



Manningham Council Submission

Infrastructure Victoria's Draft 30-Year Infrastructure
Strategy



Interpreter service

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MANNINGHAM

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Acknowledgment

Manningham Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways now known as Manningham.

Council pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging, and values the ongoing contribution to enrich and appreciate the cultural heritage of Manningham.

Council acknowledges and respects Australia's First Peoples as Traditional Custodians of lands and waterways across Country and encourages reconciliation between all.

Statement of recognition of diverse cultures

Manningham Council also values the contribution made to Manningham over the years by people of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Executive Summary

1. This submission has been prepared on behalf of Manningham Council (Council) in relation to the public exhibition of the draft version of Victoria's 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy, which has been prepared by Infrastructure Victoria.
2. The draft strategy contains 43 recommendations and 7 'future options' for the State Government to consider – with various timelines and associated considerations outlined.
3. Council has previously commented on Infrastructure Victoria's draft 30-year Infrastructure Strategies in 2016 and 2021.
4. As a key stakeholder and delivery agency for public infrastructure, it is important that Council review and comment on the draft strategy to ensure our community is represented.
5. Council generally supports the draft strategy and looks forward to the State Government acknowledging and actioning the recommendations.

Introduction

6. Council welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the exhibited draft strategy, which will become the key advisory document for the State Government for all public infrastructure decisions.
7. We acknowledge that renewed consultation occurs each time that the strategy is refreshed and commend this approach by Infrastructure Victoria to continue checking-in with key stakeholders and community. Council would welcome any further opportunities to be involved including to progress/discuss any of the matters raised in this submission.
8. Through the planning and delivery of our broad range of services and functions, Council is aware of the importance that infrastructure plays in supporting liveability, functionality and environmental resilience.

9. Our Community Infrastructure Plan (CIP) currently directs Manningham's significant investment in new and upgraded infrastructure, and guides decisions to decommission any assets that no longer meet the needs of the community. The key focus areas of the CIP are early years, young people, libraries and learning spaces, arts and culture, community meeting spaces, and community services (medical and legal services, material aid and aged care).
10. Manningham has a set of specific characteristics to consider when it comes to infrastructure. We have no rail network, an ageing but growing population, a large area of land outside the Urban Growth Boundary, a number of watercourses physically dividing land, and environmental risks including bushfires and flooding.
11. Our landscape and infrastructure environment are also undergoing significant change as the State's North East Link Project (NELP) continues to progress – which is the largest road infrastructure project in Victoria's history. Council continues to work proactively to ensure Manningham's interests are addressed throughout the project and officers are involved with a range of matters including planning, design, construction, communications and stakeholder management.
12. This submission has been prepared by Council officers based on Council officer feedback and expertise, and with input by Councillors and executive management. In addition, the recommendations of Manningham's Community Panel have been considered and noted where relevant in response to the Infrastructure Victoria recommendations.
13. The Community Panel was formed in September 2024 to help determine key priorities for Manningham's future. The Panel recruitment started with 8000 envelopes sent randomly to local households. Of those who accepted the invitation, a second random draw resulted in the final 40 people chosen. This second draw was then 'stratified,' so people chosen were representative of Manningham by age, gender, location, living situation and the language spoken at home.
14. The Community Vision generated by the Panel is that *Manningham is a harmonious, inclusive and safe community that is committed to sustainable growth, well-being, and innovation. We celebrate our diversity and natural environment whilst fostering a connected community that enriches the lives of all.*

Submission

Council's submission is generally structured to align with the structure of the draft strategy, for clarity and legibility. We discuss each recommendation under the six objectives of the draft strategy.

We seek to highlight the recommendations that we support or otherwise have concerns with, and to identify key Manningham initiatives that align with the recommendations. We have also taken the opportunity to outline any suggested changes, issues or gaps in the strategy.

Objective 1 - Victorians have good access to housing, jobs, services and opportunities

Recommendation 1 – Build more social housing

15. Council supports this recommendation for the State Government to invest in social housing to enable more Victorians on low incomes to access a secure and affordable home.
16. The rate of social housing provision in Manningham is far lower than the average for Greater Melbourne (0.6% of total dwellings compared with 2.6% in Greater Melbourne). Manningham also has the lowest supply of social housing in the eastern region.
17. Subsequently, we support initiatives that may assist with increasing our social housing provision and continue to advocate for this through the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance. We note that any such initiatives would require robust consultation with Council and community prior to implementation.
18. The Eastern Region Group (ERG) submission to Plan for Victoria also advocates for a greater focus on social housing. The submission notes that the gap between the number of households requiring assistance and the number of available dwellings (in the Eastern Region) will increase to 24,700 by 2041.

Recommendation 2 – Facilitate markets and invest in kindergarten infrastructure

19. Council supports this recommendation focused on encouraging investment in kindergarten infrastructure.
20. The recommendation aligns with ongoing work by Council to plan for the State Government's *Best Start Best Life* reforms, through Council's Community Infrastructure Plan and Early Years Infrastructure Plan.
21. Council is currently developing a new Early Years Infrastructure Plan (EYIP) to identify current and future demand for early years services. We seek that the State Government refer to local policies such as this when/if acting on Infrastructure Victoria's recommendations.
22. Infrastructure Victoria have also identified opportunities to co-locate kindergarten services in primary schools, which is strongly supported by Council. Clear identification of school sites by the State Government is recommended, as this will further strengthen the opportunities for co-location which are currently being identified through the EYIP project.
23. It is important that the State Government continue to enable infrastructure to meet population growth as identified within the State Government's Housing Targets. This must be considered through State Government financial contributions and developer contributions for new and upgraded early years facilities.
24. It is integral that the State Government also plays their role and provides kindergarten infrastructure to minimise the funding impact on local governments. There is currently an obligation for Council to fill a growing gap in funding, which can be significant for some sites. This is in addition to the ongoing maintenance and renewal costs for kindergarten infrastructure, for which there is currently no external funding support.

Recommendation 3 – Plan and deliver expanded and new schools

This recommendation is not within Council's scope. However, we support the concept in principle due to projected population growth, housing targets, and the importance of providing access to education. Council also encourages this initiative given it would assist in the use of school land for enhanced access for public and active open space for the community.

25. We see an opportunity for the State Government to actively plan ahead for shared/joint use of school infrastructure when it is in development – including sport and community infrastructure such as playing fields and indoor sports facilities. This would respond to increasing demand and the compatibility of school versus community usage times – which we note also aligns with Recommendation 16.

Recommendation 4 – Expand TAFE in Melbourne's growth areas and some large regional centres

26. This recommendation is also generally outside Council's scope as there is no TAFE campuses within Manningham. We support the recommendation in principle given the identified need to fill skills gaps.
27. We note that it is integral to support the expansion and creation of new TAFE campuses with the delivery of a robust transport network, to ensure equitable access for students and workers.
28. This network should also include consideration of connections to existing education hubs – which aligns with Manningham's advocacy for an express bus route that mirrors the future Suburban Rail Loop alignment, starting with a route between Monash and La Trobe Universities via Deakin University, Box Hill Station, Doncaster, Bulleen and Heidelberg.

Recommendation 5 – Build libraries and aquatic centres for Melbourne's growth areas and some large regional centres.

29. This recommendation focuses on facility provision in regional and growth areas. Whilst this is understandable, focus should still be made towards established metropolitan areas - especially given the significant population increases anticipated in response to the State Government's Housing Targets.
30. Funding should continue to be made available to assist with upgrading existing facilities to cater for increasing demand, as well as funding for expansion of existing or development of new services. Access to additional funding would also assist local governments in elevating community facilities to meet enhanced Environmental Sustainable Development (ESD) policies and principles as supported by Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE).
31. Similar to libraries, the State Government's investment into planning and construction should continue for metropolitan Councils. This is especially relevant given current infrastructure is ageing, and a growing population means increasing pressures on these assets.

32. As an example, Aquarena is Manningham's sole aquatic centre, and its outdoor area was built in 1960s. Aquarena is a much-loved space, however, is at the end of its lifespan and requires a total refresh. This facility serves the entire municipality, receiving 1.14 million visits annually. Without its redevelopment, Manningham Council will struggle to accommodate the growing demands of the community and the delivery of essential health and wellbeing outcomes effectively.
33. We will continue our advocacy for government to assist in funding the Aquarena outdoor redevelopment project. We seek that Infrastructure Victoria expand Recommendation 5 to also acknowledge the need for government to support local governments in established metropolitan areas with much needed upgrades of existing library and aquatic centres.

Recommendation 6 - Make government infrastructure more accessible

34. Council supports all initiatives related to improving accessibility and has keenly participated in recent discussions with the Chief Accessibility Advocate for Public Transport Victoria through our involvement with the Metropolitan Transport Forum (MTF). We note that accessibility to public transport can be limited for a variety of reasons and seek physical DDA compliance in addition to initiatives that address other factors such as visual and hearing impairments.
35. Our work with the MTF has highlighted the importance of progressing accessible transport, in particular following the State's failure to meet the 2022 deadline for all public transport to be accessible. It is integral that improvement is achieved in this space to enable people with disability to be mobile across all transport modes.
36. Noting the complexity of the required upgrades, it is understood that extensive investment and planning is required. However, this is all the more reason to act as soon as possible to build momentum and ensure roll-out as early as possible.
37. This recommendation could also be expanded to acknowledge the flow-on infrastructure impacts from accessibility upgrades, which will have a financial impact on local Councils. For example, once a public transport stop is upgraded there may be a need for subsequent changes to connecting infrastructure such as redesign or construction of wider footpaths to meet DDA standard, which may come at substantial cost.
38. We also note that this recommendation identifies that one-third of Melbourne's bus stops are not wheelchair accessible – which is a significant concern for Manningham given buses are our only form of public transport.
39. Of note is that Council is also seeking funding to upgrade our bus stops and shelters, which includes ensuring full accessibility compliance. We remain in an arrangement where a large majority of bus shelters in Manningham are owned and maintained by Council, rather than by the State government Department of Transport and Planning. As a result, we have significant expenditure on a service that should be the responsibility of the State. Our long-term goal is to hand-over the shelters to DTP for ongoing delivery, ownership, and maintenance - which would facilitate better consistency and pace in the roll-out of accessibility upgrades. In the meantime, we are working towards delivering as many shelters as we can within our budget and capabilities.

Recommendation 7 – Rezone locations near existing infrastructure for more home choices

40. Council supports this recommendation and believes that its strategic housing and residential framework closely aligns with this direction.
41. Manningham currently directs its housing growth to preferred strategic locations. This includes activity centres and along main roads, which have good access to commercial, community and recreational facilities.
42. Over the previous 13 years, Manningham Council has successfully facilitated housing growth in these locations in accordance with State Government policy directions and in accordance with the existing Manningham Residential Strategy (2012). The introduction of the Doncaster Hill Strategy (2002, revised 2004) provides for the highest density development in the 58ha area forming part of Doncaster Hill Major Activity Centre which surrounds and includes Westfield Doncaster.
43. The Pines Shopping Centre is the other Major Activity Centre in Manningham after Doncaster Hill and is also surrounded by substantial higher density dwellings. In addition, the previous and current Manningham Residential Strategies (2002 and 2012 respectively) have resulted in increased residential densities and apartment development around our activity centres and along main roads, near public transport and employment opportunities.
44. Council is currently preparing a new Residential Strategy that will provide an updated plan for how Manningham will accommodate projected population growth and housing needs up to 2036. It will take into consideration and respond to the recently released State Government Housing targets and Plan for Victoria.
45. This new strategy will deliver clear strategic direction on the spatial distribution of residential growth with consideration of the housing needs of our growing and changing community. In particular, the Residential Strategy will:
 - ensure the supply of residential land is maintained up to 2036 based on an analysis of housing capacity.
 - ensure areas for growth are well planned and delivers sustainable outcomes.
 - identify existing and new areas most suitable for accommodating projected growth and
 - use the areas for housing change identified in the strategy as the basis for determining the spatial application of residential zones across Manningham.
46. To this end, it is likely that the new Residential Strategy will recommend some changes to zonings to support residential growth in certain locations.
47. There is also, however, a need to investigate other opportunities at the state and local level to introduce more innovative planning policy and/or legislative changes that support emerging housing models and outcomes that focus on moderate income households. These may include affordable “Build to Rent” and “Rent to Buy” housing for key workers and shared equity schemes.
48. Whilst the planning system can provide the policy setting for development, it cannot compel land to be developed. There are many external factors that developers consider when developing land, including taxation, interest rates, finance, material and labour costs and availability and market interest. Council cannot compel the lodgement of planning permit

applications for residential development and likewise cannot force developers to act upon active planning permits. Accordingly, we support Infrastructure Victoria's suggestion that rezoning should be bundled with other development incentives.

49. The last decade of high-density housing growth in Manningham has slowed down with very limited new construction in the pipeline for the foreseeable future. Achieving the targets will be a challenge without a major change in housing delivery. In this context, information on how the State Government proposes to re-ignite established area housing supply is welcomed.
50. The need for additional housing and a responsive zoning structure is acknowledged, however a multi-faceted solution and whole of government approach is also required. Numerous factors impact the delivery of housing, with many of these elements being outside of Council's influence. Council is committed to establishing a planning policy setting that facilitates appropriate housing growth and encourages investment, which is demonstrated through the comprehensive process underway to develop the new Manningham Residential Strategy.
51. Outside of residential land use considerations, we also note there will be a need for any rezoning to account for the increasing demand for services and facilities that will come with the growing population. While Recommendation 7 has a focus on rezoning to allow more housing near existing services, it is generally silent on the need for any rezoning to also consider *new* services and facilities that may be required to support additional housing.
52. Overall, Council supports this recommendation in principle, and it aligns with our ongoing advocacy via the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance. We stress the importance of meaningful consultation occurring with local government and community to ensure the rezoning mechanism is appropriate and considers all flow-on implications.

Recommendation 8 – Extend Melbourne's trams to encourage more new homes nearby.

53. Council generally supports this recommendation. However, our position is that further investment in trams should not be prioritised above investment in buses. Bus infrastructure is widely known to be more affordable than light rail, and Council's view is that substantial benefit could be achieved through upgrades to the bus network in advance of any tram extensions.
54. Recommendation 8 aligns with historical advocacy by Manningham for the route 48 tram to be extended down Doncaster Road. While this priority is not at the forefront of our advocacy currently, we request that Infrastructure Victoria consider showing this as an indicative potential link on the Figure 5 map within the draft strategy.
55. It is understood that concerns were previously raised with the steep gradient up to Doncaster Road not being feasible for a tram route. However, we note that transport technology and infrastructure is continuing to evolve and anticipate this issue will not be insurmountable forever.
56. Notably, throughout the NELP planning and design works for the Doncaster Road interchange and bridge – we have sought assurances that the weight of a tram and associated infrastructure could be accommodated to future proof for a tram connection. If Doncaster cannot be included on the Figure 5 map, Council would appreciate the strategy to mention the importance of future-proofing for future light rail upgrades at key locations, including Doncaster.

Recommendation 9 – Run faster bus services, more often, in Victoria’s largest cities.

57. Council strongly supports this recommendation and notes it closely aligns with many of our current advocacy priorities. Faster, more frequent and more reliable buses are a common theme throughout our ongoing strategic, community engagement and advocacy work.
58. Manningham is the only metropolitan Melbourne municipality with no rail network. Buses are the only form of public transport service available in Manningham.
59. In the context of increased growth due to the State Government’s housing targets, Manningham’s liveability will be significantly impacted if the transport network is not upgraded to support the anticipated growth. This additional urgency for transport infrastructure to be upgraded can only be addressed by bus improvements in Manningham, due to the lack of other public transport options.
60. We have closely followed Infrastructure Victoria’s work on buses including background research undertaken by Quantum Market Research, which found that:
 - All respondents residing in Manningham travel by car/motorcycle at least weekly (100%) and were more likely than average to own a car (93%) and hold a valid drivers licence (99%).
 - Manningham respondents were more likely than average to use a bus more often than once a year (59% vs. 44% of all respondents).
 - Manningham respondents were more likely than average to agree that buses are for people like them (40% vs. 24% of all respondents) however, they were less likely than average to agree that they feel positively towards public transport overall (46% vs. 57% of all respondents).
 - 25% of Melbournians would love to get rid of their cars but do not feel that they have a viable alternative.
61. Manningham’s Community Panel has also dedicated one of fourteen Council-wide recommendations to improving bus services. Recommendation 4 of the Manningham Community Panel Final Report is: *Increase Manningham Connectivity through Bus Service*. The Panel seeks improved bus services and routes to align with local community needs, and improved frequency for key routes.
62. A community survey undertaken in October 2023 found that the top priorities for bus users in Manningham were increased frequency, better reliability, additional and/or more direct routes, and improved service spread – which further supports Recommendation 9.
63. We note that significant work has already been undertaken by DTP as part of their bus network reform project, for which the north east pilot area included Manningham. However, we were disappointed that implementation funding for the new network was not provided in the May 2024 budget. We continue to seek visibility on the draft network maps to provide local insights, and for the State Government to provide funding to facilitate the mapped improvements to be rolled out on the ground.
64. We strongly support this recommendation and echo Infrastructure Victoria’s call for the State Government to improve the bus network and services as a matter of urgency, to respond to population and housing projections and net zero emissions goals.
65. We also seek assurance of local government support in the event that the State Government acts on this recommendation. Flow-on infrastructure and asset impacts to Council may

include requirements for additional bus shelters and/or stops, accessibility upgrades, additional parking for bicycles and vehicles, wider roads, extra works in road reserves, upgraded bus interchanges and increased maintenance requirements.

Recommendation 10 - Build a new bus rapid transit network

66. In accordance with our Transport Action Plan 2021, Manningham's top transport advocacy priority is the provision of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network, beginning with the highly patronised 907 route from Mitcham Station along Doncaster Road to the CBD.
67. We welcome the Eastern Busway as part of NELP, which will provide part of our envisaged busway link from Doncaster Park and Ride to Hoddle Street. However, the beginning of the 907's journey from Mitcham to Doncaster is not covered by the Eastern Busway, and the final connection at Hoddle Street is hampered by congestion issues and a lack of on-road priority.
68. We therefore commend Infrastructure Victoria for addressing the Hoddle Street end of the 907's journey via Recommendation 10. Council strongly supports the recommended extension of the Eastern Busway along Hoddle Street to address existing congestion issues, which are projected to get worse.
69. However, the BRT map in Figure 7 does not provide a link between Mitcham and Doncaster, to cover the initial stage of the 907's journey. Council has recently commenced work to progress initial investigations for a solution, via a new campaign and project plan to investigate high frequency busway options for the Doncaster Road Corridor. However, we lack the funding to support key feasibility testing for this major project, which is integral to achieve improved transport connectivity along this strategic growth corridor.
70. Additionally, Figure 7 is also missing an orbital north/south link crossing over or connecting to the Eastern Busway, which is a noticeable gap in the modelled BRT network. A bus link along this orbital north/south alignment would respond to Manningham's advocacy for an express bus route to mimic the future Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) alignment. This link would form a key part of the BRT network shown in Figure 7 and would begin generating the commuter movements expected for Stage 2 of SRL, as well as acting as a feeder route to existing train stations and the Stage 1 SRL alignment.
71. As such, while we strongly support the sentiment behind Recommendation 10, we request it also consider how the State Government may support and/or collaborate with local councils on initial investigations into BRT or similar busway options, beyond those identified on the Figure 7 map.

Recommendation 11 – Extend metropolitan trains and run more services in Melbourne's west

72. This recommendation is not directly relevant to Manningham. However, we note that bus improvements can be achieved at a fraction of the cost of new rail infrastructure. As such, we note that improving bus services to these areas may provide the desired public transport connections in a more timely and affordable manner than rail.
73. We also support the intention of Recommendation 11 to reduce car dependency and work towards electrification of trains.

Recommendation 12 – Run more bus and coach services in regional Victoria

74. Council supports this recommendation in principle, although it is not directly related to our local area. Bus improvements are generally an affordable solution to existing transport needs and better connectivity in regional areas will also benefit Manningham residents when visiting or travelling through Victoria's regions for work, tourism, education, or other purposes.

Recommendation 13 – Make off-peak public transport cheaper and simplify regional fare zones

75. Council supports this recommendation, in particular considering the cost of living crisis being felt by many residents in Manningham, and indeed across all of Victoria.
76. Feedback from Manningham bus users obtained via the 2023 Metropolitan Transport Forum (MTF) 'Better Buses' Survey included that driving was sometimes more cost effective than catching the bus – creating a challenge for building bus patronage.
77. Making public transport more affordable increases access to a wider range of users and will contribute to the much-desired mode shift away from private vehicles.
78. To further improve this accessibility, Council recommends additional considerations in relation to ticketing be included as follows:
- Increase the provision of ticketing facilities (i.e. locations where a Myki can be 'topped-up' immediately – given there is currently a delay with online top-ups.)
 - Address the delay with online 'top-ups'.
 - Adoption of credit card 'touch on' facilities.
79. Council also seeks assurance that off-peak fares will not be made more affordable than on-peak fares simply by increasing the price of on-peak fares.
80. The 50 cent fares initiative in Queensland should be looked to as an example, which was introduced as a trial in August 2024 and subsequently made permanent. As measured in February 2025, Queensland public transport users had saved more than \$181 million since the start of the trial, based on the same number of trips being taken under the previous fare structure. This initiative has also achieved a marked uplift in public transport patronage, which is a key goal for Manningham and indeed Victoria more widely.
81. Council also seeks advice from Infrastructure Victoria on whether fare evasion has been considered in the costings for this initiative.

Objective 2 – Victorians are healthy and safe

Recommendation 14 – Make local streets safer for children and communities

82. Council supports this recommendation in-principle and is committed to improving road safety for all road users including children. We note that the recommendation should also consider locations such as Maternal and Child Health Centres as key locations that children often visit.

83. Investigating reduced speed limits is an identified action of Council's (draft) Road Safety Strategy and aligns with the Safe Systems approach to road safety. We understand DTP is working with the Council areas where 30km/h zones are being trialled, to determine their effectiveness. As the reduction of speed limits to 30km/h is controversial, Council would be most supportive of 30km/h speed zones where there is clear, evidence-based justification demonstrating that it would improve road safety and align with best practice guidelines.
84. As such, there will be case-by-case considerations for whether a 30km/h speed limit is appropriate and feasible for some locations, but we support the overall concept of reducing speeds to improve safety.
85. Council seeks that the recommended support to local governments in implementing this recommendation should also extend to additional local traffic management treatments that may become necessary with changed speed limits, to assist with compliance.
86. Creating safer streets for pedestrians and cyclists also aligns with Council's aspirations to improve active transport access to sporting venues, ovals and similar recreational facilities – which are often visited by children.

Recommendation 15 – Build safe cycling networks in Melbourne and regional cities

87. Council supports this recommendation and notes that perceptions of safety are a huge barrier to cycling uptake at present, which connected and protected cycle corridors would address.
88. This recommendation aligns with Manningham's Liveable City Strategy, which aims to encourage walking and cycling to contribute to wellbeing, improve separation between bicycles and vehicles and upgrade footpaths/bicycle paths and associated infrastructure.
89. Manningham's Community Panel has also highlighted this issue, with Recommendation 10 of their report being: *Improving Manningham's active transport network (constructive footpaths and bicycle lanes)*.
90. We are yet to see a significant increase in active transport uptake within Manningham (based on ABS data assessment and localised surveys/counts). As reported in the Manningham Bicycle Strategy 2013, the percentage of Manningham residents using a bicycle to travel to work at that time was 0.23%. In 2021, the ABS reported that this percentage had dropped to 0.1% - although the census was conducted during COVID-19 lockdowns. This is likely in part due to the key issues identified by Infrastructure Victoria in Recommendation 15 including disconnected networks, safety concerns, and poor quality infrastructure.
91. Moving forwards, our goal is to achieve an increase in uptake of active transport in Manningham to reduce reliance on private vehicles, encourage inter-modal trips with public transport, increase micromobility, better connect our community and contribute to improving their overall health and wellbeing.
92. Connected and protected infrastructure delivered by both Council and the State Government will play a key role in achieving this increased uptake. As such, we are disappointed to see that the Figure 12 map does not include links within Manningham. Additionally, we note that orbital connections between mainline routes are not proposed. We seek clarity on the reasoning behind these omissions on the Figure 12 map.

93. We also seek clarity on how recreational cyclists have been considered by Infrastructure Victoria in the draft strategy. We support the objectives and rationale of the strategy in planning for cycling more generally, but additional focus on recreational trail infrastructure could be included.
94. Of note, is that Council is in the early stages of a refresh of all active transport related strategies, to be finalised in 2026. This project will provide an updated, integrated active transport strategy to guide Council programs, planning, infrastructure, and advocacy for the next 10 years – and will consider all active transport modes and how they interact. We will echo Infrastructure Victoria’s recommendation for the State Government to better support the roll-out of cycling infrastructure as a part of this project.

Recommendation 16 – Help government schools share their grounds

95. Although schools are outside the remit of Council, we strongly support this recommendation in principle and note the wide-ranging potential community benefits. This initiative would relieve some of the pressure on Council and we agree that schools would need sufficient support from the government to participate.
96. Our view is that this initiative could also be expanded to other school facilities beyond sporting grounds, such as theatre spaces, indoor sporting facilities, playgrounds and other facilities and spaces of use to the community.
97. Public access to outdoor school spaces (e.g. playgrounds, ovals, etc) should also be encouraged for informal and casual use, in addition to organised sporting/community bookings, to help facilitate more active communities. However, a key challenge to be addressed is vandalism, anti-social behaviour and other risks to schools from allowing casual public access to their spaces out of hours. This should be a key focus for the State Government in providing support to facilitate any sharing arrangements.
98. For formal/organised sharing of facilities, we note that there will be significant complexities to be managed including how this might change priorities for development of parks and recreational facilities, how school facilities will be managed, legal agreements for access, risk management, and funding of maintenance and management.
99. For example, Council’s experience is that the process to develop Joint Usage Agreements can be difficult and can be met with resistance from the schools. We hope that additional support for schools by government as recommended by Infrastructure Victoria may assist with mitigating this challenge.
100. We note Infrastructure Victoria’s report *‘Getting more from Melbourne’s school grounds: sharing places for play and exercise’* also had a strong focus on general recreation. However, we submit that this needs to be broadened to reflect organised sport, as supporting amenities like toilets, change rooms and shelter need to also be funded to maximise use of ovals.
101. Opening up access to school facilities directly responds to Manningham’s Active for Life Recreation Strategy and is therefore supported overall. Our view is that it is essential to simplify the process to establish agreements and ensure ongoing State Government investment to enhance and maintain this infrastructure.

102. We note that sharing of facilities aligns with Recommendation 8 of the Manningham Community Panel – which seeks to transition single use facilities into multi-use facilities that can be shared for all different demographics.

Recommendation 17 – Invest in maintenance, upgrades and expansions of community health facilities.

103. We support this recommendation and suggest that it should also include additional Maternal and Child Health locations and services, youth mental health services, and Priority Health Clinics.
104. There are a number of compounding factors which make access to health care services a concern for our community, including the lack of a train or tram line, our hilly terrain (causing difficulty in reaching bus stops), and our high percentage of older adults.
105. We seek assurance that Manningham will be considered as part of the development of priorities for government investment in community health, as outlined by Recommendation 17.
106. Manningham's Community Panel has called out health and wellbeing support as Recommendation 7 of their report, with a request for Council to facilitate programs focused on enhancing the overall mental health and well-being of Manningham residents - with a particular emphasis on mental health, youth and ageing. These envisaged programs will need facilities to operate out of.
107. Council is continuing to advocate for an Eastern Health location within Manningham via multiple channels including cross-organisational meetings and letters to relevant persons/bodies such as the CEO of Eastern Health. The community in Manningham is disadvantaged in their ability to access local publicly funded health care services as there is no Eastern Health facility available within our boundaries, despite Manningham being a key catchment for the service.
108. Council is also advocating for community legal services to be introduced in Manningham, to be co-located with community health facilities – which the recommended facility upgrades and extensions could facilitate. Recommendation 8 of the Manningham Community Panel Report identifies that using Council assets more efficiently by transitioning to multi-use facilities is a supported outcome.
109. There is currently no dedicated community legal service located in Manningham. With limited public transport available, our residents face extensive travel times to access the closest available community legal service (in Box Hill, Boronia and Healesville) where there are already extensive waiting lists.
110. Manningham has a high percentage of overseas born residents (44%) and an increasing number of very low-income residents (25%). These factors indicate that our population has a range of vulnerabilities and needs for a legal service that provides free or low-cost assistance that caters for cultural and linguistic diversity.
111. We need a dedicated community legal centre based in Manningham, that provides general legal services. A part time service of several days per week would meet local needs. Community legal centres take a multi-disciplinary approach and are therefore uniquely placed to improve social and emotional wellbeing in our community. Clients are provided a wrap-

around service with access to social workers, advocates, financial counsellors, and educators which in turn provides stronger, holistic wellbeing outcomes.

- 112. We note that Recommendation 17 does not specify whether funding support for services solely run by local government, such as Maternal Child Health, would receive funding support for new and upgraded facilities to respond to growing population. We seek clarity on this in the final strategy.
- 113. Health promotion, mental health services and other Community Health Service areas can also be delivered in conjunction with local government. The funding advice for Recommendation 17 should therefore be updated to consider this.

Recommendation 18 – Build more residential alcohol and other drug treatment facilities

- 114. We support this recommendation in principle and note its high-level alignment with our advocacy outlined above in relation to Recommendation 17. Health and social support facilities are generally lacking in Manningham, and we would welcome support from State Government in improving access for our community. For facilities of this type, we note that robust consultation with Council and community would be essential.

Recommendation 19 – Invest in digital healthcare

- 115. Council supports this recommendation due to the potential for improved efficiency and quality of healthcare for all Victorians.
- 116. We continue to seek an Eastern Health location to be established in Manningham to improve direct access to health services for Manningham residents.
- 117. We note that this recommendation for digital improvements may assist in the meantime due to the increased ability for remote monitoring of patients – which would enable our residents to receive healthcare access without needing to leave Manningham.
- 118. However, remote healthcare is not a suitable replacement for direct services, and we do not wish to see roll-out of physical healthcare locations slowed or halted as a result.
- 119. We also suggest this recommendation be extended to cover Maternal and Child Health sites – which could also benefit from digital improvements.

Recommendation 20 – Upgrade critical public hospital infrastructure

- 120. Although the major public hospitals mentioned by this recommendation are not within Manningham, we support the recommendation and its intention to ensure adequate investment in hospital upgrades.
- 121. Again, we note our ongoing advocacy for an Eastern Health location to be established in Manningham – which would assist in spreading the demand for public hospital services.
- 122. As previously mentioned, a major barrier between Manningham residents and services such as public hospitals is the lack of public transport infrastructure. This may also create a challenge in relation to attracting and retaining staff when/if public health infrastructure (i.e. Eastern Health) is provided within Manningham.

123. We note that it is crucial to support the expansion and creation of new public hospital services with the provision of a robust transport network, ensuring equitable access for both patients and healthcare workers. This network should also consider connections to existing healthcare hubs, aligning with Manningham's advocacy for an express bus route that mirrors the future Suburban Rail Loop alignment, starting with a route between Eastern Health Maroondah and Austin Hospital via Box Hill Hospital, Doncaster, Bulleen, and Heidelberg.

Recommendation 21 – Better use prisons and invest more in health facilities and transition housing

124. There are no prison facilities within Manningham and prisons are outside the scope of local government. We do not seek to comment on this recommendation besides supporting the sentiment for more efficient State Government spending.

Objective 3 – Aboriginal people have self-determination and equal outcomes to other Victorians

Recommendation 22 – Invest in secure homes for Aboriginal Victorians.

125. Manningham is situated within Wurundjeri Woi wurrung Country. 0.2% of the Manningham population are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander identifying – and there has been a 40% increase between 2016 and 2021.
126. We agree with this recommendation and strongly support the sentiment behind it. We continue to advocate for investment in housing for First Nations people through our work with the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance. This recommendation also aligns with our Council Plan – which encourages an inclusive and resilient community.

Recommendation 23 – Fund better health and wellbeing infrastructure for Aboriginal Victorians.

127. We support this recommendation and suggest that it also be extended to include Maternal and Child Health services.
128. Council currently provides links to relevant local services for First Nations people on our website, however these services are all located outside of Manningham. Our advocacy for an Eastern Health location (with co-located community legal services) to be established in Manningham would also enable greater focus on health and wellbeing services for First Nations people.

Objective 4 – Victoria has a thriving natural environment

Recommendation 24 – reduce greenhouse gas emissions from infrastructure

129. Maximising carbon emissions reduction is aligned with Manningham's Climate Emergency Response Plan (2023), Liveable City Strategy 2040 and ongoing Council actions to achieve net zero by 2028 for Council operations and 2035 for community. We also suggest this

recommendation be expanded to acknowledge the link with circularity in building materials disposal, utilising what would normally be considered waste as a resource, as well as other reuse options.

- 130. We are already making efforts at a local level to reduce emissions and support Infrastructure Victoria in seeking that the State Government does the same. For example, Council's Floodlight Audit and LED conversion Programs are reducing emissions while enhancing energy efficiency in sports facilities.
- 131. We note that this recommendation also discusses the materials being used to build infrastructure, in addition to emissions from the infrastructure assets themselves. We are open to a standardised approach being implemented but seek assurance that sufficient support and transitional requirements will be provided to enable local government to adapt and adjust to any new materials standards.

Recommendation 25 – Advance integrated water management and use more recycled water

- 132. Council agrees with the sentiment of this recommendation. There is a need to advance integrated water management delivery and increase the use of recycled water. There is also a need to consider Traditional Custodians' needs as part of integrated water management.
- 133. We also suggest expansion of the integrated water management elements considered – to also address the impacts of urbanisation increasing stormwater volumes, and reduced water quality adversely impacting waterways.
- 134. Council is supportive of the draft guidelines for development and IWM currently being prepared by DEECA. We support the ongoing collaborative approach to IWM across the local government and private sector and seek further engagement and funding from the State and Federal Government to deliver large scale projects which will deliver long term benefits water security and healthy water sources for Victorians.
- 135. Officers also support the intent to increase community education and engagement around integrated water management but suggest that the engagement not be limited to acceptance of recycled drinking water and the need for more diverse water sources. The scope could also seek to enhance community water cycle literacy, achieve behaviour change, educate the community on the impacts of urbanisation on waterways and how the community can help to better manage water resources and demand.
- 136. Education should also highlight the responsibilities and need for maintenance of private integrated water management infrastructure – which would be targeted towards the development sector. Ideally, local government would be consulted regarding the proposed engagement scope and materials.
- 137. There is suggestion in the draft strategy that partner organisations including local government could contribute project funding and/or be involved in the collection of user charges for recycled water. It needs to be noted that local government does not currently have responsibilities for the supply or distribution of drinking water. The statement in the strategy should be further clarified.
- 138. Further direction could also be provided in the strategy about how the proposed recycled water supply should be used. If the water is to be made available for non-drinking purposes, consideration should be given to how it may impact the long-term feasibility and viability of

other integrated water management projects and/or other operations (e.g. irrigation and watering of reserves).

Future option – plan for and invest in manufactured water

139. This future option relates to Recommendation 25 and Council generally supports the initiative - in particular the intent to increase Traditional Custodians' involvement in water management and increase cultural allocation of water. We also suggest that utilising alternate water sources to maximise supply should allow for increased environmental flows. The need for this has been particularly evident this past summer with water levels dropping in some of our creeks to extremely low levels. Low flows have previously led to instances of fish and bird deaths at our prominent local waterways.
140. We note that climate change and subsequent increased flood events will affect lifecycle of assets, shortening them and requiring more maintenance and renewal (along with increased depreciation costs). More flooding will impact on the design of drainage and storm water management, resulting in the need to explore more modern and innovative approaches to manage runoff during storm events.
141. Figure 14 of the draft strategy focuses on projected Melbourne based demand for alternative water sources. We seek clarity on whether work has been undertaken to understand statewide demand as well.

Recommendation 26 – Better use government land for open space and greenery

142. We strongly agree with the intention of this recommendation to increase access to public open space and greenery. We commend the acknowledgement of gaps in the existing open space network and support the general principle to have a connected open space network, as well as unlock as-yet inaccessible parcels of green space for community use.
143. We suggest that this recommendation be expanded to also address the need for active open space, as the demand for playing fields continues to grow.
144. A key focus of the Manningham Liveable City Strategy is 'greening our city', which aims to provide a diverse range of high quality and inclusive open spaces within walking distance of as many residents as possible. Manningham's Community Panel have also dedicated one of their recommendations to open space, with Recommendation 3 of the Community Panel report being: *retaining existing and creating new open spaces*.
145. We suggest that Recommendation 26 be further expanded to outline requirements for the recommended ratio of open space to area/population for the 'compact city' concept. We also seek further clarity on the 'compact city' concept itself, including how it might relate to or be a further iteration of the '20 minute neighbourhood' concept that our Liveable City Strategy has a strong focus on.
146. We note the recommendation for the State Government to financially support the bodies responsible for ongoing maintenance requirements of open space, and also carefully consider the land contributions by Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water. There will be a need for the State Government to ensure relevant agencies are adequately resourced to support this initiative.

147. We request clarification of the mention of open space 'along streets', in terms of what areas this refers to and how Infrastructure Victoria envisages it will contribute to the open space network.
148. Recommendation 26 seeks to increase access to open space as a result of population growth and new housing pressures. However, it does not specifically highlight that these factors are themselves a direct challenge to the provision of open space.
149. We suggest the strategy provides comments on how demand for land should be managed between housing targets and development demand, and the need for open space. This conflict is somewhat acknowledged by the statement that land is expensive for local government to acquire for open space, but the ongoing maintenance costs for local government are not considered. Further details on how this challenge should be managed would be helpful in the final strategy.
150. In relation to the recommendation for increased vegetation cover, Council strongly supports this initiative. We agree with Infrastructure Victoria that a minimum target of 30% tree canopy cover on public land should be set. However, we note that these targets can be skewed when assessed on a municipal-wide basis, such as in Manningham where almost half the municipality is within green wedge land, which enhances the perception of elevated tree canopy. Our suggestion is that the targets focus on activity centres and/or urban zones – where cooling and greening is most needed and the impacts from urban heat islands are most felt by community. Green infrastructure such as green roofs and walls should also be considered when setting parameters for the targets.

Objective 5 – Victoria is resilient to climate change and future risks

Recommendation 27 – Better prepare infrastructure for climate change

151. We support this recommendation and remain committed to net zero emissions goals in accordance with Manningham's Climate Emergency Response Plan.
152. We note the strong focus on energy adaption being an integral part of preparing infrastructure for climate change. In relation to Council's infrastructure programs, we have a rolling 5 year program to install solar panels and batteries on council and community facilities, improve the building stock with energy efficiency measures such as LED lighting upgrades and other thermal comfort initiatives such as insulation and draft proofing. This ensures our facilities have improved usability and operational efficiency for our community while reducing carbon emissions.
153. We are eager for the additional guidance from the State Government that may arise from the implementation of this recommendation, which will assist us in further progressing our initiatives to prepare infrastructure for climate change.

Recommendation 28 - Use new flood maps to revise planning schemes

154. Council supports this recommendation for planning schemes to be revised to include a common set of flood projections based on the latest climate data. However, we strongly

advise that local knowledge and expertise be utilised in the preparation of flood mapping to ensure accuracy.

155. Council is in the progress of developing an Integrated Water Management Strategy, which is being undertaken concurrently to a flood mapping project by Council in collaboration with Melbourne Water. These projects have highlighted the significant complexities of flood mapping for local and regional catchments, and we welcome Infrastructure Victoria's recommendation that the State Government provide greater assistance and involvement going forwards.
156. Flood mapping assists us to quantify flood risk, by locating overland flow paths and calculating flow depths and velocities and in turn inform potential planning controls.
157. We support the recommended involvement of the State Government to coordinate flood studies and ensure regular updates on flood projections and modelling. This will help to maintain an up-to-date understanding of flood risk and ensure planning controls remain adequate to protect from flood risk.
158. However, a greater focus on flood mitigation and community resilience is recommended including how the State Government may support the flood resilience of owners of flood affected properties. Consideration could be given to the implementation of a grant scheme similar to the Queensland and Australian Government's 'Resilient Homes Fund', to assist to reduce flood damages.
159. Additionally, consideration must be given to how the State Government will mitigate impacts for property owners where land becomes unsuitable to build on due to newly identified flood risk. We seek Infrastructure Victoria's advice on whether consideration should be given to land swaps or compensation in relevant cases.
160. In order to improve the level of success for local catchment flooding planning scheme amendments, it is strongly recommended that the Minister for Planning assume the role of Responsible Authority for all future flood amendments.
161. We also suggest that consideration be given to a more finessed approach to monitoring and review, rather than the proposed blanket-requirement to remodel flood risk every five years. A risk based criteria could be developed to guide the timing of remodelling on a catchment by catchment basis.

Recommendation 29 – Coordinate faster delivery of key energy infrastructure

162. This recommendation is generally outside of Council's scope as it relates to the State Government needing to deliver key energy infrastructure to support the transition to reach their net zero emissions targets. We support the overall intention for battery roll-out and note that a distributed network of batteries will assist with electric vehicle charging, including for the bus network.
163. However, we note the possibility that new energy infrastructure may be proposed on or over Councils' assets. For example - the neighbourhood battery scheme, while unlikely in a metropolitan area, would require a dedicated location which could be quite large and have significant risks associated with it. Council would expect significant involvement and consultation if any such initiative was proposed by the State and would determine our position on any such project on a case by case basis.

Recommendation 30 – Improve environmental assessments and site selection for energy projects

- 164. Council supports this recommendation for reforms to the assessment process for energy projects to streamline approvals, however natural environment must be considered in this process and ensure minimal compromise to biodiversity (ground storey to tree canopy).
- 165. It is noted that Recommendation 30 suggests the reforms can 'assess a project's environmental benefits', however there is no mention of biodiversity considerations. We seek assurance that any new process will include sufficient rigour to ensure there is no unreasonable compromises for energy versus biodiversity outcomes.

Recommendation 31 – Invest in home, neighbourhood and big batteries for more energy storage.

- 166. We strongly support this recommendation and note the key long-term sustainability and climate benefits, in addition to important energy cost savings for households and businesses.
- 167. We suggest that the recommendation be extended to require support for local government to partner with community and business (or other) groups to translate to on-the-ground action and implementation.

Recommendation 32 – Determine long duration energy storage needs

- 168. Council supports this recommendation and notes the importance of ensuring uninterrupted energy for the community during the important transition to net zero. Manningham has a wide ranging demographic with varying needs, and it is important that no one experiences disadvantage directly because of this initiative.
- 169. The approach outlined in this recommendation for long duration energy storage is supported in principle by Council, provided it achieves the outlined goal of ensuring energy availability when weather conditions are not conducive to renewable production.

Recommendation 33 – Develop regional energy plans, guide transition from fossil gas and maintain reliable gas supply

- 170. Council supports the initiative to transition away from gas in households, businesses and industry by moving to all-electric plus battery storage initiatives. We note the infrastructure responsibilities for this initiative are generally State-level as outlined in Recommendation 33.

Recommendation 34 – Speed up household energy efficiency and electrification

- 171. We support this recommendation and note the important climate and social benefits that will result. We agree that efficient electric space heaters and hot water should be incentivised, and note that split systems can be an efficient choice.
- 172. We also strongly support this recommendation's focus on enabling low income households to transition to more efficient options by assisting with the costly installation / start-up costs.

173. We also support the initiative for disclosure of energy efficiency being required for sale and leasing of houses – and note that any disclosure process would need to be tightly regulated to ensure compliance and fairness.

Objective 6 – Victoria has a high productivity and circular economy

Recommendation 35 – Prepare and publish infrastructure sector plans to shape Victoria's cities

174. We understand the sentiment behind this recommendation and support the desire to break down silos in State Government departments to improve efficiency of operations and spending for infrastructure.
175. Whilst we agree a set of assumptions for future population, jobs and land use may be helpful, development of an infrastructure sector plan without preparing strategic-level plans first is a reactive approach that may miss important long-term considerations.
176. We also suggest that the finished sector plans not be the only factor to decide infrastructure project funding, particularly if they are not preceded by strategic-level planning.
177. We seek that the recommended topics that the sector plans cover be expanded to also cover sports and recreational facilities, which would align with Council's Indoor Sports Facility Plan by ensuring clear sector planning to meet future community needs for indoor recreational spaces.

Recommendation 36 – Reform infrastructure contributions

178. We are generally supportive of this recommendation and have experienced the complexities of the existing infrastructure contributions system first hand.
179. A key challenge to be considered is that some established areas have high infrastructure costs (e.g. semi-rural residential areas that require drainage upgrades) but low rates of new development. This raises the question of whether new development in other areas should support infrastructure in already-established areas and if not, then how the required infrastructure will be funded.
180. We commend Infrastructure Victoria in highlighting that any new infrastructure contribution system must consider how infrastructure costs can be distributed more fairly. We note that flow-on implications must also be considered, including the potential for costs to be passed down to the purchaser and whether that is an acceptable outcome in the current financial environment.

Recommendation 37 – Improve asset management of all government infrastructure

181. We support this recommendation in principle but note there is minimal information provided on how it (or if) it will be implemented for local government.

182. We are open to the possibility that asset management will become more prescribed, such as adoption of the Victorian Asset Management Accountability Framework, the use of specified standards for asset management, and improved or directed asset management ratio funding targets.
183. Our suggestion is that software systems and smart technology need to be implemented to help manage asset and infrastructure conditions. Logging data over time will help to determine lifespan benchmarks, better quality product use and enable municipalities to work together to cater for wider community use. There should also be a stronger commitment to using condition audits to inform upgrades and new development priorities.

Recommendation 38 – Prepare for more recycling and waste infrastructure

184. Council acknowledges that Recommendation 38 is a good starting point in relation to recycling and waste infrastructure. However, our view is that this initiative will cost more than the estimated \$1 - \$5 million if the aim is to transform the recycling and waste industry to support long term circular-economy goals.
185. It is also critical that the State Government acquires appropriate land for the development of future sites to provide facilities that are easily accessible to all Victorians. We stress the importance of local government being engaged in direct and meaningful consultation on any such land acquisitions or opportunities.

Recommendation 39 – Use digital technologies to better design, build, operate and maintain government infrastructure

186. Council agrees that there are vast opportunities to use technologies to achieve improvements for infrastructure and we generally support this recommendation. However, we note that that the recommendation is very broad and could benefit from further detail on specific technologies and/or projects to provide clearer guidance.
187. Council will be exploring options for pilot projects in the short to medium term and we would welcome any support from the State Government. Accordingly, we request that where Recommendation 39 discusses funding – that it also notes that support should be provided at a local government level. This includes filling any skills-gaps by training and/or additional staff, which will be key to achieving success in this emerging field.

Recommendation 40 – Use modern traffic control technology for efficient and safe journeys

188. In accordance with our Road Safety Strategy, our primary approach to improving road safety is to adopt the 'Safe System', which is a best-practice standard that addresses all elements of the road transport system in an integrated way, with the aim of ensuring that crash energy levels are below what would cause fatal or serious injury.
189. We are open to technology innovations and how they may form part of a Safe Systems approach, however we are conscious of the need to ensure efficient and useful spending of government funding.
190. Based on the information provided in the strategy, Council is not persuaded that greater investment in new technologies will result in the desired safety outcomes without significant conflicts with existing systems and processes.

191. We also seek to highlight that 'efficient and safe journeys' are not necessarily limited to transport by vehicles. All future traffic control or other road technology must consider coexistence with bicycles, pedestrians and buses.

Future Option – Charge people fairly to use roads

192. While Council acknowledges the potential benefits of road pricing in managing congestion and encouraging sustainable transport, it must be carefully considered within our local context. Manningham is a highly car-dependent municipality due to limited access to public transport, and as such, road pricing could disproportionately impact our residents and may be viewed as inequitable without viable alternative travel options.

Recommendation 41 - Make rail freight competitive, reliable and efficient

193. Manningham has no rail network on which freight could be transported. This recommendation is outside our scope – although we support the proposed shift away from road freight due to emissions saving outcomes.

Recommendation 42 – Encourage off-peak freight delivery in urban areas

194. We support this recommendation in principle and seek confirmation that it would not cause any flow-on impacts especially given Manningham is predominately a residential municipality. For example, school area safety during early morning and/or late evening periods must be considered. Additionally, consideration must be given to minimising further noise or disturbance to the local road network.

Recommendation 43 - Create and preserve opportunities for future major infrastructure projects

195. While this recommendation focuses on major infrastructure projects that are well outside Council's scope, we support the principle of future-proofing and planning ahead for necessary infrastructure.
196. We note that preserving opportunities for infrastructure projects may result in the acquisition of Council managed land and impacts on future development.
197. Accordingly, we seek to be actively involved in discussions with the State Government in relation to any land within Manningham that is being considered for future projects.
198. This is not something we have had a positive experience with in the past, in particular in relation to the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) project.
199. Stage 2 of SRL is proposed to include a train station in Doncaster. We have continuously sought transparency on the potential Doncaster station location from the State, with no success. Without an understanding of where a station box may be located (and whether Stage 2 will proceed or not), our long-term strategic planning for population growth and evolving community needs is impacted. We have an obligation to meet the State's Housing Targets through robust strategic planning, which is hindered by this uncertainty.

200. Accordingly, we seek that Infrastructure Victoria acknowledge the importance of involving local government in discussions about future planning and preserving opportunities for major infrastructure as early as possible.

Conclusion

201. Council generally supports the objectives and recommendations from Infrastructure Victoria in the draft strategy.
202. Council would welcome any further opportunities to be involved including to progress/discuss any of the matters raised in this submission.
203. We respectfully request that the considerations, issues and opportunities raised by this submission be incorporated into the final version of the strategy.
204. Council looks forward to reviewing the final version of the strategy to understand how all feedback from the consultation period has been addressed.
205. We share Infrastructure Victoria's hope that the Victorian government will use this strategy to sustainably plan for the infrastructure that communities will need over the coming decades, to address major challenges from population growth and climate change, and to support the published Housing Targets.

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