

21 December 2011

Alfred Road PSP

Submission for the GAA draft Precinct Structure Plans open for public comment

Bicycle Network Victoria supports the provision of cycling networks in new suburban developments and welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the draft Precinct Structure Plan process.

Bicycle Network Victoria is currently working on a three year project funded by VicHealth investigating how to overcome the low cycling rates in outer suburbs.

A key aspect of this, and a focus of the project, is the lack of consistent and appropriate planning and provision for cyclists of all ages and abilities. This has led to poor provision for potential cyclists who do not have the basic infrastructure to use their bikes for the many transport and recreational journeys/trips that can easily be done by bike. People are dependent on the car rather than having it as one of the travel options available to them. Travel and activity data from existing suburbs show that most trips to schools, friends and shops are within 1-6km – an easy distance to cycle. Trips to work and tertiary education tend to be much longer and rely upon good connections to public transport and places to leave a bicycle securely for the day.

Key deficiencies we have observed in existing suburbs are:

- Schools are not well connected to the wider path network with children expected to ride on busy connector streets with motor vehicles;
- train stations and other public transport hubs not connected to the cycle network;
- arterial roads above 60k/h with on-road bike lanes that only suit a small percentage of the population;
- lack of bicycle paths along rail reserves which would provide connections to stations for many people;
- widely spaced crossings of major barriers such as freeways and railways that mean long detours for bicycle trips; and
- a general deficiency of cycling infrastructure leading to a piecemeal, unconnected series of lane and paths that are not used (a bit like an incomplete water supply network made of a series of unconnected pipes that is expected to provide people with drinking water).

The project has developed a draft Planning Checklist for Cycling that aims to prevent these deficiencies and allow a quick assessment of whether the basic requirements for cycling have been met in development proposals. The Checklist covers the three basic criteria of:

- **Connectivity** (is it physically possible to ride to key destinations?);
- **Permeability** (encompassing directness and choice of routes –is cycling an attractive choice); and
- **Quality/Appropriateness** (does the cycling facility suit the people using it and the trip purpose?).

At **Precinct Structure Plan** level the checklist seeks to establish a finer grained network that allows access to local destinations as well as connections to surrounding areas. At PSP level there is an increased focus on the permeability and appropriateness of the bicycle network routes. Connector streets are usually shown at this level and many key destinations such as schools, community centres and Local Town Centres will be located on these streets.

Using the Planning Checklist for Cycling as an evaluation tool, Bicycle Network Victoria offers the following suggestions for the draft Alfred Road Precinct Structure Plan (see attached table and figures 1 &2):

Alfred Road

Connectivity –

Network of bicycle routes - bicycle routes (on-road lanes and/or off-road paths) are provided along connector and arterial streets and local access streets are configured to limit speeds and volumes. This provides connectivity to most destinations, including school, parks and Local Town Centres and all residences will be within 400m of a marked bicycle route.

It is not clear what provision for bicycles is provided on Geelong Rd. Cross Section 3 shows bike lanes but Plan 4 indicates a shared path. There is no detail on bicycle provision on Westbrook Drive or its realignment which will provide connections into Riverwalk Estate and Blackforest Drive PSP.

Connections to destinations – The area has a local convenience centre and there is Local Town Centre (LTC) located to the NE in the Riverwalk Estate. Connections to both will depend on good provision for bicycles on Geelong Rd. The plan is not clear on the provision of bicycles on this road (see above) Local parks and open space are served by the shared path network though the active open space on Alfred Road relies upon bike lanes which may not suit families and children. Again Plan 4 and the road cross section seem inconsistent with Plan 4 indicating a shared path on Alfred Rd while Cross Section 3 shows bike lanes only. A bike only path would be more appropriate for this street as it will carry buses (see below in appropriateness).

Permeability –

Access into Town Centres – Access to the Riverwalk Estate Local town centre will depend on provision for bikes on Geelong Rd. This will require both an off-road path on Geelong Rd and a crossing point for bikes crossing Geelong Road. Separate bicycle lanterns should be provided at signals.

Access to Schools, Parks Community Centres – There are no schools or community centres in the areas. Two of the three open spaces are accessible by off-road paths but the one on Alfred Rd depends on on-road bike lanes (see above). An off-road path is needed on Alfred Rd to make the connection to the open space and to the off-road path on Geelong Rd.

Crossing of barriers – Crossings into Riverwalk Estate are important and seem to be shown at Alfred Rd. Crossings are also needed at Westbrook Drive and at the Riverwalk Estate LTC. To the NW the railway and Bulban Rd are potential barriers into Blackforest Rd PSP area. There are not

crossings shown on the plan. A crossing is needed where the shared path meets the railway in the NW (see annotated plan). Otherwise the path ends at a dead end with no outlet or connection north.

Quality/Appropriateness –

Connector streets with schools, parks, community facilities – most schools, parks and community facilities will be located on connector streets. These streets are likely to carry significant motor vehicle traffic volumes at moderate speeds (50-80km/h). On-road bike lanes on these roads are unlikely to be used by school children, family groups or novice riders and separated off-road paths, with clear and unhindered crossing of minor streets, are more appropriate. They also serve to connect to the wider off-road path network alongside parks and green corridors. Alfred Rd is one such road which has open space and a local convenience centre located on it.

Connector streets with buses and bikes - Most of the connector streets have marked on-road bike lanes on potential bus routes. This may lead to conflict between buses and bikes as buses must cross and recross the bike lane to load and unload passengers. Off-road bike paths are more appropriate on these routes as bicycles can run behind stops and high frequency bus services will not be hindered in their operation. Off –road bike paths also mean a narrower paved road width which is easier for pedestrians and potential bus passengers to cross. Cross section 3 shows bike lanes only on Alfred Rd which will also carry buses. A separated bike path is more appropriate on this road. The same is true for Westbrook Drive and Geelong Rd.

Bike lanes on high speed roads – Geelong Rd is a higher speed arterial roads which proposes on-road bike lanes alongside motor vehicles travelling above 70-80km/h. Austroads Guides to Road Design (2009, 2011) recommend separated bike paths for these traffic regimes and these are much more likely to be used by less confident and novice bike riders such as children and family groups who do the majority of riding in the community via short trips to school, shops and friend and for recreation. Separated, bike only paths are more appropriate for this road but care needs to be taken to design intersections and cross overs (driveways etc.) to provide clear and unhindered passage for bike riders. A bike path that stops and gives way at minor intersections does not properly provide or encourage bike riding.

Comments on associated planning permit applications.

At the **Permit Planning** level the Planning Checklist for Cycling seeks to ensure that the design of bicycle facilities is appropriate and of acceptable quality. The location, alignment and type of bicycle routes have mostly been decided at preceding levels of planning and, at this stage, statutory planners are checking that the application meet these requirements. This level of planning also focuses on ensuring bicycle facilities are designed and built to the established standard detailed in design guidelines, standards and planning schemes. The checklist items at this level allows for review of critical aspects of the design of bicycle facilities in the detailed engineering and landscape plans submitted as part of application for a planning permit or sign-off of development plan.

Permit Application WYP5437/11 - Subdivision by ISPT Pty Ltd

Shows path along Geelong Rd but the alignments and cross sections of paths and roads not given nor details of road crossings.

Permit Application WYP5438/11 - Subdivision by Zuccala Homes

Shows path along Geelong Rd but the alignments and cross sections of paths and roads not given nor details of road crossings.

Permit Application WYP5436/11 - Subdivision by AMJ Castello

Does not show shared path alignment on Geelong Rd that would link to above two areas and is shown on Cross Section 4 of PSP. See Figure 2 attached which shows missing bike path.

Regards

Bart Sbeghen
Healthy New Suburbs
Bicycle Network Victoria

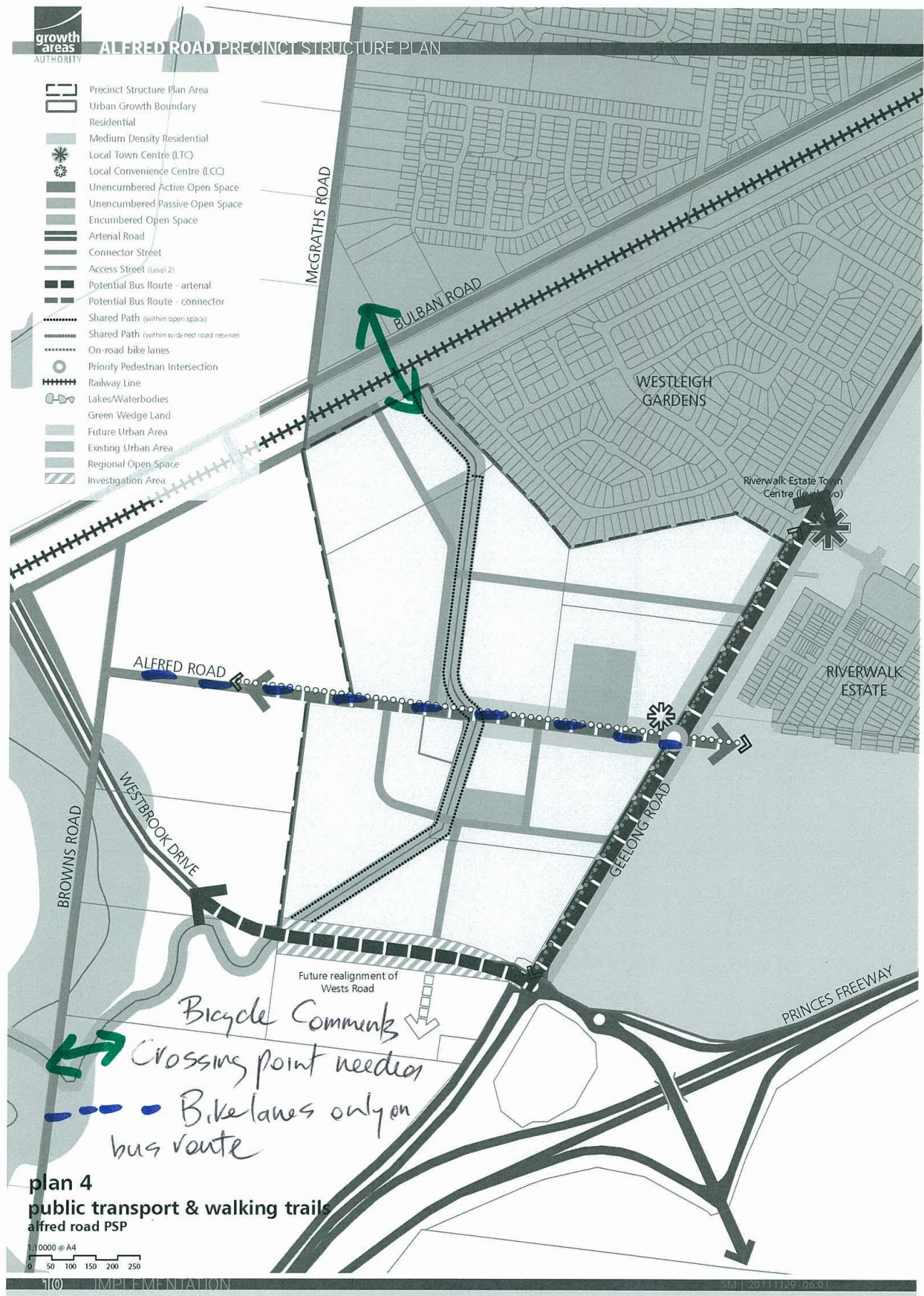


Figure 1: Annotated plan with bicycle comments

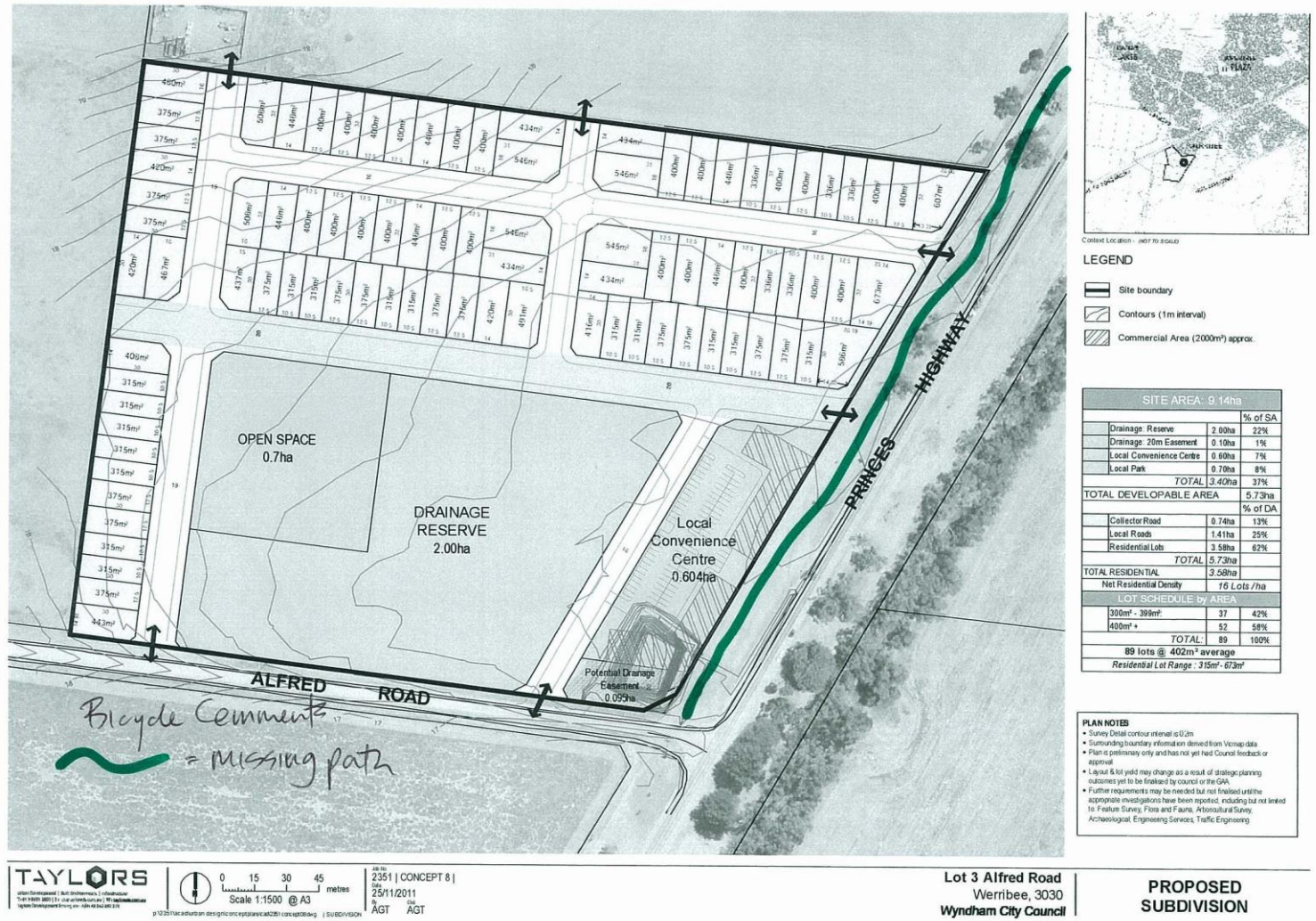


Figure 2: Annotated Subdivision Plan with bicycle comments

Table 1: Planning Checklist Assessment

| Precinct Structure Plan | | Alfred Rd Precinct Structure Plan | | |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|----|---|
| | | Yes | No | Response |
| Item 1 | Corridor routes | | | |
| Connectivity | | | | |
| | Are separated, continuous paths provided alongside all freeways, railway reserves and other green corridors? | 1 | | Including path along Geelong Rd |
| | Are bicycle routes provided along major roads (Principal Bicycle Network routes and other major roads)? | 1 | | |
| | Are paths provided along all Metropolitan Trail Network Paths (MTN)? | 1 | | No MTN paths. Path along drainage easement included |
| Item 2 | Local destinations | | | |
| Connectivity | | | | |
| | Are bicycle routes provided along all connector streets? | 1 | | Bike lanes on Alfred Rd (Cross Section 3) |
| | Are bicycle routes provided to parks, shops, schools and community services etc.? | 1 | | No schools in site. LTC connected by lanes on Alfred Rd and shared trail on Geelong Rd (on opposite side). Alfred Rd should have off-road path from drainage reserve paths to Geelong Rd to connect past open space |
| Item 3 | Residence connections | | | |
| Connectivity | | | | |
| | Are all residents within 400m of a marked bicycle route? | 1 | | Combination of shared paths and lanes |
| Item 4 | Choice of routes - activity centres | | | |
| Permeability | | | | |
| | Is there a choice of bicycle routes into and through activity centres to suit a range of trip types and purposes? | 1 | | Shared path to LTC and Riverwalk Estate Town centre if shared path provided on Geelong Rd |
| | Are there connections to minor and major destinations within the activity centre? | 1 | | Only small local convenience centre so no internal access required |
| Item 5 | Choice of route - separate paths | | | |
| Permeability | | | | |
| | Have direct routes for transport cycling been provided that are not shared with other path users on foot? | 1 | | Shared paths on both side of drainage and parallel local access roads. |
| Item 6 | Barriers and crossings | | | |
| Permeability | | | | |
| | Are crossing points at barriers provided at least every 800m? | | 1 | Crossing of railway for shared path/drainage not indicated |

Precinct Structure Plan

Alfred Rd Precinct Structure Plan

| | | Yes | No | Response |
|---------------------|--|-----|----|--|
| Item 7 | Topography | | | |
| Permeability | | | | |
| | Does the planned bicycle network take account of topography and avoid hills where possible? | 1 | | Relatively flat. Paths follow drainage |
| Item 8 | Separation and volumes | | | |
| Quality | | | | |
| | Are separated cycling and walking facilities provided on off road paths where cycling numbers are expected to exceed 200 bikes per hour and pedestrian numbers 100 per hour in peak periods? | | 1 | Not specified |
| | Are local streets configured to allow shared use by bikes and motor vehicles (speeds <40km/h and volumes of <3-5000vpd)? | 1 | | |
| | Are marked bicycle lanes or off –road paths provided for connector or arterial roads up to 60km/h and volumes < 5000vpd? | 1 | | |
| | Are separated paths provided for arterial roads (speeds over 60km/h and volumes above 5000vpd) and on connector streets with schools? | 1 | | No schools. Geelong Rd has shared path and bike lanes |
| Item 9 | Off-road paths | | | |
| Quality | | | | |
| | Are all off road paths at least 2.5m wide with 1m clearance each side? | 1 | | 3m width specified (Table 6, DR1) |
| | Are all schools and sporting grounds connected directly to the off road path network via a cycling facility that provides separation from motor vehicle traffic (usually off-road path)? | 1 | | No schools |
| | Are off-road paths provided on the side of the road or barrier that provides the best connections to destinations? | 1 | | "Shared path to be delivered along eastern edge of Geelong Road corridor to connect precinct to wider Werribee trail network." |
| Item 10 | Bikes and public transport | | | |
| Quality | | | | |
| | Have interactions with the on road public transport network (buses and trams) been catered for? | | 1 | Bike lanes on Alfred Rd which also has buses |
| | Is secure parking (undercover locked cage with multiple rails inside) provided at railway stations and major bus interchanges? | 1 | | Not applicable for this area. Plan states "Bicycle parking facilities in convenient locations at key destinations such as parks and activity centres." |