

Submission form: Victoria's draft 30-year infrastructure strategy

Your details

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About you

Please tell us which best describes you:

☐ Victorian resident
☐ Victorian business owner/operator
☐ Industry professional
☐ Community organisation representative
☒ Local government representative
☐ State government representative
☐ Researcher
☐ Other (please specify): Click or tap here to enter text.

Your focus areas

Select the topics or regions you are providing feedback on (select all that apply):

Topics	Regions
☒ Across sectors	☒ Regional Victoria
☒ Circular economy	☐ Urban growth areas
☒ Cities	☐ Melbourne
☒ Climate change	
☒ Community infrastructure	
☒ Education	
☒ Energy	
☐ Freight	
☒ Health	
☒ Housing	
☐ Infrastructure for Victoria's First Peoples	
☒ Transport	
☒ Water	

Your feedback

Topic/area:	Education
Recommendation name:	Facilitate markets and invest in kindergarten infrastructure
Recommendation number:	Action 2
1. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
2. Tell us why	This will help the City plan for our private and not-for-profit investment in kindergarten infrastructure. The following is also recommended as part of this: • Regular updated information should be shared about the supply and demand of kindergarten places. • The priorities for government investment should be published to demonstrate which kindergartens should be delivered in communities that will have the greatest need.
3. Share any supporting evidence or examples	–
4. Include proposed changes and improvements	Support the Action

Topic/area:	Education
Recommendation name:	Plan and deliver expanded and new schools
Recommendation number:	Action 3
5. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
6. Tell us why	Greater support and information should be provided to assist councils with their local area planning for public education facilities, and greater commitment is required for the delivery of expanded and new schools.
7. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Example: The Marong Township Structure Plan, and subsequent amendment C263gben, which is planning of the growth of the township of Marong to 8,000 people noted that the existing primary school site is limited in its ability to accommodate ongoing demand and identified a new site that would be appropriate for relocation. In its submission to the amendment, the Department of Education required the City to change and reduce the weight of the language used throughout the plan and planning scheme in reference to planning for future education. The City has been proactive in identifying a location for a new larger school site in Marong township, however the commitment to deliver a new public school has not been provided.
8. Include proposed changes and improvements	Support the Action

Topic/area:	Bus Services
Recommendation name:	Improved bus services
Recommendation number:	Action 9 & Action 12
9. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

10. Tell us why

Action 9

There is currently low bus patronage in regional Victoria, and Greater Bendigo is no different. Currently there are only 13 bus routes servicing urban Bendigo. Most buses run every 30-60 minutes at peak times, with many services taking indirect routes that do not enable cross-city travel without changing buses. As a result, patronage is low, with only 0.8 per cent of residents taking the bus to work in 2021 and 1 per cent in 2016. This means the community feels unsafe using the service. In addition, there is a lack of transport choice and we are a City where residents struggle to get around without a car.

The City's *Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy (ITLUS)* identifies three bus routes that should be classified as 'primary' routes. These should have 10-minute peak frequencies, 20-minute off-peak frequencies, and run early in the morning, until late at night. These routes are:

1. Kangaroo Flat to Huntly via Bendigo City Centre
2. Eaglehawk to Strathfieldsaye via Bendigo City Centre
3. Bendigo to Marong

These primary routes are all straight, direct routes that follow arterial roads that would be suitable for transit lanes to increase speed.

Improving bus services is repeatedly listed as one of the Bendigo community's highest priorities when Council conducts consultation.

There has been a significant amount of strategic planning work undertaken to facilitate increased density around transport nodes. The Bendigo City Centre has a current population of approximately 1000 residents and has significant growth capacity to accommodate more population and employment growth.

To support the expected growth the public transport needs to be efficient, effective and appealing to users. In recent years the State government has invested in the construction of government offices (Galkangu - GovHub), extension of the TAFE campus and new Law Courts building. These three developments are all located on the opposite side of the City Centre to the train station the main bus stops on Mitchell Street.

The proposed Bendigo City Centre bus route realignment has been developed as a result of a partnership between the DTP-T regional office and the City. The realignment would redistribute bus routes through the City Centre to spread evenly between Mitchell, Myers and Chapel Streets rather than just Mitchell Street. This will reduce congestion along Mitchell Street, responds to the increase in workers on the eastern side of the City and presents a more convenient and comfortable bus trip option for workers, visitors and residents.

Transport currently accounts for 22 per cent of the City's emissions, the bulk of which are from cars. Reducing emissions from transport and creating an equitable transport system will require transition to a direct, high frequency service that positions buses as a viable alternative to car travel.

	Modelling conducted on behalf of the City, the Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration and DTP shows that a direct and frequent bus service could result in approximately \$2.9 billion savings over 25 years as a result of reduced infrastructure provision, maintenance, vehicle and health costs. This represents a cost benefit ratio of 2.4. This would align with the Victorian Bus Plan which seeks to make the network “simpler, faster and more reliable”. Bendigo’s small towns such as Heathcote, Marong and Axedale are currently underserved by public transport with services ranging from 2 to 5 bus services per day on weekdays. This entrenches car dependency and isolates community members who are not able to drive. During consultations with the community, increasing the frequency of inter-town bus services is often raised as one the highest priorities. <u>Action 12</u> This action is supported. There is a public transport gap between Bendigo and Ballarat. Victoria has a very radial transport network, with Melbourne being the centre. Coaches directly between regional cities are rare, and often force passengers to transfer trains in Melbourne, or travel using alternatives, such as the car. Using the Ballarat example, a car trip that takes 1hr 30mins between Ballarat and Bendigo, takes well over 3 hours on the train.
11. Share any supporting evidence or examples	The proposed Bendigo City Centre bus route realignment project – as outlined above Another example is the Elmore township, which currently has time tabling problems that limit use of public transport to Bendigo for commuting. This also applies to other satellite towns in the region. This recommendation is supported by Greater Bendigo’s Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy (ITLUS) and the Road Safety Action Plan (2023-2027) (links provided below). https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/about-us/plans-strategies-and-documents/integrated-transport-and-land-use-strategy https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/about-us/plans-strategies-and-documents/greater-bendigo-road-safety-action-plan-2023-2027
12. Include proposed changes and improvements	Support the Actions

Topic/area:	Road Safety
Recommendation name:	Make local streets safer for children and communities
Recommendation number:	Action 14
13. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
14. Tell us why	• A recent workshop held by DTP and TAC on this included discussion about 30km/h zones being adopted in specific areas, including schools, across the state. There was discussion about a broader roll out in time where a design need could be demonstrated under the Speed Zoning Guidelines. • This recommendation suggests 30km/h will be applied to all local streets, however clarification on this is recommended. • The City recommends that this be available as a design solution where the need can be justified. This may include streets that form part of a walking or cycling network where cycling lanes can't be accommodated due to width, or other needs including activity zones and pedestrian precincts. • The City also recommends that community consultation is undertaken as part of such a change to the State speed zoning guidelines.
15. Share any supporting evidence or examples	This action aligns with the City's Road Safety Action Plan (2023 – 2027). Specifically Action 33 (speed zone improvements) and Action 45 (School safety): https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/about-us/plans-strategies-and-documents/greater-bendigo-road-safety-action-plan-2023-2027 Western Australia's safe active streets illustrate how successful 30km/h speed limit changes can be implemented: https://www.cgg.wa.gov.au/your-council/key-infrastructure-projects/completed-key-infrastructure-projects/railway-street-safe-active-street-project.aspx#:~:text=The%20safe%20active%20street%20is,bicycle%20and%20pedestrian%20friendly%20space. A research article articulating the evidence in support of 30km/h roads and successful implementation is provided in the link below: https://lens.monash.edu/2025/02/17/1387331/the-30kmh-revolution-rethinking-speed-for-safer-happier-streets
16. Include proposed changes and improvements	• Consider changing the wording of the action to clarify this will not apply to all current local roads and current default 50km/h zones. • Identify that this initiative <u>must</u> be led by DTP who control speed zoning. Speed zone changes on local roads can be onerous, challenging and time consuming as it passes through the State approval process. Approval times can be more than 12 months from time of submission, which includes minor extensions or changes. • Ensure appropriate resourcing for implementation and change management for both State and local government.

	- Factor in supportive infrastructure to ensure that roads are self-explaining – including interventions such as reducing lane widths, raised plateaus, signage, lights, line markings, along with other supportive interventions such as modal filters and community education campaigns. - Fund also required for trail programs for regional and metro areas.
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Topic/area:	Victorians are healthy and safe
Recommendation name:	Build safe cycling networks in Melbourne and regional cities
Recommendation number:	Action 15
17. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
18. Tell us why	This recommendation is strongly supported by the City, and aligns with our strategic direction. The City is planning to create a fully connected and protected walking and cycling network that enables walkers and bike riders to get where they need to go including school, work, shops, community facilities or to visit friends and family. The City is aiming for 90% of houses within urban Bendigo to be within 500 metres of the network upon completion. The proposed Protected Walking and Cycling Network will require a significant investment from the City and other funding partners including the Victorian and Australian Governments. The Protected Walking and Cycling Network will involve the City building new paths for pedestrians and bike riders, while at the same time continuing to improve our existing network, especially at road crossings. The cost benefit of increased pathways and connections are vast and would see benefits to regional Victoria's health, economy, environment, social connections, road safety and lowering rates of road trauma. The Victorian Government has a target for people to make 25% of their trips by bike or on foot, however funding that supports active transport modes is significantly less than 25% of all transport spending. To achieve change there needs to be a change in how transport spending is delivered. Government spends only \$0.90 per person on walking, wheeling, and cycling infrastructure – compared to \$714 per person on road infrastructure. Relevant documents are provided below.

19. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Greater Bendigo Protected Walking and Cycling Network - https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/things-do/walk-or-ride/protected-walking-and-cycling-network Walk Cycle Greater Bendigo - https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/about-us/plans-strategies-and-documents/walk-cycle-greater-bendigo-strategy The following research article is provided in support of protected cycling infrastructure and the importance of this in implementing change: https://lens.monash.edu/@ben-beck/2025/04/07/1387432/how-do-we-shift-people-from-private-cars-to-walking-and-cycling-heres-what-the-evidence-suggests
20. Include proposed changes and improvements	• Include and fund more than six regional cities. • Provide and prioritise an equitable supply of funding across both metro and regional areas. • Remove the reference to the Active Transport Fund, which closed in January 2025.

Topic/area:	Victorians are healthy and safe
Recommendation name:	Help government schools share their grounds
Recommendation number:	Action 16
21. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
22. Tell us why	This option can meet the demand for sporting infrastructure that is needed as the Greater Bendigo community grows and develops. It supports the community hub model of service delivery held by the City. Multipurpose and multiuse facilities can bring communities together, create a sense of community connection and cohesiveness and address accessibility needs. The City supports greater investment in community facilities that are multipurpose, allow multiple user groups to access and those that inclusive of all. The City has had very positive relationships with private education providers relating to joint use facility partnerships as there are minimal barriers. The City recommends that State processes are reviewed to ensure that barriers are similarly removed. The City acknowledges that it will require a significant number of new sporting fields to meet growth needs and demand for an additional 87,000 residents by 2056.
23. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Greater Bendigo's Community Asset Policy includes priority principles of 'Partnership and Collaboration' that align to this recommendation. City of Greater Bendigo's Managed Growth Strategy highlights anticipated growth of an additional 87,000 residents by 2056, and can be located here: https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-03/City-Greater-Bendigo-Managed-Growth-Strategy-October-2024.pdf
24. Include proposed changes and improvements	Revise wording to ensure growth is referenced in relation to Melbourne and regional areas. Note the challenge for Local Government to fund maintenance costs within the current financial climate, and undertaken further engagement with Local Government on this matter. Undertake a trial in regional cities to determine feasibility and how the partnership approach can work successfully with schools. Ensure that safety measures are included.

Topic/area:	Climate change
Recommendation name:	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from infrastructure
Recommendation number:	Action 24
25. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
26. Tell us why	Incorporating consideration of carbon values into any cost benefit analysis (CBA) would ensure the full cost of infrastructure is taken into account as a part of business cases. Prioritising “non-build” and “low build” solutions is also supported, both to reduce emissions from construction and to minimize costs to state and local governments.
27. Share any supporting evidence or examples	
28. Include proposed changes and improvements	Action as written

Topic/area:	Water
Recommendation name:	Advance integrated water management and more recycled water
Recommendation number:	Action 25
29. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
30. Tell us why	The City strongly supports that <i>‘the Victorian Government should work with partners to fund and deliver planned integrated water management projects. It should also find more projects to meet 2030 targets. These projects are an opportunity for Victoria to use more recycled water and boost water security’</i>.
31. Share any supporting evidence or examples	An Integrated Water Management Strategy (IWMS) is currently being prepared for the future Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct (BREP) and the City believes this project could assist the government to meet its 2030 targets.

	A holistic approach to water supply and sewerage servicing is critical to ensure that this State identified employment and industrial precinct is realised.
32. Include proposed changes and improvements	Support the action as written

Topic/area:	Climate change
Recommendation name:	Better prepare infrastructure for climate change
Recommendation number:	Action 27
33. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
34. Tell us why	Bendigo's repeated investment in rectification works for the same assets following both the October 2022 and January 2024 floods demonstrates that investment in infrastructure upgrades that enhance their resilience to natural disasters would save money in the long term. This includes ensuring recovery funding is able to be allocated to betterment of infrastructure rather than just like-for-like replacements.
35. Share any supporting evidence or examples	The Biolinks Alliance 'Spring Plains Watershed Project' near Heathcote also demonstrates the benefit of investing in nature based solutions, such as restoration of forests which can increase water infiltration, thereby reducing the risk of flooding if these initiatives are conducted at a landscape scale.
36. Include proposed changes and improvements	Action as written

Topic/area:	Flooding
Recommendation name:	Use new flood maps to revise planning schemes
Recommendation number:	Action 28
37. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
38. Tell us why	Following the release of the new ARR guidelines (v4.2) in 2024 there is a strong need across Victoria to update existing and develop new flood models. Victorian councils and floodplain managers need accurate and reliable flood mapping in order to inform appropriate development and mitigation infrastructure to keep the community protected and safe. The City strongly supports the proposal that <i>“the government should coordinate flood studies and maps for all local government areas, and ensure they are regularly updated using the latest climate projections and any changes in land use to better understand flood risks. It should then work with local governments to update planning schemes to reflect the most up-to-date flood information.”</i> Planning scheme amendments could be undertaken at a catchment level (as GC amendment) rather than a council level, with the technical justification and response to community submissions undertaken by the technical experts at the catchment management authority, rather than council planners.
39. Share any supporting evidence or examples	–
40. Include proposed changes and improvements	Support the action as written

Topic/area:	Energy
Recommendation name:	Invest in home, neighborhood and big batteries for energy storage
Recommendation number:	Action 31
41. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

42. Tell us why	Investing in additional home batteries, mid-sized / neighbourhood and big batteries is supported. It is noted that current funding programs for neighbourhood batteries seek to utilise local government or not-for-profit community organisations as the delivery agent for these batteries. This function would be better delivered by distributors / DNSPs who are better placed to know where mid-sized batteries would contribute to enhancing the resilience of the distribution network and who are better able to negotiate tariffs and contracts with retailers.
43. Share any supporting evidence or examples	–
44. Include proposed changes and improvements	Support the Action

Topic/area:	Energy
Recommendation name:	Speed up householder energy efficiency and electrification
Recommendation number:	Action 34
45. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
46. Tell us why	In addition to the initiatives listed in the recommendation, it is also suggested that the following initiatives would be beneficial: ▪ Increased funding for training of energy assessors to support the increase in assessments needed if energy ratings are required to be disclosed at point of sale or lease. ▪ Investment in the distribution network, including upgrades in electricity supply from the street to homes. This will help ensure electrification is attainable for more people. ▪ Establishment of a one-stop-shop energy efficiency upgrades program that facilitates the process of identifying and implementing improvements for low income and vulnerable households. ▪ Continued grants and rebates for energy efficiency and electrification works, both for households and for businesses. ▪ Commitment to increase the NatHERs rating for new homes from 7 to 8 stars by 2030.
47. Share any supporting evidence or examples	–
48. Include proposed changes and improvements	Support the Action

Topic/area:	Waste & Recycling
Recommendation name:	Prepare for more recycling and waste infrastructure
Recommendation number:	Action 38
49. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
50. Tell us why	This action is important and supported given the gap in material recovery facilities in the Central Victoria region. The City is also working with Advanced Energy Technology to increase materials recovery taken from the general waste stream.
51. Share any supporting evidence or examples	The implementation of the Buffer Area Overlay (BAO) at the Eaglehawk Landfill came at significant cost and effort to the City, with the first technical reports undertaken in 2017 and gazettal of the amendment not occurring until 2024, by which time the parameters for the technical work had changed resulting in a requirement for further work to be undertaken to confirm the status of the BAO2 within the next 2 years.
52. Include proposed changes and improvements	Support the Action Provide greater resourcing and financial support for local government to undertake reviews of existing and former landfills and waste and recycling facilities to determine whether the BAO is an appropriate tool to be implemented.

More feedback (optional)

The City also has the following infrastructure needs that rely on external funding to be realised. These are part of our current State and Federal Government advocacy programs.

DTP Road Network - Transport Project Investment

The City is strongly in support of State Government investment in the following transport infrastructure to cater for the ongoing growth of Bendigo:

1. Intersection - Midland Highway / Howard Street, Epsom

The State Government funded approximately \$600,000 in the 2022/23 State Budget to undertake planning and detailed design on this intersection upgrade. Construction of this upgrade is required to cater for this strong growth corridor.

This project is consistently raised by the community as a high priority for the State to invest in.

2. Intersection – Calder Hwy and Maiden Gully Road, Maiden Gully

This intersection signalisation upgrade is required to service the Maiden Gully growth area, as shown in the Victorian Government's Plan for Victoria.

The Department of Transport and Planning – Transport (DTP) has been liaising with the City, and other local developers/ organisations, to resolve the intersection and confirm financial contributions for many years. The cost may be in the order of \$7M to fund the project. Some funds should be available from local developments as well as the City of Greater Bendigo to assist the State to deliver the project.

3. Intersection – Calder Hwy and Calder Alternate Hwy, Marong

This intersection signalisation is required to better cater for the increase in traffic generated from four new residential precincts surrounding the Marong township, as well as from the Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct, and ensure that the intersection is safe for all users. Around 25% of the cost will be collected through local Development Contributions with the remaining cost (approximately \$4.2M) to be funded by State and Local Government.

Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct (BREP) – trunk infrastructure

The Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct is being planned and designed to provide critical industrial land to the broader region. There is less than 10 years of industrial land supply left in Greater Bendigo and this is restricted to smaller sites.

The Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct is identified in Plan for Victoria.

The Minister for Planning has appointed the Victorian Planning Authority as the planning authority for this significant industrial precinct, so it will be completing the rezoning and concept planning for the site. The rezoning process will begin with Exhibition stage in late 2025.

The City has commissioned an Infrastructure Strategy, which identifies that in order to get the first stages of development underway, \$100M worth of trunk infrastructure is required (power, sewer, water, intersections).

<https://vpa.vic.gov.au/project/brep/>

<https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/about-us/projects/bendigo-regional-employment-precinct>

Train Service Improvements

Currently a number of train stations in Greater Bendigo are underutilised due to the lack of train services. Epsom Station is currently serviced by seven trains on week days, Eaglehawk Station by five, and Huntly Station by three. These services reduce on weekends.

The current level of service does not position train travel as a viable alternative to car use for most community members. As an example, only 0.2% of residents travelled to work by train in 2021 and 0.7% in 2016. The lack of alternative transport options entrenches car dependency and contributes to accessibility and cost of living challenges.

Increasing the City's intra and intercity train services would help reduce traffic while supporting equal access and reduced emissions from transport. Reopening of the Golden Square Railway Station is also an advocacy priority for the City.

This information is supported by the City's Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy (ITLUS):

<https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/about-us/plans-strategies-and-documents/integrated-transport-and-land-use-strategy>

