



**SUBURBAN
RAIL LOOP**

Planning SRL East Precincts

Guidelines for the Preparation of Structure Plans

November 2024

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Introduction

Suburban Rail Loop (**SRL**) is more than a rail project. It is a multi-decade investment that will transform Melbourne's rail network, change how people move around the city and contribute to shaping Melbourne into a 'city of centres' – with vibrant centres outside the inner city providing high quality jobs to support transformative employment growth, in well-designed and well-connected neighbourhoods.

SRL East represents the first stage of SRL which will provide a rail link from Cheltenham to Box Hill with six new underground stations at Cheltenham, Clayton, Monash, Glen Waverley, Burwood and Box Hill (**SRL East**). SRL East is presently in delivery, with construction and detailed planning underway.

Planning for areas around the new SRL East stations provides a significant opportunity to improve housing affordability and increase housing choice in locations with good access to public transport. The Victorian Government's *Housing Statement* has set draft targets for the construction of 241,000 new homes in the four municipalities along the SRL East rail corridor by 2051. By encouraging co-ordinated infrastructure and development delivery, land use planning in these precincts can significantly contribute to meeting these targets over the next 30 years, maximising the benefits of SRL East by addressing both transportation and housing needs in Melbourne's growing communities.

In December 2023, the Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop declared a Suburban Rail Loop planning area for SRL East (**SRL East Planning Area**)¹ under section 65(1) of the *Suburban Rail Loop Act 2021 (SRL Act)*. It is in respect of this area that the Suburban Rail Loop Authority (**SRLA**) is a planning authority under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987 (PE Act)*. Established under the SRL Act in 2021, SRLA is responsible for undertaking the necessary planning for the SRL program in SRL East, in accordance with the requirements of the SRL Act² (**SRL East Program**), and for providing advice, information and guidance in relation to the use, development and protection of land required for the SRL East Program.³

SRLA's functions include coordinating State Government action and undertaking integrated land use planning in respect of land within the SRL East Planning Area.⁴ This is facilitated by SRLA's status as a planning authority for the SRL East Planning Area under the PE Act.⁵

The SRL Act provides the public policy and statutory basis for planning and delivery of land use and development within the SRL East Precincts. Planning is further supported by Victorian planning policy, including *Plan Melbourne*⁶ and the Victoria planning provisions.

To supplement the range of policies applicable to the Program, it is necessary to provide specific guidance to ensure sound and consistent structure planning for all SRL East Precincts. Broader practice guidance, including *Planning Practice Note 58: Activity Centres*, is general in application and not directed to the specific circumstances or growth expectations for the SRL East Precincts.

¹ See <https://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2023/GG2023G049.pdf#page=49> for SRL East planning area declaration, and https://bigbuild.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/821603/SRL-East-Planning-Area-Plan.pdf for a map for the relevant areas. These areas are referred to in this document as SRL East Precincts.

² SRL Act, Definitions and s12(2)(a).

³ SRL Act, ss 12(2)(e).

⁴ SRL Act, ss 12(2)(p) and (q).

⁵ Pursuant to declarations made under section 65 of the SRL Act.

⁶ See Plan Melbourne addendum 2019.

The guidance set out in these *Guidelines for the Preparation of Structure Plans (Guidelines)* is consistent with the approach SRLA has been taking in consultation with Councils and other stakeholders to date, during which time SRLA has:

- defined boundaries for the preparation of structure plans within the SRL East Planning Area (**Structure Plan Areas**) (**Structure Plans**);
- identified population and employment projections to inform the preparation of Structure Plans within the Structure Plan Areas to cater for projected growth to 2041 and beyond; and
- developed precinct Visions including Conceptual Precinct Plans, for each SRL East Precinct.

Purpose

The purpose of these Guidelines is to guide the preparation and assessment of Structure Plans within the Structure Plan Areas.

Separate Structure Plans will be prepared for each Structure Plan Area within the SRL East Planning Areas located around the Cheltenham, Clayton, Monash, Glen Waverley, Burwood and Box Hill SRL East stations.

The Guidelines are directed to ensure that structure planning is premised on a sound strategic footing having regard to the established and strengthened strategic policy context, strong residential and employment population projections, and logical spatial planning which focuses opportunities for densification into sub-areas, having regard to sound urban design outcomes.

The four key guidelines are set out here and further discussed below. Structure Plans for the Structure Plan Areas are to:

- 1 have regard to the strategic policy context as applicable to SRL East Precincts;
- 2 adopt the identified structure plan boundaries;
- 3 apply the approach to population and employment projections described in these Guidelines; and
- 4 be informed by the finalised precinct Visions including the Conceptual Precinct Plans.

Guideline 1: Have regard to the strategic policy context as applicable to SRL East Precincts

Structure planning for the SRL East Program is expected to have regard to a range of State policy expectations directed at settlement, economic, activity centre, transport, built form and sustainability outcomes, and strategies affecting the broader metropolitan area. Structure planning will also encounter local policy directions for areas within the identified Structure Plan Areas that are not yet in line with expectations for change.

In planning the SRL East precincts for activity centre locations and throughout the Structure Plan Areas, the strategic focus is on expectations for substantial change, built form transformation and a preferred future character to harness the potential for aspirational population and employment growth.

Achieving transformative change is in line with the objectives of the SRL Act, which include:

- to facilitate sustainable population growth, urban renewal and improved liveability;
- to encourage land development and the facilitation of timely and coordinated delivery of infrastructure, services and residential and commercial development;
- to improve connectivity throughout Melbourne by enhancing orbital public transport movements in relation to the new orbital rail loop; and

- to increase productivity by facilitating greater employment, activity and investment throughout Victoria.⁷

This is also consistent with Plan Melbourne 2017-2050: Addendum 2019, which notes that:

The SRL precincts will contribute to the directions of Plan Melbourne to make Melbourne a city of inclusive, vibrant and healthy neighbourhoods, including the development of 20-minute neighbourhoods and improving local connectivity with mass public transport connection.

Development of the SRL precincts will help Melbourne to grow in strategic precincts along the project corridor, with a focus on creating places that offer great liveability, productivity and connectivity.

The substantial role of SRL East and the SRL East Precincts in helping to achieve Victorian housing policy is also recognised by Victoria's *Housing Statement*.

Guideline 2: SRL East Structure Plan boundaries

SRLA has defined structure plan boundaries for land within the SRL East Precincts at Cheltenham, Clayton, Monash, Glen Waverley, Burwood and Box Hill.

Maps showing the structure plan boundaries have been publicly available since mid-2024,⁸

Land within these boundaries comprise the Structure Plan Areas and represent the areas around each of the SRL East stations for which structure plans are being prepared. As shown on the maps, they are wholly contained within the SRL East Planning Area and are not subject to change in the preparation of structure plans.

The structure plan boundaries were set after consultation with relevant local councils, and stakeholder engagement on the opportunities and ambitions for the areas around the new SRL East stations.

They reflect an approximate 800m radial area around each SRL East station which has been adjusted after considering a range of factors such as:

- locational and policy context;
- existing land use and development patterns;
- existing structure plan or employment areas (for example, the Bayside Business District in Cheltenham);
- placemaking considerations (for example, ensuring properties on both sides of relevant streets were included or using road centre lines or natural features as boundaries, as appropriate);
- topographic and geographic conditions;
- anomalous planning outcomes; and
- land that is encumbered by significant constraints (such as heritage controls), as appropriate.

⁷ Together with the balance of objectives for the Suburban Rail Loop program set out in section 5 of the SRL Act.

⁸ The structure plan boundary maps can be accessed via the following links:

- [Cheltenham](#)
- [Clayton](#)
- [Monash](#)
- [Glen Waverley](#)
- [Burwood](#)
- [Box Hill](#)

The Structure Plan Areas also include areas for which future development or consistent planning outcomes are desirable, such as:

- Government-owned land;
- whole (as opposed to part) of education and institutional areas (such as the whole of the Monash University campus at Monash and the whole of the Box Hill Institute site at Box Hill);
- adjacent public open space areas;
- areas with place making potential (such as local squares, landmarks and memorials);
- residential areas with strong functional integration or potential for intensification; and
- strategically significant sites and sites recognised for transition or with development potential.

The Structure Plan boundaries are clearly depicted in the Conceptual Precinct Plans and are not subject to change in the preparation of Structure Plans.

Guideline 3: Approach to population and employment projections

The Structure Plans are to be prepared to cater for the projected growth in population and employment through to 2041 and beyond. This planning horizon will account for the commencement of operation of SRL East in 2035, and focus on those areas in close proximity to the new SRL East stations with the greatest potential for growth, being the land within the Structure Plan Areas.

SRL Business and Investment Case forecasts

The projected growth in population and employment in response to delivery of the SRL was forecast in the Victorian Government's 2021 *Suburban Rail Loop - Business and Investment Case (BIC)*. The BIC considered consequences and opportunities arising from investment in the SRL upon a 1600m radial area around each of the SRL East stations (**BIC Investigation Areas**). It then applied a peer-reviewed bespoke land use / transport model to census data to show what impact the SRL would have on population and employment in the BIC Investigation Areas, providing forecast data to the mid-2050s.

Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, recent census and ABS data show that population growth reflects a similar long-term trajectory to the forecast growth anticipated by the BIC. As such, SRLA considers that the BIC provides the most robust and relevant available dataset to use for the purposes of preparing aspects of the SRL East Precinct structure plans. This is particularly so given that the BIC expressly accounts for the integrated transport and land use initiatives associated with the delivery of SRL East.

Population and employment in the SRL East Structure Plan Areas

Population and employment projections for the BIC Investigation Areas have been translated to the smaller Structure Plan Areas. These projections to 2041, together with the uplift compared with 2021, are set out in **Appendix 1**.

These projections are suitable to inform aspects of the planning processes to be undertaken in respect of the Structure Plan Areas.

Because of the important role that the Structure Plan Areas will play in accommodating growth within the SRL East Precincts beyond 2041, the land use and built form specifications within the Structure Plans should make allowance for future growth potential in both population and employment beyond this timeframe. The land use and built form components of the Structure Plans should accordingly be determined through application of sound urban design and planning principles that respond to the strategic context of the SRL Precincts. While the Structure Plans must provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the projected population and employment growth through to 2041, the projections should not constrain land use and built form designations within these Precincts.

Structure planning is not a static process.⁹ The Structure Plans and associated planning controls will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they remain current and relevant, and that appropriate planning settings are in place to provide for thriving communities.

Consultation on the Structure Plans will not engage with the population and employment projections contained in **Appendix A**, which have previously been shared with relevant local councils as part of the current structure planning process.

Guideline 4: Structure Plans are to be informed by the SRL East Precinct Visions

The preparation of Visions for each of the SRL East Precincts is the first step in the preparation of structure plans for the Structure Plan Areas. These Visions cover the whole of the land within the SRL East Planning Area for which SRLA is a planning authority with responsibility for land use planning. The Visions will provide a long-term vision for each of the SRL East Precincts into the 2050s.

Preparation of the Visions has been undertaken in consultation with local Councils, stakeholders and communities to ensure that the Visions are reflective of community views and aspirations, as well as accommodating the requirements of a growing population into the 2050s.

The finalised Visions will be shared with the local communities with whom they have been developed - explaining how feedback on the draft visions has been considered in their finalisation. The Visions have been used to inform preparation of the Structure Plans for the Structure Plan Areas, and will continue to guide future planning, investment and development initiatives in the SRL East Precincts.

⁹ SRLA does not warrant that the projections will be achieved by 2041 or within any particular timeframe as events and circumstances can change over time due to unforeseen forces beyond its control which impact what occurs on the ground. However, this does not make structure planning any less relevant where the process is undertaken based on relevant data.

Appendix 1: Population and Employment Projections

Table 1: Population and employment projections for each of the structure plan areas in 2021 and 2041

Structure Plan Areas	Population				Jobs			
	2021	2041	Increase	% increase	2021	2041	Increase	% increase
Box Hill	13,300	29,100	15,800	119%	18,500	38,700	20,200	109%
Burwood	5,300	11,100	5,800	109%	9,000	16,900	7,900	88%
Glen Waverley	7,100	11,700	4,600	65%	7,800	13,800	6,000	77%
Monash	10,000	17,900	7,900	79%	20,900	50,000	29,100	139%
Clayton	14,200	26,900	12,700	89%	12,700	29,600	16,900	133%
Cheltenham	9,400	20,800	11,400	121%	10,600	22,600	12,000	113%