

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLANNING POLICY

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Approved by:	Council	Responsible Officers:	Manager Community Wellbeing/ Manager Sustainable Infrastructure
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1 PURPOSE

This Policy outlines Council's commitment to an integrated planning process for the planning, delivery and management of community facilities, and as part of that process, to consider opportunities for multipurpose, co-located or integrated uses or community hub opportunities when planning for new and/or upgrades or change of use of Council community facilities.

The policy integrates with Council's Service Planning approach by ensuring that consideration of the community demand for services, Council's role and models for delivery of services are key elements of the Community Infrastructure Planning Process.

2 CONTEXT

The City of Knox is home to over 155,000 people who enjoy a diverse range of services supported by 264 Council owned community facilities. In an environment of rising expectations and significant resource constraints, Council has a responsibility to derive maximum community benefit from its current and future community facilities.

Council's strategic objectives outlined in the *Knox Vision: Our City, Our Future* and the *City Plan* identify that the provision for a range of community services is a key function of Council, and that these services in turn, rely on the provision of infrastructure assets to support Council's strategic objectives.

Knox is reasonably well serviced by community facilities which provides for multipurpose use, meets the needs of our diverse population, provides a focus for community connections and contributes to community wellbeing and the economy. Many of the community facilities owned by Council, however, are ageing, have been purpose-built for specific community services or interests and offer limited flexibility and adaptability to suit changing needs of the Knox community.

Demand for a diverse and adaptable range of community spaces is growing, driven by population increases and the increasingly diverse needs of ageing, socially and culturally diverse communities.

Consideration of opportunities for multipurpose use and/or community hubs can address the growing challenge of meeting community expectations and changing needs for community infrastructure within a constrained financial environment. There is the potential to improve efficiencies for Council and the community by reducing the costs of building renewals and maintenance, enhancing accessibility, providing an efficient and effective response to ageing infrastructure and providing a sustainable and flexible approach to changing community needs over time.

The provision of community facilities is also driven by the goals of the Knox City Plan, the Knox Planning Scheme and Council's Service plans.

The Knox City Plan 2013-2017 provides an objective to build consideration of potential multiple community uses into new and upgrades of Council facilities developments to allow for greater diversity of use and to maximise the use of facilities. This Policy supports this objective by providing policy direction for the planning and development of multipurpose community facilities in Knox, to assist in optimising use of Council resources including land, facilities and services for maximum community benefit.

This Policy is supported by Victorian State Government direction that clearly identifies priorities in the support of integrated planning and delivery of community infrastructure.

3 MULTIPURPOSE COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND HUBS

Multipurpose community facilities and community hubs can be considered either as joint use facilities (one building with many uses) or several facilities located in close proximity (each building providing a range of services).

Multipurpose facilities or community hubs can also be designed to maximise utilisation through shared use arrangements and/or integrated service provision, which can further maximise connections between programs and community users by promoting a strong integration between activities and service delivery.

The Definitions section of this Policy (refer Section 4) includes descriptions of the various types of community facilities, which includes co-located, integrated or multipurpose community facilities, or a multipurpose community hub. For simplicity, this Policy uses the terms 'multipurpose community facilities' to encompass this range of facility types unless otherwise explained. Further information about the various types of multipurpose facilities can be found in the Community Facility Planning Guidelines, where a detailed analysis of such facilities and examples already within Knox are explored in more detail.

While multipurpose use, co-location and integration of facilities and services are widely viewed as important components of community hubs, research suggests that a successful community hub needs to be more than a cluster of services and buildings.

Effective multipurpose community facilities and hubs should:

- be suitably and strategically located;
- aim to meet existing and future community needs;
- be developed to provide opportunities for co-location, flexible use and integrated service provision;
- provide for connection to, and compatibility with, surrounding land uses;
- provide best value for money in delivering community outcomes;
- house complementary services, and/or functions and activities; and
- have effective governance models in place.

4 DEFINITIONS

Asset	A physical item that is owned or controlled by Council, and provides or contributes to the provision of services to the community.
Asset Management	The process applied to manage assets over each stage of their service life from asset needs analysis, creation, operation, maintenance, renewal and disposal.
Council	Means Knox City Council, whether constituted before or after the commencement of this Policy.
Community facilities	<p>Community facilities refers to buildings that are owned by Council or where Council is the Committee of Management, that support community services or provide community benefit, and include health, individual, family and community support, education, arts and culture, information, community development, employment and training, and active and passive recreation opportunities.</p> <p>Community facilities can be described as:</p> <p>Stand-alone facilities – the establishment of dedicated facilities serving a single or multiple community purpose.</p> <p>Co-located facilities – the joint location of service providers within a facility, usually without integration of services, but involving shared premises and possibly some administrative or other services.</p> <p>Integrated facility - the joint location of service providers within a facility (as per co-location) but with integration of services to provide a co-ordinated, one-stop-shop approach to case management and service delivery.</p> <p>Multipurpose Community Facility – a facility which provides a range of flexible, functional spaces to support access to services and participation in a range of active and passive lifestyle activities.</p> <p>Multipurpose Community Hub – a collection of facilities clustered together on the same or adjoining sites. There may or may not be interaction between these facilities. Together, they create a focal point for community activity. A hub is often also a base for outreach services to other smaller facilities or surrounding communities.</p>
Change of Use	A use different to the current or former use.
Community Infrastructure Planning Process	Set of sequential and logically interrelated steps, completed in order to undertake integrated planning for community infrastructure.
Community infrastructure	Assets (which may or may not include a building), that accommodate community services, including: health, individual, family and community support, education, arts and culture, information, community development, employment and training, open space and active and passive recreation opportunities.
Facility Upgrade	Capital works undertaken to improve functionality and condition of a facility.

Fit for Purpose	Functionality and condition of a facility to provide appropriate and necessary standard for intended use.
Guidelines	Recommended, non-mandatory controls that help support principles or serve as a reference when no applicable standard is in place. Guidelines should be viewed as best practices that are not usually requirements, but are strongly recommended.
New Facility	A newly obtained or constructed facility.
Planning Principles	General statement of intention, which may be applied to particular cases to promote consistency.
Program	An ongoing activity which is developed and performed to meet a public need, and forming part of a service.
Service	A group of programs and projects primarily focussed on external recipients, which collectively provide support or guidance to the community in order to achieve the objectives of Knox's Vision and City Plan. A combination of tangible and intangible benefits that can be produced and consumed.
Service Level	A relevant measurable standard or target that reflects the required performance to meet agreed community expectations in relation to the type, quality and quantity of services delivered by Council.
Single purpose facility	A community facility designed or used for a single, specific purpose.
Technical Service Level	Describes the standard and performance of assets that Council delivers and managers to support broader customer service levels.

5 SCOPE

This Policy applies to Council and all Council staff.

The scope of this Policy includes, but is not limited to, Council owned facilities including sports pavilions, leisure centres, libraries, early years facilities, neighbourhood houses, community centres, community arts centres, senior citizens centres, community meeting spaces and public halls.

This Policy applies when planning for new or upgrades or a proposed change of use of existing Council owned community facilities as part of the following:

- A request from a community organisation for a new community facility or changing utilisation of an existing Council community facility;
- External capital funding opportunities which are available for community facilities;
- The outcomes of a Service Plan, strategic review, issues based or area based review proposing change or development of Council community facilities; and/or
- Process for the allocation, and/or use of Council community facilities.

6 COMMUNITY FACILITY PLANNING PROCESS

Achieving community hubs, integrated services and multipurpose or co-located community facilities requires investment in and understanding of foundation principles and integrated approaches to the planning, delivery and management of community facilities.

The process for consideration of multipurpose facility development therefore forms part of an integrated approach to the overall planning, delivery and management of community services, activities and facilities across Council. This integrated approach will also align with sector-wide best practice approaches to community facility planning.

6.1 Planning Principles

Eight key principles underpin the Community Facility Planning Process. These principles (outlined below) represent key organisational values and planning philosophies which provide statements of desirable outcomes to be considered during the 5 planning stages outlined in section 6 of the Policy.

1. Wellbeing

Community facilities are accessible, enhance community networks and activity, provide connections, strengthen local identity and contribute to self-sufficiency.

2. Equity and Opportunity

Community facilities encourage participation; enhance creativity, activity and healthy lifestyles, support gender equity and diverse needs of all demographic groups within the community.

3. Economic Benefit

Community facilities are located and designed to complement local businesses and services. They are affordable, technically and economically viable, provide security of tenure and are managed and operated to minimise duplication and costs.

4. Design & Sustainability

Community facilities are designed to support compatible multipurpose, flexible spaces, respond to the surrounding social, natural and built environment, contribute to sustainability outcomes and respect and celebrate the character and identity of local communities.

5. Location

Community facilities are located to service diverse communities, which is accessible to the widest possible range of community members in convenient and central locations. These locations are to be well served by a range of transport, particularly public transport.

6. Community Safety

Community facilities support the provision of safe and secure community places that enhance quality of life, equity, law and order and stability.

7. Partnership and Alliances

Community facilities are supported by collaborative arrangements and partnerships between government, education, industry, private sector and community.

8. Investment

Community facility planning considers a range of investment options including public and private sector contributions, owning, co-owning, renting or sharing.

6.2 Community Facility Planning Process

The Community Facility Planning Process (as outlined in Figure 1 below), consists of five stages which should be undertaken as part of all community facility projects.

Outcomes of each stage need to inform all subsequent stages. The overall process will facilitate an informed, integrated and robust process to plan for, assess, prioritise, deliver and manage Council's community facilities.

The specific tasks and deliverables of each stage will vary depending on the nature and scale of the project; however the strategic intent of each stage will remain consistent.

The stages of the Community Facility Planning Process are:

- 1. Strategic Intent:** Establish organisational policy and principles shaping the service; Establish the strategic intent; Understand the service purpose and sector-wide influences.
- 2. Needs Analysis:** Analyse existing and future context, community needs, requirements and opportunities; stakeholder consultation 4 locational considerations.
- 3. Solution Identification:** Align needs; feasibility of options including economic evaluation and assessment of management models; identify and approve the recommended option.
Where needs alignment cannot meet Council expectations, it may be necessary to go back and review the assumptions and project parameters developed in Stages 1 and 2 of the project.
- 4. Plan Creation and Delivery:** Undertake planning, design; facility delivery; establish facility management arrangements; commence service delivery.
- 5. Monitoring and Evaluation:** Monitor usage, demand, user satisfaction and operations; Identify key learnings from the project to inform the Community Facility Planning Process.

Figure 1 - Community Facility Planning Process



6.3 Community Facility Planning Guidelines

The Community Facilities Planning Guidelines have been developed to support and guide the implementation of this policy as part of the above process. Further information and guidance about the Community Facility Planning Process and explanation of each stage of the process can be found in the Community Facilities Planning Guidelines.

7 COUNCIL POLICY

7.1 Policy

When planning for a new, upgrade or redevelopment of a community facility in Knox, including a change of use, it is policy that:

1. Planning for Council owned community facilities must consider :
 - (a) **Multipurpose Use:** Flexible, functional and adaptable spaces within a facility which can support a range of compatible services and activities;
 - (b) **Co-located Use:** Joint location of services within the same facility;
 - (c) **Integrated Service Provision:** The joint location of services within a facility and with integrated service delivery and management; or
 - (d) **Community Hub:** Creation of or enhancement of an existing cluster of community facilities on the same or adjoining sites, which creates a focal point for community activity.
2. The suitability of the location of community facilities to optimise multipurpose, co-located or integrated use or community hub opportunities, will be informed by the ability to maximise efficient land use, accessibility and convenience for users to achieve greatest community benefit. These locational considerations will give priority to:
 - Access to public transport, activity centres, open space, pedestrian connections, car parking and other community infrastructure; and
 - The level of support for the location of the facility that is provided in the Knox Planning Scheme or any approved Structure Plan for that area.
3. Planning for the multipurpose, co-located or integrated use of community facilities or community hub opportunities will include engagement with internal and external stakeholders in order to maximise opportunities to integrate service and asset planning and build collaboration and partnerships with community stakeholders.
4. Multipurpose, co-located or integrated facilities will have appropriate governance and facility management arrangements in place. Licensing Agreements entered into between Council and community groups shall be based on the policy criteria outlined in Section 7.1 of this Policy.
5. The **Community Facility Planning Process** (as outlined in Section 6.2 of this Policy) shall be used to guide the overall process for the planning, development and management of new/upgraded community facilities and for change of use of existing community facilities.
6. Consideration of the multipurpose criteria outlined in this policy (Policy statements No.1 – 4 inclusive) shall be undertaken as part of the integrated Community Facility Planning Process (outlined in Policy statement No.5), which takes into account all relevant Council objectives and policies. The Community Facilities Planning Guidelines shall be used to inform this process.

7.2 Assessment Criteria for Multipurpose Community Facilities

Assessment criteria for consideration of multi-purpose, co-located or integrated uses within community facilities and the creation or enhancement of community hub opportunities have been developed based on the policy statements in Section 7.1 above and have been incorporated into the checklist provided in the Community Facilities Planning Guidelines.

It is recognised that multipurpose, co-located or integrated community facilities or a community hub location may not always be the optimum outcome for a particular site, use or facility. The policy criteria are designed to support consideration of multipurpose use as part of the overall planning and design process, which in turn forms part of a broader assessment of the proposed facility against all relevant Council objectives and policies (being the Community Facility Planning Process). Discretion therefore exists for the suitability of multipurpose, co-located or integrated community facility use or community hub location to be balanced against other demonstrated needs (such as user-specific requirements, site constraints, or budget considerations).

7.3 Capital Works Priorities

To ensure the proposed development/upgrades of Council facilities reflect relevant consideration of multipurpose use as outlined in this policy, the ranking criteria for Council's Capital Works program will incorporate multipurpose assessment considerations for each project.

Balancing the multipurpose considerations against other relevant considerations and priorities will form part of the Solution Identification stage of each project, the outcomes of which will in turn be reflected in the Capital Works Ranking criteria.

7.4 Risk Management

The Policy supports:

- Prioritising programs, projects and the investment of public resources.
- Investment in sustainable community facility models.
- Strong link between service planning, community facility investment decisions and an evidence based understanding of community needs and expectations.
- Transparency and accountability to the community about the allocation of resources.
- Compliance with relevant legislation including public safety standards.

7.5 Integrated Service and Continuous Review

Council will continue to enhance its community facility planning and development knowledge, skills and operational practices with a commitment to a continuous improvement approach. Improved knowledge about the future direction of Council and non-Council services, and an understanding of sector-wide best practice will drive integrated community facility planning and the provision of community facilities, including co-located, integrated, multipurpose community facilities and community hubs.

Updated assessment criteria in response to Council's continuous improvement approach will be incorporated into the Community Facilities Planning Guidelines on an as-needed basis.

7.6 Responsibilities

7.6.1 Council:

- To continue to invest in improving its knowledge of, and approaches to, community facility planning, development and management.
- To continue to support processes for integrating community service facility infrastructure planning across Council.
- To act as a steward for Council owned or managed community facilities infrastructure.
- To determine the most appropriate role for Council in the provision and support of community facilities and the multipurpose use of facilities.
- To determine allocation of resources and funding in accordance with this Policy.

7.6.2 Chief Executive Officer

- To manage implementation of the Community Facilities Planning Policy.
- To apply this Policy when considering change of use, development, redevelopment or management of community facilities.
- To report on the status and effectiveness of this Policy to Council and within the organisation.
- To be guided by this Policy in recommending the allocation of resources, when making decisions or providing advice to Council about community facility planning, development and management.

7.6.3 Directors

- To support the Chief Executive Officer to ensure community facility planning processes and decisions are consistent with this Policy.
- To support implementation of the Community Facilities Planning Policy.
- To be guided by this Policy in recommending the allocation of resources, when making decisions or providing advice to Council or the CEO about community facility planning, development and management.

7.6.4 Senior Management

- To implement this Policy within available budget and resource allocations.
- To be guided by this Policy in recommending the allocation of resources, when making decisions or providing advice to Council, the CEO or Directors about community facility planning, development and management.

7.6.5 Service Managers

- To implement this Policy within available budget and resource allocations.
- To be guided by this Policy in recommending the allocation of resources, when making decisions or providing advice to Council or senior management regarding community facility planning, development and management.

7.6.6 Staff

- To administer the Policy.
- To participate in appropriate training to develop the skill sets required to undertake community facility planning and consideration of multipurpose use of community facilities in accordance with this Policy, as appropriate for the responsibility of the role or position.

8 REFERENCES

8.1 Knox City Plan 2013-2017.

Theme	Strategies
1. Healthy, Connected Communities <p>The Knox community benefits from good health and wellbeing at all life stages.</p>	<p>Improve health and wellbeing factors and mitigate lifestyle risks such as smoking, alcohol consumption, drug use, lack of physical activity and poor nutrition, through a range of services, infrastructure and partnerships.</p> <p>Improve accessible public transport services and infrastructure so that public transport is a realistic transport choice for the Knox community.</p>
2. Prosperous, Advancing Economy <p>Improve local opportunities for people to live, work, learn and play in Knox.</p>	<p>Provide social infrastructure and a positive local amenity that make it attractive to live and work in Knox, and that encourages business development.</p>
3. Vibrant and Sustainable Built and Natural Environments <p>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. Infrastructure networks provide transport choice, affordability and connectivity.</p>	<p>Public infrastructure and open space is maintained and improved to support a vibrant community life in Knox.</p> <p>Significantly improved integrated and sustainable transport systems and infrastructure are provided to improve opportunity, choice and access for all.</p>
4. Culturally Rich and Active Communities <p>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.</p>	<p>Promote accessible opportunities to participate in leisure and recreation activities, through provision of public infrastructure and support to sporting and leisure groups in Knox.</p> <p>Develop multi-use facilities in co-located hubs that support active participation in sporting, cultural and leisure activities.</p>

8.2 Integrated City Strategy and Implementation Plan 2015-17

The *Integrated City Strategy and Implementation Plan 2015-17* is a key policy and implementation tool for Council to enhance multipurpose use of community facilities as part of an integrated planning process, which embeds consideration of the built, social, natural and economic environments into Council's planning, implementation and evaluation phases of its services and operations. Relevant strategies include:

Integrated Strategy	
1	<i>Encourage local living by providing a positive local amenity that makes it attractive to live and work in Knox.</i>
2	<i>Improve lifelong learning opportunities in Knox by raising community awareness of and increasing access to learning options for all ages.</i>

3	<i>Appropriately plan and provide guidance for land use and development by responding to changing family living structures and other City drivers of change.</i>
5	<i>Improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of people in Knox and mitigate lifestyle risks such as smoking, risky alcohol consumption and drug use, obesity, lack of physical activity and poor nutrition, through the provision of high quality services, support, infrastructure, partnerships, advocacy and regulation</i>
6	<i>Ensure the municipality is responsive to people at all stages of life (child friendly, youth-friendly, aged-friendly) by developing policies, plans, services and infrastructure that recognise the range of needs that arise across the lifespan.</i>
8	<i>Enable people in Knox to participate in community life by providing high quality infrastructure and public space and access to services and facilities.</i>
12	<i>Improve personal and community safety and perceptions of safety in Knox by working together to address community safety problems, family violence and child and elder abuse.</i>
14	<i>Enable people to celebrate and feel proud of Knox's diverse culture and local identity by participation in artistic expression and protecting and enhancing the cultural heritage and strengths of Knox</i>
15	<i>Ensure Knox City Council is a contemporary, effective and well governed through the pursuit of excellence in Council's practices, projects and service delivery</i>

8.3 Related Council Policies

Council's strategic objectives outlined in the City and Council Plan 2013-17 acknowledge that provision of community infrastructure is a core function of Council. The following policies inform Council's response delivery and management of community facilities in Knox that are flexible, cost effective and respond to community need.

Policy	Response
Untied Funding Allocation Policy	Council's Untied Funding Allocation Policy outlines the methodology to determine allocation of untied funding between competing projects and services as part of the annual budget process.
Service Planning Policy 2013	Council's Service Planning Policy articulates Council's commitment to service planning, and establishes a framework to ensure service planning is undertaken in a structured, consistent, cost effective and financially sustainable manner across the whole of the organisation.
Sale of Land and Building Policy	Council's Sale of Land and Buildings Policy defines the process for identifying and proceeding with the sale of any Council land (with or without improvements) and to also identify how the proceeds from any land sales are to be allocated.
Asset Management Policy 2013	Council's Asset Management Policy ensures that Council assets deliver the required level of service in the most effective and efficient manner now and into the future and the Asset Management Policy provides direction for management of assets over each stage of its service life including creation, operation, maintenance and renewal.
Access to the Built Environment Policy 2011	Provides Council with a consistent approach to planning and provision of access for people with disabilities to the built environment.
Community Engagement Policy 2007	Defines a consistent approach to be taken by Council when engaging with the community.

Sustainable Buildings Policy 2013	Provides a consistent approach for the inclusion of Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) principles.
Support for Community Based Facility Development/Improvements – External Funding Submissions 2009	This Policy provides a framework for Council's assessment and endorsement of community applications for funding of projects, by external agencies, such as the State and Federal governments and do not require funding from Council, for facility development/improvements on Council owned/managed land.
Sporting Reserve Facility Development Guidelines Policy	This Policy exists to provide Council and community sporting groups with a standard approach to the development of sporting reserve facilities.
Sporting Club Financial Contributions Towards Reserve Developments Policy	This Policy exists to provide Council and community sporting groups with a consistent framework when nominating financial contributions to fund facility developments and improvements at Council sporting reserves.

8.4 Relevant Legislation

- *Local Government Act 1989* – providing and maintaining community infrastructure in the municipal district.
- *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities* -community facilities should be developed and/or managed in a way that is consistent with the Charter.
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987* - The Knox Planning Scheme and its Municipal Strategic Statement encourage community facilities to be co-located and multipurpose in accessible locations, to service a range of activities to meet community needs.
- *National Disability Act 1992* – provides protection for everyone in Australia against discrimination based on disability, including access to premises used by the public.
- *National Construction Code 2015* – sets the minimum requirements for the design, construction and performance of buildings throughout Australia.
- *Building Control Act* – provides minimum building standards and requirements throughout Victoria.

8.5 External References

- A Guide to Delivering Community Precincts, Department of Planning and Community Development, 2011.
- A Guide to Governing Shared Community Facilities, Department of Planning and Community Development, 2011.
- Feasibility Study of Community Hubs for the Parramatta Local Government Area – Briefing Paper Elton Consulting, 2007.
- Greater Dandenong Multipurpose Use of Community Facilities Policy, 2008.
- Evaluation of Victorian Children's Centres, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2008.
- Infrastructure Victoria – Laying the Foundations 2016 – Setting objectives and identifying needs for Victoria's 30 year infrastructure strategy
- Plan Melbourne: Metropolitan Planning Strategy, Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, 2014.

9 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Knox City Plan 2013-2017
- Knox Vision: Our City, Our future 2015-2017
- Knox Integrated City Strategy 2015-2017
- Strategic Asset Management Plan 2003- 2013
- Building Asset Management Plan 2009
- Knox Leisure Plan 2014 -2019
- Municipal Early Years Plan-Off to a Flying Start 2011-15
- Knox Open Space Plan 2012-22
- Knox Liveable Streets Plan 2012-2022
- Open Space Assets Management Plan 2011
- Healthy Ageing Strategic Plan 2009-2013
- Knox Youth Strategic Plan 2012-2017
- Knox Arts and Cultural Plan 2012-2022
- Knox City Council Multicultural Strategic Plan 2012-17
- Knox City Council Access & Inclusion Plan 2011-2015
- Knox City Council Crime Prevention for Environmental Design Principles 2013
- Knox Planning Scheme
- Local Structure Plans