

# Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 7 March 2025  
**Program:** Suburban Rail Loop  
**Title:** Box Hill Precinct Reference Group  
**Meeting Number:** 14  
**Chairs:** Emily Box (GHD) & Paul Hamer MP for Box Hill  
**Minute Taker:** Rebecca McHutchison

Attendees	Apologies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emily Box, Facilitator, GHD (Co-Chair)</li> <li>Paul Hamer, MP for Box Hill (Co-Chair)</li> <li>Andy McCulloch, Community Representative</li> <li>Bihong Wang, Asian Business Association of Whitehorse (ABAW)</li> <li>David Morrison, Combined Residents of Whitehorse Action Group (CROWAG)</li> <li>Ellen O'Donohue, Laing O'Rourke (LOR)</li> <li>Ian Broadhead, Box Hill Historical Society</li> <li>Joanna Gorrod, Whitehorse City Council</li> <li>Kevin Earl, Whitehorse Ratepayer and Residents Association (WRARA)</li> <li>Leah McGuinness, Whitehorse City Council</li> <li>Rohan Lovell, Eastern Health</li> <li>Sam Pepper, Box Hill Institute</li> <li>Toby Hick, Epworth Health</li> <li>Clint Quealy, Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA)</li> <li>Elizabeth Reynolds, SRLA</li> <li>Erin Dale, SRLA</li> <li>Sarah Jepsen-Meek, SRLA</li> <li>Simon Wollan, SRLA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chris Trueman, Whitehorse Active Transport Action Group (WATAG)</li> <li>Helen Harris, Box Hill Historical Society</li> <li>Richard Shi, Asian Business Association of Whitehorse (ABAW)</li> </ul>

Item	Discussion topic	Who
1.	<b>Welcome and housekeeping</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paul Hamer (PH) gave an Acknowledgement of Country.</li> <li>Emily Box (EB) welcomed attendees and invited the group to introduce themselves.</li> <li>Emily asked to pass the previous minutes and actions.</li> </ul>	EB/PH
	<b>Project update from LOR, noting:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work continues to move underground services within and in close proximity to Box Hill Gardens.</li> <li>Construction of the temporary bridging structure on Whitehorse Road is ongoing.</li> <li>Traffic changes continue in the area to facilitate these works.</li> <li>Works are expected to be complete by mid-2025.</li> </ul> <b>Matters arising:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kevin Earl (KE) asked when the RSL car park will be reopened.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LOR confirmed it will be reopened in the next few weeks along with the Bruce Street and Irving Avenue intersection.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

- Ian Broadbent (IB) asked if Box Hill Gardens will be reinstated with grass or turf.
  - LOR confirmed Box Hill Gardens will be reinstated with lawn, with the exact methodology to be confirmed.

**Engagement update from SRLA, noting:**

- SRLA engagement was very busy in the lead-up to the end of the year and then again after Australia Day.
- The Box Hill ABAW Lunar New Year festival is a key event for SRLA and this year's event was a great success.
- Other SRLA general engagement events are coming up in Glen Waverley and Burwood.
- SRLA is also undertaking a variety of engagement events, including pop-ups, information sessions, and a webinar to support the structure planning exhibition.

**Matters arising:**

- IB queried the vacation dates for businesses in Market and Main Street.
  - SRLA noted that SRLA engages closely with individual businesses about their specific situation and possession date and contact has been ongoing for a number of years. After businesses vacate, the area will be prepared for the next phase of construction, with demolition of buildings occurring ahead of main works for the station. Updates and information will be provided regularly to keep all stakeholders informed about the progress and timelines.

**Structure planning update from SRLA, noting:**

- The draft Structure Plans and Implementation Plans were released last week, focusing on strategic responses to housing, infrastructure, and community needs. They were released earlier than scheduled in order to provide council, stakeholders and community with additional time to digest information prior to formal exhibition.
- The draft Structure Plan aim to address the growing demand for diverse housing options, ensuring that new developments include a mix of affordable, social, and market-rate housing to cater to different community needs.
- The community was invited to provide input through various channels, including online surveys, public meetings, and focus groups. This aimed to ensure that the draft plans reflected the needs and priorities of the community.
- The Implementation Plan outlines short, medium, and long-term actions.
- Short-term actions included immediate improvements to infrastructure and public spaces, while medium-term actions focus on the development of new facilities and services. Long-term actions aim to ensure the sustainability and resilience of the community over the coming decades.
- The advisory committee will play a crucial role in overseeing the implementation of the plans, providing guidance and feedback, and ensuring that the plans are aligned with the community's vision and goals.

**Matters arising:**

- PRG member asked if there is an accessible option to view the maps as orange and red are challenging if you are colourblind.
  - SRLA acknowledged the challenges and suggested that the information can be accessed from the neighbourhood's chapter, which includes a map that zooms in on the heights and annotates them.
- Andy queried the advisory committee timeline and asked if there is another opportunity to provide feedback.
  - SRLA confirmed that the advisory committee process is subject to future decisions
  - SRLA encouraged submissions to be submitted now as this is the recommended opportunity to ensure feedback is considered.
- Kevin queried the Implementation Plan timing.
  - SRLA confirmed that the Implementation Plan clearly outlines the process, timing, responsibilities, and actions required to realise the Structure Plans. It categorises actions into short, medium, and long-term, providing a timeline for 5, 10 and 15 years (approx.) from 2026 onwards.

- The plan is designed to evolve over time, allowing for adjustments based on opportunities and population growth. It includes detailed guidance on the implementation process, ensuring that the actions align with the community's vision and goals. The plan also identifies key projects, such as new open spaces, community facilities, and transport improvements, and specifies the pathways and responsibilities for each action.
- David queried how SRLA determined the vision for the Federation Brickworks site.
  - SRLA explained that the Federation Brickworks site is a privately held piece of land with a long history of consideration for different uses. The draft Structure Plan reflects the current zoning, recognising it as an area for potential housing. Any process involving the site would be subject to a master planning process, which would work through various options for development.
  - SRLA acknowledged that there are many different views on what the site could become and emphasised that the Structure Plan aims to balance these perspectives. SRLA also highlighted the importance of accessibility and quality of open space across Box Hill, ensuring that the community's needs are addressed in the planning process.
- David queried how the setbacks were determined.
  - SRLA acknowledged the concern about setbacks and explained that the approach to setbacks is based on urban design analysis, which considers both the public realm and built form. SRLA mentioned that in some locations, setbacks are necessary to support the quality of the street and public realm, especially in denser or urbanised parts of Box Hill. However, in other areas, buildings are brought forward to activate the street front.
  - SRLA emphasised that the urban design analysis provides a contextual approach to public realm, considering the differences in various parts of Box Hill. SRLA also noted that a uniform setback approach might not capture the nuances of different areas, and the current strategy aims to balance these considerations.
- KE queried the prominence of the key direction maps on the website.
  - SRLA acknowledged the feedback and mentioned that it would be passed on to the web team. SRLA also reiterated that the draft Structure Plans were released early for inspection, providing extra time for the community to digest the plans and the background information. SRLA noted that the Engage Victoria site will contain the full set of documents published for formal exhibition.
- IB acknowledged the letter he received on structure planning and expressed confusion about the layout and clarity of the information presented on the Big Build website.
  - SRLA acknowledged the feedback and noted that the draft Structure Plans were released early for public viewing and that the formal exhibition of the draft Structure Plans, Implementation Plan and draft Planning Scheme Amendments would commence from 17 March. SRLA emphasised the importance of providing extra time for the community to digest the plans and the background information.
  - SRLA mentioned that there would be an interactive map available during the drop-in sessions to help pinpoint specific properties, their current and proposed future zoning and understand the changes in detail.
- KE queried what is happening with the bridge across the railway line.
  - SRLA explained that the connection at Nelson and Thurston has been a priority for Council and community and came through strongly in consultation. SRLA confirmed that the project is clearly identified in the Implementation Plan and outlines the delivery timing and responsibilities.
  - SRLA acknowledged that the bridge is potentially a significant expense but emphasised its importance from an active transport point of view. The bridge will open up north-south linkages for people walking and riding, providing crucial connectivity.

- KE queried existing planning applications.
  - SRLA explained that existing planning applications and approvals remain valid and are not affected by the new Structure Plans. SRLA clarified that the Structure Plans provide guidance for future decision-making around planning approvals, but they do not retroactively change any existing planning permissions.
  - SRLA emphasised that the Structure Plans are designed to ensure that future developments align with the community's vision and goals, providing a framework for consistent and sustainable growth.
- IB queried the site at Court/Watts Street.
  - SRLA confirmed the site will be transformed into permanent public open space, which SRLA will develop, and Council will own and manage. SRLA advised that they are working with Council to finalise the designs and ensure the new open space meets the needs and expectations of the community.
  - SRLA clarified that the change on the map between previous maps is due to the open space now being confirmed for this site.

#### Other Business

- Whitehorse City Council (WCC) informed the attendees will undertake complementary community consultation regarding SRLA's structure planning process so that WCC's submission reflects the community's views. MCC noted that this consultation will complement SRLA's exhibition process and advised that the details of WCC's consultation, including dates, times, and how to participate, will be available on the WCC website.

Item	Stakeholder	Details	Status / due	Owner
<b>ACTIONS</b>				
1.	PRG members	SRLA to review December 2024 minutes and amend reference to public transport	Complete	SRLA