

Our Planet, Our People, Our Place,
Our Promise



Bayside City Council

Submission to Suburban Rail Loop Draft Precinct Key Directions for Cheltenham SRL East

August 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

Bayside City Council proudly acknowledges the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Council acknowledges the Bunurong's continuing relationship to the land and waterways and respects that their connection and spiritual identity is maintained through ancient ceremonies, songlines, dance, art and living culture.

Council pays tribute to the invaluable contributions of the Bunurong and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island elders who have guided and continue to guide the work we do.

Executive Summary

Bayside City Council (Council) appreciates the opportunity offered by the Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA) to make a submission to the Draft Precinct 'key emerging directions' for SRL East – Cheltenham Precinct (the Precinct).

Whilst Council supports the intent of the draft key directions for the Cheltenham Precinct, Council is gravely concerned regarding the disconnect between the draft visions, and the density and heights being consulted upon. Whilst there will be benefits brought by the operation of the Suburban Rail Loop, there are also significant concerns that both Council and the Bayside community have as to how the draft Precinct Structure Plan will evolve and ultimately be delivered. A summary of key matters contained in Council's submission include:

Density and Height

Council strongly opposes the scale of height and density shown in the proposed building heights and density proposed by the SRL. The heights shown are in stark contrast to the existing conditions in the area, and don't respond to the need to manage the amenity impacts of increased density on existing communities.

No modelling of population projections have been undertaken in conjunction with the proposed heights to demonstrate a need for such density intensification. Furthermore, no analysis has been undertaken as to the impact of this level of change on the amenity of existing residential areas, and the ability to service this level of population from a transport and community infrastructure perspective.

Existing Planning Controls

Council considers that existing planning controls for key sites must be incorporated into the Precinct Plan. Existing planning controls were put in place to balance the needs of the existing community and aspirations for development. The 'Highett Common' development located on the former CSIRO site on Graham Road is a key area of concern for Council. A development plan has been prepared for the site which has established an appropriate level of community facilities, open space and traffic management to manage the increase in population and density. Setting this planning aside to provide such a drastic increase in height is opposed by Council. If this is undertaken there will be unacceptable wider impacts on the surrounding community.

Transport and Traffic

Bay Road is a key East-West arterial road within Bayside. Council is concerned on the impact of the intensification of residential development on Bay Road, and its ability to meet the increased demand and continue to function to service freight to Bayside.

Council strongly opposes any narrowing of Bay Road. Council considers that further planning needs to be undertaken to understand what the impact of the additional residential density will be on Bay Road, and its ability to provide an appropriate level of service.

Council also considers the following measures need to be incorporated into the Precinct Plan to ensure Bay Road can function in the long term:

1. Be widened to achieve a minimum two-lane alignment along the corridor from the proposed station to Sandringham. This would include the widening of the Bay Road underpass to achieve this.
2. Increase the elevation of the Bay Road Rail Bridge, in conjunction with the widening of the Bay Road underpass. This is necessary to ensure the ability of Bay Road to continue to operate as an arterial route.
3. Accommodate main cycling corridors on alternative streets within the precinct (Wickham, Tulip and Park Road) to all lead towards Highett, Southland and SRL stations as pictured in Appendix 1.

The Cheltenham Precinct Plan should recognise the opportunity to create a shared user path (that allows for the use of Personal Mobility Devices) underneath the elevated rail corridor as part of the Level Crossing Removal at Highett. It is important that the delivery of the SRL project and LXRP works is undertaken in unison and consider the connectivity of the precinct into Bayside and wider Melbourne.

Development Contributions

The significant increase in population in the precinct will have far reaching impacts in terms of service delivery within Bayside, and the wider region. These impacts include the need to service the additional population with open space, community facilities such as Maternal Child Health facilities, kindergartens and schools and increased transport and traffic infrastructure. Council is concerned regarding the lack of analysis that has been undertaken to date regarding the impact on regional facilities, such as hospitals and schools. This analysis has become more crucial, given the recent announcements of increased housing targets across Melbourne.

Council has grave concerns regarding the impact of this increase in population and the ability for our community to have access to essential services to meet its needs. A development contributions plan must be prepared for the project and include all necessary infrastructure that will be required to service this precinct. Bayside City Council requests that a commitment be made by the Victorian Government that all infrastructure triggered by the SRL Project will be delivered in a cost-neutral manner to Council. There must not be any cost liability on Council for the delivery of this infrastructure.

Open Space

Council strongly advocates for the investigation of new and enhanced open space within the Bayside municipality. Council also strongly advocates for a portion of the replacement of open space lost in Sir William Fry Reserve to be located within, or within close proximity to the Bayside Municipality in an easily accessible location. In addition Council considers the land underneath the raised rail corridor to be utilised for additional open space to serve the Highett Activity Centre.

Council strongly advocates for the exclusion of Eddie Street Reserve from the Precinct Plan boundary. The Reserve is on the periphery, and it is Council's view that its current inclusion indicates a desire to develop the open space parcel, or count it towards cumulative open space area for the precinct plan area, artificially inflating the open space percentage because it is already in place.

Project Governance

Council continues to express significant concerns regarding the governance of this SRL project. Council reiterates the importance of a genuine collaborative approach between the SRLA and Council to ensure that the needs of the existing community are considered in the planning for the SRL.

Introduction

Bayside City Council (Council) appreciates the opportunity offered by the Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA) to make a submission to the Draft Precinct 'key emerging directions' for SRL East – Cheltenham Precinct (the Precinct).

The Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) is a major project which seeks to transform Melbourne's public transport system, particularly the way in which residents and commuters currently live, work and utilise activity centres and neighbourhoods surrounding the six SRL precincts.

Whilst Council supports the intent of the draft key directions for the Cheltenham Precinct, Council is gravely concerned regarding the disconnect between the draft visions, and the density and heights being consulted upon. Whilst there will be benefits brought by the operation of the Suburban Rail Loop, there are also significant concerns that both Council and the Bayside community have as to how the draft Precinct Structure Plan will evolve and ultimately be delivered.

By way of working towards this milestone, the SRLA have developed the following set of draft Key Directions alongside a set of maps with proposed building height locations, open space opportunities, and high level land use, transport and sustainability considerations:

1. Boosting Economy
2. Enriching Community
3. Better Connections
4. Empowering Sustainability
5. Enhancing Place

Council's submission discusses these key directions in detail and provides feedback as to what on-the-ground actions should be undertaken to deliver the best possible outcomes in realising these key directions. Council's intent is that these on-the-ground actions will help inform the SRLA's decision-making and the progression of the drafting of the Precinct Structure Plan for Cheltenham.

Council’s response to the SRL Draft Key Directions

Housing Density, Diversity and Building Heights

As part of SRLA’s engagement on the directions, a map (Figure 1) was provided indicating the proposed building heights of up to 18 storeys within the SRL precinct area.

Council is alarmed at the scale of height and density shown in the proposed building height map. The heights shown are in stark contrast to the existing conditions in the area, and don’t respond to the need to manage the amenity impacts of increased density on existing communities. Council strongly opposes the heights shown. Additionally, there appears to be a disconnect between the theme of ‘enhancing place’ and the proposed over-densification of the precinct. It is also noted these proposed heights are significantly different to the previous consultation undertaken with residents showed graphics including Figure 2 and 3 of this submission.

Figure 1: Proposed building height map



Figure 2: Medium, higher and significant change areas indicative graphics.



Figure 3: Medium, higher and significant change areas map.



Figures 2 and 3 were 'transitioned' to Figure 1 over the course of a few months, with no documented context as to how the Victorian Government has utilised the community's feedback received to inform the proposed building heights.

For such large and major projects like the SRL, it is important that Victorian Government keep themselves accountable by informing the community correctly on the potential changes in their area. The lack of context and information to justify such significant increases in building density makes it difficult for residents to understand the project and provide meaningful feedback.

Whilst Council is supportive of a level of increased density within the precinct core (surrounding the new SRL station and within close proximity from this area and the train line), there is a need to balance this by limiting the intensity of development in those areas that are less proximal to the station and abut neighbourhood residential areas.

The SRLA's proposed building heights do not indicate any inclusion of residential transition areas within the proposed precinct plan boundaries nor is it known as to what kind of setbacks or lot consolidation could be encouraged to ensure amenity impacts are not realised as part of the future development of the area. It is considered inappropriate to have high-rise buildings bordering directly on a Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ) which has a three-storey height limit.

It is also unclear as to why such a high proportion of the proposed housing types is to be provided as high density living. The SRLA have not provided any information to suggest what type of housing diversity is needed for the future population and demographic. Furthermore, no information has been given as to the projected population that would be achieved with heights and density of this nature.

In the absence of any detailed information from SRL or strategic justification for the need for such increased building heights, Council has created its own Housing Density map (Figure 4) as included below and separately in Council's Position Paper Summary (Appendix 1). This map identifies areas where Council believes increases in density is most suitable within the precinct. A key consideration of Council in the preparation of the proposed density map was how to increase the density of the precinct in an appropriate manner, without compromising the amenity and character of existing residential areas.

It is essential that incentives for lot consolidation are included within the precinct plan to provide for better density outcomes. Lot consolidation will allow an increase in density, whilst also ensuring appropriate levels of open space can be maintained, and the impact of overshadowing can be minimised for the existing community.

The housing density map prepared by Council is estimated to accommodate 4000 – 7000 new dwellings in the precinct planning area. Council officers look forward to working with the SRL on understanding how this preferred density model can be used to inform the draft Precinct Plans.

Figure 4: Bayside City Council officers' preferred development scenario

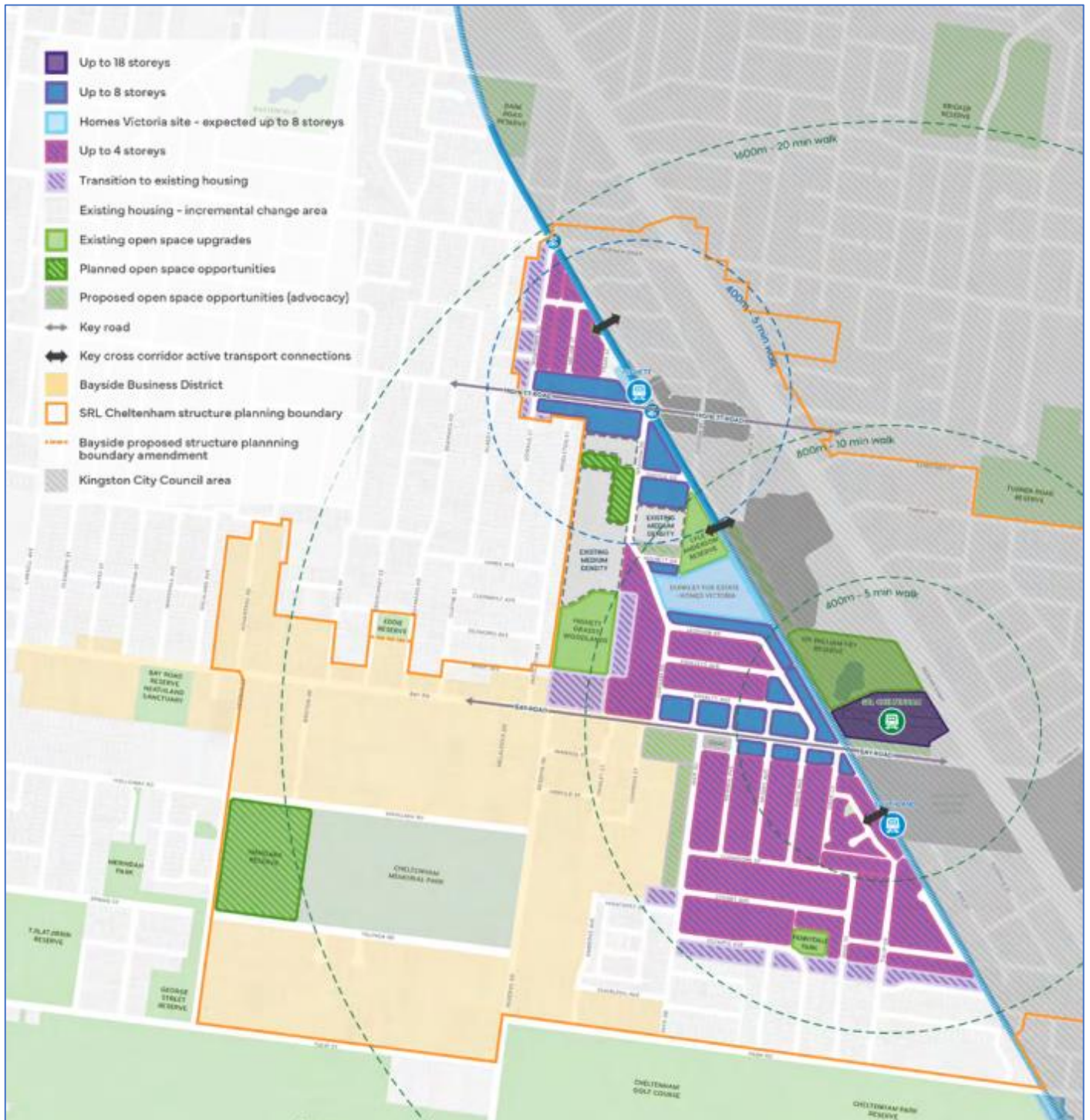
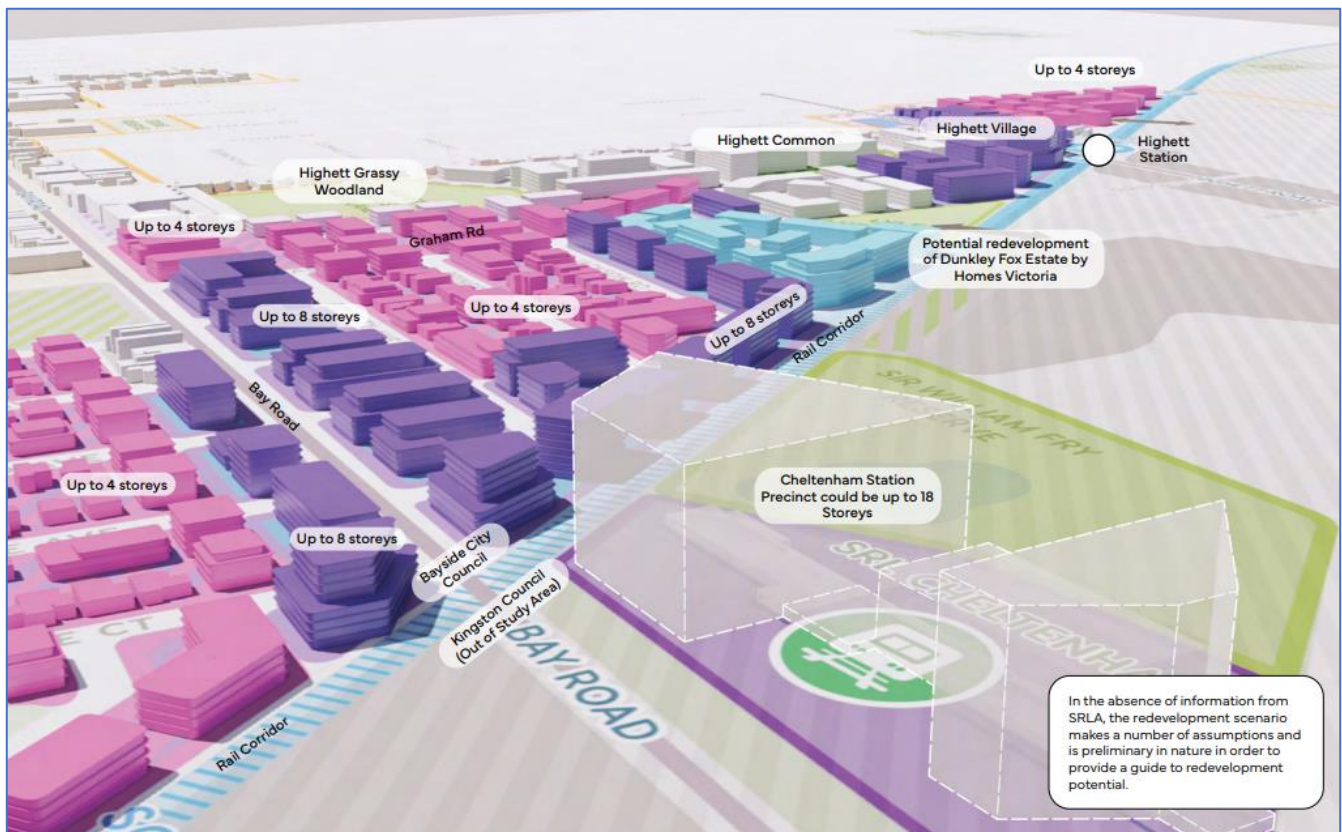


Figure 5: Potential Development Scenario - Looking north-west along Bay Road and the railway corridor



To provide some quantitative understanding, the above preferred scenario considers a potential increase of 4000-7000 new dwellings in the Cheltenham Station precinct within Bayside City Council area. This also includes the replacement of existing dwellings with new dwellings.

It is Council's view that any significant change should be targeted in areas with the least level of impacting amenity to reduce the level of change in other areas that are not within such close proximity to the train stations.

Council's preferred scenario (Figure 4 and 5 above) is considered to align well with the expectations of the community to minimise change where possible and appropriate:

- The highest level of change would be accommodated along the rail corridor north and immediately south of Bay Road, and around Highett Station.
- It includes transitional change areas of up to 4 storeys, and transition to areas of predominantly single storey dwellings. Lot consolidation would need to be encouraged and/or incentivised to achieve good density outcomes in these transitional areas.
- By concentrating the significant redevelopment potential along Bay Road, the rail corridor, and around Highett Station, many of the existing residential neighbourhoods in Highett and Pennydale could develop at a slower rate.
- This scenario assumes that the existing public housing at the Fox Dunkley Estate could be redeveloped up to 8 storeys.

- The scenario assumes some new areas of open space to offset the increase in population, subject to future needs analysis and developer contributions..
- There is no support to override the approved Development Plan for the former CSIRO Development. The SRL should not seek to increase building heights or density in this area any further than what has already been approved by Council.

Social and Affordable Housing

Council welcomes the opportunity to work with the SRLA on providing greater social and affordable housing outcomes through the precinct planning process. The precinct planning process offers a once in a generation opportunity to put in place targets to achieve greater social and affordable housing outcomes using inclusionary zoning and/or other planning mechanisms that mandate the provision.

The SRLA have not confirmed how they will achieve greater social and affordable housing outcomes in the precinct nor does the proposed building height map indicate a commitment to redevelop and revitalise Fox Dunkley Housing Estate, which is a Victorian Government owned asset.

The Victorian Government lack of commitment to take advantage of its own land portfolio to accommodate greater housing accommodation (in particular, social and affordable housing) is disheartening. Council strongly advocates for the increase of up to 8 storey building heights to be realised on the site as part of its redevelopment.

Better Connections

The SRLA draft key directions for Cheltenham included the following map (Figure 6) with little strategic direction or opportunities to better connect and integrate the transport system.

Figure 6: SRLA Better connections map



Council remains concerned about the ability of the existing transport network to cope with the projected population growth. Council has prepared its own set of maps shared within this section of the Submission which have been prepared as part of the Position Paper Summary (Appendix 1) identifying pedestrian, cycle and shared user pathway and other key outcomes to better integrate transport modes across key parts of the precinct area. Through this submission Council raises strong concerns specifically on the below transport matters:

SRLA's proposal of narrowing Bay Road

SRLA have proposed as part of the Reference Design for Bay Road (EES Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment) that the Eastbound traffic lanes along Bay Road beneath the Frankston rail line be narrowed to a single lane approximately 150m further west to provide upgraded footpaths and a new bi-directional cycle path.

Whilst Council supports treatments to make the Bay Road corridor more user-friendly for pedestrians and cyclists, Council strongly opposes any proposal to reduce the trafficable width of Bay Road. To do so would be eliminating or ultimately obstruct the road's ability to perform as an arterial road.

Narrowing of this road will impede its function to service freight to many large industries in the Bayside Business District and to Southland Shopping Centre. This main function of Bay Road will also seek to increase in the future if development of the precinct progresses as SRLA intend it to.

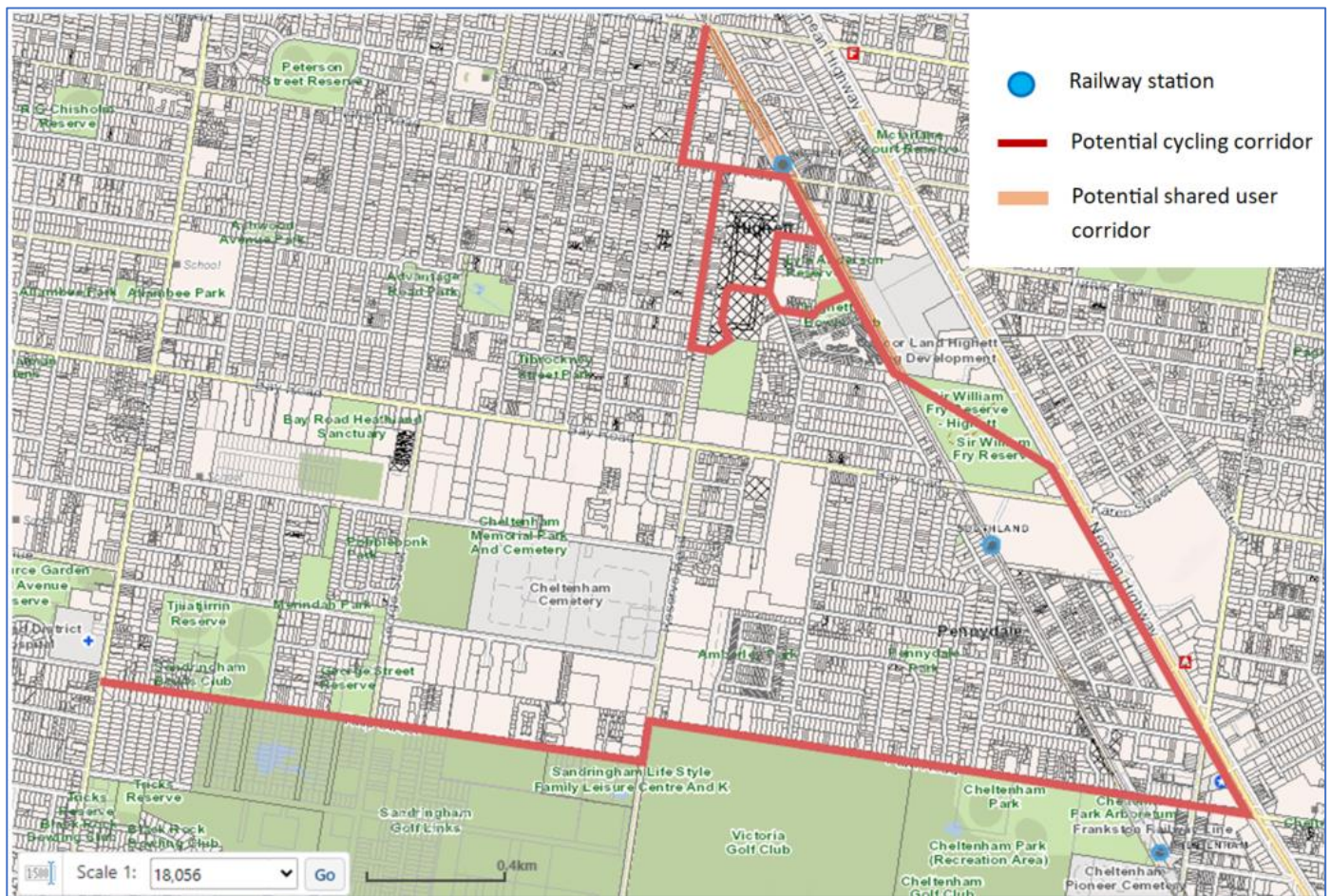
Council's appointed consultant undertook preliminary mesoscopic Domino modelling at peak times and the analysis suggested that if Bay Road (between Bluff Road and Nepean Highway) is reduced to one lane arrangement then:

- Bus stops (indented or on-street) will likely slow traffic significantly during peak hours on Bay Road.
- Increased turning lanes and traffic movements on Bay Road could negatively impact overall flow.
- Limiting Bay Road's capacity (arterial road) might conflict with traffic flow goals and push traffic to side streets like Park Rd, Highett Rd and Tulip St.
- Motorists might choose to avoid Bay Road congestion by using local streets as shortcuts.

Council strongly opposes the narrowing of Bay Road to single lane each to allow for a cycle path – which is part of SRLA's current Reference Design for the road. On the contrary, Council suggests that Bay Road:

1. Be expanded by procurement of private land to expand the two lane arrangement; and/or
2. Accommodate main cycling corridors on alternative streets within the precinct (Wickham, Tulip and Park Road) to all lead towards Highett, Southland and SRL stations as pictured below.

Figure 7: Main Cyclist corridors on Tulip and Park Street



To further improve the streetscape of Bay Road, Council considers the following must be included and funded within the Precinct Plans:

- Undergrounding of powerlines
- A safe crossing at grade or over Bay Road to provide safe passage from residents south of Bay Road to Cheltenham Station.
- An access point at Bay Road into the cycle path along the rail corridor for Bayside residents.
- The Bay Road right turn lane eastbound into Southland should not be removed.
- Syncing of traffic lights along Bay Road (and other main roads) to ensure traffic flow can be directed appropriate during peak hours and all other times.
- Council requests investigation for the need for any additional signalled intersections on the western portion of Bay Road and whether there should be restrictions in place for certain intersections to remove left or right turns on to certain streets when accessing or exiting Bay Road.
- Council requests that an additional pedestrian crossing of Bay Road in the vicinity of the Aldi supermarket be provided to allow for safer passage of pedestrians.

Council also strongly advocates for the increased elevation of the Rail Bridge above Bay Road to ensure its function as an Arterial Road. Council has received verbal communication from SRLA that this proposal would be out of scope of the SRL precinct and project works. The lack of consideration given to the broader transport impacts that will arise over the course of the next 20 years and beyond is of large concern. Particular concern is given to those traffic impacts that will incur at Bay Road if reduction to single lanes in each direction were to occur, which would only exacerbate traffic congestion onto the surrounding road network.

Shared User Path (SUP) along the rail corridor

There is a huge opportunity to create a shared user path underneath the elevated rail corridor as part of the Level Crossing Removal at Highett that can also provide for periphery open space and recreational uses and activities. It is important that the delivery of the SRL project and LXRP works is undertaken in unison.

The SRLA have indicated a north-south pedestrian and cycling corridor spine as a key direction on their 'Better Connections' Map. Council highly supports this outcome which has the ability also provides greater east to west cross corridor connections into the Kingston municipality under the elevated rail.

This north-south pedestrian spine could then be complimented by at-grade, cross-corridor connections under the elevated rail between Lyle Anderson Reserve and Highett Gasworks and other locations (map 7).

Council suggests various approaches to plan integration of the Shared User path into the draft precinct structure plan:

- To remove conflict between pedestrians and cyclists, the shared use path (SUP) should change form on approach to Highett Station. Here, a dedicated cycle path should be located on the west side of the station and remain separated when crossing Highett Road. Pedestrians should be funnelled into the plaza space around the station. An SUP should be located on the south side of Highett Road beneath the Viaduct alignment.
- The dedicated cycle path should be buffered by planting, or if space does not allow, be specially defined with line marking or alternate paving type. Materials along shared path route should be permeable to enhance water retention and avoid risk of flooding for peds and cyclists be integrated into the station architecture.
- Utilise the space created underneath the elevated rail corridor for open space and community uses. Ensure good interfaces to adjacent streets and housing.
- Ensure high quality pedestrian connections throughout the SUP, particularly on key thoroughfares such as Graham Road.
- Consider improved pedestrian and cycling connections into Highett Grassy Woodland
- Consider shared path through Lyle Anderson Reserve to provide an additional route to enter Highett
- Seamless, at-grade, cross-corridor connections under the elevated rail between Lyle Anderson Reserve and Highett Gasworks, which would push the

elevated rail ramp-down further south. Rail embankments should not be located alongside open space.

- Maximising the number of at-grade connections through the rail corridor. Overpasses and underpasses should be avoided.

Figure 8 identifies where key cross corridor connections pedestrian improvements and cycling improvements could occur.

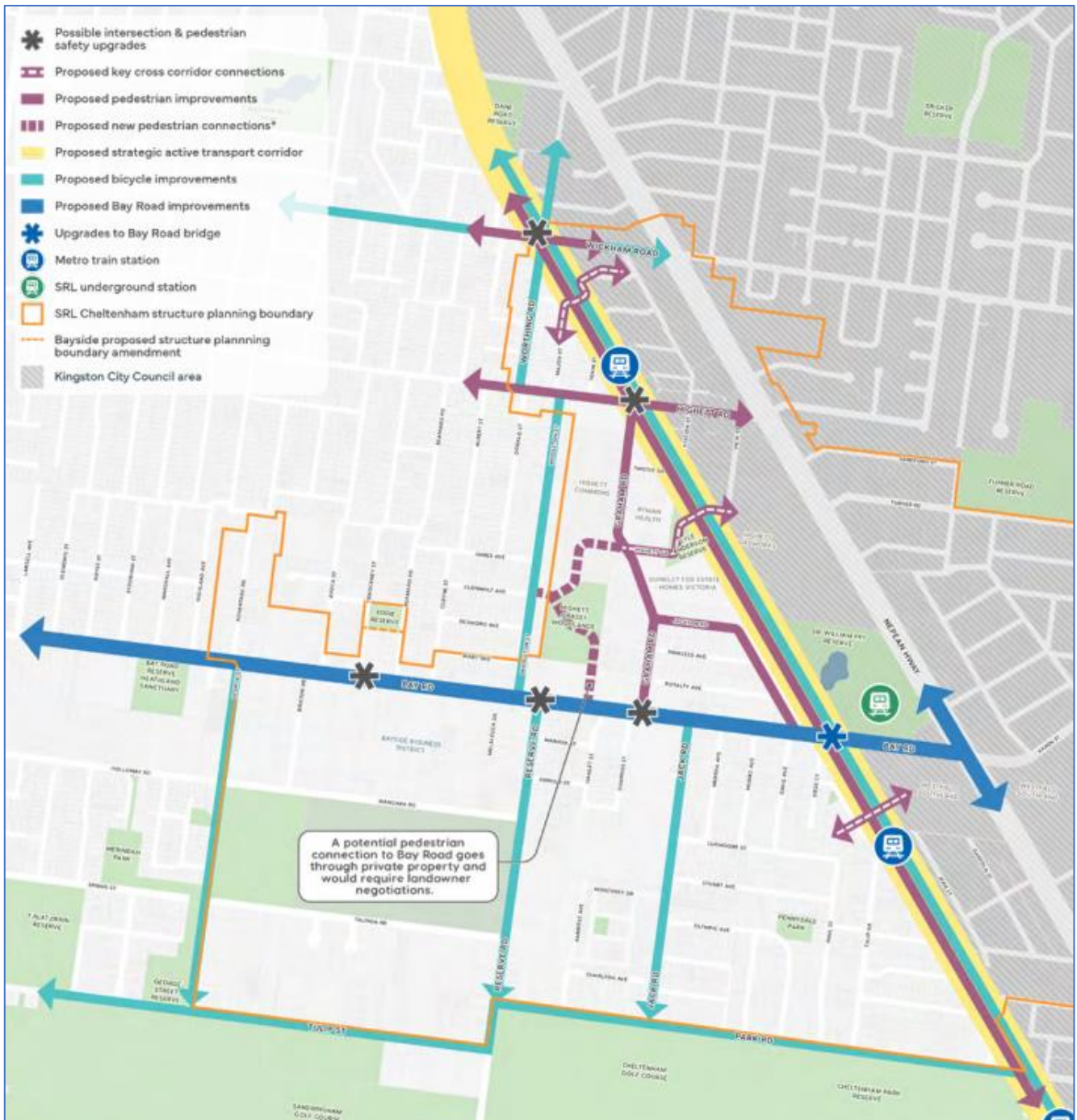


Figure 8: Bayside City Council Preferred Cross connection corridors and Active transport corridors

Pedestrian Safety and Cycling Improvement

The below opportunities are identified by Council as areas to improve connections throughout structure plan area that will enable ease of access and enhance permeability:

Figure 9: Bayside City Council Preferred movement map for Cheltenham Precinct Core

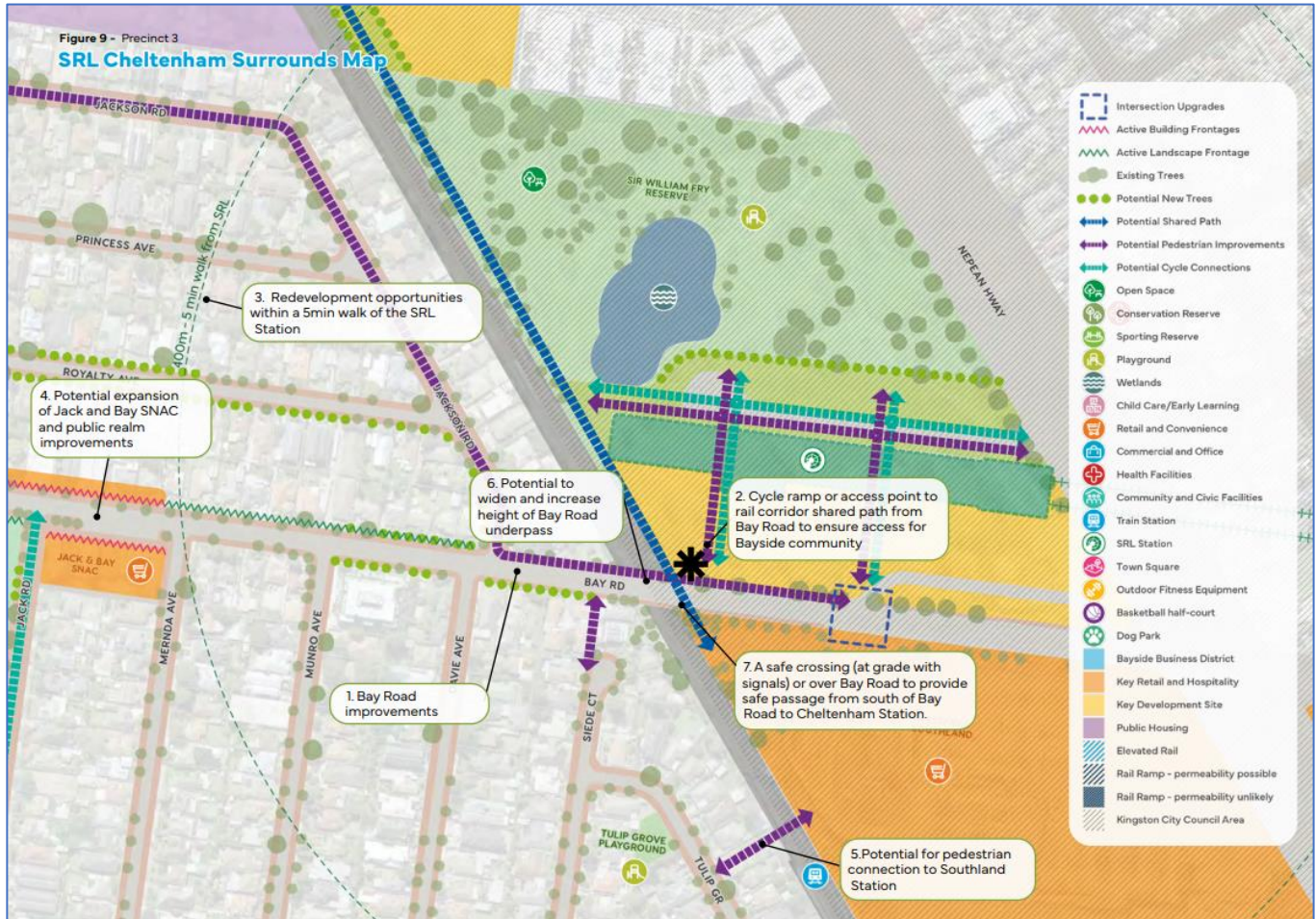


Figure 9 identifies the following pedestrian safety and cycling improvements:

- Widen and increase height of the Bay Road underpass
- Potential pedestrian connection to Southland station to provide greater accessibility to the train stations without the need to walk around and on Bay Road
- Undergrounding of powerlines on Bay Road but also throughout the entire precinct area to optimise ability to green both the private and public realm
- Syncing of traffic lights along Bay Road (and other main roads) to ensure traffic flow can be directed appropriate during peak hours and all other times
- Multiple pedestrian access points to the Station should be a priority to ensure seamless connection for Bayside residents north, west and south of the Station.

Figure 10: Bayside City Council Preferred movement map for BBD and Bay Road

Figure 10 identifies the following pedestrian safety and cycling improvements:

- Pedestrian safety improvements at the existing Reserve Road/Bay Road intersection including pedestrian crossings and signals on all legs of the intersection.
- Undergrounding of powerlines
- Signalisation at the Graham Road/Bay Road intersection including pedestrian crossings and signalisation (in motion)
- Pedestrian/cycling improvements to Bayside Business District including safe crossings, bicycle lanes where appropriate, bike infrastructure such as bike racks.
- Inclusion of a pedestrian crossing on Bay Road in the vicinity of the Aldi supermarket
- Provide for improved pedestrian (and potentially cycling) connections into Highett Grassy Woodland and through to Bay Road.

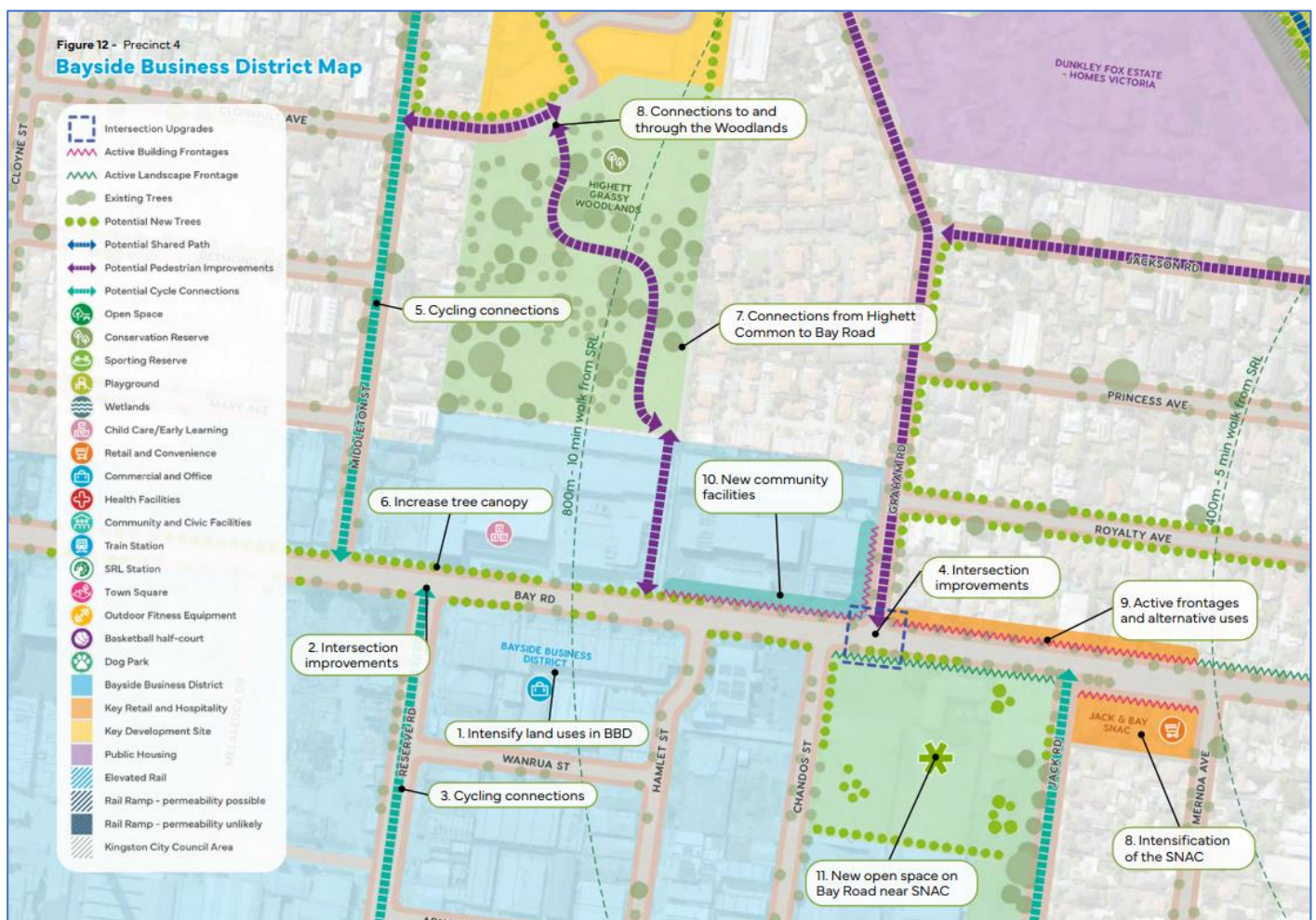


Figure 11: Bayside City Council Preferred movement map for Hightett Activity Centre area



Figure 11 identifies the following pedestrian safety and cycling improvements.

- The safest routes for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers at the existing Wickham Road roundabout considering proposed elevated rail. Once the elevated rail is in place, Council suggests removing this roundabout and add signalised traffic intersection.
- Multiple pedestrian access points to the new Hightett Station should be a priority to ensure seamless connection for Bayside residents north, west and south of the Station.
- Pedestrian-focused environment in Hightett Village by building kerb outstands and narrowing crossing distances and by visually demarcating crossings. There is great volume of interchanging passengers at this location, with poor provision of bus facilities. Council suggests providing new bus shelters and seating for east/west routes incorporated into the urban realm.
- A separate and dedicated cycle path in the immediate vicinity of the Station (including at the Highett Road crossing) to keep pedestrians safe in the Town Square.
- Create a pedestrian connection extension from Dart Street under elevated rail to Kingston.

- Ensure seamless at-grade connections between strategic cycle path associated with elevated rail and existing and proposed Bayside cycle network. It is also important to ensure station designs consider secure cycle storage within the station footprint and opportunities for stands outside the station.

Figure 12: Bayside City Council Preferred movement map for Highett Residential Core

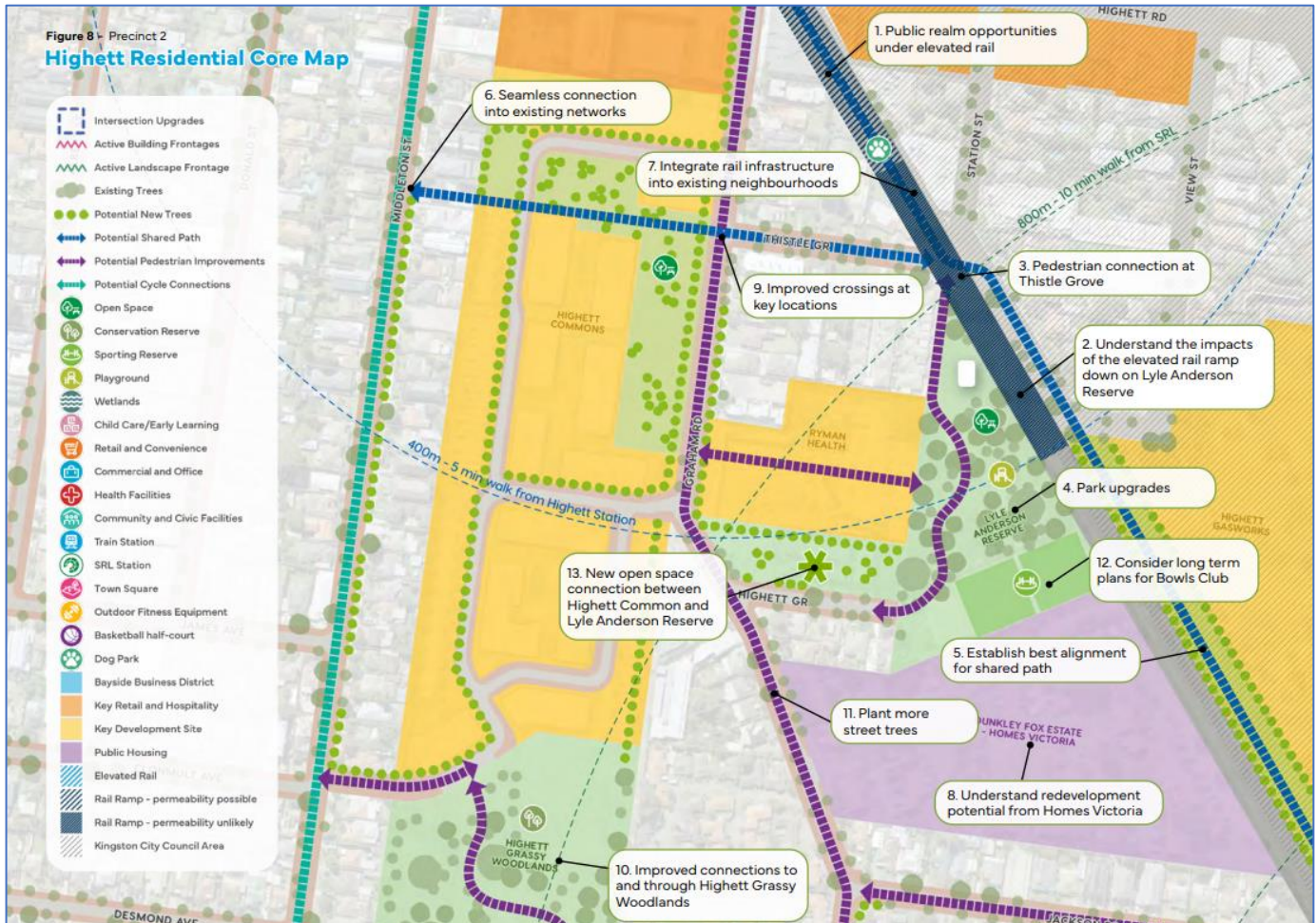


Figure 12 identifies the following pedestrian safety and cycling improvements:

- Create pedestrian-focused environment in Highett Village by building kerb outstands and narrowing crossing distances and by visually demarcating crossings. There is great volume of interchanging passengers at this location, with poor provision of bus facilities. Council suggests providing new bus shelters and seating for east/west routes incorporated into the urban realm.
- Improved pedestrian connection along Graham Road and into Highett Grove and through Lyle Anderson

Figure 13: Bayside City Council Preferred map for Highett Town Square



Key Component Legend:

- A. Elevated Station Building (with consideration of best location for and reuse of heritage station building)
- B. Platforms set back from street to allow natural light
- C. Shared retail street connected to station Plaza along Railway Parade (Kingston)
- D. Integration of adjoining existing buildings (499C Highett Rd)
- E. Buffer zones with planting, seating and canopy trees
- F. Separated cycle and pedestrian crossing
- G. Dedicated cycle lane
- H. Carpark
- I. Local road
- J. Shared Use Path

Council has prepared a concept design for the future Station at Highett subject to the LXP works being progressed.

The concept design includes the following considerations:

- Construction of a plaza at the proposed new Highett station under the elevated rail to provide a meeting place for train users and visitors to the Highett Activity Centre to stay, sit and explore the activity centre.

- Conversion of a portion of Railway Parade within the City of Kingston to a 'shared' street would effectively extend the new station plaza to the retail offering of the Highett Village (Kingston side). A continuous paving treatment to stitch together the east and west of the rail corridor. Outdoor trading zones could be allowed for in balance with street parking. The road condition should then transition to its current state as retail tenancies end and residential blocks begin.
- The existing car park at the Highett Station should be reconfigured to allow for the station development and associated access ways and amenity. Access should be maintained in its current condition.
- Planting, landscaping and water capture/treatment should be maximised.

Boosting Economy in the Bayside Business District (BBD)

The Bayside Business District (BBD) is the major focal point for business development and employment in Bayside. Its purpose is to provide for a range of commercial and industrial land uses to provide services and employment opportunities for residents of Bayside and surrounding areas. The BBD serves an important role in accommodating businesses unable to be located within activity centres due to their spatial or infrastructure needs.

Council has previously requested and continues to seek analysis of the anticipated changes to the local economy to be prepared by the SRLA.

This analysis should consider at a minimum:

- Review of the current planning controls and their impact
- An audit of the current status of the BBD to understand how the land is being used
- Identify the impacts of the SRL on the BBD – changed role, accessibility by customers, attractiveness to business and vehicle access
- Streetscape masterplan that defines the BBD as a precinct with an emphasis to increase open space and canopy associated with Council's Urban Forest Strategy
- Determination of the post SRL identity for the BBD
- Recommendation for planning controls to reflect the key directions of the BBD post SRL implementation.

At a high level, Council considers that there would be appetite and possibility to further breakdown the BBD into different nodes of employment opportunities, transitioning some of the warehouse and industrial areas to micro-breweries and office spaces however noting these changes should be supported by proper planning and technical work.

There is also possibility to enhance the creative industry employment opportunities, noting Advantage Road is currently home to many art studios which could be an anchor point for expanding the creative industry offering in the area.

Council notes that the SRLA's proposed building heights for the Bayside Business District (BBD) is 4 storeys which is largely no change to the existing preferred building height controls that exists. Council considers an increase in the proposed building

height would be suitable to help transition the BBD into an intensified and vibrant employment hub and to also allow for the accommodation of 36,500 jobs that the SRL precinct will seek to provide as outlined in their business case.

A substantial building height allowance would facilitate the creation of a vibrant employment hub within the BBD. This could attract a wider range of businesses, particularly those requiring larger office spaces or warehouse facilities. Increased development opportunities could contribute to the overall economic growth of the area.

Intensified development in the BBD aligns with the existing provisions of the Bayside Planning Scheme. Section 11.03-6L of the scheme outlines the objectives for the BBD, which include encouraging "commercial, industrial and other uses that fulfill a business/employment focussed role" and "consolidating and intensifying business uses within the Bayside Business District."

By carefully considering these factors, Council believes that intensifying development in the BBD could be a valuable strategy for fostering a more dynamic and thriving employment hub.

Highett Activity Centre

Council supports the identification of Highett Activity Centre as a local employment centre but questions on how the proposed intensification will transition to surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

Council proposes as part of its preferred development scenario (Figure 4) that there be better transition of building heights in the Highett activity centre to the surrounding periphery of the SRL precinct and that the proposed planning provisions for the site ensure the transition between land uses to avoid a jarring contrast and retain character and amenity as much as possible.

- Council seeks appropriate increased density outcomes that are not overly excessive. Any increase in density should be located within the immediate interface of the Highett Station as per Council's proposal in Figure 4.
- Advocates for a 'town square' under/adjacent to elevated rail between Bayside and Kingston to provide public realm and to better connect the two parts of Highett.
- Council strongly suggests the Level Crossing Removal project at Highett Road and Wickham Road roundabout to be delivered in conjunction with the SRL timeframes to ascertain the delivery of these improvements and opportunities.

SRL precinct and Southland Shopping Centre

Council supports intensifying the precinct core to create a vibrant community and retail hub that integrates Southland and the new SRL station in alignment with Council preferred development scenario. However, Council emphasizes the importance of significant improvements to public spaces alongside better pedestrian and cycling infrastructure within this area as per those outlined in the Maps in this submission and the Bayside Position Paper Summary (Appendix 1).

Community Infrastructure

Council is concerned about the impacts of the additional population on the existing Bayside community facilities in the absence of a commitment from State Government. Analysis should be undertaken of the impact of the additional population on existing community infrastructure such as schools, daycare, kinder and libraries. Whilst Council has undertaken some strategic work to forecast the future community infrastructure needs in the area, this work is not taking into consideration the forecasted population growth and demographic analysis that SRL have accounted for the area.

These community services should be provided in locations:

- that are easily accessible to the community by all modes of transport
- Where possible, facilities and services are co-located and provide for multiple and flexible purposes
- Innovative and future proof
- Development is innovative and sustainable in design.

Plans released publicly by the SRLA show large locations on the map of where community infrastructure could be provided (Figure 14 below).

Figure 14: SRLA key directions map showing opportunities for community infrastructure



Separately, the SRLA have shown location of new open space to be located within the City of Kingston (Figure 15 below).

Figure 15: SRLA key directions map showing opportunities for enhanced and new open space



Council strongly advocates for the investigation of new and enhanced open space within the Bayside municipality. Council also strongly advocates for a portion of the replacement of open space lost in Sir William Fry Reserve to be located within, or within close proximity to the Bayside Municipality in an easily accessible location.

There are areas of open space deficiencies within the precinct that currently exist as identified in Council’s *Open Space Strategy: Suburb Analysis and Action Plan (2012)*. Cheltenham, Hampton East and Highett all were deficient in open space offerings which will only be exacerbated by the increased density sought within the SRL precinct area.

Council also highlights the urgent need for new and upgraded active recreation facilities, as existing sporting ovals within and surrounding the precinct area are already over capacity.

Further to this, the following opportunities have been identified by Council and is represented in the following Figure 16.

- Council identifies the Laminex Buffer site (332-336 Bay Road, Cheltenham) as a potential new Open Space location to provide for active recreation uses, to be delivered via purchase, long-term leasing (50 years or more) or via Public Acquisition Overlay by the SRLA.
- Council identifies the Wangara Road open space site as a location for passive open space that Council is seeking to deliver. The SRLA's contribution and funding mechanisms should consider opportunity to help deliver the open space on this site to cater for the additional population in the area.
- Council seeks upgrades (including surveillance) of existing open space at Lyle Anderson Reserve to provide pedestrian and cycling connections from this area to other key locations in the SRL precinct. Council also seeks SRLA's consideration of developing land on Highett Grove as additional open space to provide greater connection from Highett Grassy Woodland through to Lyle Anderson and the recreational activities that could occur under the elevated rail.
- Council advocates for the delivery of enhanced pedestrian pathways as per the Maps provided in this submission and the Bayside Position Paper Summary to also be able to provide for personal mobility devices and cycling (where shared user pathways can be appropriately accommodated).
- Council advocates for a plaza at the proposed new Highett station under the elevated rail to provide a meeting place for train users and visitors to the Highett Activity Centre to stay, sit and explore the activity centre.
- Council advocates for the utilisation of the space underneath the elevated rail corridor between the new Highett Station (following LXR works) and the new SRL station to create new public open spaces and recreational opportunities.
- Council emphasises the importance of accessibility and affordability and strongly opposes relying solely on private ownership for new community facilities, as this might restrict access for future residents.

As previously stated in this submission, Council strongly advocates for the exclusion of Eddie Street Reserve from the Precinct Plan boundary. The Reserve is on the periphery, and it is Council's view that its current inclusion indicates a desire to develop the open space parcel, or count it towards cumulative open space area for the precinct plan area, artificially inflating the open space percentage because it is already in place.

Figure 16: Open space opportunities



Sustainability

Council is concerned that the SRL draft key directions under Sustainability theme are both high level and fail to note how the direction will be met on a tangible level.. The SRL project is one of the largest infrastructure and housing project Victoria will likely see in this lifetime. The proposal of seeking such a significant increase in housing, transport and community infrastructure means the opportunity to think big and innovatively when incorporating greater sustainable outcomes is huge. It would be a waste to deliver this project without incorporating more environmentally sustainable design outcomes within the precinct.

Through the *Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020-2025*, Council seeks to remain a Carbon Neutral municipality and encourages the SRLA to incentivise renewable energy options as part of the precinct structure plan.

Council recommends the following:

- The SRLA undertake analysis and investigate sustainable methods to manage waste in the density intensified areas.
- Include suitable emissions reduction targets to be introduced with annual reporting of progress across construction and operation of the SRL station.
- The provision of ESD requirements as part of new developments within the precinct, alongside appropriate incentivising for the industry.
- The provision of water sensitive urban design (WSUD) as part of community and drainage infrastructure, including planting, raingardens and other types of greening. WSUD is intrinsically linked to ESD outcomes and improves amenity, mitigates the urban heat island effect, and supports stormwater management plans. These interventions could treat stormwater from Sir William Fry Reserve.
- Utilise those targets as set in policies and strategies from Bayside City Council to achieve sustainable development outcomes.
- Seek to deliver an increased level of tree canopy coverage in the precinct by incentivising creative design and landscaping including the provision of high quality rooftop gardens where on-ground landscaping opportunities may be limited as part of development.
- Incentivisation to provide for microgrids and greened sky way bridges between buildings
- Undergrounding of powerlines to optimise ability to green both the private and public realm.

Council notes that no information has been shared surrounding the management of waste for medium, high and significant change areas. The planned density changes would see significant population densification, there is concern that poorly coordinated waste collection methods and plans will hinder sustainability outcomes and contribute to traffic and movement problems.

Council's *Urban Forest Strategy 2022-2040* stipulates Council's goal to increase tree canopy coverage from 16% to 30% by 2040. Council urges SRLA to consider the *Cheltenham/Pennydale Precinct Plan* and *Highett Precinct Plan*, which were adopted by Council at its 20 February 2024 Meeting.

Measures should also be included within the Precinct Plan to increase tree canopy coverage within the Precinct, in conjunction with any redevelopment to safeguard the precinct against the heat island effect and mitigate the negative impacts of increased density.

Council submits there ought to be greater certainty and measurability to ensure increased tree canopy cover can be achieved and that appropriate planning provisions are set to ensure the landscaping of private developments is of a high level.

Concluding comments

The next 6 months are going to be critical for the SRLA to bring the feedback received so far from Council's, community's, technical experts and state government agencies together to build a highly informed draft Precinct Structure Plan and Planning Scheme Amendment to engage on.

This Submission provides further indication of those site-specific opportunities and those strong advocacy positions that Officers will continue to make as part of this Precinct Structure planning process.

Council officers envisage that this Submission, alongside the Position Paper Summary separately enclosed as Appendix 1, will help mould future discussions with the SRLA in shaping the draft Structure Plan in the lead up to its next community engagement phase and the Independent Advisory Committee when this is convened in 2025.

Appendix 1: Bayside Position Paper Summary

(separately enclosed)