

**Combined Residents of Whitehorse
Action Group (CROWAG) Incorporated.**

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The Committee Manager
Legislative Assembly Environment and Planning Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Re: Inquiry into Environmental Infrastructure for Growing Populations

CROWAG thanks the Committee for the opportunity to submit a community view on provision of open space and specifically in this submission the issue of rapidly diminishing space in Box Hill, City of Whitehorse.

Box Hill is bordered to the north by Thames Street, to the south by Canterbury Road, the west by Elgar Road and the east by Middleborough Road. Whitehorse Road is a major arterial road which runs east-west through the suburb and Station Street is a north-south secondary arterial and runs slightly west of centre through the suburb.

The Whitehorse Open Space Strategy Part Two 2007 summarised for Box Hill 3128 pps 159 – 160 states that:

Box Hill • 43.08 hectares (ha) of open space • 12.2% of the suburb area • 49m² per person (2001)

*5 Municipal reserves of 35.9 Ha are in a total of 43.08 Ha where **four of the five are sporting or restricted sporting reserves** and the other is the Box Hill Gardens which is predominantly an informal unstructured Municipal open space.*

The then 2019 Estimated Resident Population for Box Hill was 13,443, with a population density of 38.20 persons per hectare.

Metropolitan Activity Centre (BHMACH)

Since 2007 the central core of Box Hill has been re-designated as one of nine existing Metropolitan Activity Centres (BHMACH) where enhanced access to jobs located in closer proximity to where people live, combined with high- frequency multi-modal public transport, supports good access for communities to a range of major retail, community, government, entertainment, cultural and transport services. Box Hill under this Plan is attracting investment in education, health and housing at higher densities.

Population, housing and employment forecasts prepared by SGS Economics & Planning for the Whitehorse Council show that the resident population of BHMACH has grown by 3% per annum from 3,800 people in 2006 to 5,100 in 2016, with growth of the working age and tertiary student populations particularly strong. The resident population is anticipated to grow to between 12,700 and 14,000 people by 2036, requiring between 4,000 and 4600 additional dwellings.

The Review of Strategic Direction Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre Analysis & Options —Appendices May 2019 Prepared by MGS Architects | TQ Planning Movement & Place Consulting | SGS Economics & Planning reports that *“Over the last 10 years, population in the Box Hill Activity Centre has increased at a faster rate than the rest of the LGA, the Eastern region, and Metropolitan Melbourne. The average annual growth rate of population in Box Hill was 2.9%, higher than the Greater Melbourne average of 1.2% (2006-16).*

In 2016 there were over 8,500 residents within the Box Hill Activity Centre, comprising 5.1% of the LGA’s population. This share has risen from 4.1% in 2001. The Box Hill Activity Centre hosted 14% of the total population growth of Whitehorse LGA over the last 5 years. Residents aged 26 to 64 have increased at an average annual growth rate of 4.8%, and those aged 0 to 17 have grown by 3.5% per annum.

In the period 2003 - 2018, 95 planning permit applications have been approved in the BHMAC. Of these about 18% was distributed roughly evenly between 17-23 storeys (mid-high rise) and 24-30 storey categories (high rise) and 4% of development was greater than 30 storeys.

However, the individual size of the larger development proposals means that they represent a significant proportion of future floor space growth. Thus while development proposals over 24 storeys represent only 12% of applications they will deliver, if all approved and constructed, more than 50% of the growth in floor space and approximately 45% of future dwellings. The small number of very large developments has a disproportionate impact on future growth outcomes”.

14 Federation Street, Box Hill

Surrey Dive was originally the clay pit for the former Box Hill Brickworks. The site which included Surrey Park was purchased by Council in 1905 and became a popular swimming hole when Council fenced and built changing sheds and diving platforms there. This became the major swimming facility in the area with many swimming carnivals held there until it was closed in 1968 for safety reasons. The indoor swimming centre in Surrey Park was opened in the 1980's.

Adjoining and to the immediate north of Surrey Dive is the area of the former Federation Brickworks site and clay pit area. The site is in private ownership and the clay pit was intended to be filled only with non-putrescible waste however after capping gaseous emissions were evident around the perimeter of the cap indicative that at some stages of filling putrescible wastes were also deposited.

The Whitehorse Planning Scheme Clause 22.13 (13/12/2012 C135) policy applies to land at 14 Federation Street, Box Hill. *“The Municipal Strategic Statement identifies the property as a Key Redevelopment site. Council wishes to ensure that future use and development are appropriate to the role of this site in accordance with any Statements of Environmental Audit. It should be recognised that the property has been identified as having potential for future residential development following the resolution of environmental issues”.*

The Review of Strategic Direction for the BHMAC noted that ... *“as the centre intensifies the legacy of boulevard and parkland spaces will need complementary new and reimaged*

areas. It will become increasingly important to provide access to high- quality and useable open space, safe and inviting streets and public spaces for all.

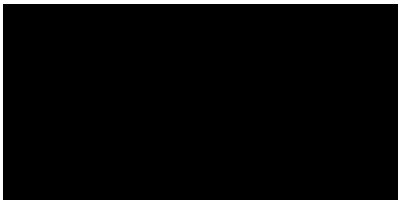
These objectives seek to support the delivery of people friendly environments with open and welcoming public spaces and natural landscapes that support liveability, social interaction and wellbeing. These objectives are aligned with the forthcoming Box Hill Open Space Strategy (BHOSS)”.

The former sand belt area of south east Melbourne has been extensively used for landfill of all municipal wastes over many decades and post capping/gas extraction are now being opened to green belt parks.

CROWAG suggests that the Committee consider a recommendation to Whitehorse Council that the Federation St site be purchased for open space. In summary we consider that:

- i. The site has considerable limitations for future residential use given the legacy of the landfilling.
- ii. Subsidence within open space parkland is less of a risk than if residential dwellings were placed on the site.
- iii. Residential dwelling capacity of Whitehorse is being adequately catered for within the BHMAC and adjoining RGZ zones.
- iv. Purchase of the site should be assisted by the State Government as some offset for the loss of green space in this western end of Whitehorse because of the North East Link project and the designation of the MAC.

Regards



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Brickworks site Federation St; Box Hill.
Southern boundary view to North and Box Hill Metropolitan Major Activity Centre
August 2020



Brickworks site Federation St; Box Hill
Eastern boundary view to North and Box Hill Metropolitan Major Activity Centre
August 2020