

Submission Form:

Victoria's draft 30-year infrastructure strategy

Organisation Details:

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Introduction

The City of Whittlesea welcomes the release of Infrastructure Victoria's draft infrastructure strategy 2025-2055 and acknowledges the work that has gone into shaping its recommendations.

Council is pleased to see the strategy's emphasis on housing, jobs and opportunities. However, there is a broader and more urgent need for investment in transport infrastructure across Melbourne's north than what the report recommends. Additionally, recommendations should be updated to include Melbourne's Growth areas by name, including the Epping Metropolitan Activity Centre. It is also worth acknowledging the important role Local Government plays in planning and delivering infrastructure, the broader impacts of cost shifting on local government's ability to deliver infrastructure and community services, and how important partnerships are with other layers of government and the private market – for which innovation is needed.

Located 20 kilometres north of Melbourne's Central Business District and covering some 490km², the City of Whittlesea is one of Melbourne's largest municipalities. A city of diverse suburbs and places including established neighbourhoods, extensive residential growth corridors, and rural areas. The City of Whittlesea's population is expected to increase 50% to 360,692 by 2040. Our community needs adequate infrastructure investment that keeps at pace with this rapid growth.

With the City of Whittlesea's Gross Regional Product exceeding \$10.4 billion in 2022, and growing 7.3% since the previous year, additional investment by the State Government could further unlock the prosperity and liveability of the region.

Sector: Local Government Area

Topics: Across Sectors

Regions: Urban Growth areas, Melbourne

Document Date

17 April 2025

Directorate Responsible

Advocacy and Community Research

Feedback Areas

Topic/area:	Victorians have good access to housing, jobs, services and opportunities
Recommendation name:	Build more social housing
Recommendation number:	1
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

Tell us why:

The City of Whittlesea strongly supports this recommendation, especially in light of the increasing demand for social housing, as reflected in both Victorian and local social housing waiting lists. With rising financial instability, growing rates of homelessness, and numerous other identified health and wellbeing challenges, it is crucial to set targets for expanding social housing. This will help address the urgent need for secure, affordable housing and contribute to improving the overall wellbeing of vulnerable community members.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

The City of Whittlesea has seen a significant increase in demand for social housing, with local waiting lists growing each year. Data from the local housing and homelessness service providers, along with recent surveys, show a steady rise in the number of residents experiencing housing insecurity and financial distress. Additionally, the City of Whittlesea has witnessed a growing number of people seeking emergency housing support, which further highlights the need for increased investment in social housing.

Recent reports, such as the City of Whittlesea's Housing Strategy, underscore the gap in affordable housing options for low and moderate-income households. This strategy identifies the urgent need for targeted housing solutions, especially as the population grows and new developments emerge. As part of the City of Whittlesea's ongoing commitment to address these issues, social housing initiatives are viewed as a crucial element in ensuring equitable and sustainable outcomes for residents facing housing challenges.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

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To address the growing demand for social housing, the City of Whittlesea advocates for greater collaboration between local government, state agencies, and non-profit organisations to ensure that social housing projects are well integrated into the broader urban planning framework.

Council supports Local Government having a role in identifying locations for social and affordable housing and ensuring the projects are of high quality, sustainable design and contribute positively to their neighbourhoods and ensuring the housing has access to essential services such as public transport, healthcare, and educational facilities. Incorporation of community consultation and input in the design and implementation of social housing projects will ensure that they better meet the needs of the local population. Local, State and Federal governments should partner to raise awareness of the need for social housing to facilitate acceptance within communities and delivery.

Topic/area:	Victorians have good access to housing, jobs, services and opportunities
Recommendation name:	Plan and deliver expanded and new schools
Recommendation number:	3
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ In part

Tell us why:

The City of Whittlesea support the principle of additional schools being required, particularly in growth areas, and expansion being explored where suitable. However more information is needed around tangible approaches or improvements to be implemented.

The State Government school planning is perceived to be ad hoc and reactive. There is rarely opportunity for consultation between an announcement and construction commencing. This leaves little room for:

- Councils to support good design, particularly in growth areas, due to limitations on local government going through public acquisition processes for adjacent land simultaneously.
- Council and DET to negotiate shared use arrangements or co-contribution into potentially sharable spaces on school sites (i.e. Gyms, sports fields, community spaces etc). This ultimately leads to missed opportunities for co-collaboration for the construction of larger facilities and also leads to the duplication of facilities within close proximity where infrastructure built at a school site is not fit for a broader purpose.

The recommendation also doesn't outline whether:

- Existing shared use facilities in schools will be protected (i.e. Sports fields on school grounds with community access), or whether the expansion will come at the cost of these facilities
- Additional operational work will be required if PPP schools come back into the delivery model, as previously delivered PPP arrangements did not consider shared use arrangements which led to significant operational challenges post construction.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

- There are at least 11 new public schools planned for the City of Whittlesea in our growing suburbs where, with early local government consultations, scenarios such as the below can be avoided.
- Edgars Creek Primary and Secondary College (Wollert) – Separate announcements led to missed opportunities to create a larger gym/stadium that could support community competition pathways. The layout and location of the school sporting facilities does not integrate with the planned Council sporting reserve adjacent to the school.
- Wirrigirri Primary School (Wollert) – Missed opportunity for Council to acquire land adjacent to the school for simultaneous deliver of open space and sporting facilities that could have supported the school's use.
- Wollert Primary School and Wollert Secondary College (Wollert) – DET pushed forward with construction of sporting infrastructure that is non-compliant to State Sporting Association guidelines for sporting club use, despite feedback provided by Council. As such, Council will not be able to invest into activation of this facility for community use outside of school hours.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

Greater detail is required into the recommendation to advise:

- Whether existing school amenities, including gyms, sports fields, and open space, will be protected as part of the expansion considerations
- What approaches/improvements can be made to timing of announcements vs delivery timeline to maximise partnership opportunities and joint planning for better community design outcomes
- Acknowledgement of operational considerations at the time of planning when rolling out PPP models.

Topic/area:

Victorians have good access to housing, jobs, services and opportunities

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Recommendation name:	Expand TAFE in Melbourne's Growth areas and some large regional centres
Recommendation number:	4
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ In part

Tell us why

The City of Whittlesea supports the six objectives and draft recommendation four, which calls for the expansion of TAFE campuses in Melbourne's west, north, and south-east growth areas by 2030 to address the skills gap, particularly in construction, energy, and healthcare sectors. The government's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy outlines plans to expand TAFE campuses to accommodate rising student enrolments, but this expansion hinges not only on infrastructure development but also on the availability of qualified teachers, a challenge that must be addressed concurrently.

Construction and healthcare training are expected to experience the largest increase in demand, requiring hands-on, in-person instruction with specialised equipment and workshop space. Emerging sectors, such as battery storage, renewable energy, and wind farms, will need TAFE educators to upskill, as teaching expertise in these fields is currently limited. In support of the 'Learning for Life' report (page 45), the City of Whittlesea emphasises the need for more skilled workers to support energy transitions. Recent discussions with RMIT, Kangan, and Melbourne Polytechnic have highlighted the shortage of qualified teachers as a major barrier to expanding course offerings. Without immediate action to recruit, train, and retain TAFE educators, newly expanded campuses risk being underutilised. Facilities must support a range of specialised, hands-on training needs, including trade workshops, simulation labs, energy and sustainability training centres, and flexible classrooms with digital and AI capabilities. Infrastructure investment should focus on campuses with room to grow, strong public transport links, and proximity to employment hubs.

To ensure these expanded facilities are fully utilised a comprehensive strategy needs to be implemented to address the teacher shortage, including:

- incentives to attract industry professionals into teaching
- fast-tracked teacher training pathways
- support for retention and professional development
- broader workforce strategies

Collaboration with the business industry is essential to success. Businesses play a key role in identifying skills needs and shaping facilities, equipment, and training models. Industry input ensures that new infrastructure and training align with real-world environments and workforce demands. Feedback from the industry is that TAFE courses are not keeping pace with the skill

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requirements of the future. More women are required in trades to create a stronger, more diverse workforce. When building infrastructure government must ensure facilities offer supportive training environments.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

Australian Education Union – Victorian Branch:

- Skills shortage across the Victorian economy are being impacted by a shortage of TAFE teachers to deliver the courses needed.
- The Victorian Government forecasts that they will need an additional 2,709 Vocational Education Teachers by 2026.

Source:

<https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/data/labour-market-insights/industries/education-and-training>
[The future of education: Five big changes ahead for teaching in Australia - RMIT University](#)

Include proposed changes and improvements:

N/A

Topic/area:	Victorians have good access to housing, jobs, services and opportunities
Recommendation name:	Build libraries and aquatic centres for Melbourne's growing communities
Recommendation number:	5
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ In part

Tell us why:

There is immense value that libraries and aquatics bring to the community. However, the recommendation is reflective of traditional infrastructure delivery models and does not adequately consider:

- That the construction of aquatic and library infrastructure is increasing, as are operational costs with delivering these services
- Councils cannot afford to maintain the existing level of service desired in the 30-year infrastructure plan in a rate capping environment
- The role of private sector in pool provision, with providers such as King swim and other privately owned learn to swim centres play a role in meeting market demand for Learn to

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Swim education, which is also the most commercially sustainable element of swimming pool provision.

- The current funding environment. The Better Pools fund has been eliminated and State Government funding towards this infrastructure is now capped and only obtainable through non-pool specific competitive funding rounds or election commitments.
- A one size fits all approach for library planning is not applicable for everyone. Different communities will have different needs and differing levels of reliance on library services. The recommendation does not acknowledge this and assumes that every community needs large branches or destination libraries to meet local needs. More innovative service thinking is required to respond to changing community needs.
- There are limited library providers who can support the delivery of library services. The lack of market options monopolises this service increasing operational costs.
- The recommendation mentions that staged delivery can reduce upfront costs, but staged delivery leads to increased overall capital costs as cost escalation in the construction sector is rapidly increasing each year. This is not always a sustainable delivery model for Councils.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

- State Government sport funding streams (outside of election commitments) have decreased by approximately 91% - from \$216M to \$17.5M since FY 2020/21. However, construction costs have increased approximately 25%-40% during this time, widening the funding gap for Councils to fill. For example: Current project that was costed at \$60M before COVID is now costed at \$100M.
- Mernda Library (Mernda) and Kirrip Library (Wollert) are examples of smaller and different library service delivery models in Whittlesea – both delivered in the last 12 months. Time is needed to evaluate the potential role of these types of facilities in long term library service planning as they could help to fill current facility gaps.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

- Greater openness to alternative service delivery models for both aquatics and library services to combat the 'one size fits all approach'.
- State Government funding contributions to go toward whole of facility costs – not just portions as business cases are only viable if the whole of facilities is delivered. For example, a standalone pool is not financially viable, but a pool combined with a stadium or gym is financially viable.
- Libraries can considerably contribute to place making initiatives. Funding other spaces and greater openness to alternative service delivery models for both aquatics and library services can combat the 'one size fits all approach'.
- Strengthened commitment to funding a minimum amount towards aquatics and library projects would be welcomed. The idea of State Government funding a third of aquatics projects and \$10M of a library project is attractive and will support business cases and

advocacy for these projects, whereas language such as ‘up to a third of’ creates doubt and uncertainty.

Topic/area:	Victorians have good access to housing, jobs, services and opportunities
Recommendation name:	Making Government infrastructure more accessible
Recommendation number:	6
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

Tell us why:

The City of Whittlesea supports this recommendation, especially considering proposed legislative changes that aim to enhance accessibility requirements. These changes emphasise the importance of removing, reducing, and preventing barriers for individuals with disabilities. Public transport systems and public buildings should lead the way in setting a new benchmark for addressing these enhanced accessibility needs.

The upgrade of public transport stops and interchange points is an important aspect of achieving accessibility for all users of public transport. It will offer new transport options for prospective public transport users and help ease the affordability challenges associated with car ownership. This is particularly important given that many community members with accessibility issues may suffer from financial hardship.

Our community will also benefit from complete, DDA-compliant footpath connections to and from every public transport stop—supporting the ‘first and last mile’ of every journey and addressing any missing links in the existing footpath network.

Share any supporting evidence or examples: Nil

Include proposed changes and improvements:

Ongoing funding for community transport is essential to promoting inclusive access for community members experiencing various accessibility barriers and vulnerabilities. It offers a vital transport option for residents who are otherwise excluded from a wide range of activities due to barriers to accessing other forms of transport.

Topic/area:	Victoria has good access to housing, jobs, services and opportunities
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Recommendation name:	Rezone locations near existing infrastructure for more home choices
Recommendation number:	7
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ In part

Tell us why:

The City of Whittlesea supports this recommendation in part, as rezoning land in proximity to existing infrastructure can facilitate the delivery of a greater variety of housing typologies in areas that are suitable for increased density. This approach can help accommodate population growth while making efficient use of established services and transport networks.

However, any future rezoning must also carefully consider a broader range of planning factors beyond infrastructure access. These include flooding risk, heritage values, environmental constraints, and existing subdivision patterns. A balanced, context-sensitive approach is essential to ensure new development is both appropriate and sustainable. Good design is essential, to ensure that higher density housing offers good levels of amenity for residents and contribute to high quality neighbourhoods.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

N/A

Include proposed changes and improvements:

The City of Whittlesea supports this recommendation in part, as rezoning land near existing infrastructure can support the delivery of a wider range of housing typologies in areas suitable for increased density. This can help address housing demand while making better use of established services and transport networks.

However, any future rezoning must also consider key planning factors beyond infrastructure access, including flood risk, heritage values, environmental constraints, and existing subdivision patterns. Rezoning for higher-density development may also lead to increased land values and place additional demand on infrastructure and services. To ensure the community benefits from this uplift, value capture mechanisms should be explored to deliver public infrastructure and amenities in line with the scale of development. Importantly, the community and local Council must be engaged through a transparent and meaningful consultation process to ensure any changes reflect local needs and priorities.

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Topic/area:	Transport
Recommendation name:	Extend Melbourne's trams to encourage new homes nearby
Recommendation number:	8
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

Tell us why:

Council is advocating for an extension to Tram route 86, from the current terminus at Bundoora RMIT through to Plenty Valley Town Centre, in South Morang. This would allow an additional 15,000 residents to easily use South Morang train station on the Mernda line for better access to education, employment, retail and health services.

A good public transport network will provide wider transport choices for the community. Public transport coverage and frequency are essential to improving mode share and providing convenient travel choices. Improved coverage, particularly into the growing suburbs, will ensure that new residents are connected into the public transport network sooner and are not forced into car dependency. Improved densities of land use must be coordinated with improved public transport infrastructure.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

A commitment to extending Tram 86 would signal increased public transport capacity along Plenty Road and towards Plenty Valley Town Centre. This could serve as a catalyst for encouraging higher-density housing within the catchment.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

Include the extension of Tram 86 to Plenty Valley Town Centre in South Morang.

Topic/area:	Transport
Recommendation name:	Run faster bus services, more often, in Victoria's largest cities
Recommendation number:	9
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

Tell us why:

The key determinants of public transport patronage are well understood. Existing and prospective users want a safe, reliable, well-communicated, convenient and connected system. Users also want fast and frequent services with short waiting times for modal interchange.

Public transport coverage and frequency are essential to improving mode share and providing convenient travel choices to the community. Improved coverage, particularly in our growing suburbs, will ensure that new residents are connected to the public transport network sooner and are not forced into car dependency.

Increased frequency of services will provide more confidence, convenience and comfort to existing and prospective transport users, including for trips that involve modal interchange.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

Buses often suffer from a poor public image, with many routes perceived as indirect, slow, and circuitous - resulting in a subpar customer experience. In the City of Whittlesea, 80% of households are located within 400 metres of a bus stop, yet patronage remains low. Many local trips are short and well-suited to bus travel, highlighting untapped potential. Notably, 4% of households in the municipality do not have access to a car, underscoring the need for more reliable and appealing bus services.

By straightening routes and improving frequency, there is an opportunity to offer viable alternatives to driving, which will provide relief from the cost of running a vehicle.

Passengers will be more willing to accept modal interchange if the connections offered are frequent, reliable and punctual.

Span of service is also critical, allowing passengers to travel earlier or later in the day with confidence that a return journey is possible. Epping is an expanding retail and healthcare hub—home to the Northern Hospital—and improved service span and frequency would enhance access for shift workers. The City of Whittlesea also has a significant number of blue-collar employment hubs and industrial areas, where bus services could be strengthened. Additionally, east–west travel within the municipality remains a challenge. There is a clear need for investment in high-quality, direct east–west bus services along arterial roads to improve transport options and connectivity.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) Bus Reform work appears to indicate that consolidation of routes would allow fast, frequent and direct connections and phase out the old, poorly patronised legacy routes, which by nature are long and circuitous.

Integration with other public transport modes is important for those longer trips that require interchange. This also requires more reliable and frequent services.

The nature of travel patterns post-pandemic has given rise to a large uplift in recreational trips. Better integration between modes could see bus patronage increase to support this shift.

Access to blue-collar employment and industrial hubs, as well as improving east-west bus capacity.

Timely extensions of bus routes into growth areas should be frequent and reliable. Ideally, these are live prior to occupancy in order for new residents to enjoy wider transport choices and not be forced into car dependency.

Topic/area:	Transport
Recommendation name:	Build a new rapid bus transit network
Recommendation number:	10
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ In part

Tell us why:

The Epping North to Wollert corridor is a key growth area within the City of Whittlesea. A heavy rail extension from Lalor to Wollert—known as the Wollert Rail—has been identified in numerous statutory planning documents, including Plan Melbourne and the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan (PSP). This corridor includes the rapidly growing Epping Metropolitan Activity Centre (MAC), which is emerging as a major retail and health hub.

Council has identified that Wollert Rail will be essential by 2030 to meet the transport capacity required to support population growth and increasing travel demand. Currently, 65% of residents leave the municipality for work each day, and the Epping MAC is projected to be a significant trip generator.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems typically include dedicated lanes or other bus priority measures, enabling faster journey times and making this mode of transport competitive with private vehicles.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems typically include dedicated lanes or other bus priority measures, enabling faster journey times and making this mode of transport competitive with private vehicles. By implementing BRT along key corridors in the City of Whittlesea, we can significantly improve public transport efficiency, especially in high-demand areas. BRT can provide a reliable and cost-effective alternative to car travel, reducing congestion and promoting more sustainable transportation choices. Additionally, the dedicated lanes and priority measures would help buses avoid delays caused by traffic, ensuring quicker and more predictable travel times for passengers.

The introduction of BRT could also encourage greater use of public transport, particularly for those who currently rely on private vehicles for short trips. With the City of Whittlesea's growth and evolving transport needs, BRT would play a key role in enhancing connectivity between key

residential, commercial, and employment hubs, improving accessibility to essential services, and supporting future urban development plans. By offering an efficient and competitive alternative to car travel, BRT could also contribute to reducing the region's overall carbon footprint and help create a more sustainable, integrated transport network.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

As an interim solution ahead of rail, Council is supportive of a rapid bus service linking Epping to Wollert. This would provide public transport capacity until heavy rail is built. Council is immediately seeking a Public Acquisition Overlay to guarantee the availability of land to build the future rail extension.

The proposed link between Donnybrook to Keilor East would provide Donnybrook residents with greater transport choices for regular rail connections at Craigieburn station, as well as access to employment precincts at Airport West and Broadmeadows. This is supported.

Topic/area:	Transport
Recommendation name:	Make off-peak public transport cheaper
Recommendation number:	13
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

Tell us why:

The introduction of off-peak fares would provide wide-ranging benefits. Off-peak fares would enable people (including low-income families) to benefit from cheaper and more affordable fares outside of the traditional peak periods. Off-peak fares would also incentivise the community to choose to travel during quieter periods. The rise in off-peak recreational trips would be more affordable for families and therefore also make public transport more cost competitive with car travel and reduce pressure on the road network. Changes to the fare structure may result in fewer peak trips and many new off-peak trips, and prospective new public transport users.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

The City of Whittlesea faces socio-economic challenges, with 4% of households lacking access to a car. Expanding off-peak public transport services can help address these challenges by providing greater mobility for those without a car, offering socio-economic benefits, and promoting more equitable outcomes for residents.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

Consider introducing fares that reflect the mode of travel, as bus trips are typically shorter and can sometimes appear overpriced. Many bus users come from disadvantaged backgrounds and reducing fares for bus travel could promote more equitable outcomes.

For fare reform, including off-peak fares, to have a meaningful impact on our community, there must be a significant increase in service frequency and reliability. Additionally, targeted investment in route extensions to growth suburbs is essential to ensure comprehensive coverage and expand the catchment area for bus services.

Off-peak fare reductions alone would be ineffective if there is no bus service available within the catchment of new estates. A holistic approach—improving both service accessibility and affordability—is key to achieving long-term benefits.

Topic/area:	Transport, Victorians are healthy and safe
Recommendation name:	Make local streets safer for children and communities
Recommendation number:	14
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

Tell us why:

The City of Whittlesea supports the Safe System approach, which underpins our new Road Safety Plan. Council offers in principle support for the introduction of reduced and safer speed limits on local roads, particularly when implemented alongside complementary measures such as upgraded pedestrian crossings. This approach should be applied to areas with high pedestrian and cyclist activity, key routes around schools, and roads connecting residential areas to important destinations, as well as recreational routes.

Additionally, the City of Whittlesea Health Profile and draft Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan identify Active Living as one of our six key priority areas. These priorities reflect significant local gaps in physical activity participation and healthy lifestyle behaviours that safer local streets will help support. Addressing these issues requires not only improved access to supportive infrastructure—such as safe walking and cycling paths, open space, and community activities—but also enhanced communication and knowledge-sharing initiatives that empower residents to make safe and healthier choices.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) projects can include measures to boost road safety and create local environments that are more attractive for walking and cycling.

2025 City of Whittlesea Municipal Health & Wellbeing Plan (draft)

Include proposed changes and improvements:

To effectively address gaps in community safety and lack of physical activity, strategic investment in community infrastructure is needed. This includes expanding the network of shared paths and walkable streetscapes, ensuring open spaces are safe, accessible and equipped for active use, and activating spaces with community inclusion opportunities, such as embedding edible landscapes and community gardens into urban design. Planning schemes should more explicitly integrate health/safety outcomes as a consideration in land use and development assessments. Additionally, targeted funding is needed for active living and community activity programs—particularly those co-designed with community members and delivered in local neighbourhood settings.

Improved coordination across state and local government departments, healthcare providers, and the not-for-profit sector would enable a more integrated approach to delivering safe & health-promoting environments. Embedding measurable health targets into infrastructure and land use planning frameworks will help ensure developments meet the needs of a growing and diverse population, particularly in growth areas like the City of Whittlesea, where lifestyle-related chronic health conditions are prevalent.

Community members with various vulnerabilities, including the elderly and people with disabilities, will also benefit from safer streets. As they are more likely to rely on walking to access local services and amenities, they are particularly vulnerable road users who stand to gain from enhanced safety measures.

Topic/area:	Transport
Recommendation name:	Build safe cycling networks in Melbourne and regional cities
Recommendation number:	15
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

Tell us why:

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Cycling is best supported by a safe, direct, complete, and connected network. A key factor in increasing cycling participation is the provision of safe, separated cycling infrastructure, including end-of-trip facilities, coupled with targeted behaviour change programs.

Providing this infrastructure can unlock latent demand for cycling, catering to both functional transport needs and recreational opportunities, thereby offering the community more transport choices. Many trips in our municipality are short (under 5 km), making cycling a viable option. There is significant potential to shift short car trips to cycling trips, reducing congestion and promoting healthier, more sustainable travel.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

The provision of more cycling corridors will enable improved transport choices for residents to access key destinations, including employment. It will also provide recreational cycling opportunities linked to improved health outcomes.

Council is seeking funding to construct the High Street Shared User Path between Keon Park train station to Epping train station. This would provide residents with a high-quality off-road transport choice, providing access to multiple key destinations and is also part of the network of strategic cycling corridors.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

Providing greater transport choices should help reduce car dependency and alleviate the affordability challenges associated with car ownership. Council advocates for careful consideration of both outer and growth suburbs, as well as inner suburbs, ensuring that transport options are accessible across the entire municipality.

Topic/area:	Victorians are healthy and safe
Recommendation name:	Help government schools share their grounds
Recommendation number:	16
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ In part

Tell us why:

A uniform approach to all schools should be applied rather than the draft recommendation which suggests prioritisation of some schools over others.

The two biggest challenges to ground sharing are:

- **Facilities that are not fit for purpose** – Many school facilities are not built to compliance standards of sporting associations and do not have access to essential infrastructure such as toilets and storage. Therefore, they cannot be utilised by local sporting groups on an ongoing basis. Increased willingness is required from State Government to build these facilities to relevant compliance levels if they wish to share their grounds for broader community use.
- **A non-uniform approach to shared use agreements** – While there is a standard JUA agreement, the contents and negotiations of individual sites are left up to the principal of individual schools. This created barriers for long term partnership with Council's and eliminates any incentive for Council investment into facility upgrades on school sites as the principal can change their mind at any stage and there is no longer term security in the agreement to justify or protect Council investment.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

- Of the 59 outdoor courts available at Government based schools in the City of Whittlesea, only 23% (14 courts) are compliant for outdoor training. Six of the 14 courts are currently failing due to poor initial construction. Only 3% (two courts) of the 59 courts are currently floodlit to support local club netball training. The remaining courts cannot be used for local clubs as netball is played predominately in Winter when daylight savings ends.
- Of the 29 indoor courts available at Government based schools in the City of Whittlesea, only 13% (four courts) are compliant for indoor netball and basketball competition. A further 24% (seven courts) are compliant for basketball but are unlikely to be used as six of these are single courts only, which is not sustainable for local basketball clubs who need a minimum of two courts side by side for training.
- Several soccer and AFL facilities are non-compliant or built only to junior size with no lighting provision, toilet access or storage opportunities. School principals are reluctant to grant access to school toilets and have not in the past granted permission for Clubs or Council's to build storage on school land.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

- Expand recommendation to say 'Give schools or local government extra help for maintenance' rather than just schools to encourage local government to assist with implementation of this recommendation and reduce pressure on school resources.
- Establish a uniform approach to agreements consisting of minimum requirements that apply to all schools (ie. Duration, type of access, hours of use etc). This will eliminate personal principal preferences, provide greater security around tenure for local government and community groups and open school facilities for greater community use.
- Build fit for purpose compliant sporting facilities at new schools and invest in redevelopment of existing school facilities to state sporting association standards. This will create opportunities

for partnership discussions with local government including the potential for local government to invest in sporting infrastructure on school land.

- Facilitate better communication between State Government's DET and Sport and Recreation departments to ensure consistent support to local government partners and to maximise partnership opportunities and outcomes for shared facility use.
- Consider opening other school facilities for community use or other educational institutions as well as sports grounds. For example: Libraries, home economics rooms, music studios etc can be used by TAFEs, for home schooling, tutoring, tertiary education. Example: Kurunjang Community Hub (Melton City Council) – has a partnership between the school and Council to open the school's fit for purpose kitchen for community use outside of school hours.

Topic/area:	Victorians are healthy and safe
Recommendation name:	Invest in maintenance, upgrades and expansions of community health facilities
Recommendation number:	17
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

Tell us why:

The City of Whittlesea agrees with this recommendation, as enhanced access & provision of health services/facilities that best responds to the current & future community needs (such as mental health and wellbeing) are critical priorities outlined in the current City of Whittlesea Health Profile and the draft Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. While current initiatives like Mental Health and Wellbeing Local are addressing pressing needs in the municipality, the growing demand for health services, particularly in post-COVID times and in fast-growing areas, necessitates further investment in connected, responsive systems supported by modern, culturally safe, adaptive and easily accessible infrastructure.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

2025 City of Whittlesea Health Profile & Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan (draft)

Include proposed changes and improvements:

N/A

Topic/area:	Victorians are healthy and safe
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Advocacy and Community Research

Recommendation name:	Fund better health and wellbeing infrastructure for Aboriginal Victorians
Recommendation number:	23
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

Tell us why:

The City of Whittlesea supports this recommendation for collaborative reconciliation, self-determination principles and enhancing culturally safe support spaces - critical in the current climate. Additionally, these recommendations align with the City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Action Plan principles and targets.

Furthermore, Council's Health Profile highlights the significant health and well-being intersectional issues impacting our high First Peoples population, and such focus on supporting and developing Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to better plan and deliver culturally appropriate infrastructure will help respond to this.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

2025 City of Whittlesea Health Profile & Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan (draft)

Include proposed changes and improvements:

N/A

Topic/area:	Victoria has a thriving natural environment
Recommendation name:	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from infrastructure
Recommendation number:	24
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ In part

Tell us why:

Document Date

17 April 2025

Directorate Responsible

Advocacy and Community Research

The City of Whittlesea agrees in part with this recommendation. To drive meaningful emissions reductions, it is essential to set a clear target to work toward.

The construction of new housing and buildings contributes significantly to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. To address this, greater emphasis should be placed on small-scale, passive design, and modular construction techniques. These approaches offer lower-impact alternatives to conventional building methods.

The NSW Government references the University of Melbourne’s Environmental Performance in Construction (EPiC) database as a reliable standard for measuring embodied carbon emissions in new building construction. To ensure total emissions remain within the Victorian Government’s reduction targets, embodied GHG emissions from each new building should be recorded and monitored consistently across the construction sector.

Modular housing presents a more sustainable alternative to traditional construction. It typically requires fewer materials, produces less waste, and supports higher energy efficiency. In fact, modular homes can be built using as little as one-third of the GHG emissions associated with standard building methods. When installed on stumps instead of concrete slabs, modular homes also help lower land development costs by reducing the need for excavation, cut and fill, and rock removal, further minimising their environmental footprint.

Additionally, modular buildings constructed on stumps offer greater resilience in the face of natural disasters. In flood-prone areas, they can be elevated or relocated, providing more flexible and sustainable rebuilding options following events such as floods.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

The City of Whittlesea has recently lodged a provisional patent (Application No. 2024903170) for an innovative **Water Treatment System and Process for Treating Water**. This system provides an alternative method for managing stormwater runoff in urban developments by replacing most conventional stormwater infrastructure with a combination of rainwater tanks and ephemeral wetlands.

By eliminating traditional stormwater systems, the remaining four essential utility services—potable water, electricity, sewage, and NBN—can be placed closer together. This streamlined configuration helps reduce land development costs and cuts greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions typically associated with large-scale land development.

This approach complements modular construction techniques and supports efforts to reduce emissions in new building projects. The City of Whittlesea has also contributed to a review article on affordable housing, published in *The Fifth Estate* (March 2025), which advocates for small, passive-design, modular housing as a sustainable solution.

Climate-related infrastructure damage is already placing significant financial strain on communities, with rising insurance premiums and the high costs of rebuilding. As highlighted in a recent ABC News article (15 April 2025), many high-risk areas face threats from riverine flooding, surface flooding, or bushfires—further underscoring the importance of resilient, low-impact development strategies.

Source: [Climate risk makes suburbs 'uninsurable'. But Shepparton offers answers - ABC News](#)

Include proposed changes and improvements:

Greater emphasis should be placed on constructing new housing and infrastructure using high-quality, passive-design, modular construction methods. These methods are not only more sustainable, but they also result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions during both construction and operation, making them a critical strategy in addressing climate change. Additionally, modular construction techniques reduce waste and are more energy-efficient, contributing to long-term environmental and financial sustainability.

A target should also be set that aligns with the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global temperature rise to below 1.5 degrees Celsius. Establishing clear carbon reduction targets for new housing and infrastructure projects will guide decision-making, ensuring that projects contribute to the global effort of mitigating climate change. This can be achieved by adopting carbon values and measuring carbon emissions for each infrastructure project, enabling the City of Whittlesea to set and meet an infrastructure emissions reduction target that is in line with the Paris Agreement's climate goals. This approach will foster long-term resilience in urban development while supporting global sustainability efforts.

Topic/area:	Victoria has a thriving natural environment
Recommendation name:	Advance integrated water management and use more recycled water
Recommendation number:	25
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

Tell us why:

Document Date

17 April 2025

Directorate Responsible

Advocacy and Community Research

Integrated Water Management must strongly embrace updated best practices in stormwater management, particularly reducing overall stormwater runoff volumes in line with EPA guidelines. The City of Whittlesea is committed to applying a tiered approach to stormwater management:

1. **Capture and reuse** water on-site or locally where water quality is suitable for the intended use.
2. **Reduce runoff** in areas without a water demand by modifying surface textures to encourage infiltration.
3. **Delay and moderate** runoff where neither of the above is possible, ensuring it does not negatively impact downstream environments.

These principles support the broader objectives of Integrated Water Management by treating stormwater as a valuable resource. This approach helps reduce reliance on potable water, supports urban cooling for more liveable neighbourhoods, and protects natural waterways and habitats for local wildlife.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

The City of Whittlesea promotes the stormwater management principles in the published IWM guidelines, with examples of adoptable technologies, design, modelling, construction and infrastructure operation advice.

Source: [IWM guidelines](#)

Include proposed changes and improvements:

Council recommends that the EPA flow volume targets are embedded in the planning scheme as standards for clauses in the particular provisions (especially in 56.07-4, 55.05-1, 54.03-4, 57.05-1, 58.03-8). Ensuring wide-spread adoption in new land development, Precinct Structure Plans, Development Services Schemes (Stormwater) and promote further innovation in stormwater management practices.

Topic/area:	Victoria has a thriving natural environment
Recommendation name:	Better Use of Government Land for Open Space and Greenery
Recommendation number:	26
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

Tell us why:

The City of Whittlesea has several large, strategic open space projects that remain unfinished and present significant opportunities to enhance biodiversity and expand passive open space offerings for the community. The recommendation to make better use of government-owned land for open space and greenery could be realised through a coordinated review, audit, and implementation process—focused on completing existing strategic plans.

This process must also give careful consideration to environmental and heritage values to ensure that future land use remains consistent with ecological and cultural significance. For example, golf courses can serve as important refuges for native wildlife and opening them to broader recreational uses—such as dog walking—may have unintended negative impacts on these ecosystems.

Council welcomes opportunities to increase canopy cover across the municipality, in alignment with the **Greening Whittlesea Strategy**. We strongly advocate for the use of locally indigenous and native plant species to ensure that greening efforts also provide critical habitat and food sources for native fauna.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

Public land managers and stakeholders have begun collaborations through the ‘Suburban Parks Program’ on areas like *marram baba Merri Creek Regional Park*. These collaborations provide a good template for how local and state agencies, along with traditional owners and water authorities, can partner to co-manage parklands that improve and enhance the quality of these areas for the surrounding communities. Actions to implement the existing plans will increase the quantity of green space available for appropriate public use and core ecological services.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

Investigate the gaps in public land ownership, such as unreserved crown land that could be reviewed for actively managed environmental reserves.

Examples of improvement within the City of Whittlesea include:

- Connections through the Grassy Eucalypt Woodland in Melbourne’s outer north link to the Quarry Hills Regional Park (another Suburban Parks Program collaboration).
- Unmanaged crown land frontage on the Plenty River in Mernda and Doreen that could provide a green link between Plenty Gorge Parkland and Yan Yean Reservoir.
- Wallan Wallen Regional Park that continues the marram baba Regional Park to Melbourne’s outer hinterland.

Topic/area:	Victoria has a thriving natural environment
Recommendation name:	Better prepare infrastructure for climate change
Recommendation number:	27
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ In part

Tell us why:

Local Government is at the front line of climate change. All levels of government should work closely together to ensure climate adaptation actions are prioritised in at risk areas. This action has the opportunity to acknowledge the great work of Local Government and acknowledge the need for investment in infrastructure upgrades at the local level.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

N/A

Include proposed changes and improvements:

Work with Local Government to fund high-priority, cost-effective infrastructure.

Topic/area:	Victoria has a thriving natural environment
Recommendation name:	Coordinate faster delivery of key energy infrastructure
Recommendation number:	29
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ In part

Tell us why:

The City of Whittlesea supports the recommendation in part. This is an important goal, and it is necessary to fast-track key projects. This recommendation needs to include community engagement and benefit sharing as an integral first step to any energy projects.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

Document Date

17 April 2025

Directorate Responsible

Advocacy and Community Research

There have been many cases of push back against big energy projects, including offshore wind, solar farms and transmission lines. Council needs to ensure that engagement and inclusion are at the forefront of key energy infrastructure projects.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

To support the successful rollout of key energy projects, it is critical to establish a unified energy transition framework that ensures genuine and respectful community engagement is embedded from the outset. Early and consistent engagement enables communities to better understand the purpose, benefits, and potential impacts of energy infrastructure, fostering trust, transparency, and social licence.

Proposed improvements include the development of clear community engagement guidelines for all energy transition projects—particularly those in growth areas like the City of Whittlesea. These should include:

- Early engagement with Traditional Owners, local councils, and affected residents
- Transparent communication of project timelines, land use implications, and environmental considerations
- Support for localised benefit-sharing arrangements such as local jobs, training, and co-investment in community infrastructure
- A centralised platform or portal to track energy transition projects and their community consultation outcomes.

Embedding these changes within a coordinated energy transition strategy will help ensure that the shift to renewable and resilient energy systems is equitable, inclusive, and widely supported by the communities they serve.

Topic/area:	Victoria is resilient to climate change and other future risks
Recommendation name:	Improve environmental assessments and site selection for energy projects.
Recommendation number:	30
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ In part

Tell us why:

Document Date

17 April 2025

Directorate Responsible

Advocacy and Community Research

Providing clearer standards and guidance for major renewable energy projects is essential to unlocking further investment in the sector. However, it is equally important that biodiversity impacts are not assessed solely on modelled data available to the State Government. Instead, assessments must be grounded in fully verified, on-the-ground data.

Many proposed energy projects are located on private farmland where existing biodiversity knowledge, such as that captured in the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA), is extremely limited. This is largely due to a lack of previous assessments and data contributions in these areas. Consequently, applicants are often held to an unreasonable standard of proof by the VBA review team, despite the incomplete nature of the available records.

The strategy's example of wind energy projects impacting Brolgas or the Southern Bent-wing Bat is valid, but only scratches the surface. While these iconic species may be more easily modelled, many cryptic or lesser-known threatened species, such as the Striped Legless Lizard or various rare flora—can go undetected without detailed, targeted field assessments. Identifying these species requires physical access to private land, which may not be available to the State Government but is critical to conducting accurate, evidence-based environmental impact assessments.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

N/A

Include proposed changes and improvements:

The government should not be able to provide detailed land assessments and guidance on sites where localised knowledge is limited. A considered approach ensures impact mitigation and the thoughtful integration of energy infrastructure into the landscape. This would reduce the risk of broad biodiversity losses in the pursuit of clean energy.

Topic/area:	Cities – Urban Growth Areas
Recommendation name:	Prepare and publish infrastructure sector plans to shape Victoria's cities.
Recommendation number:	35
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

Tell us why:

The City of Whittlesea supports this recommendation as it provides greater transparency in decision-making and supports the integrated and coordinated delivery of infrastructure priorities across different levels of government and sectors. Clear, long-term infrastructure sector plans enable local governments, service providers, the private sector, and communities to align their planning and investment decisions with state-level priorities—helping to avoid duplication, address service gaps, and unlock co-investment opportunities.

Publishing these plans also enhances accountability, ensuring infrastructure planning is proactive, responsive to population growth, and equitable across growth and established areas. It is especially critical in rapidly growing outer metropolitan areas like the City of Whittlesea, where infrastructure often lags behind residential development. Publicly available sector plans can assist in advocating for timely delivery and funding of much-needed transport, health, education, energy, and digital infrastructure. These plans should also embed climate resilience, sustainability, and community wellbeing to ensure that the infrastructure of tomorrow meets the evolving needs of Victoria’s diverse communities.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

Council and DET/VSBA have been working together to identify opportunities and assist with prioritising sites for delivery. Council provides local knowledge from its planning functions and forecasting of infrastructure/development, such as the Donnybrook Farmhouse and Darebin Creek school sites.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

It is important to achieve better integration at different scales of government i.e., between state and local government. There is potential to include recommendations in respect to governance/responsibility for planning for regional level infrastructure. Cloverton MAC could be a good pilot study.

Infrastructure plans should assess barriers (or triggers) for delivery, including access to land. There is also little reference to the up to date, local knowledge that Councils possess, which could provide important information regarding project feasibility or demand for particular state infrastructure. State infrastructure sites will often rely on the provision of local infrastructure to unlock their delivery (e.g., Council roads).

Topic/area:	Cities – Urban Growth Areas
Recommendation name:	Reform infrastructure contributions
Recommendation number:	36

Do you support this topic or recommendation?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☒ In part

Tell us why:

While it is acknowledged that there are opportunities to improve the contributions system, including responding to the VAGO report Managing Development Contributions, very little information has been provided in the report regarding what potential models could look like, their scope and methodology. Council has concerns in respect to the current State Government reform.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

N/A

Include proposed changes and improvements:

The recommendation is not clear on the below critical items:

- Whether the model would cover both state and local infrastructure funding, as this seems to be implied but is not clear
- Whether the system intends to replace existing DCP/ICPs or how these would be managed under a new system
- Whether Councils would remain responsible for collecting and managing contributions
- Whether Clause 53.01 of the Planning Scheme will remain applicable for the purposes of funding open space or will become subject to a new system
- Milestones and timeframes for changes and where local government would be engaged within the process.

Any reform should ensure that:

- The process for developing and managing developer contribution plans is simplified
- Reducing barriers to levying contributions to areas experiencing incremental growth
- Councils maintain responsibility for collecting contributions for the infrastructure it is responsible for delivering
- Addresses the shortfalls of infrastructure projects and Councils are no worse off than the current system
- That the reform maintains the ability for Councils to negotiate the delivery of projects via 'works in kind'
- That Councils are closely consulted as part of any reform process.

Topic/area:

Transport

Document Date

17 April 2025

Directorate Responsible

Advocacy and Community Research

Recommendation name:	Use modern traffic control technology for efficient, safe journeys
Recommendation number:	40
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

Tell us why:

The City of Whittlesea generally supports this recommendation as modern traffic control technology can significantly improve the efficiency and safety of local transportation networks. As the municipality continues to grow, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that our roads and public transport systems are equipped to handle higher volumes of traffic while minimising congestion and travel times. Advanced traffic control technologies, such as adaptive traffic signals, real-time traffic monitoring, and smart traffic management systems, can enhance traffic flow, reduce accidents, and improve the overall travel experience for residents and visitors.

Furthermore, the integration of these technologies aligns with Council's broader goals of promoting sustainable transport solutions, reducing environmental impact, and improving the quality of life for its residents. By investing in modern traffic control systems, the City of Whittlesea can ensure safer, more efficient journeys for all road users, including drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians, while supporting long-term urban growth and development.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

The City of Whittlesea faces ongoing traffic congestion and disruptions, particularly along key arterial roads. Upgrading sensor technology and incorporating real-time traffic data, similar to systems in Melbourne, could help alleviate congestion and provide drivers with alternative detour routes during peak times or network disruptions.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

In the event of planned or unplanned disruptions to the highway/freeway network, real-time information from platforms like Google can help keep drivers informed. However, sensor technology on growth area freeways needs upgrading to better indicate alternative detour routes during periods of severe congestion. Overhead gantries could also be used to provide real-time updates on changed speed limits and available detour routes.

Traffic signal optimisation should be more clearly defined, including improved coordination across the network to reduce delays and enhance traffic flow.

Additionally, establishing clear criteria for prioritising highways/freeways that provide interstate connectivity for the movement of people and goods is crucial. The Hume Freeway, in particular, should be a priority due to its vital role in connecting major regions and its future function in servicing the Beveridge Intermodal Precinct.

Topic/area:	Transport
Recommendation name:	Make rail freight competitive, reliable and efficient
Recommendation number:	41
Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

Tell us why:

The future Beveridge Intermodal Precinct will play a crucial role in facilitating the movement of large volumes of freight via Inland Rail, addressing the forecast growth in rail freight demand. It will also ensure reliable access for freight owners and movers, supporting efficient supply chains.

A network-wide policy for rail freight coordination, management, and maintenance would benefit all sector stakeholders by providing a consistent approach and investment certainty regarding connectivity, access, and maintenance. Such a policy would help ensure that future investments are made strategically and in alignment with broader freight network goals.

Investment should be proportionate to the needs of the Principal Freight Network (PFN), as well as the servicing requirements of existing and new freight hubs, intermodal facilities, and the Inland Rail network.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

N/A

Include proposed changes and improvements:

N/A

Topic/area:	Transport
Recommendation name:	Encourage off-peak freight delivery in urban areas
Recommendation number:	42

Do you support this topic or recommendation?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ In part

Tell us why:

The rise in online shopping and increased local freight movements in recent years has highlighted the importance of first and last-mile freight delivery.

There has been a steady increase in the use of electronic cargo bikes for last-mile deliveries, which calls for careful consideration of how to manage appropriate storage or drop-off facilities in industrial areas. Additionally, improving access for these vehicles, such as through the creation of dedicated, protected bicycle lanes, would help ensure safer and more efficient delivery operations.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

There is an opportunity for all sector stakeholders to collaborate in promoting greater off-peak deliveries to commercial premises and encouraging the freight industry to minimise the impact of freight movements on local communities, particularly in terms of noise, vibration, air quality, and community severance. Increased opportunities for daytime charging and the adoption of quieter electric freight vehicles could further support these efforts, creating a more sustainable and community-friendly freight system.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

There is also an opportunity for the Government to work in partnership with Councils to explore opportunities to discourage the practice of empty running of freight vehicles, which contribute to already congested roads.

Investment should be appropriately proportioned to the Principal Freight Network (PFN) and the servicing needs for existing and new hubs. This will help to achieve more investment, predictable journey times for freight movements, especially high value and time sensitive freight and perishable goods. Urban consolidation can enable smaller vehicles to effectively service town centres. The provision of appropriate loading/unloading facilities can better support off-peak deliveries.

Topic/area:	Transport
Recommendation name:	Create and preserve opportunities for future major infrastructure projects
Recommendation number:	43

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Advocacy and Community Research

Do you support this topic or recommendation?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ In part

Tell us why:

The City of Whittlesea agrees that it is important to preserve opportunities for the delivery of infrastructure. This is important for growth areas where infrastructure delivery often lags behind the establishment of residential estates. In the absence of strategic preservation of land, it is difficult to provide infrastructure when it is needed.

Share any supporting evidence or examples:

Independent analysis has shown that a rail extension between Epping to Wollert (Wollert Rail) will be required by 2030 to provide capacity in a key growth corridor. It is understood that capacity constraints mean that Clifton Hill interchange needs upgrading, and Melbourne Metro 2 would be a pre-requisite project to unlock the required capacity.

Though recognised at a strategic planning level, there is no Public Acquisition Overlay in place for the alignment of the Wollert Public Transport Corridor. This has resulted in significant pressure being placed on Council to develop the land for other purposes, which will compromise the entire alignment of the corridor.

The City of Whittlesea is advocating to the State Government for the design and construction of the E6 and Outer Metropolitan Ring Road, which are considered vital connections to provide future capacity and also expand the Principal Freight Network (PFN) as a key corridor to service the proposed Beveridge Intermodal Precinct.

Council is also advocating for the upgrade of sections of five arterial roads to be upgraded.

Council supports extension and electrification of the Upfield line to Wallan. This would improve the frequency of services for Donnybrook residents, currently serviced by less frequent V/Line train services operating above capacity, providing improved connectivity to the CBD and introducing access to the Sydney Road employment corridor.

Include proposed changes and improvements:

It is important to provide support to Councils to assist in their efforts to preserve opportunities for future major infrastructure projects. The acquisition of land should make reference to assisting Councils with their efforts to create/preserve opportunities for future major infrastructure. For example, Council experiences challenges with the acquisition of land to support major infrastructure.

A Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) is required to preserve the Epping-Wollert growth corridor for this intended long-term future use as a heavy rail corridor (Wollert Rail). Both the PAO and subsequent construction of Wollert Rail should be included within the 30-year plan.

The E6 alignment reservation is also important to ensure it is preserved for its intended future use.

