

# **Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre to 2036 DRAFT Structure Plan**

**May 2020**

Prepared by MGS Architects  
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#### Description

Review of Strategic Direction  
Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre  
DRAFT Structure Plan

May 2020

Prepared by MGS Architects

#### Client

Whitehorse City Council

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*The Wurundjeri– Balluk Tribe are the traditional custodians of the land on which Box Hill is located. The tribe, whose traditional language is Woi Wurrung, is one of the five tribes that make up the Kulin nation. The tribe has historical links with the wider area now known as the City of Whitehorse extending over 40,000 years. Whitehorse City Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional owners of the land which is now called Whitehorse, the Wurundjeri people and their elders past and present.*

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## Glossary of terms

<b>ABS</b>	Australian Bureau of Statistics
<b>ACZ</b>	Activity Centre Zone
<b>BHI</b>	Box Hill Institute (formerly Box Hill TAFE)
<b>BHITS</b>	Box Hill Integrated Transport Strategy
<b>BHOSS</b>	Box Hill Open Space Strategy
<b>BHTI</b>	Box Hill Transit Interchange
<b>BHURTG</b>	Box Hill Urban Realm Treatment Guidelines
<b>CBD</b>	Central Business District
<b>DELWP</b>	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (State Government of Victoria)
<b>DDA</b>	Disability Discrimination Act 1992
<b>DDO</b>	Design and Development Overlay
<b>DPO</b>	Development Plan Overlay
<b>FAR</b>	Floor Area Ratio — the ratio of a building's total floor area (gross floor area) to the size of the piece of land upon which it is built.
<b>GRZ</b>	General Residential Zone
<b>MAC</b>	Metropolitan Activity Centre ( <i>Plan Melbourne 2017-2050</i> )
<b>MUZ</b>	Mixed Use Zone
<b>MSS</b>	Municipal Strategic Statement
<b>NEIC</b>	National Employment and Innovation Cluster ( <i>Plan Melbourne 2017-2050</i> )
<b>NEL</b>	North East Link
<b>NRZ</b>	Neighbourhood Residential Zone
<b>P&amp;E Act</b>	<i>Planning &amp; Environment Act 1987</i>
<b>PDZ</b>	Priority Development Zone
<b>PTV</b>	Public Transport Victoria
<b>R1Z</b>	Residential 1 Zone (now superseded by reformed residential zones)
<b>RGZ</b>	Residential Growth Zone
<b>SRG</b>	Stakeholder Reference Group
<b>SRL</b>	Suburban Rail Loop
<b>VCAT</b>	Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal
<b>VIF</b>	Victorian Government's Victoria in the Future forecasts
<b>VPA</b>	Victorian Planning Authority
<b>VPP</b>	Victorian Planning Provisions
<b>Wombat crossing</b>	Zebra crossing placed on a raised section road
<b>WOSS</b>	Whitehorse Open Space Strategy
<b>WSUD</b>	Water Sensitive Urban Design
<b>Zebra crossing</b>	Pedestrian crossing on a section of road marked with alternating dark and light stripes







# Introduction

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## 1.1 Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre

**Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre (BHMAC) is located approximately 14 km to the east of Melbourne's CBD. It is the largest Metropolitan Activity Centre (MAC) in Melbourne's eastern region and the primary activity centre within the City of Whitehorse. The scope of BHMAC is shown on the map below.**

BHMAC is the major public transport interchange in Melbourne's east with an extensive network of bus routes interchanging with trains on the Lilydale and Belgrave line and the Route 109 tram. It is the major employment hub in Melbourne's east with expanding roles in health, education, government and retail services.

BHMAC also contains a significant Health and Education Precinct, one of 11 designated in *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*. This precinct accommodates Box Hill Hospital, Epworth Private Hospital and the Box Hill Institute.

The transit-enabled nature of the centre, combined with its distinctive retail, health and education employment anchors, means that the centre is strategically well positioned to accommodate medium and higher density mixed use development.



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## 1.2 The revised Structure Plan

### Purpose

**The revised Structure Plan aims to reconcile the significant forecast growth in population, housing and employment with the necessary underpinning amenity, character, connectivity and resilience to support the centre's role as the pre-eminent urban centre for Melbourne's east.**

The plan establishes a clear vision for the overall centre and proposes a suite of objectives, strategies, land use and development controls by which this vision will be achieved.

The plan aims to deliver a network of distinctive neighbourhoods with well-managed development density, built form, land-use mix and amenity. It provides recommendations for the enhanced placemaking role of all new development and how it should look, engage and function.

The plan is supported by the *Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre to 2036 Urban Design Framework* (BHMAL UDF) which contains recommendations for a new built form framework. This framework consists of centre-wide and precinct-specific objectives, standards and guidelines.

The vision for these neighbourhoods seeks to build on their individual strengths as hubs for regional education, training and health, large employment, core retail, and civic, residential and entrepreneurial small business. This means supporting and encouraging particular outcome characteristics likely to underpin their future urban quality and contribution to the operational success of the shared vision.

The plan provides guidance on how substantial growth will be enabled within an enriched and cohesive public realm and in a built environment that is accessible and welcoming to all. This will be characterised by a network of high-quality sunlit boulevards, streets, walks, arcades and cycling networks.

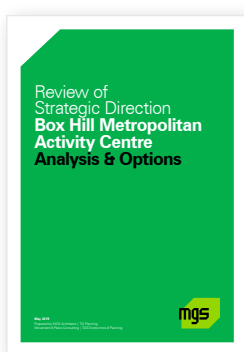
This future vision is complemented by integrated transport and open space strategies which detail the role and sharing mix of networks and what these enhanced places, streets and spaces will look like. This growth will celebrate and support a diverse and expanding enterprise, institutional, entertainment, events and services economy along with a growing and diversifying, resident and visitor community.

It will be underpinned by an ambition to ensure the long term resilience and comfort of the centre while aligning the vision with the landscape identity of the region: through enhanced tree canopy cover and shade; expanded public open space; and enhanced environmental performance of both the neighbourhood and the development therein. The plan also aims to retain and enhance the role and capacity of valued heritage and cultural character; the role of community facilities within the centre; and the connection of the centre to regional cycling, open space and community facilities.



## Background documents and strategies

The plan is supported by a series of background documents and technical reports containing analysis and recommendations which, alongside community and stakeholder engagement findings, underpin the vision, objectives and strategies contained in this plan.

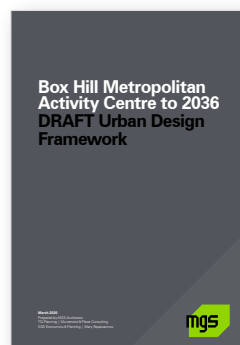


### Review of Strategic Direction Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre Analysis and Options Report (May 2019, updated April 2020)

The Analysis and Options report was prepared following the abandonment of Amendment C175 to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme. The report provides a thorough assessment of the first decade of implementation

of the *Box Hill Transit City Activity Centre Structure Plan* (also referred to as the '*2007 Structure Plan*'). It sought to extend the *2007 Structure Plan* analysis with new data and updated research and policy towards a revised planning framework to respond to emerging trends and influences. It included:

- Analysis of relevant research and planning policy change since the *2007 Structure Plan*.
- Population and employment projections to 2036.
- Analysis of 95 planning permits — constructed, approved and under consideration — lodged in the last 15 years, including assessment and 3D modelling of resultant floorspace.
- Detailed appraisal of a 20% sample of those permits to determine key issues and gaps in built form and public realm guidance against the *2007 Structure Plan*'s ambition.
- Analysis of existing and emerging land use trends to determine whether the *2007 Structure Plan*'s preferred uses for identified precincts are being achieved.
- Analysis of the centre's physical framework, including block and lot size, emerging density (in plot ratio or FAR), height, accessibility, key opportunity sites and capacity to support forecast growth.
- Analysis of emerging transport, parking and access issues, including whether the levels of pedestrianisation and public transport required to support a vibrant and productive centre are occurring.
- Analysis of public realm elements and benchmarking the extent to which best practice outcomes are being achieved.



### Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre Urban Design Framework (March 2020)

The BHMAL UDF draws on relevant best practice tools in relation to encouraging high- quality outcomes in built form, placemaking, access and movement. In this framework the centre is aligned with the vision and preferred character for each neighbourhood whilst also envisaged collectively, as a

centre in the context of the emerging conventions for higher levels of amenity and pedestrianisation appropriate for a Metropolitan Activity Centre. The UDF recommends a built form framework based upon new built form requirements and guidelines for the centre and on how the proposed guidelines can be applied in combination with the suite of proposed planning controls and related documents.



### Box Hill Activity Centre Demand Report (August 2019)

The Demand Report provides population and employment growth forecasts for Box Hill, drawing on the Victorian Government's *Victoria in the Future (VIF)* forecasts from 2016. This also estimated the forecast demand for additional floorspace for residential and employment uses to

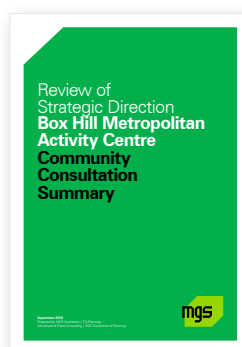
accommodate the projected level of growth in Box Hill. These forecasts informed the review of the current planning framework.

## 1.3 Engagement with key stakeholders and landowners

The process for delivery of the plan responds to the findings of the earlier Amendment C175 Panel Report. This included a detailed engagement plan to reach key stakeholders, landowners and the broader community and is outlined in the background reports.

This engagement process informed and tested the draft vision, objectives and strategies emerging from the Analysis and Options work phase. This process included:

- Two rounds of broad public consultation using both an online map survey and pop-up event with the first round occurring early in the Analysis & Options phase, followed by a second round of consultation during the development of the Draft Structure Plan and Urban Design Framework.
- A Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) composed of key representatives from community, institutions, land owners and agencies, the inputs of which were gained through documented workshops.
- Direct engagement with key agencies and landowners for strategic development sites. These were in the form of one-on-one or small group meetings. Key landowners and institutions also formed part of the Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) membership, providing multiple forums for their inputs.
- The importance of the Box Hill Central area to the future success of the Vision was recognised. This involved multiple meetings between the project team and Council with key landowner and tenant Vicinity Centres and their project team with the purpose of reconciling developer ambitions with the emerging vision and controls. This also included representation on the Stakeholder Reference Group.
- Direct engagement with Council teams leading the Box Hill Integrated Transport Strategy (BHITS) and Box Hill Open Space Strategy (BHOSS).



**Findings and outcomes from community engagement are summarised in the *Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre Community Consultation Summary (2020)*.**