



**SUBURBAN
RAIL LOOP
EAST**



Artist's impression

The Vision for Box Hill

December 2024



Acknowledgement of Country

Suburban Rail Loop Authority acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land, sky and waters across Victoria and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We proudly recognise the strength and enduring connection to Country as the world's longest living culture and the profound wisdom, resilience, and contributions of First Peoples and their communities. We are committed to the ongoing journey of reconciliation by embedding self-determined Aboriginal ways of knowing and doing across the lifespan of the SRL project.

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The Vision for Box Hill outlines the long-term aspiration for how Box Hill will realise the benefits delivered by SRL – and how the precinct can accommodate anticipated population growth over 20 to 30 years. It expands on the ambitions set out in the *SRL Business and Investment Case*.

The purpose of this document is to present the final shared Vision for Box Hill, incorporating stakeholder and community feedback on the Draft Precinct Vision for Box Hill. Together with community feedback, the Vision will inform structure planning for Box Hill.

The Structure Plan for Box Hill will implement steps to prepare for transformational change. It will provide greater detail related to planning and development.

The Structure Plan will provide a detailed land use and built form planning framework to ensure future planning decisions for Box Hill are consistent with the Vision and are able to support future community needs. This includes, but is not limited to, provisions for social and affordable housing, locations for new open space and community infrastructure, and building height regulations.

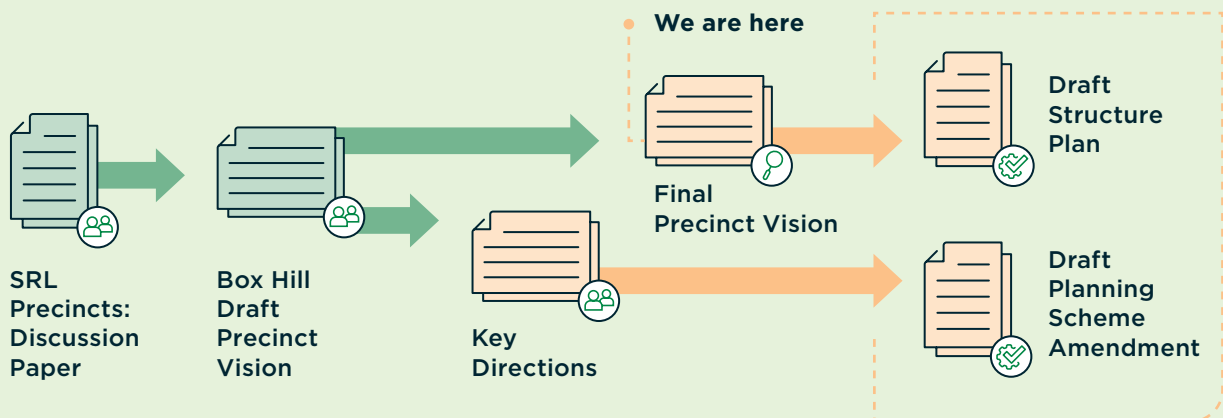


Figure 1: Structure Planning Process

The Vision for Box Hill

A thriving, culturally dynamic and cosmopolitan place where global and local communities connect.

Box Hill will continue to be an exciting, culturally diverse destination – a connection between Melbourne’s east and the rest of our city and state. Its exceptional transport accessibility will elevate its strategic importance as one of Melbourne’s economic and lifestyle centres, and it will play a key role in the city’s visitor economy.

The centre of Box Hill is already the community heart and will continue to be a place where people can share experiences and traditions. Celebrating diversity will strengthen the connection between the many residents who call Box Hill home.

The wider area will be a place of many neighbourhoods – better connected to each other – each with its own character, identity and sense of place.

High quality design, greener streets and enhanced natural environments will support resilient and sustainable living and increase local biodiversity. Whitehorse Road will be a better experience for people and pedestrians. Leafy streets and open spaces will make walking and cycling between new and well-loved places more comfortable and enjoyable.

Building on existing strengths, new economic opportunities in Box Hill will leverage established health, education, cultural and recreational services, as well as the vibrant local business community. There will be a need for new homes, high quality offices, services and community amenities that strengthen both housing and employment choice and enhance quality of life for the growing Box Hill community.

SRL will unlock new opportunities to create a sustainable, affordable and vibrant lifestyle in Box Hill that continues to celebrate cultural diversity.



Transformational change for Box Hill

Box Hill's population is already growing and the improved accessibility and connectivity delivered by SRL will drive further growth. This means Box Hill will experience significant change over the coming decades, requiring a fresh approach to how the area should be planned and designed.

The Vision for Box Hill sets out the long-term aspiration for the precinct to accommodate these growth projections.

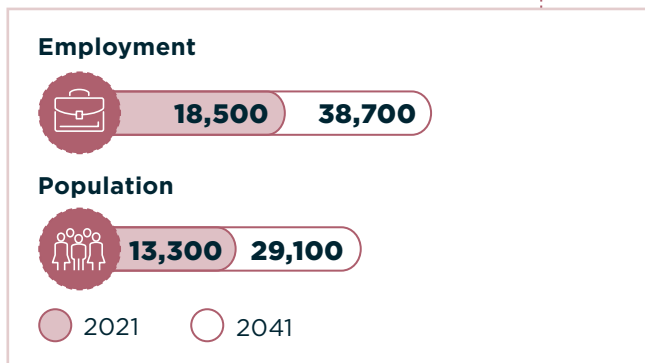
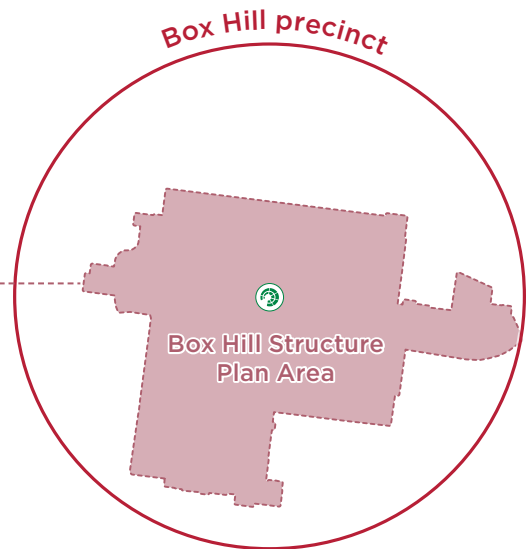


Figure 2: Growth for the Box Hill Structure Plan Area to 2041

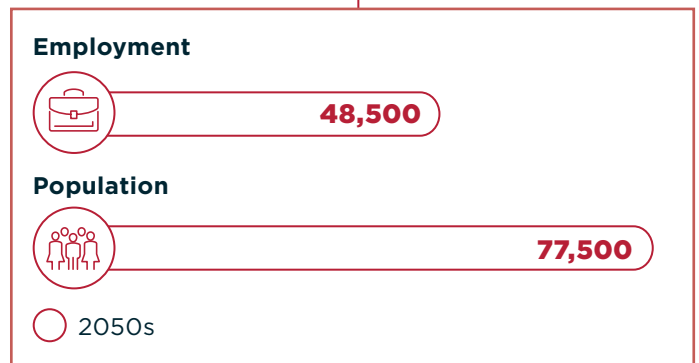


Figure 3: Growth for the Box Hill precinct to the 2050s

The role of the Structure Plan

Preparing a Structure Plan for the area surrounding the new SRL East station is the first step to realising the Vision for Box Hill to support the longer-term population and employment projections.

Structure Plans guide how future growth will be managed to ensure that development and investment occurs in places and ways that maintain liveability, amenity and distinctive neighbourhood character. The Box Hill Structure Plan Area is focused around the

SRL East station, as well as places near the station and neighbourhoods where the most change is expected to occur over the next 15 years.

The Box Hill Structure Plan will set out objectives, strategies and actions to achieve the Vision and cater for changing community needs. It balances the longer-term aspirations of the Vision with the need to implement more detailed and immediate planning policies and frameworks.

Conceptual Precinct Plan

The Conceptual Precinct Plan for Box Hill is a spatial representation of the Vision.

The plan identifies where longer-term change is expected to occur into the 2050s as Box Hill grows, supported by enhanced connectivity, improved community amenities, diversified retail and commercial areas and increased local job opportunities.

From time to time the plan may be refined by Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA), in response to community needs and to the detailed technical studies that will support the planning implementation through Structure Plans and Planning Scheme Amendments. As a first step, the Box Hill Structure Plan will set out a more detailed framework for land use, buildings and infrastructure within the Structure Plan Area. The Structure Plan will deliver holistic planning for this area, which is focused around the new SRL East station and surrounding neighbourhoods where significant change is expected over the next 15 years.



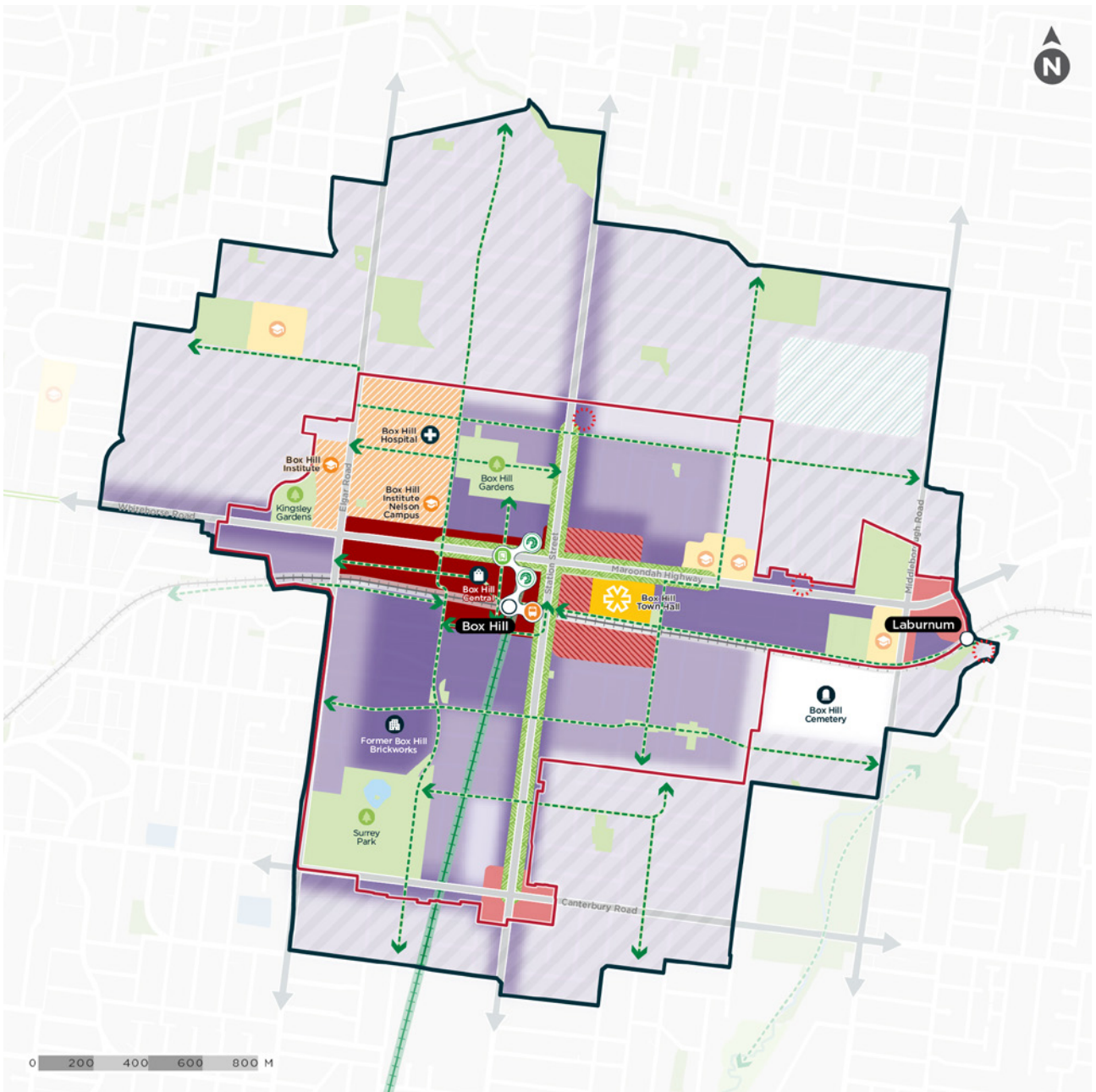
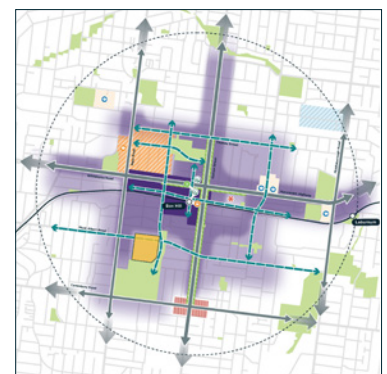


Figure 4: Box Hill Conceptual Precinct Plan



The Conceptual Precinct Plan has evolved from the Draft Precinct Plan released in the *Box Hill Draft Precinct Vision* in December 2023, in response to community feedback and stakeholder submissions.



Box Hill Draft Precinct Plan, December 2023

Developing a shared vision

Planning with the community

Over several years, SRLA has been speaking with Box Hill residents, workers, students, businesses, institutions, local council and others about how to take full advantage of the opportunities delivered by SRL East and to develop a shared Vision for Box Hill. SRLA is consulting the Traditional Owners to understand their aspirations and acknowledge Aboriginal values. This consultation and relationship is ongoing.

The Vision for Box Hill is encapsulated in this document, which includes the vision statement, a Conceptual Precinct Plan and an outline of how the Vision will be realised under five themes: boosting the economy, enriching community, enhancing place, better connections and empowering sustainability.

The Vision for Box Hill responds to feedback and sets the direction for future strategic planning work. It represents the refinement of ideas initially proposed during the public consultation periods for the *SRL Precincts: Discussion Paper* and *Draft Precinct Visions*, which occurred between August 2023 and March 2024.

During this extensive engagement, the Box Hill community and various stakeholders provided valuable feedback on priority outcomes, opportunity areas and preliminary ideas for the precinct. The ideas, issues and opportunities raised and discussed have been considered in forming a long-term vision for the precinct that reflects community needs and expectations, as well as addressing the requirements of a growing population. The feedback has shaped the Vision for Box Hill and Conceptual Precinct Plan. These now set the strategic direction for future planning and will inform the structure planning for Box Hill. This will guide planning, investment and development initiatives in the precinct.



The planning process for Box Hill

Community engagement will be ongoing as structure planning for SRL East progresses.

The figure below outlines further opportunities for community and stakeholder engagement and feedback as the Box Hill Structure Plan is prepared, exhibited and finalised.

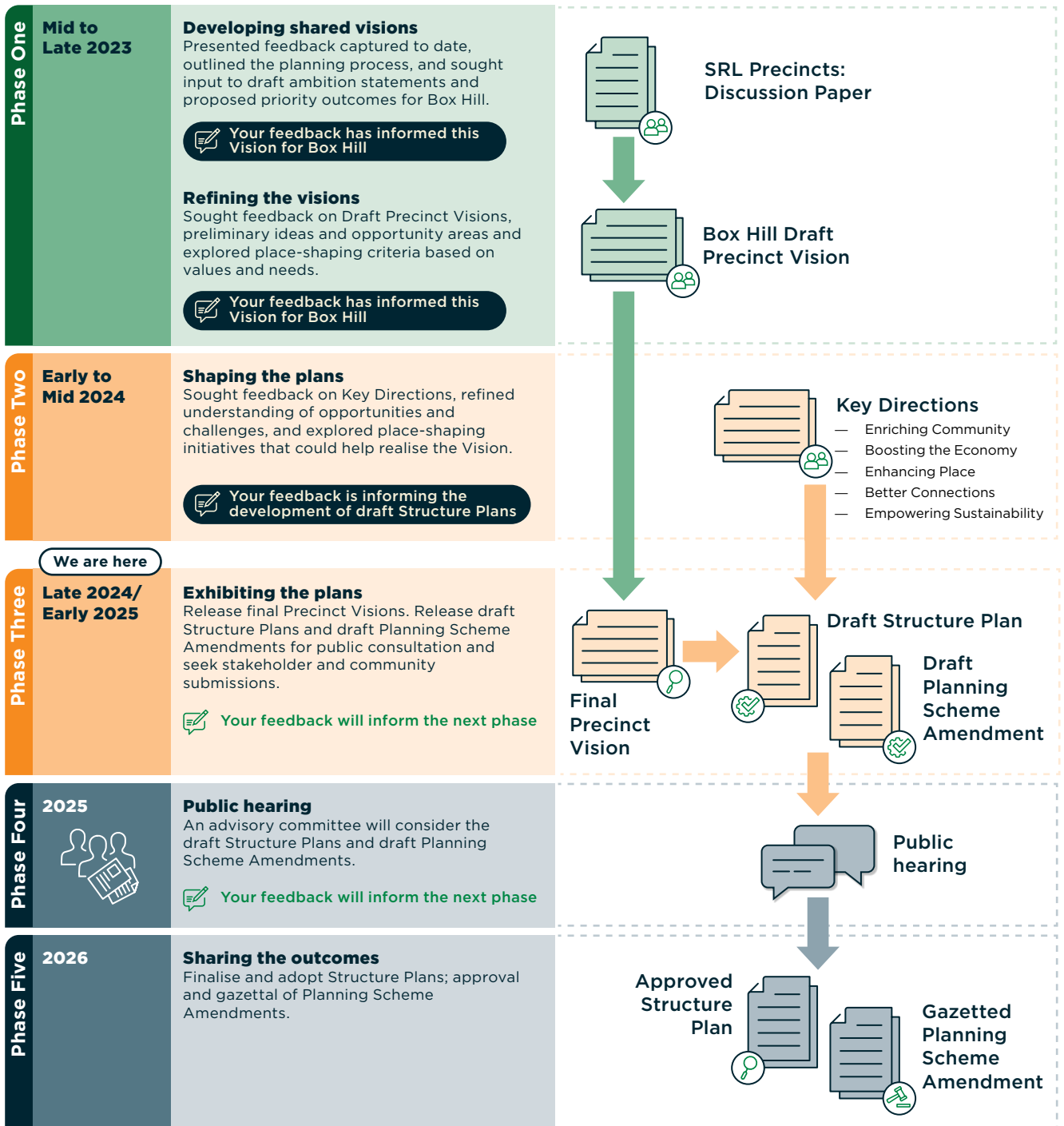


Figure 5: Phases of engagement

- Released for engagement and consultation
- Released for information
- Draft planning process
- Final planning outcome

Engagement phases

The *SRL Precincts: Discussion Paper* was released for public consultation from August to October 2023.

The Discussion Paper detailed community feedback about each of the SRL East precincts to date, outlined the structure planning process and potential future opportunities created by SRL East. Engagement during this phase sought feedback on draft ambition statements and proposed priority outcomes for Box Hill. This feedback informed the five themes set out in the *Draft Precinct Vision*.

Feedback was captured via an online survey on Engage Victoria and at in-person community engagement sessions and stakeholder workshops. SRL received 615 online survey responses, with 95 related to Box Hill. This was complemented by discussions with more than 460 people at community pop-ups and listening post sessions and 13 submissions from stakeholders.

The *Box Hill Draft Precinct Vision* was released for public consultation from December 2023 to March 2024.

The *Box Hill Draft Precinct Vision* outlined how Box Hill could grow and evolve into the 2050s, building on the ambition established by the *SRL Business and Investment Case*. Feedback on these has informed how the Vision for Box Hill responds to the five themes. These themes will guide structure planning for the areas surrounding the SRL East station at Box Hill and the development of objectives, strategies and actions within the Box Hill Structure Plan to achieve the Vision.

A website was developed to support engagement and capture feedback during this phase. SRLA received 2,457 responses to the preliminary ideas (577 related to Box Hill) and 864 responses to the opportunity areas (177 related to Box Hill). SRLA also had discussions with more than 470 people at community pop-up sessions and held workshops with Precinct Reference Groups, councils, universities and other stakeholders, convened Community Panels for each precinct and a Youth Panel, and received 16 submissions from stakeholders.

This feedback is presented in the *SRL Structure Planning Phase One Engagement report* suburbanrailloop.vic.gov.au/structure-planning-engagement-report




The *Box Hill Key Directions* were released for public consultation from April 2024 to June 2024.

SRLA has also engaged with community and stakeholders on the Key Directions for the SRL East station precincts which have been informed by the themes and preliminary ideas presented in the *Draft Precinct Visions*. Feedback received on the Key Directions will inform technical details within the Box Hill Structure Plan and Planning Scheme Amendment.




Community sentiment

Community engagement sought feedback via online 'emoticon' prompts for the preliminary ideas and opportunity areas outlined in the *Draft Precinct Vision*. A summary of key findings is provided in the figures below.

Preliminary ideas

			
1. An enhanced urban core	67%	12%	21%
2. Enhance Whitehorse Road	67%	10%	23%
3. Reinforce health and education	80%	10%	10%
4. Enable greater housing choice	58%	14%	28%
5. Connect places and improve access	76%	9%	15%
6. Link local neighbourhoods	76%	9%	15%

Opportunity areas

			
1. Creating new opportunities in Central Box Hill	76%	8%	16%
2. Expanding Health and Education	84%	7%	9%
3. Integrating Box Hill Gardens	66%	15%	19%
4. Revitalising Civic Precinct and Whitehorse Road East	68%	16%	16%
5. Diversifying Ellingworth Enterprise District	66%	20%	14%
6. Activating Surrey Park and Station Street South	68%	12%	20%
7. Enhancing Prospect Street and Whitehorse Road West	71%	15%	14%
8. Expanding housing in Residential East	66%	15%	19%

Source: *SRL Structure Planning Phase One Engagement Report*

Building on what we heard

The *SRL Precincts: Discussion Paper* and *Draft Precinct Vision* offered an early opportunity for community members, councils and other stakeholders to share their ideas on the future of Box Hill. Hearing and understanding the community's views has been instrumental in refining this Vision for Box Hill and identifying how Box Hill can best respond to the opportunities presented by SRL East.

SRLA has built on the *Draft Precinct Vision* and incorporated feedback to advance thinking about how Box Hill can evolve over time, as it is shaped by further detailed planning and ongoing engagement with the community and stakeholders.

The following discussion points were highlighted during consultation and have been key considerations in developing this Vision for Box Hill.



Enriching Community

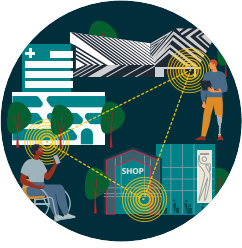
What we heard

- There is support for a greater variety of medium and high density housing, including affordable and rental housing in new developments.
- There is a desire for good quality outdoor, green spaces and community facilities for people to gather and engage in cultural and recreational activities.
- People desire safer and more inviting public spaces and streetscapes that can support social wellbeing and liveability.

How this shaped the final Vision

The Vision continues to prioritise diverse housing options in strategic locations with convenient access to public transport, services and amenity.

The Conceptual Precinct Plan identifies medium change, mixed-use development areas that can provide more diverse housing options close to Box Hill Institute and Box Hill Hospital along Whitehorse Road and Station Street. The Vision also encourages improved accessibility to community facilities that enable cultural and recreational activity.



Boosting the Economy

What we heard

- There is a desire to maintain Box Hill as a commercial hub and enhance its capacity for future employment.
- People would like more high-paying jobs closer to where they live to boost the local economy and improve work-life balance.
- There is interest in attracting more medium and large businesses to the area and providing spaces for innovation industries, particularly in technology and science, to stimulate growth and attract talent.

How this shaped the final Vision

The Vision has been updated to better reflect the intent to attract new businesses and talent within the health and education sector and to intensify key employment areas.

The Conceptual Precinct Plan now provides more opportunities for expanded health, education and research uses to the north of Box Hill Hospital. It identifies more locations for diversified employment along Whitehorse Road and Station Street. Encouraging more diverse spaces along main streets and thoroughfares will enhance Box Hill's capacity as a commercial centre and provide more local job opportunities for residents.



Enhancing Place

What we heard

- There is strong community support for creating safer and more attractive public spaces and streetscapes.
- There is a desire to increase activity on Station Street and Whitehorse Road.
- People desire high quality, pedestrian-friendly spaces that support business activity.

How this shaped the final Vision

The Conceptual Precinct Plan has been updated to prioritise more active and diversified uses along Station Street and Whitehorse Road to support local living and contribute to an enhanced and inclusive pedestrian experience.

The Vision captures the importance of an upgraded open space network. High quality design and development will be promoted around Whitehorse Road Linear Reserve to encourage recreation and activity within central Box Hill.



Better Connections

What we heard

- People desire improvements to local walking and cycling infrastructure to improve safety and accessibility.
- There is support to reduce reliance on private vehicles by improving walking, cycling and public transport networks, particularly in the centre of Box Hill.
- People would like better connections between frequently used public spaces, parks and points of interest.

How this shaped the final Vision

The Vision continues to prioritise pedestrians in dense areas of activity, particularly around the new SRL East station and Box Hill Central. The Vision has been updated to capture the intent to transform the area around central Box Hill into an open and people-focused public space that integrates with and extends along Whitehorse Road.

The Conceptual Precinct Plan has also been updated to incorporate additional cross-precinct links between local destinations, such as Surrey Park, Box Hill Central, Laburnum Activity Centre, Box Hill Gardens and Box Hill Hospital.

This will make moving around the precinct safer for pedestrians and cyclists, and facilitate an enhanced open space network that connects areas of activity and employment to surrounding neighbourhoods.



Planning for Box Hill's future

Precinct context

Box Hill is located on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, within the City of Whitehorse, approximately 14 kilometres east of Melbourne's Central Business District (CBD). The Box Hill precinct is located at the northernmost end of the SRL East rail alignment, connecting directly to the Burwood and future SRL North Doncaster precinct.

Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre

Box Hill plays a key role for Melbourne as the one of the largest Metropolitan Activity Centres in the city's eastern suburbs. With state-significant health and education anchors and a prominent commercial and retail destination in Box Hill Central Shopping Centre, Box Hill is the dominant employment centre and service provider for the area.

Retail, commercial and residential uses are clustered around the centre of Box Hill, anchored by Box Hill Central Shopping Centre and the existing railway station. This concentration has supported high density development in recent years, particularly along Whitehorse Road and Station Street, as demand for housing in Box Hill has grown.

Box Hill is also a major transport interchange serviced by the Lilydale and Belgrave Metro train lines that connect to the CBD.

Box Hill's capacity for higher density local living

Strong demand for apartment living and a desire to live in a dense, exciting urban environment has already led to a number of residential and mixed-use developments of significant scale. These developments contribute to Box Hill's distinctive built form, characterised by tall towers around the commercial core.

Box Hill's state-significant health and education cluster

The precinct's established health and education institutions include Box Hill Hospital, Epworth Eastern Hospital, Box Hill High School and Box Hill Institute. A range of smaller scale health services and specialised medical practices are located in surrounding areas off Wellington Road. The precinct's specialised role in health and education presents opportunities for Box Hill within the broader network of state-significant health and education precincts in Monash, Frankston, Dandenong, Parkville, Sunshine and Werribee.

Box Hill's expanding health worker and student catchment

The delivery of specialised housing for key workers is recognised in Victoria's Housing Statement. The cluster of health and education institutions in Box Hill means key workers will increasingly want to live in surrounding neighbourhoods. Similarly, enhanced access to Deakin University, Monash University, Holmesglen Institute and other tertiary institutions along the SRL East alignment unlocks the potential for more students to seek high quality and affordable accommodation in Box Hill.

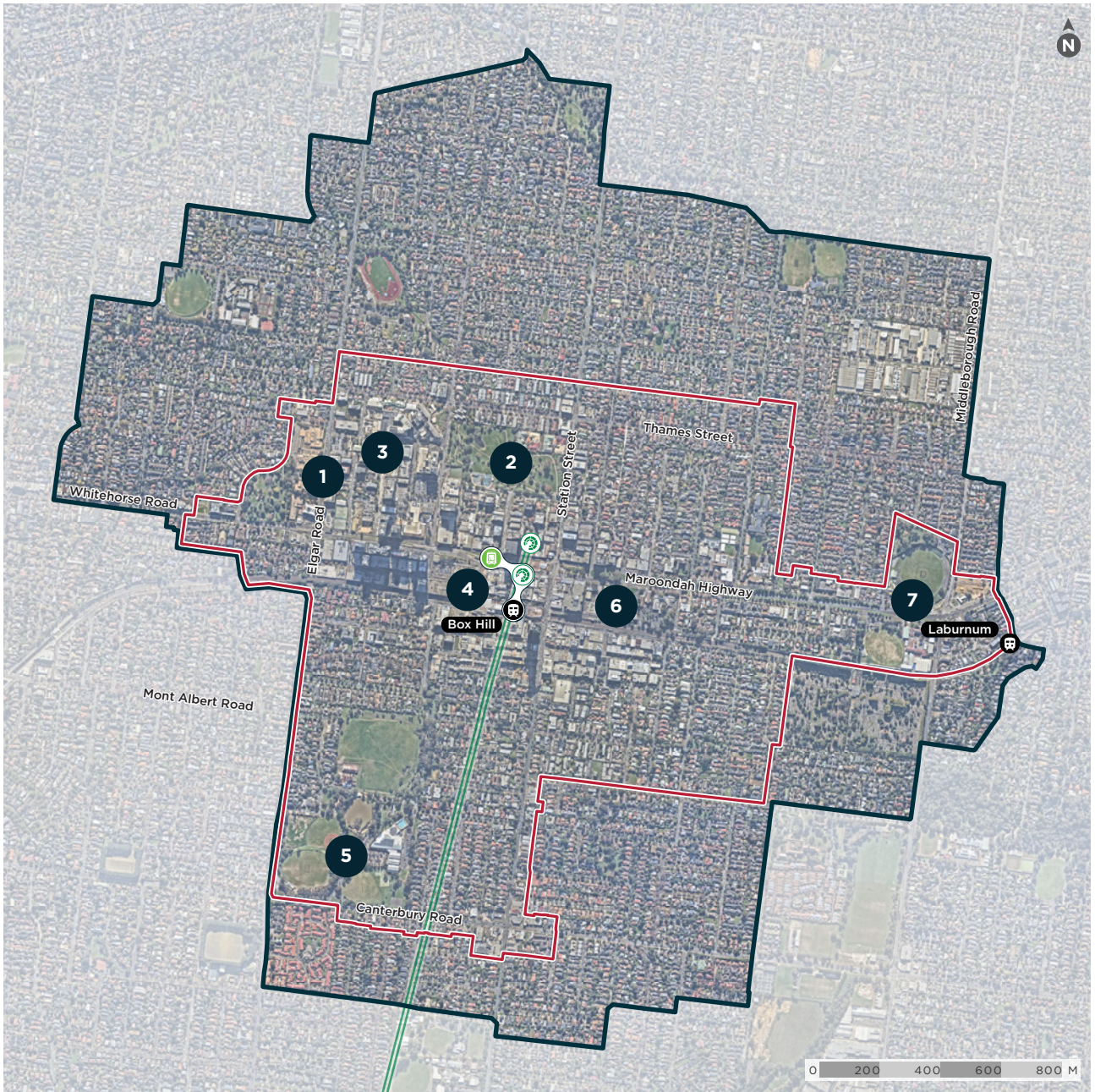


Figure 6: Box Hill Context Plan

Key Features

- 1 Box Hill Institute
- 2 Box Hill Gardens
- 3 Box Hill Hospital
- 4 Box Hill Central Shopping Centre
- 5 Surrey Park
- 6 Box Hill Town Hall
- 7 Box Hill City Oval

Legend

- SRL East station
- Existing Metro station
- Tram stop
- Structure plan area
- Planning area



Figure 7: Visualisation of the future character of Box Hill

A thriving, culturally dynamic and cosmopolitan place where global and local communities connect.



Realising the Vision for Box Hill

Precinct themes

There are five precinct themes that will guide and direct strategic planning to help realise the Vision for Box Hill.



Enriching Community

Enriching Community will guide precinct planning to deliver healthy and inclusive neighbourhoods.

Box Hill will have a diverse range of medium and higher density housing, maintaining liveability, improving affordability and helping to alleviate housing stress for future residents.

There are opportunities for substantial urban renewal to support a more inclusive and diverse precinct, including different types, sizes and tenures of homes – such as affordable housing, high- to mid-rise apartments and townhouses – and potential redevelopment of the Box Hill Brickworks.

Areas around the SRL East station, Whitehorse Road and Station Street will offer significant housing growth and mixed-use opportunities, with convenient access to public open space (including Box Hill Gardens), public transport, jobs and retail options. Further away from the central area and main streets and thoroughfares, housing growth will be encouraged through medium-scale apartment development and townhouses.

Improving access to valued community infrastructure, including Box Hill Library and Town Hall, will help meet the needs of Box Hill's growing population of residents and workers.

Upgrading Whitehorse Road with new open space will significantly improve residents' enjoyment of the public space. Areas further away from the central area, including Ellingsworth Parade and Surrey Park, may also be enhanced by new and upgraded open spaces.



Boosting the Economy

Boosting the Economy will guide how we build on the unique assets and strengths of each area to trigger investment growth.

Accommodating businesses and professional services in highly accessible locations around the SRL East station will generate job opportunities and a pipeline for future investment. Diversifying land uses in strategic locations will enable office and retail floorspace growth. Retail and entertainment uses will be located in areas along Station Street to create a connected mixed-use corridor and facilitate a lively day and night economy, catering to the expanded resident and worker community.

As a state-significant health and education precinct, the health and education sectors will remain central to employment in Box Hill and will be strengthened through new facilities that support the popular Box Hill Institute campuses, Box Hill Hospital and Epworth Private Hospital.

As more job opportunities shift towards knowledge-based services, the SRL East station at Box Hill will attract more services and jobs closer to where people live. The precinct's attractive environment, characterised by well-designed buildings and public spaces, will attract workers and businesses.

To support more local jobs and provide convenient access to services beyond central Box Hill, local activity centres at Box Hill South, Canterbury Road and Laburnum will provide access to local services and employment opportunities for surrounding residents. Commercial and retail growth within these areas will complement, rather than compete with, central Box Hill and other centres.



Enhancing Place

Enhancing Place will guide how we plan vibrant, sustainable and inclusive public spaces that build on the existing character and identity of our suburbs.

Substantial change is anticipated to occur around the SRL East station, along Whitehorse Road and other opportunity sites. Development in these areas will help the heart of this precinct continue to be a vibrant, safe and lively place, both during the day and at night.

Areas further away from the central area, east of Station Street, will experience gradual residential growth and built form change through well-designed low- to mid-rise housing in suitable locations that respect existing heritage character.

There will be a network of connections between sites of interest, with enhanced trees and vegetation, to complement greater density throughout the precinct. Enhancements in areas, including Station Street and further away from the centre, will make it easier, safer and more enjoyable to travel within the precinct. Versatile spaces catering to a diverse range of uses will promote social connections and enhance amenity in locations such as Box Hill Gardens and Market Street Plaza.



Better Connections

Better Connections will guide how we plan public and active transport options, connecting people to opportunities and experiences in the SRL East corridor and beyond.

To encourage greater uptake of public transport within, to and from the wider precinct, key movement corridors will be established with convenient interchange facilities, priority bus corridors to enhance bus route efficiency and new links to improve access to the bus network.

While private vehicles and parking will still be part of the movement network, prioritising universal access and safe, connected and accessible walking and cycling networks will enable greater social connectedness and improve residents' sense of wellbeing. Transforming Whitehorse Road into a pedestrian-focused civic boulevard with dedicated crossings will further improve safety and ease of travel. To provide attractive east-west walking and cycling connections through the wider precinct, local streets will be upgraded and enhanced with planting and landscaping.

Improvements will be made to public areas by reprioritising the movement network towards a people-first approach. The area around the SRL East station will become a well-connected, walkable urban centre by enabling convenient connections through large existing blocks.

Future strategies will reinforce traffic routes around the precinct's periphery, improving the safety and amenity of key streets and neighbourhoods.



Empowering Sustainability

Empowering Sustainability will guide how we adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change and contribute to environmental sustainability.

Victoria has a target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2045. To help achieve this, SRL East precincts and the buildings within them will be more energy efficient and use fewer resources. Creating a low carbon future will benefit people who live and work in Box Hill by improving air quality, supporting healthy lifestyles, creating economic and employment opportunities, and improving access to nature.

Box Hill's transition to a low carbon precinct will be encouraged by making sure the built environment is equipped with the right technologies and prepared for changes in conditions. To mitigate the impact of intense heatwaves and the urban heat island effect, the precinct will accommodate green infrastructure throughout the public areas, using methods such as increasing street canopy cover and creating shady green corridors.

Delivering the Vision for Box Hill

This Vision is a key step in planning for the future of the Box Hill precinct. It builds upon the *SRL Precincts: Discussion Paper* and *Draft Precinct Vision* and will guide a new planning framework around the Box Hill SRL East station, including a new Structure Plan.

SRLA is responsible for preparing and applying the required planning controls that will help to realise the Vision, commencing with the preparation of the Box Hill Structure Plan. Changes to statutory planning controls within the planning scheme will support new land uses, such as business and retail, as well as residential development, community facilities and transport links. New planning controls within the planning scheme will also allow for increased densities, depending on the characteristics and context of different areas across the precinct. The draft Structure Plan and associated technical studies, along with a draft Planning Scheme Amendment, will be publicly exhibited for consultation in early 2025.

Following exhibition, the Minister for Planning may refer public submissions to an independent Advisory Committee, which will consider the draft Planning Scheme Amendment. If approved, the Planning Scheme Amendment will be gazetted in 2026.

SRLA will work closely with Whitehorse City Council, stakeholders and the community to further test and refine feedback through public consultation on the draft Structure Plan and draft Planning Scheme Amendment.

For updates on preparation of the Box Hill Structure Plan, visit suburbanrailloop.vic.gov.au

contact@srla.vic.gov.au | 1800 105 105 (call anytime)
suburbanrailloop.vic.gov.au



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