



rowville:next

The Rowville Plan

January 2015



Knox City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the City of Knox, the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation.

Acknowledgements

Council would like to thank the members of the Rowville Community Reference Group (the Group) for their contribution to the development of the Rowville Plan. Sixteen individuals have volunteered their time and energy over an 18-month period to engage with friends, neighbours, and colleagues on the issues that mean the most to them in order represent the views of their community throughout this process. The Group have brought depth and experience to Council's process and have been an integral part in the planning of communication and events for the community engagement program, and their participation has helped broaden the number and range of people who have had their views heard.

Thanks also to the many other members of the Rowville community who volunteered their time, energy, and ideas to the development of the Rowville Plan. This is your plan for your future. Council looks forward to your continued participation in shaping your community's future, and is committed to supporting ways of working together to ensure that Rowville is and remains a great place to live, work, and play for all.

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Forward

A Balanced Approach to Managing Change

Rowville is a suburb in transition. As the last open areas in Rowville are built out with houses, population growth is slowing to almost nil. At the same time, Australia-wide shifts towards smaller households and an older population is changing the way we live and the services we need. A changing climate is changing how we use resources and interact with our natural environment. As Rowville transitions from a period of rapid growth into one of maturity, the impacts of these changes are being felt differently in Rowville than other parts of Knox. The way we respond to change and the decisions we make together will shape the resiliency of our suburb for decades to come.

Planning for the future is a balancing act. In a suburb as large and diverse as Rowville, there are no easy answers. With a range of ambitions and ideas about the future, there is not always a clear consensus on what our future should look like. When we do agree on the issues, we often find ourselves faced with ambitions that are at odds with each other. And even when our priorities are clear, the factors driving change often require us to adjust our goals and adapt our solutions. Some decisions will allow us to deliver complimentary solutions with multiple benefits to many people; others will require compromises to achieve the best balance of outcomes for the community.

The fundamental challenge in planning for Rowville's future is how to balance two very important competing aspirations within our community: the desire to preserve the existing character of our neighbourhoods and the benefits that come with increased density and diversity in appropriate locations. Knox Council acknowledges a strong desire within the Rowville community to preserve the characteristics that have attracted families to its quiet, leafy neighbourhoods over the years. While the Rowville Plan recognises a need to accommodate some growth and change in order to deliver more choices in housing, transport, recreation and services, it seeks to influence how and where this change occurs by providing a vision and directions that emphasise a managed approach.



Introduction

Why Do We Need a Rowville Plan?

Because change is happening, all around us, every day.

We live in a complex world that is changing more rapidly than any time in our history. In order to plan for our future, we must understand the forces that are affecting change both globally and locally.

The Rowville Plan identifies and investigates some of the important **Drivers of Change** facing our suburb today and over the next 20 years in order to help us understand the decisions we'll need to make in order to best respond to and influence that change.

Because Rowville is a dynamic community with diverse views.

Over 34,000 people live, work, and play in Rowville every day, each with their own goals and ideas about the future. In order to provide guidance about decisions, we first need to understand the full range of ideas and priorities within our community.

The Rowville Plan builds on an extensive community engagement process that identified a full range of **Community Priorities** to help us understand our ideas about the future.

Because we need a clear point of reference to guide future decisions.

In order to provide clear guidance and directions for future decisions, we need to describe the future we want for our suburb and the people who live, work, and play here every day.

The Rowville Plan proposes a **Shared Vision** for Rowville's future based on the themes defined in the Knox City Plan as a point of reference to enable us to ensure that the decisions we make are taking us collectively in the direction we want to go.

Because the challenges we face are unique in Rowville's history.

The last few years have seen many new challenges arrive in Rowville, including development pressures and increased demands on our infrastructure. While previous plans and Council policies have served the Rowville community well in the past, we need an approach to our future that can respond to these challenges and capitalise on the opportunities of a maturing suburb.

The Rowville Plan provides a set of **Objectives and Strategies** that give guidance and direction on how to work together to build a more resilient future for Rowville.

The Rowville Plan replaces the Stud Park Structure Plan (Stages 1 & 2), which previously defined and guided development in the Stud Park, Rowville Major Activity Centre as defined by the previous state government's Melbourne 2030.

Components of the Rowville Plan

Background Reports

Part 1: Context & Research

This document provides detail and supporting evidence about the existing context as well as the factors and trends driving future change in Rowville.

Part 2: Community Engagement

This document gives a summary of the process and results of an extensive community engagement program designed to develop a decision-making framework that has helped understand the community priorities that inform the Rowville Plan.

Part 3: Evaluation of Land Use Options

This document applies the decision-making framework developed in consultation with the community in order to address questions about land use and development.

The Rowville Plan

The Rowville Plan (this document) is a strategic document that sets out a vision and direction for the Stud Park Shopping Centre and surrounding neighbourhoods over the next 20 years. The document is made up of the following sections:

- **Vision**
- **Key Directions**
- **Context**
- **Key Influences**
- **Objectives & Strategies**

The Rowville Plan is informed by the three parts of the background report. The key directions in the Plan aim to balance the priorities of the local community with the factors that are driving change in Rowville in order to set out Objectives and Strategies to help achieve our shared vision for the future.

Implementation Plan

The Rowville Plan will support a range of actions and initiatives to carry out the Objectives and Strategies and work toward the Shared Vision for the future. An Implementation Plan will include information on timeframes and the responsible parties for each action. It will also track progress over time.

Many potential actions have emerged from the community engagement process and are under consideration. One of the first to be implemented will be an amendment to the Knox Planning Scheme to enact the land use recommendations in the Plan.

The Implementation Plan will be a living document that continues to evolve over the years to come. Council and the Rowville community will continue to work together through a strategic Rowville Place Program, which will provide a process to develop and refine new initiatives and programs to implement the Rowville Plan and help track progress in achieving our vision.

A Shared Vision for Rowville's Future: Delivering the City Plan for Knox Locally

Knox's Vision is structured around five aspirations which are intended to provide a picture of the future City that will deliver the lifestyle, jobs and industry, health and wellbeing desired by members of the Knox community. The City Plan outlines key objectives and strategies to achieve these aspirations.

The Rowville Plan aims to deliver on these objectives and strategies at the local level, as outlined through the Vision for Rowville and subsequent local objectives, strategies and actions for Rowville.

Rowville's future is defined by a vision that balances the ability to adapt and grow to meet the changing needs of the future with a desire to protect and preserve the qualities that make Rowville an attractive place to live, work, and play.

Healthy, Connected Communities

Rowville will be a lively, vibrant place that provides housing, amenities, and services to meet the needs of both current and future residents. Rowville will be characterised by its strong neighbourhoods and opportunities to live, work and play locally.

Community connectedness is highly valued, reducing the risk factors that contribute to social isolation and vulnerability.

Improvements to local infrastructure will provide better choices for transport and improve access.

Prosperous, Advancing Economy

Opportunities for local employment and education will be accessible for all, ensuring skills for the future economy.

Rowville will attract investment in business and infrastructure while preserving the character and community that attracts people to its neighbourhoods.

Vibrant and Sustainable Built and Natural Environments

Rowville will respond to the needs of its community by enabling a diversity of housing in appropriate locations which exemplifies good building design that responds to existing local character.

Protecting and preserving the natural environment will be highly valued by the Rowville community and businesses. Responding to the changing climate and mitigating the negative impacts will be a high priority for Rowville.

Culturally Rich and Active Communities

Rowville will have a 'heart', offering a central area for people to gather that concentrates local retail, dining, activities, services and entertainment.

Diverse art, cultural and sporting activities will be available and accessible for all. Open spaces will be well designed, safe and accessible for a wide variety of uses.

The complementary cultural centres at Stamford Park Historic Homestead, the Rowville Community Centre, and the Rowville Library will provide amenity for Rowville residents and attract visitors from across the region to events and activities.

Democratic and Engaged Communities

Rowville will be home to a diverse population that has the capacity to take an active role in shaping its own future. Decision-making will be enhanced by collaboration and partnership with the Rowville Community.

Key Directions

Protect the quiet, leafy character of Rowville's neighbourhoods

Context: During community engagement residents were concerned that high-rise development and high-density housing is beginning to occur in some of Rowville's neighbourhood areas. Many viewed this as inconsistent with the local character which is made up of family houses and quiet leafy streets. There was a strong desire by Rowville residents to maintain and enhance the look and feel of their local streets. Restricting the potential for change in the neighbourhoods may compromise the viability of improved public transport in the area, including the Rowville Rail and a new bus interchange at Stud Park, and could contribute to slower growth and change in the Commercial Core.

Direction: The Rowville Plan places a strong emphasis on preserving existing neighbourhood character by enabling zoning changes which concentrates development in a more compact Activity Centre and restricts building heights in most areas to under 9 metres.

Increase different housing choices in a smaller Activity Centre

Context: Current demographic trends in Rowville suggest that the existing housing stock will not match the needs of the population in the future. While the population of Rowville is expected to grow very little in the next 20 years, changes in household size and type will continue to drive demand for smaller houses, including new families looking for their first house and ageing residents looking to downsize locally. Redevelopment of lots in existing neighbourhoods that replaces houses with medium density alternatives has the effect of changing the local character and can place strain on existing infrastructure that was mostly designed for low densities.

Direction: The Rowville Plan provides opportunities for a diversity of housing by focusing of townhouses, apartments, and multi-unit dwellings into a handful of key locations where this type of development is considered appropriate: within the Commercial Core, on a few key Opportunities Sites, and in very limited areas of existing neighbourhoods.

Encourage better transport choices to combat congestion

Context: There was a strong and consistent view in the Rowville community that traffic congestion is a major problem that is getting worse. A shortage of convenient, connected public transport means residents are highly dependent on the car to get around. Another common view was that heavy rail service would be good for Rowville, and that Council should work with the community to continue to advocate to State Government to deliver this service. Since much of Rowville's traffic comes from outside the area, restricting development locally is not likely to reduce congestion on main roads. Since Rowville is likely to remain dependent on the car for the foreseeable future, reducing congestion will require developing better and more convenient alternatives to driving.

Direction: The Rowville Plan seeks to support better transport choices by directing growth within the Activity Centre to increase opportunities for walking locally and improve viability of public transport for longer trips to Melbourne and surrounding suburbs.

Create a public 'heart' for Rowville's community

Context: The community placed a high value on its parks and expressed a desire for improved opportunities to gather and participate in a range of social and recreational activities. There was a sense by many that Rowville lacked a central area for people to gather. Many expressed interest in finding ways to combine recreational opportunities in new and improved public spaces, where people of all ages and interests can interact. Diversity and density can help attract public and private investment in new facilities. To help ensure that each dollar spent can benefit the most people, many of Council's planning and funding frameworks seek to direct public investment to areas experiencing growth and change.

Direction: The Rowville Plan seeks to leverage existing community assets such as the Rowville Community Centre, Rowville Library, and the Stamford Park Historic Homestead to deliver new spaces for and venues that could serve as a focus for recreation, socialising, and arts and cultural life in Rowville.

Key Directions

Support more local options for shopping, dining, & entertainment

Context: While the Stud Park shopping centre was generally seen as providing adequate options to meet basic daily needs, many expressed interest in a greater variety of shops and services locally in Rowville, particularly cafes and evening dining. Several people described travelling to Knox City to access dining and entertainment, which was not always an easy option for young people in particular. An increase in the number and variety of dwellings near Stud Park could facilitate expansion by broadening the local customer base for retail and services. But the ultimate feasibility and timing of an expansion is likely to be dependent on external factors other than density of the local area.

Direction: The Rowville Plan has informed the development of planning controls to guide future expansion of the Stud Park Shopping Centre and surrounding commercial areas, including support for a 'Main Street' concept that could provide cafes and outdoor dining along Fulham Road.

Balance services and support for a changing and ageing population

Context: Wider demographic shifts are changing the service needs of Rowville's population. As children grow up and parents age, school enrolments are falling and the over-60 population is projected to increase dramatically over the next 20 years. There was acknowledgement in the community that Rowville is ageing, and a desire to provide more housing options and services to cater to this growing population. The desire by the community to bring a high-care nursing home or large health care facility to Rowville may be hindered by limiting development opportunities for growth and change. Providers often seek to locate such facilities in regional centres that enjoy strong access to complementary services and a variety of transport options.

Direction: The Rowville Plan encourages the provision of services in the Activity Centre for people of all ages and needs. It also provides more options for smaller housing for people at all stages of life, whether looking to downsize or buy a first home locally.

Promote sustainable solutions to building resilient infrastructure

Context: Recognition of global risks to the natural environment is raising the profile of sustainable development and the conservation of resources. In February 2011, significant flooding of the Corhanwarrabul Creek brought these issues into focus locally. After years of below-average rainfall and drought conditions in Victoria, the rain event caused considerable concern among Rowville residents of the risks associated with flooding. Increases in residential density that reduces vegetation and open space can result in fragmented habitats and may place additional demands on the stormwater network, especially when combined with projections of further increases in future rainfall.

Direction: The Rowville Plan seeks to embed sustainable best practices including water sensitive urban design (WSUD) in the local planning scheme, and to link to existing Council policies to support the community's desire to increase planning and maintenance of native vegetation in local streets, parks, and on private property.

Enable a greater voice for the community in future planning

Context: There was a clear frustration among many members of the local community who felt that their concerns relating to planning and development were not receiving due consideration by decision makers within Knox Council. Many believed that there was a large gap between what the community wants for its neighbourhoods and the type of development allowed by the planning system, and are interested in having more of a say in decisions about Rowville's future. The extensive community engagement program that supported the development of the Rowville Plan sought to respond to this desire for more community input. The directions in the Rowville Plan give weight to community concerns and priorities.

Direction: The Rowville Plan will support a Rowville Place Program that will help build partnerships and work with the local community to develop and implement actions and initiatives that can help achieve the vision and objectives in the Plan.

Context

Location of the Study Area

The suburb of Rowville is located in the southern portion of the City of Knox, near the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges in Melbourne's eastern suburbs. The Study Area for the Rowville Plan includes the commercial areas and residential neighbourhoods in and around the Stud Park Shopping Centre: from the Corhanwarrabul Creek in the west to Taylors Lane in the east, and Kelletts Road to the north to Wellington Road in the south.



Context

A History of Development in Rowville

Rowville has moved through distinct periods of growth and development over the last 150 years. Rowville today sits on the cusp of a new chapter in its development, one that will present new opportunities and challenges not present at previous points in its history. The following is a brief summary of where we have been.

Pre-Settlement Before 1837

The area that is now Rowville has been home to the Woiwurrung people for at least 40,000 years. The Ngaruk willam (Bun wurrung) and Bulug willam of the Wurundjeri-Balluk (Woi wurrung) clans led a subsistence lifestyle in balance with the ecology. Following the arrival of John Batman and other settlers at Indented Head in 1835, rapid land clearing, grazing of sheep and cattle and exclusion of aborigines from water and food resources by European settlers quickly and dramatically reduced the population of the Woiwurrung and Bunwurrung people.



Rural Settlement 1840s – 1960s

The earliest settlement in what is now the City of Knox was in 1838, when Reverend James Clow took possession of the Corhanwarrabul pastoral run and built a homestead named Tirhatuan close to modern day Wellington Road. The Row family, after whom the suburb is named, immigrated to Australia from England and established a homestead at Stamford Park in the mid 1860s. The Rowville/Lysterfield area remained predominantly rural until the 1960s.



Suburban Boom 1960s – 2000s

The City of Knox was founded in 1963, and rapid population growth soon began in Rowville. Significant commercial development occurred from the 1980s, including the opening of the Stud Park Shopping Centre in 1989. The 1990s saw rapid growth continue, much of which was driven by families with children, drawn to the relatively affordable houses in the growth areas of the time. Much of Rowville's houses were built during this period of growth.



Infill & Consolidation 2000s – 2010s

Between 2006 and 2011, the population remained stable around 34,000 people, while average household sizes declined. Fewer new houses and rising property values meant fewer young families moving into the area. While families and children still make up a greater proportion of Rowville's population than other parts of Knox, between 1991 and 2010 the number of young children (ages 0-4) and young professionals (ages 25-34) actually declined.



Redevelopment 2010 and Beyond

Rowville has recently entered a new era of development. Townhouses, apartments, and other new types of housing began to appear across Knox in the early 2000s, and since 2010 they have started to appear in Rowville as well. Some of the houses built in the 1960s and 1970s are beginning to be renovated or redeveloped. As demographics change, the needs of the suburb are changing as well. The Rowville Plan is a response to these changing conditions.



Context

People

Rowville is a large and diverse suburb where people from many backgrounds and walks of life come to live, work, and play. Rowville's quiet and leafy neighbourhoods are home to over 34,000 people in over 11,300 dwellings, making it the largest and most populous suburb in the City of Knox.

Over 54% of the households in Rowville are made up of families with children, although that percentage has been steadily decreasing over the last 20 years. The number of one- and two-person households has been on the rise recently, reflecting a general trend across Australia. In the next 20 years, the number of parents and children is expected to decline in Rowville while the number of people over 60 is expected to increase.

Household incomes are higher and unemployment is lower in Rowville than the averages for Greater Melbourne, Victoria, and Australia. In Rowville, 55% of people aged 15 years or older have completed Year 12 schooling (or equivalent) and 20% have a Bachelor or higher degree. There are more professionals in Rowville than any other occupation, followed by clerical & administration and technicians & trades.

Rowville residents overwhelming travel by car, with 92% of all trips to work contributing to traffic on the roads. Around 7% of people travelled by train or bus, but without a local train station many of those trips depend on driving as well. Less than 1% of Rowville residents walked or cycled to work in 2011.

Percent of Rowville's population aged 60 and over

5%

In 1991

13%

In 2011

24%

Projected by 2031

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2011. Compiled in profile.id by .id and Population and household forecasts, 2011 to 2036, prepared by .id, May 2014.

34%

Percent of couples and lone-person households in 2011

47%

Projection for couples and lone-person households in 2031

4%

Percent of dwellings in Rowville with 2 bedrooms or less in 2011

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2011. Compiled in profile.id by .id and Population and household forecasts, 2011 to 2036, prepared by .id, May 2014.

17,744

Total employed persons aged 15+ in Rowville in 2011

122

Number of people in Rowville who reported regularly walking or cycling to work in 2011

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2011 (Enumerated Population). Compiled in profile.id by .id.

6

Number of bus routes serving Stud Park

8

SmartBus services per hour in peak periods

92%

Driving as a percent of work trips in 2011

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 (Enumerated Population). Compiled by Knox City Council from profile.id.

Context

Land Use

Rowville is mainly a residential suburb with a significant regional economic centre in the Scoresby-Rowville Employment Precinct. Commercial areas are characterised by low-density strip shopping, fast food restaurants, light warehousing, and small industrial offices. The Stud Park Shopping Centre offers two national supermarkets and variety of small shops to a mostly local market.

Natural Environment

Rowville sits on the doorstep to the Dandenong Foothills in the east and alongside the Corhanwarrabul Creek and to the west. The Dandenong Valley Wetlands represent the most significant ecological habitat in an area dominated by low-density development. Most of the area's other open space is characterised by introduced landscapes and exotic vegetation, including the Kingston Links Golf Course and Rowville Lakes.

Infrastructure

Rowville is a suburb of by quiet neighbourhood streets and cul-de-sacs that relies heavily on the car. Busy main roads, winding local streets and a disconnected network of footpaths all serve as barriers to walking and cycling. Public transport is limited, with two SmartBus routes, four local bus routes, and Telebus service available. Main roads are widely spaced, and local streets are designed to carry small amounts of traffic and discourage through trips.

Community Services

Rowville is generally well-provisioned with open space, education, and health and family services. Recreational opportunities are clustered in a few locations, including the Rowville Community Centre and Stud Park Reserve. The Rowville Library at Stud Park is a popular and well-used community asset. And the future rejuvenation of the Stamford Park Historic Homestead and surrounding parklands will provide new community venues, open spaces, and natural habitats along the Corhanwarrabul Creek.

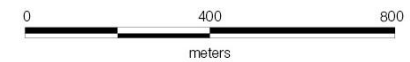


LEGEND

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Public Open Space
-  Other Open Space
-  Waterbodies
-  Retail / Commercial
-  Commercial / Industrial
-  Community Uses
-  Residential
-  Bus Routes
-  Signalised Intersection
-  Shared Path Network



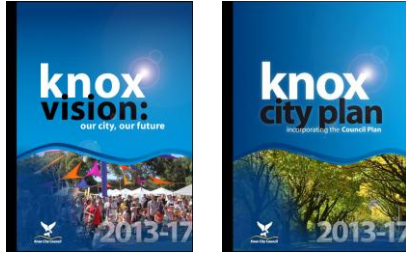
EXISTING CONDITIONS MAP



Context

Policy The Rowville Plan sits within a policy and urban landscape which includes a Vision and City Plan for Knox, a Metropolitan Planning Strategy for the Greater Melbourne region, the local policies and zones of the Knox Planning Scheme, and the Knox Housing Strategy that guides development across Knox.

Knox Vision and City Plan



Knox’s Vision is structured around five aspirations which are intended to provide a picture of the future City that will deliver the lifestyle, jobs, industry, health and wellbeing desired by members of the Knox Community. They are:

- **Healthy, Connected Communities**
- **Prosperous, Advancing Economy**
- **Vibrant and Sustainable Built and Natural Environment**
- **Culturally Rich and Active Communities**
- **Democratic and Engaged Communities**

The Knox City Plan outlines the key objectives and strategies to achieve the aspirations outlined in the Vision. The Rowville Plan will aim to deliver on these objectives and strategies at the local level.

State Planning Policy



The requirements of State Planning Policy are a key consideration in the preparation of the Structure Plan. *Plan Melbourne: Metropolitan Planning Strategy* includes the following related to local Activity Centres.

Clause 11 Settlement provides strategic guidance for responding to the needs of existing and future communities through the provision of appropriately zoned and serviced land for housing, employment, commercial and community facilities.

Clause 16 Housing encourages a diversity of housing, with a substantial proportion of new housing to be located in or close to activity centres and at other strategic redevelopment sites that offer good access to public transport and a range of services.

Clause 17 Economic Development encourages the development of commercial services and housing in locations with good access to services, community infrastructure, employment and public transport to support future growth and economic sustainability.

Local Planning Policy



The Knox Planning Scheme sets out the policies and requirements for development across the City of Knox.

Clause 21.05 Housing* – Provides guidance on the location and provision of residential development

Clause 21.07 Economic Development* – Seeks to promote economic activity and employment growth across the municipality and identifies Rowville (Stud Park) as a Major Activity Centre.

Clause 22.07 Development in Residential Areas and Neighbourhood Character* – Provides design guidance to ensure that development contributes to the preferred future character of residential areas

Clause 22.08 Scoresby Rowville Employment Precinct – Encourages the use and development of production economy and related businesses.

*Revised as part of Amendment C131 which implements the Knox Housing Strategy and the Rowville Plan

Context

Existing Zones

Rowville contains a mixture of zones across the study area. Prior to the introduction of the new residential zones on 1 July 2014, Residential 1 Zone and Residential 3 Zones applied to existing residential land. The Commercial 1 Zone applies to existing retail and business areas in and around the Stud Park Shopping Centre. Commercial 2 Zone applies to existing employment areas west of Stud Road and north of Wellington Road. Public Use Zones apply to areas such as schools, child care centres, the Rowville Community Centre, and the Homestead at Stamford Park. Public Parks and Recreation Zone applies to neighbourhood parks and the open space at Stamford Park. The Special Use Zone applies to Kingston Links Golf Course. The Urban Floodway Zone applies to land adjacent to the Corhanwarrabul Creek.


Existing Overlays

Land within the study area is subject to a variety of overlays. Vegetation Protection Overlays and Environmental Significance Overlays in the area protect existing vegetation. Land Subject to Inundation Overlay and Special Building Overlay seek to protect properties from inappropriate development in areas subject to flooding. Development Plan Overlays provide additional guidance for development at Stud Park Shopping Centre, Scoresby-Rowville Employment Precinct and Stamford Park. The Heritage Overlay applies to Stamford Homestead and seeks to protect the heritage values of the heritage place.

Additional detail on the planning context including more on existing zones and overlays can be found in Background Report Part 1: Context and Research.



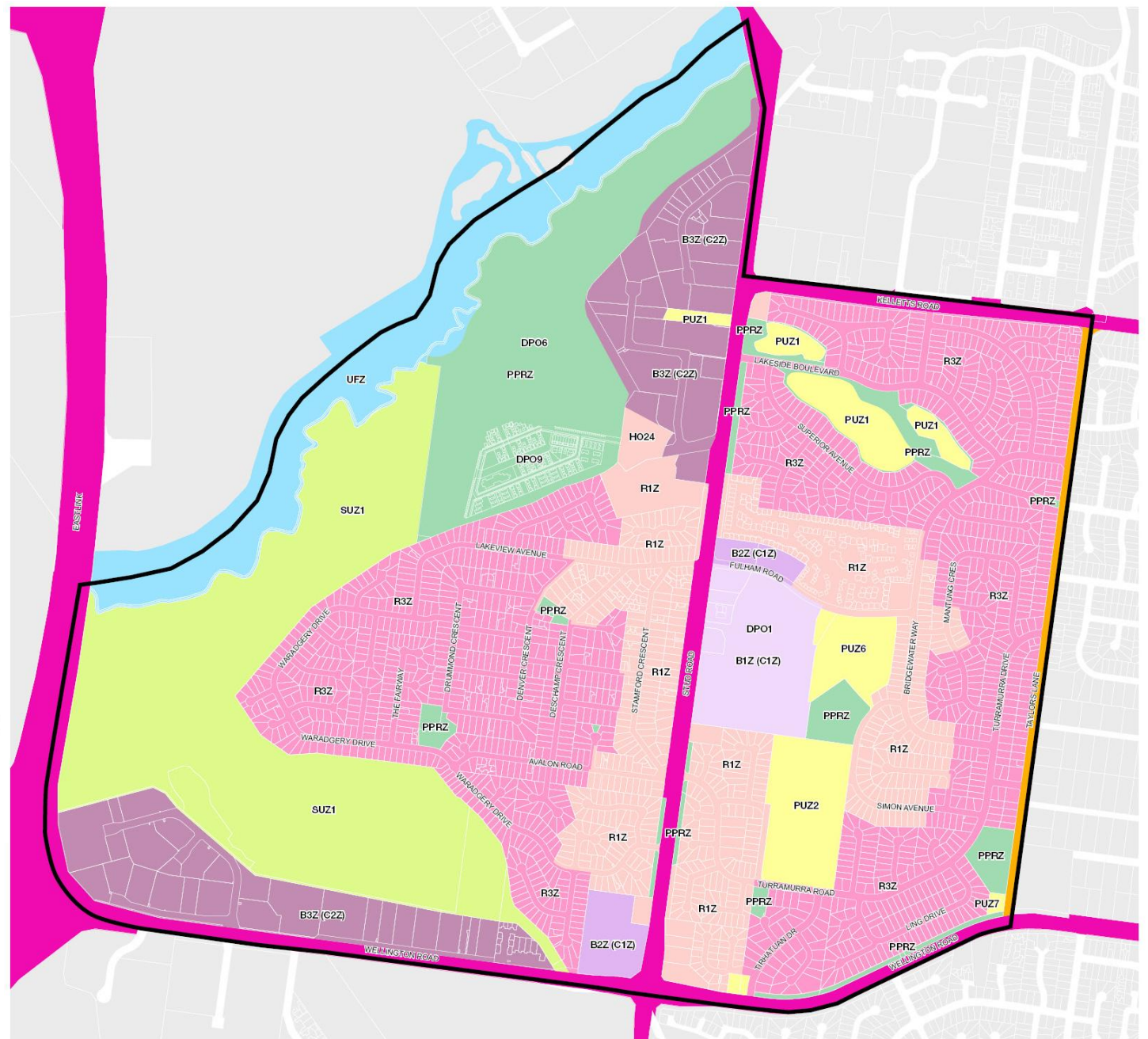
LEGEND

 Study Area Boundary

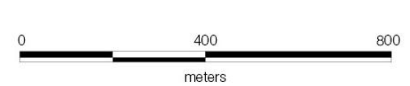
Existing Zones

-  Residential 1 Zone*
-  Residential 3 Zone*
-  Low Density Residential Zone
-  Business 1 Zone (C1Z)
-  Business 2 Zone (C1Z)
-  Business 3 Zone (C2Z)
-  Industrial 1 Zone
-  Urban Floodway Zone
-  Public Park & Recreation Zone
-  Special Use Zone
-  Public Use Zone
-  Public Conservation & Resource Zone
-  Road Zone - Category 1
-  Road Zone - Category 2

* The Residential 1 Zone and Residential 3 Zone were replaced on an interim basis by the General Residential Zone Schedule 1 and General Residential Zone Schedule 2, respectively, on 1 July 2014. The implementation of the Rowville Plan through Amendment C131 introduces the new residential zones as defined in the Knox Housing Strategy 2015 according to the Proposed Land Use Map on page 37.



EXISTING ZONES MAP



Key Influences: Research & Studies

Knox Council has undertaken extensive research in the development of the Rowville Plan. Research included analysis of 2011 Census figures to understand key trends related to population and demographics in Rowville. A literature review was conducted of Council studies and state government reports, including a number of documents related to the proposed Rowville Rail. The Rowville Plan also draws on the large body of background research conducted during previous planning efforts with updates to current figures where relevant.

Council also commissioned two technical studies to examine the potential effects on the local infrastructure systems from different levels of development in the residential neighbourhoods of the Study Area. The **Rowville Transport Study** and the **Rowville Stormwater Management Study** used simulation models to test a set of possible land use options on the capacity of these systems. The results and findings influenced the land use direction of the Rowville Plan.



Key Findings

- Many intersections along the current roadway network in the Study Area are nearing capacity, and continued increases in traffic volumes and delay are expected in the future.
- Most future increase in traffic congestion on main roads is projected to come from sources outside the Study Area. Impacts from development within the area are small in comparison to background growth in traffic.
- The stormwater system in the Study Area is resilient to changes in hard surfaces, able to accommodate a greater increase in residential development than that recommended in the Rowville Plan without significant additional flooding of properties.
- Current best practice estimates estimate that rainfall intensity and frequency of rainfall events will continue to increase, which would require significant adaptation of the stormwater network to maintain resiliency.
- The latest state government report finds that construction of a heavy rail line to Rowville would be a complex undertaking but technically feasible, with a projected average weekday ridership of 68,000 users across four stations.
- Delivery of the Rowville Rail will first require upgrade of the Dandenong rail corridor and the construction of the Melbourne Metro Rail Tunnel.

A detailed account of the research that was conducted, the key conditions and trends, and the drivers of change that the Rowville Plan addresses can be found in the Background Report Part 1:

Key Influences: Community Input

Knox Council conducted an extensive program of community engagement during the development of the Rowville Plan. The goal was to conduct a community discussion with a wide range of residents and other stakeholders on the needs and aspirations for the future of Rowville. The engagement program highlights included two community workshops, a community survey reaching over 600 people, and a number of small events and discussions.

The community engagement program was also informed by the findings of the **Knox@50 project**, Council's city-wide engagement on the future of Knox. It was also supported by **Rowville:NEXT**, a multimedia campaign designed to raise awareness and bring people into the conversation. A citizens' advisory committee called the **Rowville Community Reference Group** acted as a bridge between Council and the community to facilitate a broader exchange of ideas.

There was a wide range of ideas and strong opinions expressed by the participants throughout community engagement process. While there were common issues that were raised by many people, the diversity of views expressed was broad. It was clear that participants were passionate about the community and interested to have a voice in shaping the future of Rowville.



Key Points:

One of the strongest themes that emerged was a **concern about high-rise and high-density development** appearing in existing neighbourhoods, particularly along Stamford Crescent west of Stud Road. There were many underlying reasons given for this concern, from traffic and flooding risks to loss of character and privacy. Advocating **for the Rowville Rail** was another common priority among participants, although many were also sceptical it would be built within the next 20 years.

Survey Results: Highest Community Priorities

- Safe, high-quality public transport choices (including the Rowville Rail)
- A diverse mix of services and activities at Stud Park
- Traffic congestion and parking on main roads and local streets
- Safe, high-quality parks, recreational facilities, and open space
- Leafy streetscapes and views to the Dandenong Ranges
- Activities and services for young people

A detailed account of what was done, what was said, and what it means for the Rowville Plan can be found in the Background Report Part 2: Community Engagement.

The collage features several key documents:

- Housing and Development Table:** A table with columns for 'Poor Outcome', 'Acceptable Outcome', and 'Option A'. It lists various housing and development factors like 'Density of Housing Sites & Types', 'Diverse Mix of Residential Uses', and 'Community Connectedness, Village Feel, Local Living'.
- rowville:next Survey Poster:** A poster titled 'rowville:next' with the question 'What are your 5 MOST IMPORTANT issues in Rowville over the next 20 years?' and a list of potential issues such as 'Density of housing sites, types, uses and services', 'Traffic congestion and parking', and 'Loss of character and privacy'.
- Table 6:** A table titled 'Table 6' with columns for 'Description of a poor outcome', 'Description of an acceptable outcome', and 'Description of an excellent outcome'. It includes sticky notes with handwritten feedback, such as 'Community connectedness, village feel, local living' and 'Community participation in decision making and partnerships'.

Healthy, Connected Communities

City Plan Objectives:

- The Knox community benefits from good health and wellbeing at all life stages
- A safe community with strong community connections and where learning and volunteering are valued and supported

Vision for Rowville:

- Rowville will be a lively, vibrant place that provides housing, amenities, and services to meet the needs of both current and future residents. Rowville will be characterised by its village feel and opportunities to live, work and play locally.
- Community connectedness is highly valued, reducing the risk factors that contribute to social isolation and vulnerability.

Community Priorities

- Preserve Existing Neighbourhood Character
- Limit High-Rise Buildings and High-Density Development
- Reduce Traffic Congestion
- Bring the rail to Rowville
- Improve Choices for Transport

Drivers of Change

- Car Dependency
- Increasing Traffic Congestion
- Lack of Transport Choice
- Cost of Living Pressures
- Emerging Health Risk Factors

Neighbourhood Character

The image of the 'green and leafy' suburbs is a key aspect of the identity of the Knox community, and Rowville is no exception. There was a strong desire by many to protect and preserve the existing character of Rowville's neighbourhoods, with high value placed on an identity defined by a quiet family setting. High-rise buildings and high-density development were seen as highly inappropriate and a threat to the amenity of Rowville's neighbourhoods.

Canopy trees along local streets and on residential lots make up a significant part of the look and feel of Rowville neighbourhoods, and the participants in the community engagement program place them near the top of their list of priorities. The community defined an acceptable outcome for Rowville as one where street trees and views to the Dandenong Ranges are preserved and protected in order to maintain their place in the landscape. The Knox Liveable Streets Plan provides guidance for landscape and design for different street types including Principal Avenues, Community Links, and Neighbourhood Green Streets.

Community Connectedness & Local Living

Throughout the engagement on the Rowville Plan and Council's Knox@50 project, residents identified a desire for more opportunities for community connectedness and local living. These two ideas relate to residents' ability to fulfil most requirements of daily life close to home. While Stud Park serves many of these functions today, there was a desire to increase the diversity of activities and services in the centre to avoid needing to drive to other suburbs. Promoting more compact, walkable shopping areas with cafes and other attractions could help create more vibrant public areas which bring people together.

Walking and cycling

Rowville is a suburb of busy main roads and quiet local streets that requires a dependence on the car to get around. Even short trips to Stud Park often require driving. Safe walking and cycling facilities are an important component to every healthy community. Walking contributes to active lifestyles and encourages social interactions in public places. It may also lead to fewer cars and less congestion on local streets.

Rowville residents have expressed a desire to address gaps in the existing walking and cycling network that discourage walking. Many have identified difficult crossing of Stud Road and Fulham Roads as barriers, particularly those living at Peppertree Hill Retirement Village. Cycling networks that require riders to share roads with traffic represent safety concerns for the public and for Council.

Traffic congestion & parking

Traffic congestion remains one of the most prominent issues in the Rowville community. Development inside and outside Rowville along with the opening of EastLink in 2008 is leading to worsening of the high congestion, long travel times, and significant delays that are common in Rowville. One of the most significant challenges to reducing congestion in Rowville is a transport system almost completely dependent on the car. A framework of cul-de-sac streets, disconnected pedestrian and bicycle trails, and lack of public transport options has made driving the dominant mode of transportation in Rowville, with a 92% share of all work trips in 2011.

Parking on local streets is also a major concern of many Rowville residents, as increased demand for parking, construction, and other activities has led to access concerns on narrow

local streets. Improvements to intersections and parking regulation can help address local access. But improving roads and adding more capacity only leads to more traffic in the long run. The only way to effectively combat congestion is to reduce the need for people to drive.

Public transport

Public transport ranked as the most important issue in the survey of community priorities. Rowville residents expressed a clear desire for more convenient services from their neighbourhoods to destinations inside and outside of Rowville. Much of this was driven by a strong belief that the Rowville Rail represented an important need for the community, although some were concerned that it would increase congestion and attract crime. Delivery of the Rowville Rail continues to be at the top of the list of major transport priorities endorsed by Council.

There was also interest in better bus services that could improve options for aged residents and young people to get around. While the SmartBus routes in Rowville have some of the highest ridership levels in the Greater Melbourne region, the current network of bus routes was described by community members as too disconnected and waiting times between buses as too long to be an attractive

alternative to driving. Large parts of the residential neighbourhoods west of Stud Road and south of Wellington Road do not have bus service within 400 metres of most houses.

Encouraging viable alternatives is also the only way to effectively reduce increasing traffic congestion in the long term. Although Rowville is likely to remain dependent on the car travel for the foreseeable future, promoting compact walkable communities centred on frequent public transport service can help promote the beginnings of a shift away from auto travel for some trips which can start to reduce pressure on local roads.

The state government is currently undertaking a reform of its development contributions framework, which provides tools for Councils and State Government agencies to collect funds for infrastructure improvements from developments in key strategic areas. Clearer directions and more streamlined processes that emerge from this effort may increase opportunities for coordination between Council, state government agencies, and landowners to fund public transport improvements in the Activity Centre such as a new bus interchange at Stud Park.

Healthy, Active Lifestyles

An examination of risk factors for health reveals significant difference between Rowville and other parts of Knox. Risk factors like obesity and smoking are significantly higher in many local neighbourhoods in and around the Study Area than they are in suburbs to the north. While Rowville residents have access to large recreational areas like the Rowville Community Centre and the emerging open spaces at Stamford Park, there are fewer neighbourhood parks and playgrounds than other parts of Knox with lower risk factors. Increasing walking and cycling has health benefits as well as benefits to the transport system.

One way to improve pedestrian amenity is by reducing the impact of urban heat island effects in neighbourhoods and public areas. Large areas of paving and buildings have been shown to contribute higher temperatures at a local level. Increased vegetation and canopy tree cover as well as Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) techniques that retain stormwater locally can have beneficial health impacts by reducing heat stress on vulnerable communities, particularly young children and the elderly.

Social isolation and mental health

Recent examinations into the social environment in Rowville have revealed several stresses affecting residents. There were many factors identified that contribute to anxiety and depression, from weak social connections and work-life balance to financial stress and family breakdown. Much of the stress people spoke about in the study related to a lack of time to devote to family, leisure activities, and planning for the demands of daily life. Transport was cited as a significant factor, including long commutes made worse by congestion; large distances between activities and services such as schools, shops, child care centres; a transport system requiring car travel to reach most places; and lack of bus service for vulnerable populations such as the aged and young people. Recommendations from the study included improved access to affordable rental options for those facing family breakdown or mortgage stress, and better awareness of and access to counselling and crisis prevention services.

Objectives & Strategies: Healthy, Connected Communities

1. Residents enjoy opportunities for local living with a wide variety of daily needs within convenient walking and cycling distance of home

- 1.1. Improve walking and cycling connections between the Commercial Core, Community Precinct, and surrounding neighbourhoods
- 1.2. Make crossings of Stud Road and Fulham Road easier and safer for pedestrians to reduce barriers to walking
- 1.3. Improve lighting along footpaths and shared paths within the Activity Centre
- 1.4. Provide additional bicycle parking near shopping and activities within the Commercial Core and Community Precinct
- 1.5. Support an increased diversity of shopping, services, and multipurpose recreation within the Activity Centre
- 1.6. Prioritise new residential development in areas designated for Higher Change within a 5-minute walk (roughly 400m) of the Commercial Core
- 1.7. Encourage planting and maintenance of canopy trees the Activity Centre and along key transport corridors to reduce urban heat island effect and improve amenity for walking

2. More viable choices of convenient and attractive public transport that can help reduce Rowville's dependence on the car and slow the growth of congestion

- 2.1. Contribute to improved viability of future heavy rail service to Rowville and advocate for delivery of the Rowville Rail by State Government
- 2.2. Support a new and expanded bus interchange at Stud Park delivered as part of any future expansion and designed in consultation with Public Transport Victoria to satisfy their requirements for provisions for a future railway station
- 2.3. Support and advocate for the improvement of SmartBus, local bus, and Telebus services in Rowville
- 2.4. Support and advocate for the expansion of bus services to the neighbourhoods west of Deschamp Crescent and the neighbourhood around Tirhatuan Drive to ensure access within 400m of all residences in the Study Area
- 2.5. Improve access and amenity of bus stops in the Activity Centre through improvements to the public realm

3. The increase in congestion on main roads and local streets is slowed and access to the Commercial Core, Community Precinct, and surrounding residential neighbourhoods is improved

- 3.1. Investigate and advocate for changes to intersection operations and signal timing on main roads to improve access in and out of residential neighbourhoods
- 3.2. Manage parking on narrow neighbourhood streets to minimise congestion while preserving access to parking for residents

- 3.3. Reduce demand for driving for short trips made within the Activity Centre through improvements to walkability and the public realm
- 3.4. Reduce demand for driving for long trips made outside the Activity Centre through improved access to convenient public transport

4. *Healthy, active lifestyles that contribute to the overall wellbeing of Rowville residents of all ages*

- 4.1. Reduce the high incidence of risk factors such as smoking and obesity
- 4.2. Increase access to fresh foods and promote healthy eating options in the Commercial Core and Community Precinct
- 4.3. Support sports clubs, community organisations, and Council programs that seek to increase physical activity among young people
- 4.4. Continue to support the Rowville Community Centre, community organisations, and Council programs that seek to increase physical activity among adults and aged residents

- 4.5. Increase access to primary health care services in Rowville by encouraging providers to locate in the Activity Centre

5. *Strong social connections and support that contributes to good mental health for Rowville residents of all ages*

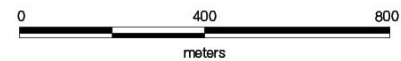
- 5.1. Increase events and organisations that provide opportunities for social connections that can help reduce social isolation, particularly among vulnerable groups
- 5.2. Support affordable personal and financial counselling services that address the need for crisis prevention
- 5.3. Co-locate Healthy Ageing services and facilities where possible with other Council and community services
- 5.4. Support co-location of child and family services at school and preschools where appropriate

LEGEND

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Activity Centre Boundary
-  Commercial Core
-  Public Open Space
-  Other Open Space
-  Waterbodies
-  Potential New Pedestrian Crossing
-  Improve Top Priority Pedestrian Crossing
-  Improve Existing Pedestrian Crossing
-  Potential Main Street Pedestrian Priority Area
-  Improve Top Priority Pedestrian Routes
-  Protect & Improve Key Pedestrian Routes
-  Potential New Bicycle/Pedestrian Connection
-  Possible Future Rowville Rail Station
-  Possible Future Rowville Rail Line
-  Existing Bus Routes
-  Proposed Bus Interchange
-  Existing Shared Path Network
-  Existing On-Street Bicycle Lanes



PROPOSED TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE MAP



Prosperous, Advancing Economy

City Plan Objectives:

- Knox has a strong local economy that supports business growth, jobs and community wealth
- Improve local opportunities for people to live, work, learn and play in Knox

Vision for Rowville:

- Opportunities for local employment and education will be accessible for all, ensuring skills for the future economy.
- Rowville will attract investment in business and infrastructure while preserving the character and community that attracts people to its neighbourhoods.

Community Priorities:

- More local options for shopping, dining, and entertainment
- Expanded Rowville Library
- Jobs, skills, and training for the future economy

Drivers of Change:

- A changing environment for retail and services
- Scoresby Rowville Employment Precinct

Commercial Core

The Commercial Core of the Activity Centre is made up of the Stud Park Shopping Centre, freestanding fast food restaurants, a new commercial building with office and retail, and a number of shops along the north side of Fulham Road.

The Stud Park Shopping Centre contains 26,500 m² of net leasable floor space (of which 20,500 m² is 'shop' floor space) on a site of approximately 93,000 m². The site includes a main shopping centre with two anchor tenants and over 60 specialty stores, a freestanding grocery store, a separate freestanding retail building along the northern edge of the site, and a total of 1,589 car parking spaces. The Stud Park Shopping Centre also includes the Rowville Customer Service Centre operated by Knox City Council, the Rowville Library and a bus interchange area.

Potential Shopping Centre Expansion

There is a general desire among the community for more variety of shopping, dining, and entertainment options in Rowville. The owners of Stud Park Shopping Centre are developing a long-term plan for the centre that would include a greatly expanded retail offering, additional restaurants and cafes, a new Rowville Library, and an improved public transport interchange to consolidate bus services on site.

The current long-term plan for the expansion of the Stud Park Shopping Centre includes a proposal for a 'Main Street' area of shop fronts, cafes, and enhanced amenity along Fulham Road. An increase in the number of residents in the immediate vicinity of the shopping centre and a broadening of the types of dwellings in this area may have positive influence on the ultimate viability of a 'Main Street' concept. However, this is one of many commercial factors that may influence when and if the shopping centre expansion moves forward.

Scoresby-Rowville Employment Precinct

Economic development in Rowville is a complex and important issue that involves linkages between people and businesses within Knox and adjoining councils. The commercial uses within the activity centre make up a small proportion of the local economy, with most Rowville residents travelling outside the area to access jobs. The Scoresby-Rowville Employment Precinct (SREP) is an area of commercial and industrial development partially within and adjacent to the Study Area that is a major employment centre for people across Melbourne's Eastern Suburbs.

One of the key goals of promoting continued economic growth in Rowville is ensuring access to education and training to prepare residents with the skills and education needed for jobs in the future economy. Although issues related to jobs and skills training made up a relatively small part of the discussion during engagement, there was interest from some on providing convenient access to jobs and training by locating employment and education near residents and advocating for better public transportation options to more destinations. Opportunities also exist to develop strategic links with the businesses in the SREP as well as local training facilities and job centres at Swinburne TAFE and Knox Innovation, Opportunity and Sustainability Centre (KIOSC).

Other Supporting Land Uses

The Study Area also includes the Kingston Links Golf Course. This site which lies largely within the 100-year floodplain of the Corhanwarrabul Creek has been the subject of various redevelopment proposals over the years, with a focus recently on the potential for residential use and potentially some commercial or business uses in the southern portion of the site near Wellington Road.

Objectives & Strategies: Prosperous, Advancing Economy

6. A more diverse mix of activities, services, retail, dining, and entertainment options in the Commercial Core.

- 6.1. Support and guide appropriate expansion of the Stud Park Shopping Centre that includes new retail and entertainment offerings and multipurpose public spaces
- 6.2. Support the development of Fulham Road as a 'Main Street' area that accommodates a variety of street-front shops, cafes, and outdoor dining that emphasises pedestrian activity, safety, and amenity
- 6.3. Improve access to the Commercial Core from the Community Precinct and surrounding neighbourhoods

7. Better utilisation of underdeveloped sites to support a more diverse and vibrant commercial core


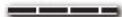




- 7.1. Identify Opportunity Sites for redevelopment that enjoy good access to transportation and services and provide guidance on supported future uses
- 7.2. Continue coordination between Council and owners of Opportunity Sites to discuss future ambitions and the redevelopment potential of their sites
- 7.3. Enact zoning on Opportunity Sites to support higher density residential and commercial development and community uses

- 7.4. Encourage coordination of development concepts for sites fronting Fulham Road to contribute to a consistent look and feel and continuous environment of amenity and walkability
- 7.5. Encourage coordination of development concepts between the shopping centre and smaller commercial site along Stud Road to ensure connectivity and legibility of interface treatments

8. Increased opportunities for jobs and training required to adapt to the future economy

- 8.1. Develop strategic business and education linkages with the Scoresby-Rowville Employment Precinct to facilitate new local jobs in the future economy (technology, information services, advanced manufacturing)
- 8.2. Investigate potential strategic linkages with potential future neighbourhood activity centre at Caribbean Gardens
- 8.3. Support the development of home-based business in and around the Activity Centre
- 8.4. Support the Rowville Neighbourhood Learning Centre and other community organisations in the delivery of education and lifelong learning opportunities

LEGEND

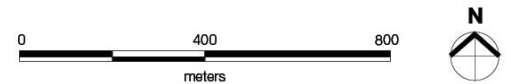
-  Study Area Boundary
-  Activity Centre Boundary
-  Commercial Core
-  Public Open Space
-  Other Open Space
-  Waterbodies

Proposed Opportunity Sites

-  Former Pool & Spa Display Centre
1060 Stud Road
-  Australia for Christ Fellowship (ACF) Church
1070 Stud Road
-  Peppertree Hill Retirement Village
15 Fulham Road
-  Veterinary Clinic
1103 Stud Road
-  Fulham Road Commercial Precinct
1-7 Fulham Road
-  Restaurants & Takeaways
1085, 1087 & 1089 Stud Road
-  Commercial Building
1091 Stud Road
-  Stud Park Shopping Centre
1101 Stud Road



PROPOSED OPPORTUNITY SITES MAP



1. Former Pool & Spa Display Centre, 1060 Stud Road

Higher density residential development that includes a range of dwelling sizes is encouraged.

A component of affordable housing (including low-cost and/or social housing) is encouraged.

2. Australia for Christ Fellowship (ACF) Church, 1070 Stud Road

Continuation and expansion of the existing community uses on this site is supported.

Higher density residential development that includes a range of dwelling sizes is encouraged.

A component of affordable housing (including low-cost and/or social housing) is encouraged.

3. Peppertree Hill Retirement Village, 15 Fulham Road

The existing aged care use and built form may intensify, providing a range of aged care options and dwelling types to accommodate for changing needs in the aged care sector.

Development along the Fulham Road frontage should complement the 'main street' theme envisaged on Fulham Road, to the west of this site.

4. Veterinary Clinic, 1103 Stud Road

Higher density residential development that includes a range of dwelling sizes is encouraged.

Development must be site responsive and address the slope of the land.

A component of affordable housing (including low-cost and/or social housing) is encouraged.

5. Fulham Road Commercial Precinct, 1-7 Fulham Road

A mixed use development which provides active ground floor uses such as retail, cafe and office with residential uses at upper levels is encouraged.

Built form is to be designed to create active street frontages, a safe pedestrian environment and must contribute to the 'main street' concept.

Development must have regard to residential amenity of the Retirement Village to the north and east.

6. Restaurants & Takeaways, 1085, 1087 & 1089 Stud Road

A mix of uses such as commercial, retail, higher-density housing is encouraged.

Consolidation of sites to form larger sites could expand the range of development opportunities and is encouraged.

Development which adjoins Fulham Road must contribute to the Fulham Road 'main street concept'.

Built form is to integrate with the development of Stud Park Shopping Centre.

7. Commercial Building, 1091 Stud Road

A mix of commercial and office uses is encouraged.

Built form is to integrate with the development of Stud Park Shopping Centre.

8. Stud Park Shopping Centre, 1101 Stud Road

Redevelopment of the shopping centre will include a new public transport interchange, designed in consultation with Public Transport Victoria and Council. The interchange must have provision for a future railway station.

A mixture of commercial, office, accommodation and community uses is encouraged.

An increase in height in the northern part of the site is encouraged.

Built form is to be designed to create active street frontages, a safe pedestrian environment and integrate development concepts with other sites within the Commercial Core.

Development which adjoins Fulham Road must contribute to the Fulham Road 'main street concept'. The provision of a food and drink precinct at ground level along the Fulham road frontage is encouraged

Redevelopment of the shopping centre is to ensure that residential amenity to the south is protected.

Vibrant and Sustainable Built and Natural Environment

City Plan Objectives:

- The changing needs of a diverse community are supported through planned growth and change in housing and infrastructure that respects both built form and natural systems, and resource availability
- Biodiversity and places of natural significance, including waterways and open space are highly valued, protected and enhanced
- Infrastructure networks provide transport choice, affordability and connectivity

Rowville Vision:

- Rowville will respond to the needs of its community by enabling a diversity of housing which exemplifies good building design that responds to existing local character.
- Protecting and preserving the natural environment will be highly valued by the Rowville community and businesses. Responding to the changing climate and mitigating the negative impacts will be a high priority for Rowville.
- Improvements to transport local infrastructure will reduce traffic congestion and improve access.

Community Priorities:

- Preserve existing neighbourhood character
- Improve choices for housing
- Increase native trees and vegetation
- Maintain protection from flooding and storms

Drivers of Change:

- Slowing Growth in Population
- Declining Average Household Sizes
- Ageing Population
- Declining Housing Affordability
- Cost of Living Pressures
- Shortage of Social Housing
- A Changing Climate with Increasing Rainfall

A Changing Population

Knox is experiencing transition in the makeup of its population that is changing the need for development and infrastructure across the city. Rowville's population growth has been slowing since the boom years of the 1970s and 1980s, with the total population remaining nearly unchanged since 2006. At the same time, the number of families with children has been declining while the number of couples and single person households has been increasing, leading to a decline in average household size.

All of these factors together are changing the mix of education, health, and service needs of the local community both today and into the future. Healthy, vibrant suburbs provide housing and services to people at all stages of life.

Demand for Housing

Separate houses make up 94% of the housing in Rowville, and only 4% of dwellings have two bedrooms or less. While large houses with 3-5 bedrooms and back gardens have served the traditional makeup of families with children over the years, shifts to smaller households and different family structures are changing the demand for housing in Rowville. Couples without children, new families buying their first home, or parents who are looking to downsize once their children have moved out of the family home are all growing segments of Rowville's population. Many in these groups have expressed interest in smaller dwellings that require less maintenance, such as units or townhouses without large gardens.

While not all smaller households will have the same preferences, providing a wider mix of options locally in Rowville can help provide for the needs of the population as it changes over time. The community has defined a future with few choices for housing as a poor outcome, but has also expressed a desire to limit significant change in residential areas to protect Rowville's family-friendly neighbourhoods from inappropriate development.

Housing Affordability

Housing stress, whether related to mortgage or rental payments, is defined as households that spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing. Housing stress in Rowville has risen in recent years, as local housing prices have risen faster than household incomes. Since 2001, the median monthly cost of housing in Rowville has increased beyond the level of 30% of the median monthly income, indicating an increased risk of housing stress among the community. Rising housing costs can crowd out other household expenses such as food, fuel, and utilities, increasing vulnerability to changes in prices.

In addition, Rowville has a significant shortage of rental properties, which limits options for those who cannot afford to or are not interested in buying a home.

The community and Council together have defined an excellent outcome for housing affordability as one where a variety of housing stock is available at different prices and with accessible amenity which together create an environment for affordable living, as well as one where residents enjoy low levels of mortgage and rental stress. The Rowville Plan recognises that there are many economic factors that influence housing prices and governments at all levels currently have limited influence over many of these factors.

Social housing

Social housing represents a valuable resource for people who find themselves suddenly or temporarily vulnerable to housing costs, including family breakdown, work injury, chronic illness, migration, or downsizing in the workplace. There is a demonstrated shortage of social housing across the Melbourne metropolitan region, at around 3% of all dwellings. In Knox that number is 2.1%, and Rowville has the largest shortfall of social housing out of any suburb in Knox.

The issue of social housing is a divisive one in the Rowville community. While Council has focused several efforts to better understand and improve the provision of social housing across Knox, much of the community does not consider the issue a high priority. Opposition to social housing in local neighbourhoods has arisen based on images of high-rise commission housing in the inner suburbs along with stereotypes and misunderstanding about those in need.

Building design

The Rowville community places a very high value on the existing amenity and character of their residential neighbourhoods. There was a clear opposition by many community members to large-scale changes to existing neighbourhood character. Taller, more modern-looking buildings, that take up more space on the lot than the existing houses in the area were considered out of step with existing neighbourhood character.

Loss of privacy, amenity, and solar access from overlooking and overshadowing by taller buildings was another concern, particularly west of Stud Road where medium and higher density development is starting to appear. While the Knox Planning Scheme provides controls related to buildings setbacks, screening, and height, additional restrictions on any development of taller buildings in existing residential neighbourhoods will involve negotiation between Council, developers, and neighbours to reach the best overall outcomes.

Issues related to a changing climate and an ageing population will require new approaches to building design that allows for more efficient use of resources and flexibility to adapt to the needs of a changing population. Innovative buildings that demonstrate sustainable design and industry best practice to utilise renewable

resources and minimise their impact on the planet. And building innovations allow homes to be adapted to suit households at all stages of life can provide greater flexibility to suit population changes over time.

A clear definition of neighbourhood character and guidance for appropriate design was considered to be an important part of the Rowville Plan. Much of this is being addressed through new residential design guidelines during the review of Council's emerging Housing Policy. The Rowville Plan provides additional guidance for what types of development are acceptable in the Activity Centre.

Flooding and Stormwater

After years characterised by drought conditions and below average rainfall, the flood event in February 2011 helped bring effective stormwater management to the front of the discussion in the Rowville community. While the existing stormwater network provides good protection from flooding across most of the area, pressures related to climate and development are adding to the demands on the network.

While all flood systems – no matter how robust – are susceptible to the most extreme weather events, consistent attention to maintaining a resilient network can help reduce the potential

for future damage to homes and property. Regardless of future levels of development in the Activity Centre, the impacts of long-term climate change will need to be addressed in order to maintain a resiliency against future flooding. Upgrades that improve future capacity should be built into the regular program of maintenance and replacement.

In addition, implementing Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) practices can help mitigate the immediate demands on the underground pipe network by slowing the flow of water during storms. WSUD can also help protect sensitive ecological waterways such as the Corhanwarrabul Creek by filtering out pollution and contaminants.

Ecological Habitats

The protection and expansion of ecological habitats throughout Rowville's reserves, roads, and neighbourhoods is an important goal of the Rowville Plan. While much of the area's natural habitat has been lost to housing and development, the Corhanwarrabul Creek and Dandenong Valley Wetlands represent important ecological and community assets. Land use plans that protect open space from development and allow for reconnection of habitat corridors provide the best outcomes for native animals.

Knox has designated several main roads including Stud Road and Wellington Road as Bush Boulevards for extensive native planting as a way of expressing the landscape transition between the suburbs and the Dandenong Foothills. Knox has also identified several Sites of Biological Significance for special protection of vegetation through planning controls.

Replacing exotic trees and vegetation with native and indigenous species in parks, along streets, and on private properties is an important part of the community's definition of excellent outcomes for the environment. Educational programs and organisations like Gardens 4 Wildlife can help provide the community with resources and knowledge to help encourage planting and maintenance of native species.

Objectives & Strategies: Vibrant and Sustainable Built and Natural Environments

9. Strengthened protections for the leafy, low-density character of existing residential neighbourhoods

- 9.1. Prohibit apartments, high-rise, and high-density development in Lowest Change (Knox Neighbourhood) and Lower Change (Local Living) areas
- 9.2. Limit the number of dwellings on a lot to single houses or dual occupancies only in Lowest Change (Knox Neighbourhood) areas
- 9.3. Limit the height of residential and commercial buildings to protect key views
- 9.4. Encourage planting and maintenance of native canopy trees along neighbourhood streets and on private properties to ensure continuous amenity over time
- 9.5. Ensure high-quality building design for new buildings that is appropriate to the existing neighbourhood character

10. Limited impacts from future development on the amenity of existing homes and sensitive public areas

- 10.1. Minimise overlooking and overshadowing of homes and private open spaces by adjacent buildings
- 10.2. Introduce setback requirements for interfaces between Opportunity Sites and existing residential areas and public spaces

11. Growth and development needed to accommodate demand for new dwellings is directed to appropriate areas within the Activity Centre with good access to transport and services

- 11.1. Support development of apartments in Higher Change Areas, Opportunity Sites, and the Commercial Core only
- 11.2. Provide guidance on the supported uses and future development of Opportunity Sites
- 11.3. Designate Highest Change residential areas that are expected to accommodate higher density development

12. Increased choices for housing sizes and types in appropriate locations that can better meet the needs of Rowville's changing population

- 12.1. Encourage 1-2 bedroom dwellings across the Activity Centre to accommodate people of all stages of life looking to downsize or moving into their first home
- 12.2. Encourage apartments as part of mixed-use development on designated Opportunity Sites and within the Commercial Core
- 12.3. Encourage a mix of higher density development including townhouses and apartments in areas designated for Higher Change (Activity Areas) within the Activity Centre
- 12.4. Encourage a mix of medium density development including two and three dwellings on a lot in areas designated for Lower Change (Local Living) within the Activity Centre

12.5. Encourage an increase in the supply of rental properties within the Activity Centre to provide transitional options for people looking to locate or remain within Rowville

12.6. Coordinate with social housing providers to deliver new social housing options distributed within the Activity Centre with the aspiration of bringing the percentage of social housing provided for in Rowville in line with the average for the Greater Melbourne region

13. *Preservation of sensitive habitats and extension of ecological corridors that support a variety of native and indigenous wildlife in Rowville's neighbourhoods and open space*

13.1. Protect and enhance the Corhanwarrabul Creek corridor and wetlands at Stamford Park as a high-value ecological habitats and community assets accessible to Rowville residents and visitors

13.2. Prioritise the planting and maintenance of native and indigenous vegetation in parks and reserves and along neighbourhood streets

13.3. Encourage the planting and maintenance of native and indigenous vegetation on private properties

13.4. Preserve and enhance existing sites of biological significance within Rowville's neighbourhoods and public spaces

13.5. Support Gardens 4 Wildlife program and other existing community organisations and encourage the formation of groups dedicated to the natural environment

14. *Buildings and developments that minimise the use of natural resources and impacts on the natural environment to provide adaptability to a changing climate*

14.1. Implement Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles in public and private buildings and other construction works within the Activity Centre

14.2. Implement Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) principles, including Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) techniques in public and private buildings, landscapes and construction works within the Activity Centre

14.3. Support initiatives and infrastructure that contribute to reductions in waste destined for landfill through recycling and local reuse

14.4. Continue to support the Stringybark Festival in promoting environmental sustainability via education, technology, local businesses, and community organisations

15. *Increase the resiliency of infrastructure to changes in rainfall and development to reduce the potential for flooding of homes and property*




15.1. Identify sensitive areas and elements of the stormwater network that may be vulnerable to increased future risk of flooding in order to prioritise Council investments in infrastructure upgrades and renewal in Council's capital works program

15.2. Undertake upgrades of the underground and above-ground stormwater systems to improve function and resiliency in areas of existing and potential future flooding, particularly in response to a changing climate







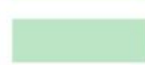


15.3. Implement Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles on public and private land to reduce demands on the stormwater network and protect sensitive waterways from stormwater runoff and pollutants

- 15.4. Restrict development in areas known to be vulnerable to potential future flooding
- 15.5. Continue partnership work with Melbourne Water in the planning and implementation of future flood modelling studies and flood mitigation works
- 15.6. Continue coordination with the owners of the Kingston Links Golf Course and Caribbean Gardens, in collaboration with Melbourne Water, to ensure that any future redevelopment of these sites do not increase flood risk of nearby properties or negatively impact the Corhanwarrabul Creek
- 15.7. Educate residents, landowners, and other stakeholders on the changing risks associated with flooding, the purpose and function of the stormwater network, and the roles and responsibilities of Council and the community in the maintenance of infrastructure and the management of flooding risks to people and properties

LEGEND

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Activity Centre Boundary
-  Commercial Core
-  Waterbodies

Proposed Land Use

-  Lowest Residential Change (Knox Neighbourhood)
-  Lower Residential Change (Local Living)
-  Higher Residential Change (Activity Areas)
-  Opportunity Sites - Residential/ Community Uses
-  Opportunity Sites - Mix of Uses
-  Public Open Space
-  Other Open Space
-  Community Uses
-  Commercial/ Industrial Uses



PROPOSED LAND USE MAP



Lowest Change Areas: Knox Neighbourhood	Lower Change Areas: Local Living	Higher Change Areas: Activity Areas	Opportunity Sites: Residential Uses	Opportunity Sites: Mix of Uses
<p>Knox Neighbourhood areas will: Continue to be low-scale neighbourhoods, characterised by detached house and dual occupancies; some villa units on larger blocks. Retain their green and leafy character through the retention of front and backyards, and the retention and planting of trees and vegetation. Not be appropriate for more intensive types of development.</p>	<p>Local Living areas will: Contribute to creating quality designed detached houses, dual occupancies, villa units and townhouses. Contribute to and enhance Knox's green and leafy identity and character Enhance the 'village feel' of local shopping areas, whilst providing different styles, types and design of housing that is well located.</p>	<p>Activity Areas will: See a greater change in housing style than other areas in Knox Balance the retention of the green and leafy character, whilst allowing more intensive development Allow more people to live close to everyday and specialised services to support their needs and lifestyle changes Contribute to quality residential development that enhances the quality of living in Activity Areas</p>	<p>These Opportunity Sites will: Accommodate more intensive development based on their size, location, and proximity to many transport options Allow more people to live close to everyday and specialised services to support their needs and lifestyle changes Contribute to new housing types in Rowville that can increase the choice of sizes and types available to people living in the Activity Centre</p>	<p>These Opportunity Sites will: Encourage a mix of activities, commercial uses, and higher density residential development that includes taller buildings. Provide opportunities for people to live with an easy walk to activities, services, shopping, and entertainment Contribute to new housing types in Rowville that can increase the choice of sizes and types available to people living in the Activity Centre</p>
<p>Preferred housing types: Single houses and dual occupancies 3 or more units on a block only on lots 1000 m² or larger</p>	<p>Preferred housing types: Dual occupancies, villa units, and townhouses</p>	<p>Preferred housing types: Villa units, townhouses, and apartments</p>	<p>Preferred development: Apartments, commercial, and community uses</p>	<p>Preferred development: Commercial, retail, dining, community uses Apartments and shop-top housing</p>
<p>Building heights: Up to 2 stories (8m)</p>	<p>Building heights: Up to 2 stories (8 m)</p>	<p>Building heights: Up to 3 stories (9m)</p>	<p>Building heights: Up to 4 stories (13.5m) with setbacks to residential areas</p>	<p>Building heights: 2 - 4 stories with up to 6 stories in the shopping centre</p>
<p>These areas will discourage: Apartments and townhouses</p>	<p>These areas will discourage: Apartments</p>	<p>These area will discourage: Single houses & dual occupancies</p>	<p>These area will discourage: Single detached houses</p>	<p>These areas will discourage: Single detached houses</p>

Culturally Rich and Active Communities

City Plan Objectives:

- Improve the acceptance and valuing of diversity and difference in the Knox community
- Increase use of public spaces and infrastructure for the purposes of cultural expression and physical activity

Vision for Rowville:

- Rowville will have a 'heart', offering a central area for people to gather that concentrates local retail, dining, activities, services and entertainment.
- Diverse art, cultural and sporting activities will be available and accessible for all. Open spaces will be well designed, safe and accessible for a wide variety of uses.
- The complementary cultural centres at Stamford Park Historic Homestead, the Rowville Community Centre, and the Rowville Library will provide amenity for Rowville residents and attract visitors from across the region to events and activities.

Community Priorities

- Activities, services, & living options for aged residents
- More activities for young people
- Expanded opportunities for arts and culture

Drivers of Change

- Ageing population
- Stamford Park Masterplan
- Potential Expansion of Stud Park Shopping Centre

Parks, Recreation & Open Space

The Rowville community highly values their parks, recreational facilities, and open space, and the area is generally well-served by access to these facilities. Local residents enjoy access to large facilities such as the Rowville Community Centre that serve as regional destinations with a variety of activities unique to Rowville. Smaller parks including Stud Park Reserve, Arcadia Reserve, Row Reserve, Delta Court Reserve, and Deschamp Crescent Reserve provide a variety of facilities and activities from ovals to playgrounds and grassy open space.

Rowville enjoys relatively high participation in organised sport, although the number of playing fields and sporting facilities are low relative to the large number of clubs and number of members in the area. Some facilities are struggling to meet a rising demand. There are also fewer small neighbourhood parks and playgrounds within walking distance of houses in Rowville than there area in other parts of Knox. And while Rowville is adjacent to large amounts of opens space along the Corhanwarrabul Creek corridor, much of this space is currently closed to the public like the Stamford Park Historic

Homestead or reserved for private use like the Kingston Links Golf Course.

Community Precinct

The Community Precinct to the east of the Stud Park Shopping Centre is a collection of facilities and assets that are important to the function of the Activity Centre. It includes the Rowville Community Centre, Stud Park Reserve, the Rowville Adventure Playground, Rowville Police Station, Rowville Primary School, and the Rowville Secondary Western Campus.

The community has expressed a desire for more central places for people to gather and hold events. Both previous plans and the current concept for the long-term expansion of the Stud Park Shopping Centre include a proposal for a 'Town Square' element that would link with the facilities in the Community Precinct to provide a new public outdoor space that could accommodate both informal gatherings and programmed events.

Rowville Library

The Rowville Library in the Stud Park shopping centre is a highly valued and popular community asset. The current 650 m² facility offers books, music, and media as well as public computers. A small meeting space within the library is used by the library and community organisations offering activities for people of all ages, including several regular programs for young children and families.

Rowville has changed considerably since the library was built, and Knox Council is investigating opportunities for the provision of a larger, purpose-built library facility at Stud Park with a more flexible internal layout that could accommodate a wider and more diverse range of services and activities.

Stamford Park

Stamford Park, adjacent to the Activity Centre, is an emerging development around the historic homestead which represents an opportunity to address many of the objectives in the Rowville Plan. The development includes the conversion of large amounts of unused open space to a new public park and wetland reserve. The restoration of the Stamford Park Historic Homestead and grounds provides potential venues for a wide range of arts, cultural, social, and recreational activities and users. A new

sustainable residential neighbourhood at Stamford Park will support the investment in this community infrastructure, envisioned as a sustainable development that provides new housing types and serves as a demonstrator for innovation in technology and design.

Services and Facilities for Aged Residents

The Rowville community is experiencing an ageing of its population that is also being felt across many other parts of Knox and the eastern suburbs. As children move away and parents age in place, fewer young families are arriving to take their place in Rowville. Today, people over 60 represent around 13% of Rowville's population. By 2030, that number is expected to more than double to 24%. The result has been an increasing demand for services related to healthy ageing.

There was a desire within the community to give proper recognition to the role and needs of aged residents. While the Peppertree Hill Retirement Village serves as a valuable resource for this part of the community, there was interest in providing a high-care nursing home or other facility that could serve this growing group as well. There was also considerable interest in finding opportunities for people of all ages and generations to participate in activities together to promote community connections.

Activities and Services for Young People

There was a general agreement among participants in the community engagement process that Rowville lacks enough variety of fun and productive activities for young people to engage in. While organised sport enjoys wide participation among a large number of clubs, there are few other activities for youth in Rowville. There are many opportunities to create new venues and support events related to cultural activities and the arts, including the new development at Stamford Park. Effective communication with young people to ensure that the activities and services that are provided locally are relevant and well-used is seen as an important goal of the Rowville Plan.

A Family-Friendly Suburb

The history of Rowville is one of families, and the much of the identity of the suburb that residents hold dear relates to its safe and quiet, family-friendly atmosphere. The rapid development of the area from the 1960s to the 1990s saw vast areas developed with large houses as families moved out to enjoy the promise of prosperity and suburban lifestyle that offered a balance of city and country. Many still share a strong interest in maintaining Rowville as a place with a rich sense of community that is friendly to families, which is an important aim of the Rowville Plan.

However, the nature and structure of our families and households is changing, and maintaining this identity of Rowville will require adaptation. Many people are starting families later in life, to make time to establish careers and savings first. There is an increase in single-parent families and blended families in Rowville as well, with different priorities.

Gone are the days of cheap land and new housing. Most of the developable space in Rowville has been filled with estates, and the price of houses has risen significantly over the years. The cost of a house on a quarter-acre block is less accessible to many new families than it was thirty years ago. As children in Rowville grow up and move out of the family home, many residents are choosing to age in place. Maintaining a population that includes families will require providing better opportunities for new families to establish in Rowville. Introducing new, smaller dwellings can offer a more affordable and accessible alternative for first time home buyers looking to establish themselves in the area who may not otherwise have access to the housing they need.

Objectives & Strategies: Culturally Rich and Active Communities

16. A broader range of active and passive uses at existing parks, reserves, recreational facilities, and open spaces that provides access to opportunities for all ages, interests, and abilities

- 16.1.Undertake masterplanning of Stud Park Reserve, Row Reserve, Deschamp Crescent Reserve, and Arcadia Reserve in coordination with residents, community organisations, and other key users
- 16.2.Facilitate opportunities to share the use of sport facilities and other spaces between clubs and community organisations
- 16.3.Enhance the amenity and safety of public streetscapes along Neighbourhood Green Streets to encourage informal public uses
- 16.4.Support multipurpose use of recreational areas through addition of new facilities and upgrades of existing facilities

17. Development of new public spaces in and around the Activity Centre

- 17.1.Support the delivery of Town Square or other flexible community space within the Commercial Core that could serve as a ‘heart’ for Rowville, with strong links to the facilities in the Community Precinct that could support large-scale events and gatherings
- 17.2.Identify and promote opportunities for informal or temporary ‘pop-up’ spaces for arts and cultural activities in Rowville, including in parks, reserves, public buildings, church facilities, schools, and commercial areas

17.3.Deliver new large-scale parks, reserves, and open space at Stamford Park to serve as a focus for community support of arts, cultural, educational, recreational, and civic activities and events

17.4.Identify opportunities to create new small-scale ‘pocket parks’, plazas, and suburban squares through the acquisition and conversion of land as it may become available in neighbourhoods that have limited options for open space with a 5-minute walk

18. Expanded capacity for the Rowville Library (in a new, purpose-built facility within the Commercial Core) to serve the future needs of a changing community

- 18.1.Continue coordination with the owners of the Stud Park Shopping Centre to include a larger purpose-built library facility as part of any major expansion of the shopping centre
- 18.2.Support an expanded offering of multipurpose programs and events at the Rowville Library and additional use by community organisations

19. Rowville is host to a growing arts and cultural offering with a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages, interests, and abilities to experience and participate in events and activities

- 19.1.Support a wide range of inclusive cultural activities, arts, festivals, and events in Rowville, including those with a multicultural or Indigenous focus

- 19.2. Support the rejuvenation of the historic Stamford Park Homestead and gardens as a venue for public events and activities
- 19.3. Continue to support the Stringybark Festival in promoting local artists, craftspeople, and community organisations related to environmental sustainability
- 19.4. Investigate opportunities to make available spaces at the Rowville Community Centre, Rowville Library, schools, and local church facilities as performance venues and gallery spaces for community events and organisations
- 19.5. Continue to support the Rowville Neighbourhood Learning Centre and other existing community organisations and encourage the formation of new groups dedicated to arts and culture
- 19.6. Increase the number and range of opportunities for young people to engage with each other through the arts

20. Maintain Rowville's identity as an attractive family-friendly suburb for future generations

- 20.1. Encourage a greater range activities and constructive opportunities for young people to engage with each other and people of all generations
- 20.2. Continue to provide Early Years services and support preschool services at a level to effectively accommodate changing demographics
- 20.3. Maintain a large supply of single homes with gardens and other private open space that can cater to families and others who enjoy the lifestyle of Rowville's existing neighbourhoods

- 20.4. Apply Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to all open space, streetscape, and building design
- 20.5. Encourage smaller dwellings and rental opportunities in Higher Change and Lower Change residential areas that could appeal to young couples and families looking to establish a home in Rowville

21. Accommodate the changing service needs of an ageing population

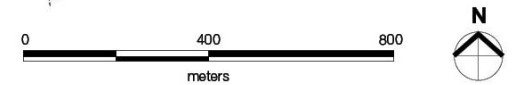
- 21.1. Encourage multipurpose use and co-location of services related to Healthy Ageing with those catering to other age groups to increase flexibility of delivery and community connectedness
- 21.2. Advocate to current health care providers to support the delivery of a nursing home or other high-care retirement/care facility located within the Activity Centre
- 21.3. Encourage and support events, activities, and organisations that bring together people of different ages, generations, and stages of life
- 21.4. Encourage smaller dwellings in Higher Change and Lower Change residential areas that could appeal to residents looking to downsize from larger family homes
- 21.5. Encourage flexible housing that can accommodate access by aged and disabled and can be adapted to support changes to intergenerational living arrangements
- 21.6. Improve accessibility throughout the Activity Centre for those with limited mobility

LEGEND

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Activity Centre Boundary
-  Commercial Core
-  Public Open Space
-  Other Open Space
-  Waterbodies
-  Potential Main Street Shopping and Dining
-  Bush Boulevards
-  Principal Avenues
-  Community Links
-  Neighbourhood Green Streets
-  Key Viewing Corridors
-  Sites of Biological Significance



PROPOSED ENVIRONMENT & LANDSCAPE MAP



Democratic and Engaged Communities

City Plan Objectives:

- Improve community leadership and participation in Knox
- Increase opportunities for the Knox community to participate in public decision-making processes
- Ensure Council is well governed and demonstrates effective leadership

Vision for Rowville:

- Rowville will be home to a diverse population that has the capacity to take an active role in shaping its own future. Decision-making will be enhanced by collaboration and partnership with the Rowville Community.

Community Priorities

- A Greater Voice in Planning for the Future
- Active Participation in Civic Events such as the Stringybark Festival

Drivers of Change

- A Greater Emphasis on Local Responsibility for Planning

Community capacity, partnerships and participation in decision making

Community participation in future decision making is a major goal of Council, and the Rowville community in particular has expressed a strong desire to have greater influence in decisions related to planning and development. The Knox@50 Community Engagement program that Council ran throughout 2012 was a major effort to engage with many communities in Knox to understand their ideas about the future. Discussions about what is driving change in Knox provided a valuable insight into how people see where they live. The outcomes of the engagement provided a solid foundation in the development of the Rowville Plan. Throughout engagement with the Rowville community, there was general agreement about the value in working toward a future where clarity of purpose and improved trust in a shared process can lead to higher levels of engagement and participation. Potential obstacles to be avoided include poor communication between Council and the community, a sense that Council is not listening to residents, or simply a lack of facilities and opportunities to influence local government.

Equal access to services, resources and technology

This provision of equal access to information and services for all parts of the community is an important priority across Knox Council. Reaching out to vulnerable and underrepresented segments of the population – such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, the aged (especially lone person households), people with disabilities and their carers, young people, and the economically disadvantaged – is an important goal of any successful engagement. The community defined an excellent future for Rowville as one where services are accessible by all people regardless of age, gender, disability, race, or economic background. These outcomes can be supported with convenient access for all through safe, convenient public transportation and widely-available broadband access.

Objectives & Strategies: Democratic and Engaged Communities

22. Initiate Rowville Place Program, a strategic place management and development approach to future planning and delivery characterised by broad community participation and collaborative decision-making

- 22.1. Establish a continuing strategic dialogue between Council and interested community stakeholders to guide the development and delivery of actions that help implement the Rowville Plan
- 22.2. Identify and support opportunities for strategic partnerships between Council residents, local businesses, community organisations, and Council to advance specific projects and initiatives
- 22.3. Equip and support community organisations to build capacity to continue to deliver important services within Rowville and to be able to advocate issues to all levels of government
- 22.4. Support local community leadership programs to promote community participation and foster emerging local leaders

23. People of all ages and abilities have convenient access to information, services, venues, and events

- 23.1. Provide regular communication between Council and the community across many accessible channels to increase awareness of existing services and future opportunities
- 23.2. Reach out to underserved and disadvantaged populations during Council community engagement activities to ensure participation by the entire Rowville community, including Aboriginal groups, young people, cultural and linguistic diversity

