

1.5 DRAFT EASTERN METRO LAND USE FRAMEWORK PLAN (SMcN: F18-5108)

Responsible Director: Peter Panagakos

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Notes the draft Eastern Metro Land Use Framework Plan.*
- 2. Notes that the draft Eastern Metro Land Use Framework Plan promotes significant change in existing urban areas and around the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) station precincts.*
- 3. Endorses the draft officer submission as detailed in the report and attachment.*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to brief Councillors on the recently released Draft Eastern Metro Land Use Framework Plan (the draft Plan) and to consider and endorse the officer submission to the draft Plan as set out in this report and Attachment 1.

BACKGROUND

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 (Plan Melbourne) is the high-level plan developed by the Victorian Government to guide growth and change across Melbourne. It is the blueprint to guide planning and development to ensure Melbourne grows more sustainable, productive and liveable.

Given the scale of metropolitan Melbourne, Plan Melbourne identifies the need for more detailed planning at a metro regional level. Plan Melbourne identifies the need for six plans to be developed, providing detailed guidance at a regional level and setting a 30-year vision for each area.

The plans are proposed to provide a means of aligning state and local planning strategies and to enable collaborative work across government to implement Plan Melbourne.

The purpose of the draft Plan are to guide the application of Plan Melbourne's nine guiding principles, 7 outcomes, 32 directions and 90 policies at a regional and local level.

It is proposed that the draft Plan will be used to:

- drive the majority of Melbourne’s growth into established areas through a land use framework that identifies places of state and regional significance
- guide the strategic integration of land use and infrastructure (including housing and jobs aspirations) in key areas and precincts
- guide the development of Melbourne’s greenfield growth areas
- facilitate collaboration between state and local government, key agencies and partners on regional planning and priorities
- inform priority places for state-led planning
- enable metro councils to update their municipal strategies and policies within a clearly defined land use framework.

The draft Plan supports the implementation of Plan Melbourne – guiding the implementation of Plan Melbourne’s 9 principles, 7 outcomes, 32 directions and 90 policies at a regional and local level.

The Eastern Metro Land Use Framework Plan is a 30 year strategy for the six local government areas that comprise the Eastern Region – Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges.

The Plan outlines a strategic vision for the future development of the Eastern Metropolitan Region and identifies six key themes -

- Productivity
- Housing choice
- Integrated transport
- Liveability
- Strong communities
- Sustainability and resilience

The draft Plan is divided into chapters based on the six key themes above. Each theme includes maps showing the current state of play and the 2050 aspiration, and a number of directions, strategies and actions.

In total there are 28 directions, 86 strategies and 13 actions.

A copy of the Eastern Metro Land Use Framework Plan – Summary is provided as Attachment 2.

A full set of the documents can be accessed via the link below:

[**Eastern Metro | Melbourne's Future Planning Framework | Engage Victoria**](#)

DISCUSSION

The aim of the draft Plan is to establish a common land use framework across the regions.

In essence, the Eastern draft Plan is an amalgamation of a range of varied current state policy, projects and regional land use patterns into one overarching document.

It confirms places of state significance as identified in Plan Melbourne that includes the Monash National Employment and Innovation Clusters, metropolitan activity centres, state significant industrial precincts and health and education precincts.

It introduces places of regional significance for each region, which for the Eastern Metro Region include all metropolitan and major activity centres, nominated activity corridors, regionally significant industrial, health and education precincts, and housing opportunity and investigation areas.

Some of the key issues identified with the draft Plan are:

General comments

- It is not clear what, if any, statutory status the draft Plan will have once finalised and whether it, or part of it, will form part of the local planning schemes.
- The draft Plan includes all of the municipality of Yarra Ranges, a large proportion of which is not metropolitan and has very different opportunities and challenges to the rest of the region. This is reflected in some of the strategies that focus on strategies for agriculture and tourism.
- Although it is a land use plan, the draft Plan includes a range of overarching, unclear and ambiguous policy statements that do not relate to specifically to land use planning. These include statements such as supporting start-ups and creative industries, regional planning for social services and supporting a range of sporting activities across the region.
- There is some contradiction and inconsistency in policy statements and actions in the draft Plan, particularly on issues relating to housing and employment areas.
- Precincts and corridors identified throughout the Plan are extremely large and unlikely to obtain the jobs or housing density required to focus growth, target infrastructure improvement or achieve the 20 minute neighbourhood principles.
- The Suburban Rail Loop is identified as a catalyst for significant increased urban density, however the SRL is not scheduled for completion until 2035/36.
- The Suburban Rail Loop is a key project for delivering improved transport connectivity across the region and for development of the SRL precincts as locations for significant growth and change.
- Four activity corridors have been identified in the Eastern Region as highly accessible locations for increased investment and development, including employment uses and higher density housing.
- Two activity corridors are located in Monash – Dandenong Road / Princes Highway from Caulfield to Chadstone extending east of Springvale Road, and North Road / Wellington Road from the Huntingdale, east to Rowville. These corridors are excessively long (over 15 kilometres and

include many areas with fragmented conventional suburban development.)

- The boundary to the Monash National Employment and Innovation Cluster (MNEIC) is shown incorrectly in a number of maps throughout the LURP as it is shown extending north of the Monash Freeway, west to Oakleigh and south to Springvale.
- The scale of the mapping that results from the inclusion of all of the Shire of Yarra Ranges compacts the metropolitan areas resulting in much of the information being jumbled and unclear.
- There is a lack of clarity on the governance for the implementation of the draft Plan.

Productivity

- The important role of manufacturing is not reflected in the draft Plan.
- The SRL station north of Monash University is not shown in the correct location – it is not located on Blackburn Road as shown.
- The job and population projections for the SRL precincts show very large increases at all 3 station precincts in the City of Monash – Clayton, Monash, Glen Waverley with little explanation of how these numbers are arrived at.
- Huntingdale Industrial Area has been included as a regionally significant industrial precinct although it is identified as being locally significant in the Melbourne Industrial and Commercial Land Use Plan.
- Table 5 shows the existing attributes and strategic opportunities for Activity Centres in the region
- Action 2 – State Government-led planning projects in Major Activity Centres and urban renewal areas. It is unclear how these projects will be managed across the region and what level there will be for community and Council input into these projects.

Housing Choice

- The population and housing projections used need further explanation.
- The plan forecasts an additional 44,000 people in Monash to 2036
- The plan does not adequately address housing affordability or affordable housing provision
- There are 4 housing investigation areas centred around 4 railway stations in Monash – it is unclear why these stations have been identified when similar stations on the Lilydale/Belgrave line have not been selected.
- Support the action of identifying a pipeline of sites for social and affordable housing.

Integrated Transport

- Even though there is a heavy reliance on the SRL to deliver connectivity in this region, it is not highlighted in this section.
- The Westall Road extension is mentioned as a potential road project of regional significance but it should also be noted as a project that would

add integrated transport benefits by freeing up road capacity on adjacent arterial roads like Blackburn Road and Springvale Road for Bus Priority routes.

- The Plan indicates that the Strategic Cycling Corridors are “well-developed” in the western part of the region, however this is questionable. There are a number of sections that are below current standards and this needs to be addressed.
- The VicRoads Principal Bicycle Network and Bicycle Priority Routes along direct routes, such as arterial and collector roads, are still considered necessary to support commuter cyclists rather than recreational routes, shared with pedestrians, which form part of the Strategic Cycling Corridor network. The increasing problem of cyclists speeding on shared paths is discouraging people walking and the concentration on the SCC network to the exclusion of more direct commuter bike facilities may be counter-productive.
- To reduce dependence on private vehicles and make public transport more accessible, access to bus stops on arterial and busy roads needs further consideration and priority. These roads are often difficult for pedestrians to cross without the support of formal pedestrian facilities nearby.
- There are no specific strategies or actions that would connect the MNEIC to wider areas and increase connectivity within the MNEIC, even though this is identified as a regional challenge.
- The proposed Caulfield to Rowville Link is shown as a concept route subject to design and planning work so it does not appear to be a priority for government.

Liveability

- The draft Plan encourages the creation of additional boulevards along key road corridors throughout the region to reinforce the treed character of the region and enhance pedestrian and cycling amenity.
- In Monash this includes Dandenong Road, Springvale Road, Ferntree Gully Road and Wellington Road, although Map 6 - Liveability does not show this correctly. The Monash, Eastern and Eastlink Freeways are all shown as potential green boulevards, although it is not clear how this would be achieved on these freeways.
- The draft Plan encourages the creation of new open space particularly to serve walkable catchments from residential areas, but provides no explanation as to how this would be achieved, who provides or how it is funded.
- The use of a public open space M2 ratio is questionable given that such an approach was not supported by the Panel and the Department of Planning as part of Council open space contributions changes.
- Question the basis for the calculation of open space per person in Figure 18. Monash quoted as the second lowest in the Eastern Metro Region at 38.3m² with Whitehorse the lowest with 36.7m² per person. This differs from the figures outlined in the Monash Open Space Strategy.

Strong Communities

- This section focusses on social infrastructure, health and education services and the 20 minute neighbourhood aspirations.
- Strategies in this key theme area should also support the provision of passive open space, not focus solely on sporting and active recreation.

Sustainability and Resilience

- This theme includes environmental issues including urban heat environments, tree canopy and vegetation cover, water supply and management and flooding and bushfire risks.
- This chapter is quite confusing with different measure of tree canopy cover, vegetation cover, urban and non-urban areas. Needs to be simplified.
- The inclusion of the non-urban areas of Yarra Ranges distorts the average tree canopy cover figure.

Implementation Actions

- 14 Implementation actions are listed with 12 relevant to Monash.
- Many of these actions require State agency's to take the lead in consultation with local government.
- A full list of strategies and actions is included in the draft officer submission.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The draft Plan will have implications for many of Council's strategic planning policies and strategies. The implementation and governance arrangements for the draft Plan may require a review of strategies particularly in relation to the SRL stations and precincts.

CONSULTATION

Consultation on the draft Land Use Framework Plans is open until 24 October, 2021.

Officers have submitted a provisional submission and been granted an extension to lodge the endorsed Monash submission after Council has considered and endorsed the officer submission.

GENDER EQUITY ASSESSMENT

A gender equity impact was not required for this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate and direct financial impacts arising from the draft Plan. However, the increased development focus in established areas, increased population will have future financial impacts on Council.

These impacts will come about due to the increased expectation for amenity improvements contained in the Plan, particularly around public open space, sustainable travel, urban place making and supporting infrastructure. Funding of these improvements will pose a challenge without clear support from the State for the introduction of additional funding mechanisms such as development contributions and/or changes to existing contributions such as the Public Open space contribution provision.

In addition, some of the proposed actions of the draft LUPP would require additional funding to undertake unplanned strategic planning work in the short time frame proposed.

Council is attempting to address some of these issues through ongoing discussions with the SRLA.

CONCLUSION

The draft Eastern Metro Land Use Framework Plan is a good first cut at providing an overall picture of the eastern region and providing some regional direction for investment and local development. However, the document is overly long, covers a lot of issues and is unclear in parts as to how it will be implemented or provide the necessary framework to focus state and private investment decisions to achieve the 20 minute neighbourhood objective.

There are also a number of issues around conflicting or competing land use directions that are not adequately resolved. The Plan indicates a significant increase in development in established urban areas but provides no indication as to how this increased growth is to be accommodated or infrastructure and amenity improvement funded.

The issues highlighted in this report and the attached draft officer response provide an appropriate summary of these issues and suggestions for improvements to enable the document to perform as a regional planning tool.