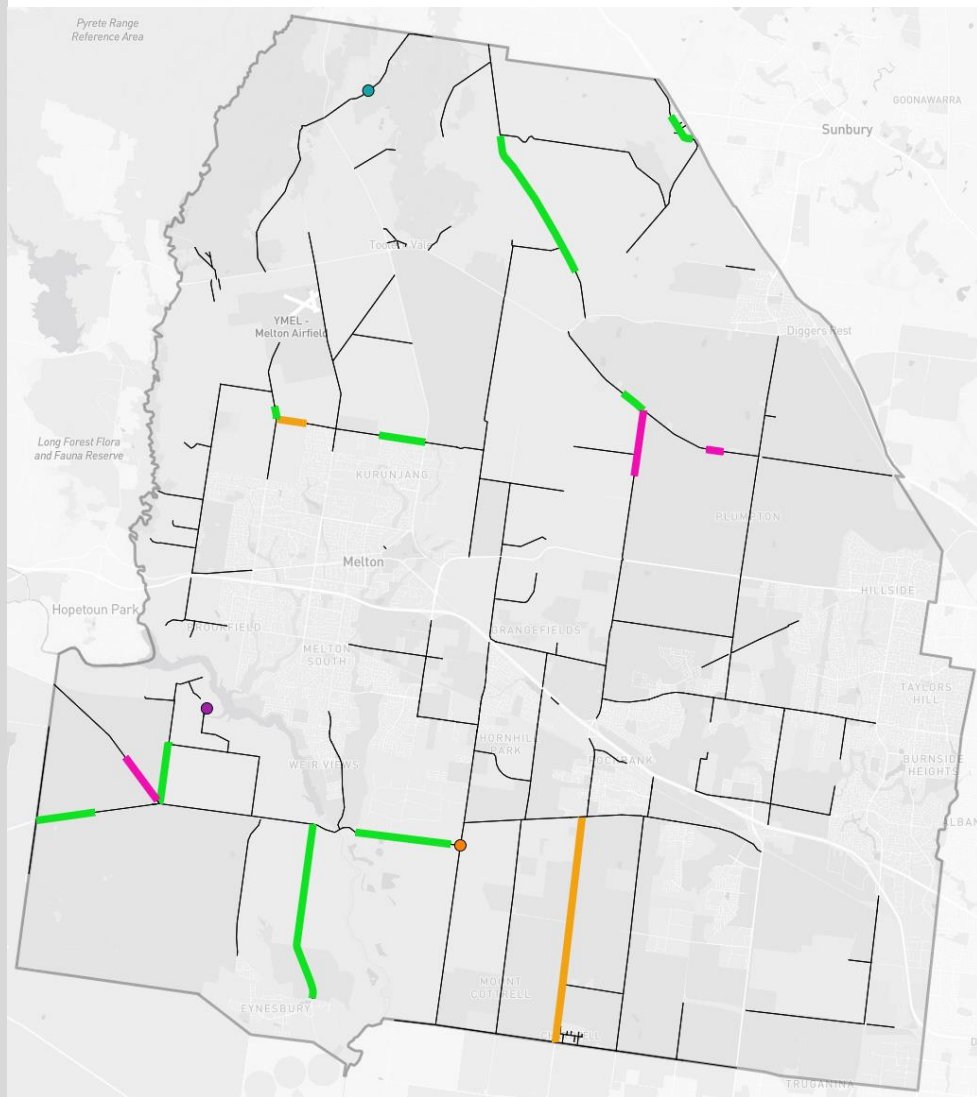


Figure 11: RIGARUS Project Priorities Identified for Delivery in Short to Medium Term

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● Public Lighting Installation

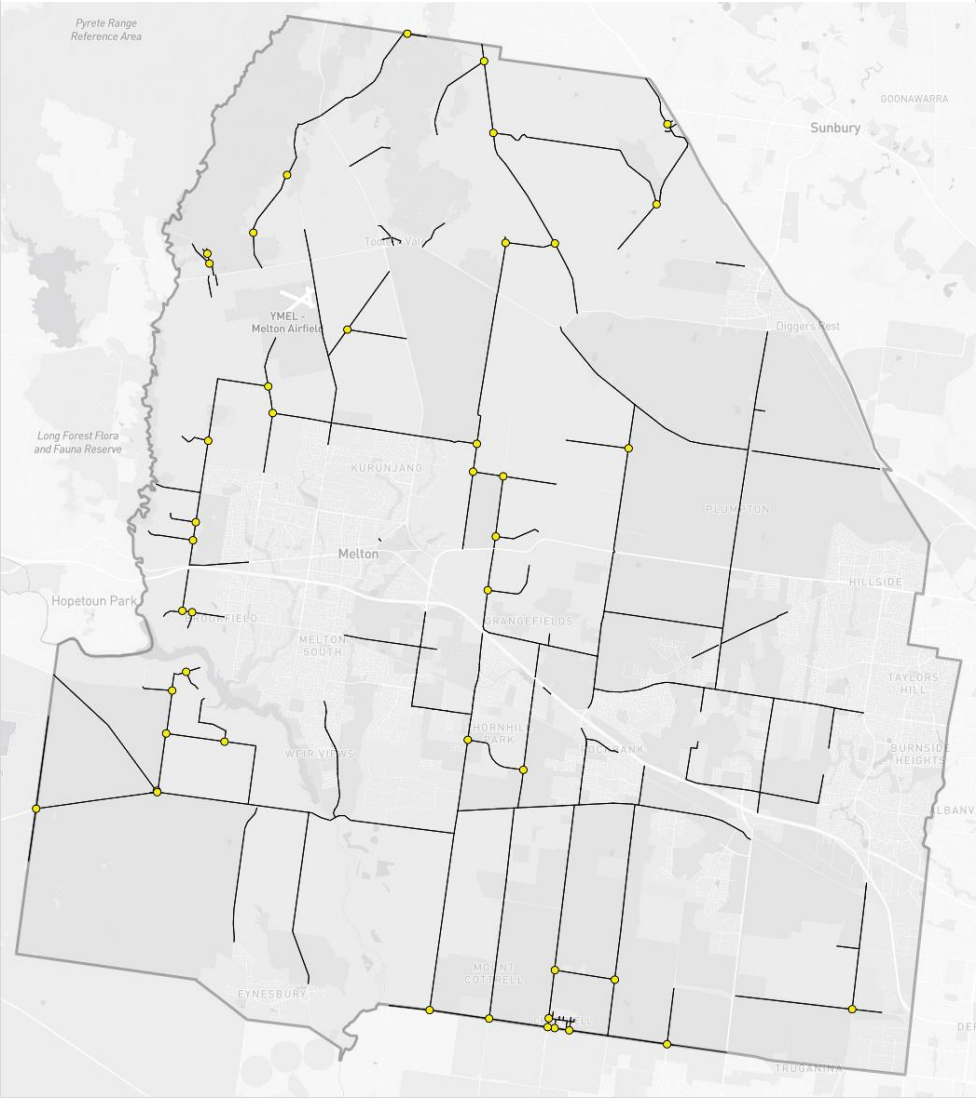


Figure 12: Public Lighting Priorities identified by RIGARUS

LEGEND



Existing Urbanised Road



Road Identified for Upgrade Through Development Applications

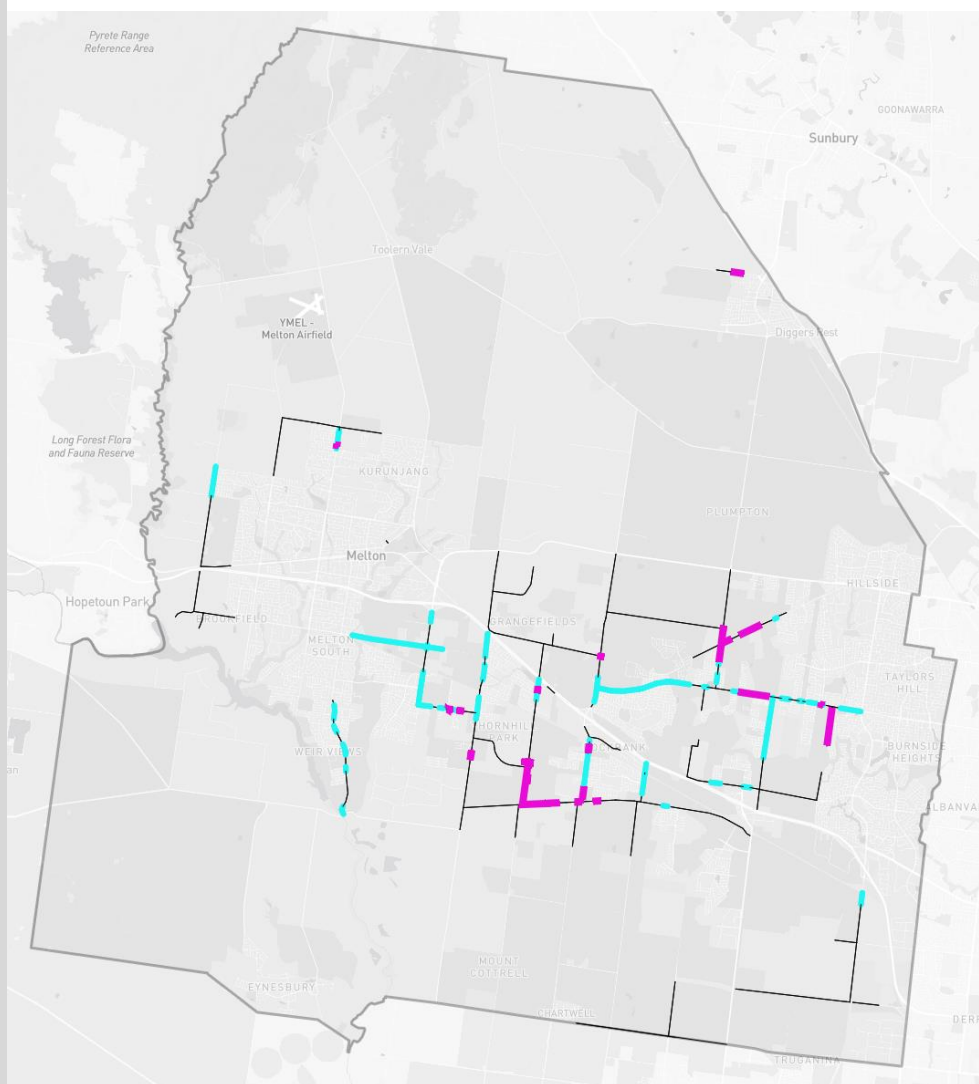


Figure 13: Projects Identified for Delivery in Current Planning Applications by Developers



Melton Civic Centre
232 High Street, Melton
T 9747 7200

Melton Library and Learning Hub
31 McKenzie Street, Melton
T 9747 7200

**Caroline Springs Library
and Learning Hub**
193 Caroline Springs Boulevard
Caroline Springs
T 9747 7200

melton.vic.gov.au

