

**SUBMISSION OF WHITEHORSE CITY COUNCIL**  
**SUBURBAN RAIL LOOP PRECINCTS DISCUSSION PAPER**  
**OCTOBER 2023**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. Whitehorse City Council (Council) is supportive of the transport benefits that will come from the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) rail project, however wants to see robust and transparent processes in place to ensure the associated precinct planning and implementation is undertaken with the community's best interests in mind and with meaningful community input that genuinely influences the outcomes of the project.
2. Council encourages Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA) to align the precinct structure plans (PSPs) with the values and themes contained in the Whitehorse Community Vision, Council Plan, draft Box Hill Structure Plan and other relevant Council strategies, as these documents are based on robust community engagement and should be regarded by SRLA as a reflection of community views.
3. Changes around the SRL stations in Box Hill and Burwood must be sustainable, responsive, logical and clearly justified. This balanced approach recognises the need to grow while respecting the existing character and the people who live, work and visit the areas.
4. Council is seeking information from SRLA about:
  - a. The roles, responsibilities and authority of Council in the development and implementation of PSPs;
  - b. How the boundaries of each precinct will be determined;
  - c. The expectations for growth and change within the boundaries; and
  - d. Technical information about the impact of increased population and workforce on existing environmental, social and infrastructure matters.
5. Council is seeking to enter a partnership agreement with SRLA to develop the PSPs for Box Hill and Burwood. The agreement should outline:
  - a. How SRLA will actively seek Council's views on precinct planning (in addition to broader community consultation and engagement) and demonstrate how these views will be incorporated into the PSPs;
  - b. The ongoing support that SRLA will provide to Council (resource funding) to undertake tasks related to the PSP process; and

- c. The roles, responsibilities and authority of Council and SRLA in developing and implementing the PSPs including future resourcing.
6. Council is interested in the outcomes of the community engagement conducted by SRLA during the exhibition of the Precincts Discussion Paper. We request a report detailing the outcomes be provided to Council ahead of or with the release of the draft Precinct Vision statements. This will enable Council to further understand community views as the development of the PSPs evolve.

## **INTRODUCTION**

7. SRL is an important part of a collection of major infrastructure investments in Melbourne's East and will continue to contribute to the boom of significant private and public investment and development that has been occurring over the last decade.
8. Public infrastructure investment and public realm within SRL precincts must be focused on people first and improving quality of life, liveability, sustainability, and changing travel modes and distances.
9. Council is looking forward to improved quality of places in the areas in and around Box Hill and Burwood. This includes enhancing the unique and authentic character of the places that people identify with such as local heritage, and acknowledging the diverse community and regional population catchments that use these areas.
10. Employment land and housing are particularly important as they are levers for economic stimulus and quality of life. Council would like to work with the Victorian Government to plan for shared economic and social outcomes for the City of Whitehorse and the eastern region, building on existing industries, strengths and enabling new opportunities, connections and partnerships.
11. This submission outlines comments from Council relating to the '*SRL Precincts Discussion Paper, August 2023*' (Discussion Paper), as well as general PSP matters, particularly where the matters relate to the proposed SRL precincts in Box Hill and Burwood.

## **COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

12. The '*Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision*' documents the long term aspirations from the community, outlining what they would like Whitehorse to look like into the future.
13. The '*Council Plan 2022-2025*' outlines eight strategic directions that are inspired by the Community Vision and guide Council activities and decisions into the future. Council encourages SRLA to incorporate the strategic directions within its PSPs for Box Hill and Burwood, working collaboratively with the Whitehorse community to translate these themes to action:

- Innovation, Transformation and Creativity
- A Thriving Local Economy: Business, Employment, Education and Skill Development
- Our Diverse and Inclusive Community
- Our Built Environment; Movement and Public Places
- Sustainable Climate and Environmental Care
- An Empowered Collaborative Community
- Health and Wellbeing
- Governance and Leadership

14. Council has a number of existing and draft structure plans and are supportive of using structure plans to guide land use, development, infrastructure and services in our area. It is essential that SRLA consider the existing and draft strategic direction contained in these documents and work with Council to identify if modifications to the strategic intent are necessary or desirable.

15. One of Council's key strategic documents is the draft Box Hill Structure Plan (BHSP). The BHSP acknowledges the significant growth and demographic change that is predicted to continue within this Metropolitan Activity Centre (MAC). The Victorian Government has refused to advance the documents through the Planning Scheme Amendment process at this time, largely based on the SRL Precinct Planning work to come. Nonetheless, the draft BHSP and draft Box Hill Urban Design Framework (UDF) still describe the vision and directions Council sees for the built form, public spaces, movement and transport. The key themes in the BHSP and UDF are outlined in key points below.

- Re-balance the mix of floor space from 70% residential and 30% employment to 50% each;
- Ensure building designs follow the controls in the UDF regarding street interface, overshadowing of public realm, wind impacts, building height and setbacks;
- Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport, including connectivity between modes of transport;
- Develop open and urban spaces that promote social interaction and areas that are engaging and safe;
- Create new open spaces that are unencumbered and accessible that feature diverse typologies and provide for a range of active recreation, passive and greening opportunities; and
- Include landscaping (including on private land) that reflects the character of each of the neighbourhoods within the Box Hill MAC.

16. There are a number of other Council documents and strategies that guide Council decisions for Box Hill and Burwood. The documents are based on robust community engagement and should be considered by SRLA as a reflection of community views. The relevant documents that Council draws SRLA's attention to include (but are not limited to):

Corporate

- 2040 Community Vision (2021)
- Council Plan (2021)

#### Land use planning

- Box Hill Structure Plan (2007)
- Draft Box Hill Structure Plan (2020) and draft Urban Design Framework (2020)
- Burwood Village Neighbourhood Activity Centre Framework Plan (2008)
- Burwood Heights Activity Centre Structure Plan (2006)
- Residential Corridors Built Form Study (2019)
- Housing Strategy (2014)
- Neighbourhood Character Study (2014)
- Neighbourhood Activity Centre Urban Design Guidelines (2014)
- Student Accommodation Strategy (2018)
- Whitehorse Tree Study and Planning Scheme Amendment C219
- Development Contributions Plan and Planning Scheme Amendment C241whse
- Tally Ho Urban Design Framework (2007) [currently under review]
- Tally Ho Urban Design and Landscape Guidelines 2013 [currently under review]
- Whitehorse Heritage Review 2012: Amended 2016

#### Investment and economic development

- Investment and Economic Development Strategy (2020) [new strategy currently being developed]
- Industrial Strategy (2011)

#### Environment, sustainability and biodiversity

- Climate Response Plan (2020)
- Sustainability Strategy (2016)
- Integrated Water Management Plan (2022)
- Urban Biodiversity Strategy
- Urban Forest Strategy (2021)

#### Open space, recreation, arts and culture

- Open Space Strategy (2007) [new strategy currently being developed]
- Draft Box Hill Open Space Strategy (2019)
- Recreation Strategy (2015)
- Arts and Cultural Strategy (2014)

#### Transport

- Integrated Transport Strategy (2011)
- Box Hill Integrated Transport Strategy
- Cycling Strategy (2016)

#### Health and wellbeing

- Health and Wellbeing Plan (2021)
- Affordable Housing Policy (2010)
- Early Years Plan (2014)
- Municipal Youth Plan (2014)

## **VICTORIAN POLICY**

### Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 (2017)

17. Plan Melbourne 2017 – 2050 is the Victorian Government’s long-term planning strategy, guiding the way that Melbourne will grow and change to 2050. The strategy among other things outlines measures to support jobs close to homes, services and transport and identifies the areas that will accommodate Melbourne’s future growth.

18. Direction 3.1 of Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 is to transform Melbourne's transport system to support a productive city. The SRL project responds to this broad strategic direction and provides opportunities for positive change in those areas surrounding the proposed stations at Box Hill and Burwood.
19. Careful precinct planning, undertaken in close consultation with communities around the proposed Box Hill and Burwood stations, has the potential to progress Direction 2.2 of Plan Melbourne, to deliver more housing closer to jobs and public transport.
20. While extensive planning work has been done for the Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre, limited work has been done to accommodate such change in Burwood (as a precinct around the station). It is shown as an education precinct in Plan Melbourne and is not a designated Activity Centre.
21. Precinct planning work by SRL in Burwood will need to start with the community from a 'first principles' basis of community engagement and visioning.

#### Open Space For Everyone Metropolitan Melbourne 2021

22. Planning for new open space should align with the six directions set out in the Open Space For Everyone Metropolitan Melbourne 2021 plan.

#### VPA Metropolitan Open Space Network Provision and Distribution

23. Provision of open space should see a net gain in total area of public open space per person in City of Whitehorse

### **SRL PRECINCTS DISCUSSION PAPER**

24. The SRL Precincts Discussion Paper outlines SRLA's intention to develop precincts that encourage diversity of housing, employment and facilities in areas surrounding the SRL Box Hill and Burwood stations.
25. The Discussion Paper acknowledges the themes emanating from community engagement to date. It is helpful to see clear links between community thoughts and some of the draft ambition statements and priority outcomes, eg '*increased cycling and walking connections*'. The correlations between community comments and other SRLA priority outcomes are less apparent, eg '*more diverse, high-value jobs*'.
26. It would be helpful for the Discussion Paper to outline any other themes that may not have been raised by the community but are nonetheless important to consider. Without exploring all possible topics, the Paper could be considered to be a consultation feedback report rather than a 'Discussion Paper'. A Discussion Paper has specific purpose and responsibility i.e., it should identify and acknowledge all the relevant aspects and issues and invite comments and generate discussions on those matters.
27. The Discussion Paper names precincts after the SRL station suburb locations. Given the precinct planning will extend well beyond the suburb boundary of where the station is located, this could

be confusing to the community when seeking feedback, with some people perhaps not understanding that the issues are relevant to them.

28. The following sections provide comment on the ambition statements and priority outcomes outlined in the Discussion Paper.

### Box Hill

29. Council’s suggestions for amendments to the Box Hill ambition statement are:

*“Box Hill will ~~be~~ **continue to thrive as** a significant Metropolitan Activity Centre (MAC). **It will strengthen its transport services and infrastructure so that it becomes a ~~and~~ well connected,** strategic multi modal hub for Melbourne’s east. ~~Box Hill-It will see~~ **public and private** growth in **health, education, business, retail and tourism** ~~and public sector jobs. , anchored by Eastern Health, Box Hill Institute and government offices~~ This will be balanced by a leafy and permeable ~~central areas~~ with mixed use development **that showcases** ~~providing a multicultural hub and~~ community infrastructure **with exemplary design** for its diverse population.”*

30. The Discussion Paper outlines future opportunities in Box Hill:

Box Hill opportunities	Council comment
Box Hill will reaffirm its role as one of Melbourne’s most important Metropolitan Activity Centres with the new SRL station at its heart. Opportunities to reinforce the broader precinct’s green and leafy character could also support better links for people to walk and cycle to leading health and education jobs and services.	1. Box Hill has so much potential and opportunities. With the expected increases in population and workforce, there will be a need for supporting activities such as retail, commercial, recreation, transport and the economy to be contemporary and modern. It is considered that the SRLA statement has not captured this.
A revitalised linear reserve along Whitehorse Road, providing high-quality green public space	2. Council supports the provision of new high quality public realm as part of the realignment of Whitehorse Road, including natural shade opportunities that contribute to increasing the tree canopy in the area.
New walking and cycling paths connecting to public transport	3. Particular focus is needed to address the safety, accessibility and convenience barriers created by arterial roads and the existing train line. 4. Council supports the new east-west cycling and walking infrastructure to be constructed by SRLA within the new Whitehorse Road open space areas. 5. Council strongly advocates for SRLA to invest in projects to encourage safe, sustainable and active transport in Box Hill, including (but not limited to):

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Linking Nelson Road and Thurston Street, over the Belgrave/Lilydale train line</li> <li>b. Implementation of Council's 'Easy Ride' routes</li> <li>c. Completion of the Box Hill to Hawthorn Strategic Cycling Corridor</li> <li>d. Actions within the <i>Box Hill Integrated Transport Strategy</i> and the <i>Whitehorse Cycling Strategy</i></li> </ul>
<p>Removing barriers across the local area, enabling better access for residents and people working, studying and visiting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Clarity is required about what the 'barriers' are that are referenced in this statement. 'Barriers' could be a number of physical or non-physical components of the urban realm.</li> <li>7. In addition to the comments above regarding barriers for cyclists and pedestrians, there are other opportunities to improve access throughout Box Hill, including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Upgrading Bruce Street and its connection to the SRL station northern entrance – this project will provide a more direct link for workers and students whose destinations are the hospitals / medical facilities, Box Hill Institute and the Australian Taxation Office</li> <li>b. Enhancing access for visitors to the precinct (improving visitor economy), including those who visit sport and recreation facilities, visit for business reasons, visit relatives or visit for social and cultural reasons. Extending tram route 109 to City Oval (Middleborough Road) is an example of improving access for visitors.</li> <li>c. Ensuring 'access for all' is front of mind for all design considerations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Increased housing opportunities, enabling more families to make Box Hill their home close to a bustling employment and entertainment hub.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Council is seeking to rebalance the quantity of housing and employment space to meet future demand. See draft Box Hill Structure Plan for further details.</li> <li>9. Box Hill currently attracts workers from a range of skill and pay levels. A great portion of housing in the area is however only attainable for residents with higher income levels. The ability to work and live within 20 minutes of each other is therefore currently unattainable for many who work in Box Hill.</li> <li>10. Ensuring there are a range of accessible, affordable and social housing is supported.</li> <li>11. It is imperative that the design and scale of housing is in line with communities values. Refer to Council's <i>Neighbourhood Character Study</i> and <i>Housing Study</i> for further information.</li> <li>12. 'Cultural' hub is a more appropriate term rather than 'entertainment' hub, as it is unclear what 'entertainment' is referring to.</li> </ul>

31. The priority outcomes for Box Hill stated in the Discussion Paper include:

Box Hill priority outcomes	Council comment
Access to distinctive and high-quality environments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council recommends expanding this outcome to include <i>“Access to distinctive, high-quality, high-amenity and sustainable environments”</i>.</li> <li>2. High quality and sustainable environments are vital for public spaces and Council supports this focus being applied to the natural environment and environmentally sustainable developments, landscaping, more street trees for greening and cooling, enhancement to existing public places and spaces, heritage protection, cultural heritage and modern and thriving while maintaining some of the characteristics of Box Hill.</li> <li>3. When referencing built form, positive, high-amenity needs to be prioritised, eg limiting shadowing and wind impacts. Council is looking for spaces that are ‘places for people’ that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• liveable</li> <li>• inclusive and accommodative for all ages, genders and abilities</li> <li>• respectful and encouraging of arts and cultural values</li> <li>• fun and entertaining that provide active and passive recreation opportunities</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Capacity for future employment and industry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Supported</li> </ol>
More diverse high-value jobs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Suggest rewording priority to <i>“Encourage and invite more diverse and high-value economic activities”</i> (delete the word ‘jobs’).</li> </ol>
Increased cycling and walking connections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Combine the two transport priority outcomes into <i>“Increased integrated and connected transport options”</i>.</li> </ol>
Greater public transport	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Having a truly integrated and connected transport system will play a significant role in encouraging mode shift away from private vehicles.</li> <li>8. All modes of transport need to feed into this system including public transport and active transport.</li> <li>9. Upgrades to the Box Hill Transport Interchange needs to occur as a priority. This has been clearly articulated in the Ministerial Advisory Committee regarding the Box Hill Transit Interchange, and the subsequent Box Hill Transit Interchange Steering Committee. This is a genuine city shaping opportunity. Significant commitment and investment is required to take real action to address the dysfunction spaces and active transport gaps that cause safety, connectivity, accessibility, amenity and convenience issues.</li> <li>10. In addition to integration and connectivity, a focus on safety for pedestrians and cyclists is vital (including perceptions of safety).</li> <li>11. Council’s priority active transport projects are contained in the <i>Box Hill Integrated Transport Strategy</i> and the <i>Whitehorse Cycling Strategy</i>.</li> </ol>



	12. The north-south walking-cycling connection over the Belgrave/Lilydale train line, connecting Nelson Road to Thurston Street is critical.
	Other priorities:
	13. Housing diversity including social and affordable housing, student accommodation and accommodation for key service workers.

## Burwood

32. Council’s suggestions for amendments to the Burwood ambition statement are:

*“Burwood **and its surrounds** will be a thriving **precinct, boosted by enhanced education, residential and employment nodes.** ~~centre of activity and be a major education precinct for Victoria, anchored by Deakin University’s strengths as a leader in technology and commerce.~~ Well designed public spaces with shops, restaurants and cafes along the Burwood Highway corridor will support more jobs and residents and Access to **the improved biodiversity of Gardiners Creek, its parklands and other open spaces, as well as the surrounding retail and hospitality** will be supported by convenient walking and cycling links **through the precinct.** **Industrial land will be revitalised to magnify productivity and improved transport will open up connectivity to nearby important destinations along the Burwood Highway corridor.**”*

33. The Discussion Paper outlines future opportunities in Burwood:

Burwood opportunities	Council comment
In the future, Burwood could retain its green and leafy residential character while offering new and affordable living options. This would be integrated with a growing education precinct and new jobs, all with direct and well-designed access to public transport. The residential population could benefit from enhanced green public spaces and an enhanced Gardiners Creek corridor.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is imperative that Burwood protects and enhances its green leafy residential character throughout the precinct but equally with a focus on providing tree canopy around the station environs.</li> <li>2. Council supports higher density housing along Burwood Highway, in accordance with the <i>Residential Corridors Built Form Study (2019)</i>.</li> <li>3. Beyond the arterial road network (and where appropriate redevelopment sites are identified), Council supports the retention of low and medium density housing, in line with Council’s <i>Housing Strategy 2014</i>.</li> <li>4. There are opportunities to investigate transport connectivity improvements beyond Burwood so that adjacent neighbourhoods also have access to the SRL Burwood station. For example: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. extending the route 75 tram beyond Vermont South into the City of Knox</li> <li>b. connecting the route 70 tram to the SRL Burwood station via Elgar Road</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>5. Enhancing public spaces and the Gardiners Creek corridor is supported, including (but not limited to):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. extending the naturalisation of Gardiners Creek through to Highbury Road and beyond</li> <li>b. Completing the Lundgren Chain through to the SRL Burwood station</li> <li>c. Connecting Gardiners Creek Trail to Box Hill Golf Course</li> <li>d. Link Gardiners Creek Trail to the former Healesville Freeway Reservation</li> <li>e. Partnering with Council and Deakin University to redevelop the northern oval of Bennettswood Reserve to ensure that the future population is well serviced with active recreation opportunities.</li> </ol>
<p>Creating a new mixed-use retail, service and commercial core adjacent to the Gardiners Creek trail and Burwood Highway</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Council seeks clarification about SRLA's intent here.</li> <li>7. Council is concerned about the impact of future commercial development around the immediate station environs and how this would impact the existing commercial offer in the local vicinity (Burwood Heights, Burwood Brickworks, Burwood One and Burwood Village).</li> <li>8. Council is concerned about how this will interface with the residential surrounds including uses in McComas Grove and Sinnott Street.</li> </ol>
<p>Transforming industrial areas over time to deliver new kinds of employment as the precinct evolves</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Protection of industrial land in Whitehorse is important to Council. Council's Industrial Strategy 2011 (and subsequent update) supports this direction.</li> <li>10. Council supports investigating ways to revitalise the industrial precinct to magnify productivity.</li> </ol>
<p>New green spaces, improved streetscapes and easy connections to nearby schools and Deakin University</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. With the anticipated growth in residents and workforce, significant boosts to open space, recreation and social infrastructure will be required as well as enhancing and protecting the contribution that the existing network provides, eg Bennettswood Reserve, Wattle Park and Gardiners Creek Reserve.</li> <li>12. Local and neighbourhood spaces and increasing the street tree canopy are just as important to create and enhance as the larger municipal level spaces.</li> <li>13. There are opportunities to partner with Council and Deakin University to activate the underutilised northern oval of Bennettswood Reserve to ensure that the future population is well serviced with active recreation opportunities.</li> </ol>
<p>Better walking and cycling links, helping to reduce demand for car parking and provide sustainable active transport options for those living, studying and working in the area</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Council has a strong commitment to active transport and welcomes investment from the Victorian Government in actions contained in the <i>Whitehorse Cycling Strategy</i> and the <i>Whitehorse Integrated Transport Strategy</i> that focus on ways to encourage walking, cycling and public transport to provide environmental, health and congestion benefits. Safety (including perceptions of safety) must be addressed when planning for active transport enhancements.</li> <li>15. East-west cycling and walking connections need attention, not just improvements along the Gardiners Creek Trail, eg various</li> </ol>

	<p>east-west 'Easy Ride' routes and completing the Lundgren Chain through to the SRL Burwood station.</p> <p>16. Careful consideration is warranted of the impacts vehicles (including parking) may have on precincts and how to make the road barriers more permeable for pedestrians and cyclists.</p>
More diverse and affordable housing options enabling more families to call Burwood home	<p>17. Given the large student population and rental housing stress, accessible, affordable and social housing is supported.</p> <p>18. High density housing is supported in locations outlined in the <i>Residential Corridors Built Form Study (2019)</i>. Single dwellings and medium density housing is supported in other locations.</p> <p>19. It is imperative that the design and scale of development is in line with community's values. Refer to Council's <i>Neighbourhood Character Study, Housing Study and Residential Corridors Built Form Study</i> for further information.</p>
	<p>Other opportunities</p> <p>20. Gardiners Creek is important to Traditional Owners and Council encourages precinct planning to respect and celebrate indigenous culture.</p>

34. The priority outcomes for Burwood stated in the Discussion Paper include:

Burwood priority outcomes	Council comment
Diverse housing options	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council supports housing diversity particularly when higher density is located on tram and road corridors, where there is an interface between the Residential Growth Zone (RGZ) and the General Residential Zone (GRZ) or Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ), leaving local streets with low and medium density housing. Refer to the <i>Residential Corridors Built Form Study, Neighbourhood Character Study and Housing Study</i> for further information.</li> <li>2. All housing densities should offer more affordable, accessible and social opportunities.</li> <li>3. Diverse housing options should also consider valued neighbourhood character elements. Refer to Council's <i>Neighbourhood Character Study</i> for further information.</li> </ol>
Enhanced environment and biodiversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Council supports the prioritisation of actions that enhance the environment and biodiversity, social connectedness, as well as health and wellbeing.</li> </ol>
Capacity for future employment and industry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Council supports the opportunity to align future jobs with skills training through Deakin University, as well as linking to the nearby Box Hill Institute within the SRL Box Hill precinct.</li> </ol>
More diverse, high-value jobs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Delete "<i>More diverse high-value jobs</i>" as all employment types should be encouraged. This can be captured within the outcome "<i>Capacity for future employment and industry</i>".</li> <li>7. Council seeks more information about SRLA's focus on 'high-value' jobs.</li> </ol>

Increased cycling and walking connections	9. Council would support expanding this priority to include public transport connections and ensuring all transport options encourage safe behaviour, are accessible for all, are environmentally friendly and promote health and wellbeing.
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Connected precincts

35. While Box Hill and Burwood are distinct precincts in some respects, they have similarities and a geographic closeness that should be harnessed. Investigating the economic and social relationship between the two precincts (and other precincts to the south if appropriate) may lead to opportunities for the two areas to augment and support each other, connected via the SRL train line. An example could be opportunities to support apprentices training at Box Hill Institute with jobs in the industrial precinct in Burwood.

**AREAS OF INVESTIGATION**

36. The legend included with each map in the Discussion Paper identifies “1600m radius around SRL Station”. The Discussion Paper however does not:

- a. Explain to the community the significance of this measurement to the project and what it means in terms of the focus for change in the precinct planning process;
- b. Clarify if SRLA will be considering precincts of a different footprint (within the 1600m radius);

or

- c. Invite the community to comment on what each precinct’s area of investigation should look like.

37. This section of Council’s submission discusses some high-level themes intended to be the start of conversations between SRLA and the community (including Council) about where the precinct boundaries should be for Box Hill and Burwood.

Box Hill

38. Clarity is sought in relation to the boundary of the Box Hill MAC “CBD” and the MAC hinterland. Extensive work has been carried out by Council in consultation with the Box Hill community in developing the Vision for Box Hill and updating the Structure Plan. The Box Hill MAC has been the focus of Council’s project and presents very differently to other areas of the wider Box Hill ‘precinct’ and should be considered as such.

39. In providing that further clarity, consideration should be given to whether the area is restricted to the Box Hill MAC (as defined in the draft Box Hill Structure Plan), or expanded to include other destinations such as Surrey Park, City Oval, and other similar key attractions.

40. In clarifying the areas, consider whether areas with heritage significance such as in Mont Albert or Box Hill should be omitted.

41. Inclusion of regionally significant sport and recreation facilities should be considered, such as City Oval (home to the VFL's Box Hill Hawks), Box Hill Gardens, Aqualink Box Hill, Surrey Park, Hagenauer Reserve; in addition to many other locally important open spaces.

### Burwood

42. Burwood has substantial latent potential however it does not present as other activity centres/places.

43. Burwood needs to be considered as part of a linear spine of linked and networked activity centres along Burwood Highway and the Route 75 tram corridor. Examples of important locations beyond the theoretical 1.6km boundary include:

- a. Burwood Brickworks – this location is quoted several times in the community engagement sections of the Discussion Paper
- b. Toorak Road strip shops (Burwood Village Shopping Centre) – half in and half out of the 1.6km radius
- c. Burwood One
- d. Tally Ho Major Activity Centre

### **PROCESSES, ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIMELINES**

44. The *Suburban Rail Loop Act 2021* passed through the Victorian Parliament without community consultation or dialogue with local governments. The powers that the Act gives SRLA directly impact the planning role of Council as a Planning Authority and Responsible Authority under the *Planning and Environment Act, 1987* (P&E Act) and introduces a level of uncertainty regarding how SRLA's powers will be used.

45. Council has regularly requested information about the process for developing the PSPs, including Council's role and the impact on Council's existing responsibilities as a Planning Authority and Responsible Authority under the P&E Act.

46. Given Council's existing key role in delivering planning activities within its municipality, it was expected that Council officers and Councillors would have received detailed information from SRLA about PSPs and been provided the opportunity to collaborate on matters such as roles, responsibilities, timelines and resources. It was therefore disappointing that the first Council became aware of the PSP process and timelines was when the Discussion Paper was released for community comment.

47. The Discussion Paper outlines the very high level process and timelines for developing the PSPs, however Council is still unclear about the details of the vital role that Council must play during the development of the PSPs, and Council's role post approval in implementing and enforcing relevant requirements in its planning scheme.

48. Council seeks to develop a formal partnership with SRLA regarding the PSP process, not just be a stakeholder.
49. It is acknowledged that the Discussion Paper is intended to commence the dialogue with the community and other stakeholders, and that further detailed research will follow. Council is seeking information about the disciplines of the technical reports, eg population projections, housing projections, social, community, economic, environment, transport, heritage assessment, cultural heritage assessment, environmental impacts assessments, wind assessment for Box Hill, geotechnical studies, urban design and many others as relevant to both precincts.
50. Council's interests and concerns extend to understanding the positive and negative impacts across each of the above disciplines, and what measures will be employed to mitigate the negative impacts.
51. The type of information Council is keen to receive includes (but not limited to):
  - a. What are the roles and responsibilities of these two precincts in achieving the Victorian Government's recent announcements (as noted above in this submission) on urban renewal, social and affordable housing goals and targets?
  - b. How the strategic directions and recommendations from existing and draft Council strategies are being considered and used when developing the PSPs for these two precincts?
  - c. What is the population projection, housing projection and details of the number and types of housings anticipated to be built within the SRL precincts located within the City of Whitehorse?
  - d. Details of the additional retail, commercial and industrial floor areas projected in each precinct.
  - e. Impacts of this additional development on stormwater drains and other infrastructure, and the details of the proposed new and upgrades to the existing development, utility and community infrastructure within the City of Whitehorse as part of the SRL PSP projects.
  - f. Social and environmental infrastructure required to cater for the increased resident and workforce population.
  - g. Funding arrangements for the provision of the above infrastructure (including costs for the full lifecycle of any infrastructure where Council will or may become the asset owner or service provider).
  - h. Timing of the delivery of these new and upgrades to existing infrastructure.

## **NEXT STEPS**

52. Council seeks a commitment from SRLA that it will enter into a formal partnership agreement with Council to develop the PSPs in Box Hill and Burwood. The agreement should outline:
- a. How Suburban Rail Loop Authority will actively seek Council's views on precinct planning (in addition to broader community consultation and engagement) and demonstrate how these views will be incorporated into the Precinct Structure Plans;
  - b. The ongoing support that Suburban Rail Loop Authority will provide to Council (resource funding) to undertake tasks related to the Precinct Structure Planning process; and
  - c. The roles, responsibilities and authority of Council and SRLA in developing and implementing the Precinct Structure Plans including future resourcing.
53. Council is interested in the outcomes of the community engagement conducted by SRLA during the exhibition of the Precincts Discussion Paper. It would be very much appreciated if a report detailing the outcomes could be provided to Council ahead of or with the release of the draft Precinct Vision statements. This will enable Council to further understand community views as the development of the PSPs evolve.

## **CONTACT DETAILS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

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