



**BICYCLE
NETWORK®**

**MELBOURNE FUTURE
PLANNING FRAMEWORK
WESTERN METRO REGION**

RESPONSE TO DRAFT

OCTOBER 2021



Bicycle Network acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we work and live and pay our respects to the first peoples of this country, their culture and elders, past, present and emerging.

Who we are

Bicycle Network is one of the leading member-based bike riding organisations in the world. We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all Australians by making it easier for people to ride a bike.

Operating nationally, we have a measurable, successful and large-scale impact in community participation and the promotion of healthy lifestyles through bike riding.

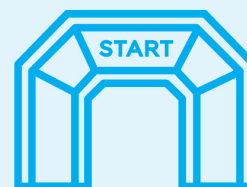
We achieve this through:

- improving the bike riding environment by working with government at all levels to provide better infrastructure, legislation, data, policies and regulations
- delivering successful, large-scale behaviour change programs such as Ride2School and Ride2Work
- providing services and insurance that support bike riders through nationwide membership
- running mass participation bike riding events such as the Great Vic Bike Ride
- being a key national spokesperson on issues related to cycling and physical activity

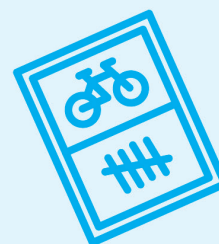
Bicycle Network can assist the Victorian Government in scoping and targeting achievable outcomes for bike riding and other forms of active travel. If you need our help to build bike rider patronage in Victoria, please contact us.



Nearly 50,000 members



150,000 event participants since 2012



Providing bike services to 125 councils and shires



Providing parking for over 2250 bike riders each day



Promoting active travel at over 1800 schools since 2007

Introduction

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has developed *Melbourne's Future Planning Framework*, comprising six region-specific Land Use Framework Plans that will guide strategic land-use and infrastructure development over the next 30 years. The six plans were prepared in alignment with the Victorian Government's *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* for managing growth across the city. In this submission, Bicycle Network responds to Chapter 6 ('Integrated Transport') of the Western Metro Land Use Framework Plan.

The Western Metro Region is one of the fastest growing regions in Melbourne. The local government areas of Wyndham and Melton both experienced population growths of 5 per cent in 2018-2019, placing them in the top five of fastest growing LGAs across Australia. The region generates \$38 billion each year, employs nearly 300,000 people, and contains 25.5 per cent of Melbourne's open space¹. It is therefore critical that the Victorian Government prepares a robust framework that guides development and practice with a focus on ensuring sustainability and maximizing productivity.

Active travel in the Western Metro region

Bike patronage is unfortunately low in the Western metro region. According to the Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity (VISTA) only 1.14 per cent of the population in the Western Metro region use a bike for travel purposes². However, researchers at Monash University have found that between 75-85 per cent of the region's population are 'interested but concerned' when it comes to using a bike³. In other words, if we are to build a bike network in the Western Metro Region that is safe, enjoyable, and connects to goods and services, there is likely to be promising uptake.

The steady rollout of the Strategic Cycling Corridor will support this. Over half of the population live and work in the Western Metro Region⁴, and developing a bike networks that provides a safe and enjoyable thoroughfare within and between suburbs will be of significant benefit to both new and experienced riders.

Bicycle Network is pleased to see not only the state government acknowledge and support increased investment in walking and bike facilities, but also to integrate these with other modes and develop a well-connected transport system in this fast-growing region of Melbourne.

We also acknowledge the numerous references to 'transport choices' throughout the draft framework. It is important to provide a range of transport options that suit lifestyle, health and living costs. People may have a preference for active travel over motorised travel, and vice versa. It is important to provide a levelled playing field for all types of travellers.

Bicycle Network's submission is made in support of a strong framework for developing the Western Metro region over the next 30 years. We have provided four small but important recommendations to improve the framework's active transport components. We offer these recommendations in the spirit of support and welcome the Victorian Government to engage with us on any of the considerations raised.

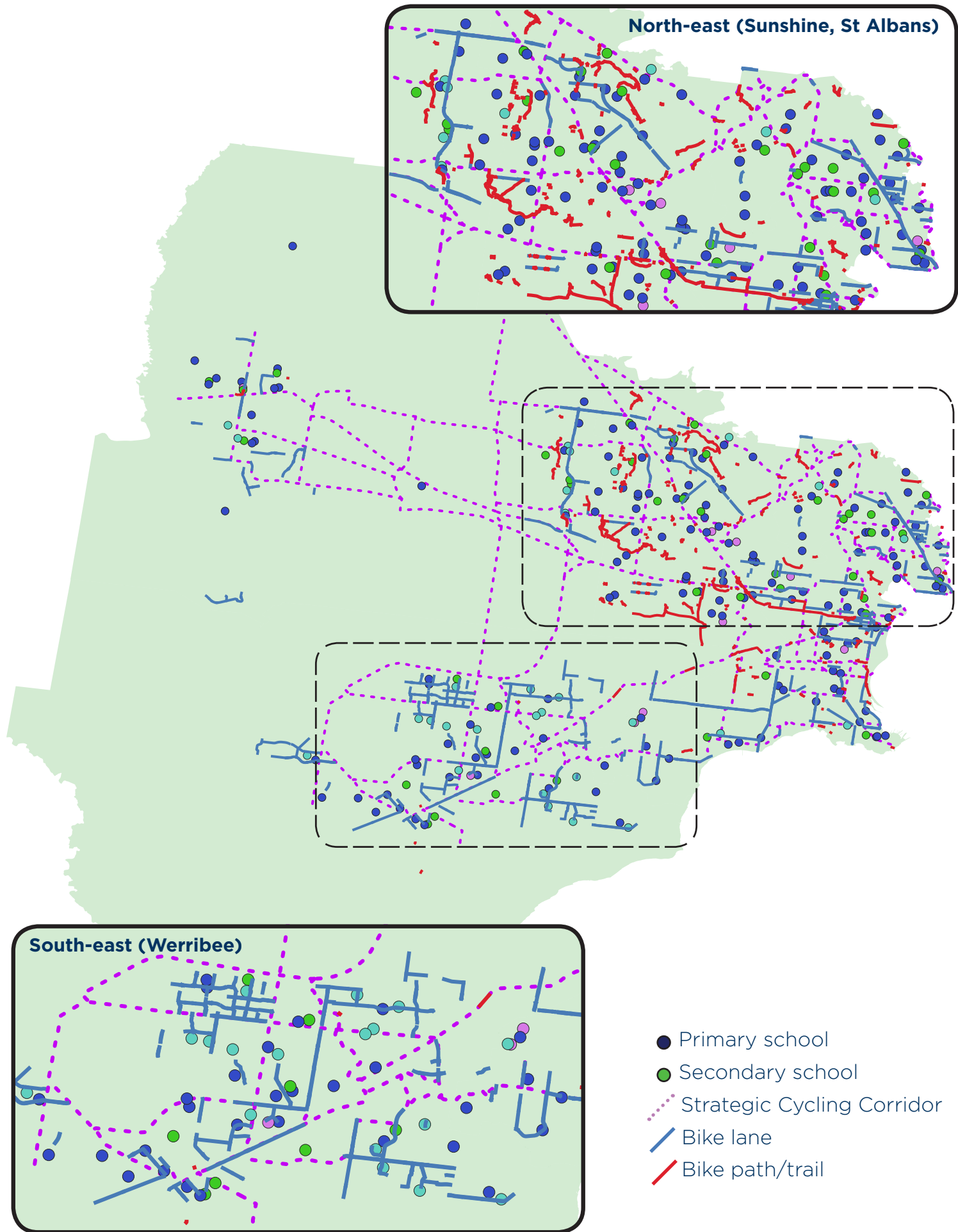


Figure 1 - School locations and the bike facilities (existing and proposed) across the Western Metro region. Note that in many instances schools and bike facilities do not intersect.

Key recommendations

1. Inclusion of school travel in active transport planning

The Victorian Government's strategy to improve active transport options and facilitate mode shifts in the Western Metro region is detailed across Directions 12, 13 and 15 of Chapter 6 of the draft plan. Combined, these directions outline a promising long-term plan for connecting walking and bike facilities to health services, public transport, activity centres and employment nodes.

However, the draft does not adequately detail how active transport systems will be prioritised for school travel, other than a brief acknowledgement in Direction 12.

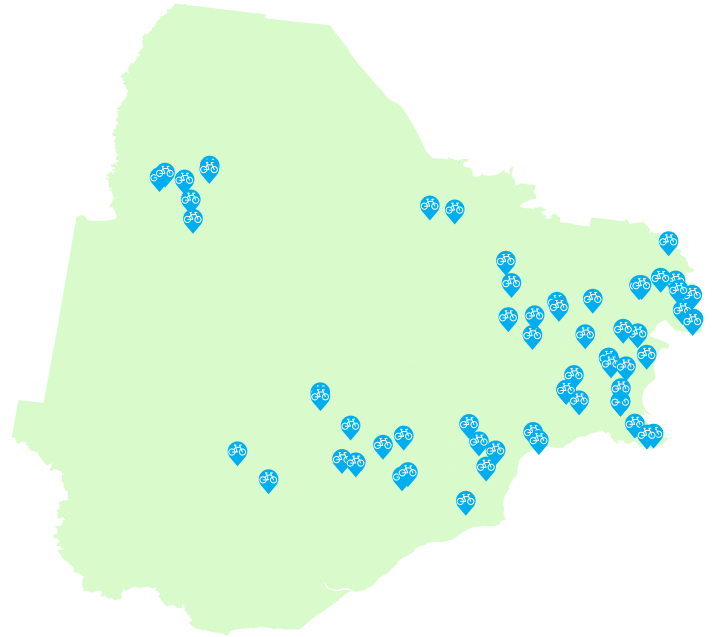


Figure 2 - Schools currently participating in Bicycle Network's Ride2School program

Figure 1 (previous page) shows the location of schools in the Western Metro region, many of which are not connected to existing or planned bike facilities (red, blue and dashed lines). Amongst these, there are a number of schools of particular concern based on the lack of nearby bike-friendly roads and their proximity to busy arterial roads.

- Braybrook College, Braybrook
- Gilson College, Delahey
- Cairnlea Park Primary School, Cairnlea
- Seabrook Primary School, Seabrook
- Victoria University Secondary College (Brimbank Campus)
- St Albans Secondary College, St Albans
- St Albans East Primary School, St Albans
- Ardeer South Primary School, Ardeer
- Glengale Primary School, Sunshine West
- St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Sunshine West

In Victoria, children under the age of 13 are permitted to ride a bike on the footpath, which may assist in providing a safe passage to school. For most secondary school students, this is not an option. In any case, a designated bike lane is the best option. This will allow parents to feel confident in letting their children engage in active school travel.

To action this, we need safe bike-friendly routes to facilitate school travel, which will require local active transport links outside the purview of the Strategic Cycling Corridor strategy.

Our Ride2School program, which provides education for schoolchildren on bike skills and road safety, is currently working with 64 schools in the Western Metro region (Fig. 2). As a result, there are kids across the region that are eager to get on their bikes. It will be of significant benefit for the Victorian Government to meet this demand with bike treatments that will ensure kids have a safe passage to their school.

We urge the Victorian Government to place further emphasis on connecting active transport networks to schools by considering this as a strategy item under Direction 12.



2. Emphasize the role of good design in building the active transport network

The introduction to Chapter 6 states that improved transport connections can be achieved in part by “*making better use of infrastructure, complemented by good design*”. In other words, our focus should be not only about **where** to build but **what** to build.

This consideration is extremely important when it comes to bikes, a transport mode for which the government is hoping to stimulate widespread long-term uptake from Victorians.

When building for bikes, it’s not just about the number of kilometres of bike lane we put down, or where we put it. To encourage new riders and promote gender and age equity, emphasis should also be placed on the type of bike facilities that will be provided. It is well-established that bike infrastructure physically separated from road traffic (e.g. by a concrete kerb or bollard) improves safety and increases the confidence of most riders, particularly in groups that are underrepresented such as females and older adults^{3,5-13}. Protected lanes, painted lanes and shared lanes with ‘sharrows’ will each have dramatically different effects on bike uptake, and therefore how successful the active transport connections will be.

Active transport connections should also be designed in an attractive way (e.g. maximizing greenery and amenities) so that people can enjoy the experience of riding and be motivated to make a long-term investment. There is a wealth of international evidence to demonstrate the role that the attractiveness of bike facilities plays on people’s motivations for riding¹⁴⁻¹⁶.

This is why placing emphasis on the design of bike infrastructure may significantly enhance the plans outlined in Chapter 6. The role of design has already been considered to an extent in Strategy 47, which states that the planning and design of the Suburban Rail Loop should “[maximise] *opportunities for active transport connections*”.

Bicycle Network urges the Victorian Government to take a further step and state the importance of design in building active transport connections. We recommend similar strategy items under Directions 13 and 15: “*Ensure the planning and design of infrastructure maximises opportunities for active travel and support improved safety and accessibility*”.

3. Address how integrated transport plans will connect with council planning schemes and other Victorian Government transport strategies

The Melbourne Future Planning Framework is guided by Plan Melbourne 2017-2050. It may be useful to also provide some further detail regarding if and how the proposed directions and strategy items that comprise the draft plan(s) are informed by or complement: (i) current and future council planning schemes; and (ii) other Victorian Government transport strategies and policies.

3.1 Planning across state and local government

Development the Western Metro region will require coordinated state and local government land use and transport planning. With regard to bikes, one of the most important items to address will be how the Strategic Cycling Corridor connects with the six council planning schemes across the Western Metro Region.

Direction 16 clearly details the working relationship between state and local governments with respect to the freight network. Bicycle Network recommends a similar approach be taken for Directions 13 and 15, regarding the provision of active transport infrastructure between local and state government. It is important to be clear on how the Victorian Government will work with councils to build the region's active transport network.

3.2 Interdependencies between other state strategies

Appendix 1 in the Western Metro Land Use Framework Plan provides a helpful overview of state strategies and policy documents that are relevant to integrated transport planning across Melbourne. However, Chapter 6 of the Framework Plan may benefit from some further clarity regarding the connections between integrated transport planning and other forms of existing policy.

For example, it should be detailed how the proposed Direction and Strategy items coincide with the Victorian Government's goal of net-zero emissions and a climate resilient Victoria by 2050. *Victoria's Zero Emissions Vehicle Roadmap* lays the strategic groundwork for reducing vehicle emissions, and it will be of benefit to readers that this connection be acknowledged in the Chapter, along with a statement that the integrated transport plans conform to the policies laid out in the Roadmap.





There are also government strategies that are surprisingly absent in Appendix 1. The *Victorian Cycling Strategy* set out the state government's plan to increase bike riding for transport by investing in safer and better-connected bike networks. It will be of interest to people who ride bikes if the Direction and Strategy items in Chapter 6 are concordant with the policies set out in the *Victorian Cycling Strategy*. Other transport strategies not currently listed in Appendix 1 include *Victorian Road Safety Strategy* and *Growing Our Rail Network 2018-2025*.

Bicycle Network recommends that the Victorian Government prepare some clear statements across the draft plans, regarding the existing interdependencies between the draft plans for Integrated Transport and other existing transport-related plans and strategies.

4. Frame the Western Metro Land Use Framework Plan within the context of Movement and Place

Our perception of transport systems has changed dramatically. The traditional view has been that roads should be designed to optimize high levels of movement with minimal travel time. However, certain streets may be desirable places in their own right and where, conversely, the community chooses to increase their dwell time. There are, thus, competing demands between the 'movement' and 'place' of transport networks.

The Movement and Place Framework has, unsurprisingly, become an integral component of contemporary urban planning and is now used by many local and state governments.

While there has been an acknowledgement of the Movement and Place Framework in the Land Use Framework Plans of other regions, it is unclear how it will inform and guide planning for the Western Metro region, particularly around the Sunshine and Werribee activity centres. We believe the Western Metro Land Use Framework Plan could be strengthened with some acknowledgement of Movement and Place, including:

- if and how the Movement and Place Framework will be employed to categorise and prioritise road planning; and
- how movement and place will be balanced when designing the network into the future.

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