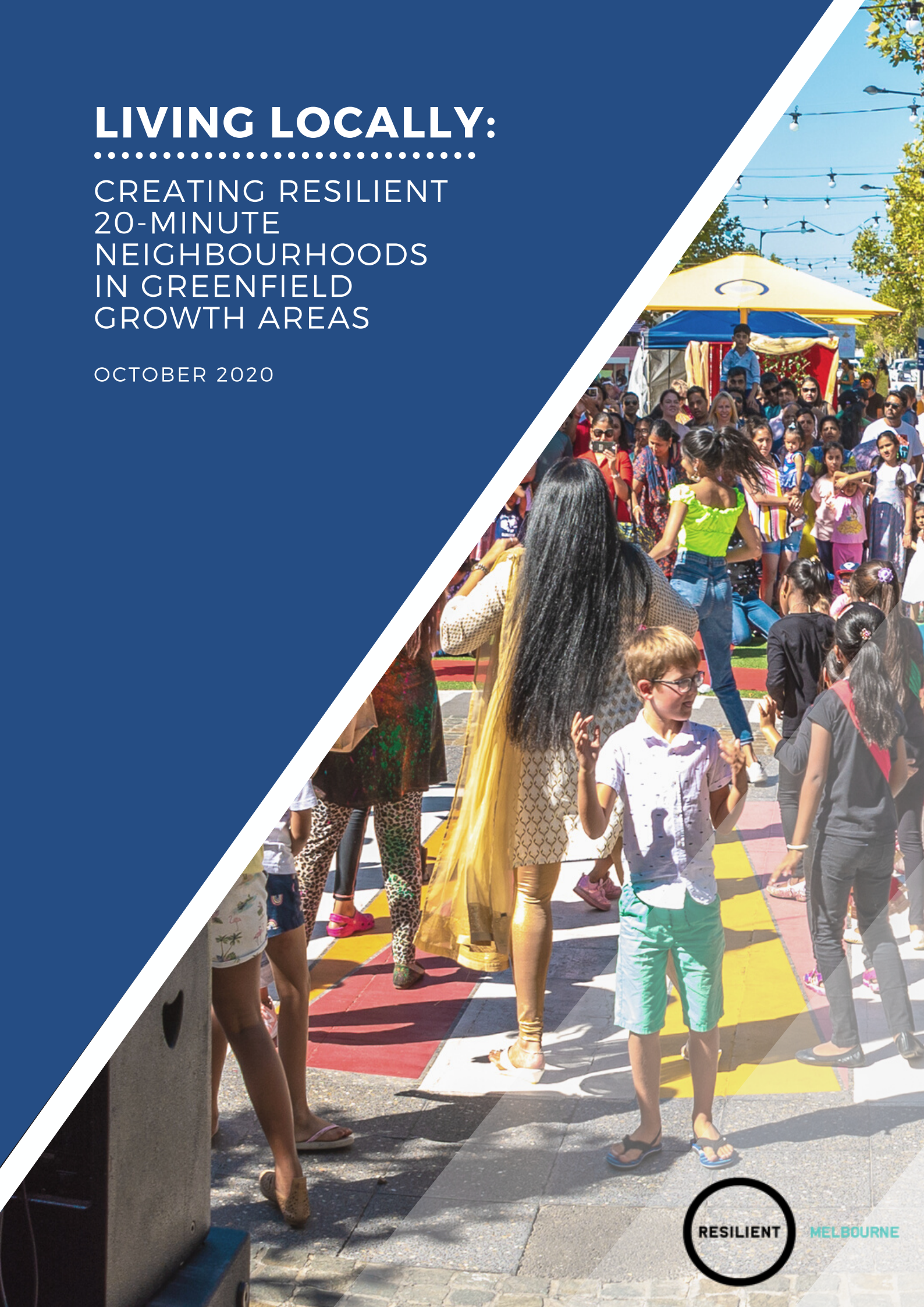


# LIVING LOCALLY:

## CREATING RESILIENT 20-MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOODS IN GREENFIELD GROWTH AREAS

OCTOBER 2020



MELBOURNE

*Resilient Melbourne acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Land, and their strength, resilience and pride as the oldest continuous culture in the world.*

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## PARTNERS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Resilient Melbourne has produced this report through funding from the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. It is intended to contribute to broader efforts to embed strong planning and development outcomes for new residential and mixed-use communities in metropolitan Melbourne and across Victoria, and reflects lessons drawn from academic research, as well as the experiences of state government departments, local councils, community groups and private developers involved in growth area planning.

This report has been developed in collaboration with RMIT University, Monash University, the Victorian Planning Authority, Frasers Property, Mirvac, Casey City Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Whittlesea City Council, Wyndham City Council, The Heart Foundation, CoLocal, SocioLogic and Yarra Valley Water.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Melbourne's rapid growth requires clear strategies to ensure that all communities can thrive, even in the face of acute shocks and chronic stresses – including impacts of growth itself. Greenfield growth areas, anticipated to house 30 percent of Melbourne's new population, face unique challenges in relation to liveability, including their distance from major employment centres, lack of public and active transport options and limited local retail and services.

The Victorian Government's 20-minute neighbourhood initiative, as presented in *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*, identifies the benefits of 'living locally'; this is defined as the ability to meet most daily needs within a 20-minute round-trip walk from home. Resilient Melbourne, through its 'Resilient Communities in Residential and Mixed-use Developments' Action, partnered with the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to gather evidence about limitations to 20-minute neighbourhood outcomes in existing greenfield settings and opportunities for achieving such outcomes more consistently in new and emerging greenfield growth areas.

This report summarises findings from four DELWP-funded research projects, conducted by Monash and RMIT universities, about outcomes-based issues in existing suburbs and potential pathways for achieving 20-minute neighbourhoods in greenfield development. Findings from the research are organised around the 'hallmarks of a 20-minute neighbourhood'. In addition, based on consultation with local councils, developers, community groups and others, the report identifies a range of implementation challenges associated with greenfield development. Collectively, this evidence has informed a set of key opportunities to support 20-minute neighbourhood outcomes in new greenfield developments; these are listed in the table below.

The opportunities proposed range in complexity and do not represent an exhaustive set of solutions for overcoming challenges to greenfield development. They are designed to offer actionable first steps that encourage multi-sector and whole-of-government collaboration. If approached in this way, they provide a meaningful, grounded pathway to improving liveability and resilience outcomes for Melbourne's future communities in growth areas.

PLACE	PARTNERSHIPS	POLICY
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start the design process with a focus on people, places and activities, rather than shaping neighbourhoods that ultimately determine car use</li> <li>2. Develop 'Local and Regional Access Plans' to accompany neighbourhood master plans, which outline how residents will access jobs and services</li> <li>3. Develop 'Temporary Activation Toolkits' to promote best practice for staging social infrastructure, and to inform specific design elements and implementation roadmaps for temporary infrastructure</li> <li>4. Draw on relevant principles from alternative planning methodologies, such as form-based codes, to create best-practice guidelines for built environments and place-making</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Develop collaborative, innovative models for funding and implementing 20-minute neighbourhood designs and policies to ensure a 'whole-of-government approach to 20-minute neighbourhoods'</li> <li>6. Meaningfully engage with current and future residents to inform the design of new greenfield neighbourhoods</li> <li>7. Develop an approach to monitor progress in the delivery of 20-minute neighbourhood outcomes</li> <li>8. Promote the uptake of the Growth Areas Social Planning Tool to facilitate holistic, place-based planning in line with DELWP's pilot program findings</li> <li>9. Undertake additional research to identify further changes to policy and practice to achieve 20-minute neighbourhood outcomes</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Amend PSP Requirements and Guidelines to incorporate 20-minute neighbourhood hallmarks as central tenets of greenfield development</li> <li>11. Develop 'Temporary Infrastructure and Service Delivery Masterplans' to ensure the inclusion of temporary infrastructure in new greenfield estate development</li> </ol>

COVID-19 and its effects on society have radically altered the way we view how we work, travel and live day-to-day. Our current situation has made the ability for communities to 'live locally' glaringly important, and that ability is increasingly linked to their ability to survive and thrive during this time. While the research underpinning this report was completed before the onset of COVID-19, its conclusions have only become more pertinent in the face of recent changes to the workforce, travel patterns and local amenities required to maintain health and wellbeing. These circumstances have brought to light an opportunity—and imperative—for planning and development of new neighbourhoods to be reimagined so that these places, and the communities that inhabit them, are well-prepared for future shocks and stresses.

# OVERVIEW

## LIVEABILITY AND RESILIENCE IN GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENTS

As Melbourne continues to grow to an anticipated 9 million people by 2056,<sup>1</sup> it is critical that we develop communities that are able to respond to chronic stresses and acute shocks as they arise, including the ongoing stress of rapid growth itself.<sup>2</sup> This is particularly important in Melbourne's outer suburban growth areas—anticipated to house 30 percent of the city's new population—where the outcomes of rapid growth and conventional models of development in many established greenfield suburbs have challenged the formation of thriving, cohesive local communities. The physical design, density and mix of uses in neighbourhoods have a considerable influence not only on their liveability, but also on the ability of residents to bounce back from stresses and shocks and become more resilient as a result.

Resilient Melbourne designed the 'Resilient Communities in Residential and Mixed-use Developments' (Resilient Communities) Action in the Resilient Melbourne strategy to address the question:

***How do we create and sustain buildings, infrastructure and neighbourhoods that build resilience by genuinely reflecting the needs, values and aspirations of the communities using or occupying these spaces?***

RESILIENT MELBOURNE, 2018, P. 22<sup>3</sup>

Through this action, Resilient Melbourne aims to demonstrate the value of residents participating in planning and governance for their neighbourhoods,<sup>4</sup> both to shape the built environment and to contribute to building stronger local social connections. To do this, Resilient Melbourne is partnering with five residential and mixed-use development sites across metropolitan Melbourne to test and share lessons from innovative approaches to resident engagement and integrated decision-making.

Resilient Communities objectives align closely with those of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)'s 20-minute neighbourhood initiative. The latter is designed to involve community, public and private stakeholders in decision-making with the goal of delivering a city where people are able to 'live more locally' within new and existing residential areas. The initiative is defined in Plan Melbourne 2017 – 2050 (Plan Melbourne)'s Direction 5.1 'Create a city of 20-minute neighbourhoods'.<sup>5</sup> The Victorian State Government seeks to enable residents to access most of their basic needs within a 20-minute return walk from home with access to safe cycling and local transport options.

Work on testing approaches to delivering 20-minute neighbourhoods initially focused on established middle-ring neighbourhoods; however, during this undertaking the question of how it might be addressed in greenfield growth settings emerged.<sup>6</sup> This led to commissioning of four DELWP-funded research projects to reflect on outcomes in already-built greenfield suburbs and inform decision-making about delivering 20-minute neighbourhoods in growth areas.

This document summarises findings from the research funded by DELWP and undertaken in partnership with Resilient Melbourne. It also includes knowledge from local councils, private developers, community groups and others about how to deliver 20-minute neighbourhoods in greenfield settings.

The audience for this report is intentionally broad, as local and state government, planners, policy makers, developers and community groups are all integral to creating 20-minute neighbourhoods in growth areas.



# BACKGROUND

## CREATING A CITY OF 20-MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOODS

The 20-minute neighbourhood concept was introduced as one of nine key principles that underpinned *Plan Melbourne* when it was originally released in 2014. This concept was strengthened in the refresh of *Plan Melbourne*, released in 2017. It has gained traction across a range of geographical contexts in Victoria, from urban to rural, with the objective of promoting local liveability, journey minimisation and access to critical services close to home for all residents in a given area.

Fundamentally, the 20-minute neighbourhood promotes walkable catchments of up to 800m in radius—roughly equivalent to a 20-minute return walk—that enable people to meet most of their daily needs locally, therefore enabling people to, as it has been termed, ‘live locally’. It is also considered to be critical for supporting community health and wellbeing.

To create accessible, walkable neighbourhoods where people can meet most of their daily needs locally, DELWP, in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Heart Foundation, developed six ‘hallmarks’ that provide a guide for what is required. The hallmarks define that a 20-minute neighbourhood must:

1

be safe, accessible and well connected for pedestrians and cyclists to optimise active transport (walking and cycling)

2

offer high-quality public realm and open spaces

3

provide services and destinations that support local living

4

facilitate access to quality public transport that connects people to jobs and higher-order services

5

deliver housing/population at densities that make local services and transport viable

6

facilitate thriving local economies

## 20-MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOOD PILOT PROJECTS

Following the release of *Plan Melbourne*, the Victorian State Government explored opportunities to demonstrate approaches to delivering 20-minute neighbourhoods in established middle-ring areas. In 2018-19, DELWP conducted a pilot program to facilitate the delivery of 20-minute neighbourhoods in three metropolitan Melbourne suburbs: Croydon South (City of Maroondah), Strathmore (City of Moonee Valley) and Sunshine West (City of Brimbank). Taking a whole-of-government approach, DELWP partnered with local councils, the Heart Foundation, Victoria Walks and community groups to define and plan for delivery of 20-minute neighbourhood objectives.

A ‘Neighbourhood Report’ for each site provided case studies for Croydon South, Strathmore and Sunshine West that detailed insights about design, engagement and development processes. Recommendations in DELWP’s 20-minute Neighbourhoods: Creating a more liveable Melbourne identified recommendations aligning with the following three key themes:

- **Policy** – Embedding 20-minute neighbourhoods in decision-making
- **Place** – Guidance to improve how we design liveable places
- **Partnerships** – Connecting government, industry and communities



# PROJECT PURPOSE

## LIVING LOCALLY RESEARCH: 20-MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOODS IN GREENFIELD SETTINGS

The success of the pilot projects led to questions about the application of 20-minute neighbourhoods in growth areas. New suburbs reflect different growth patterns; particular social, cultural, political and economic contexts; and unique planning and delivery conditions that have evolved over time. The creation of 20-minute neighbourhoods in these places therefore presents different challenges from those in existing suburbs. As a result, DELWP and Resilient Melbourne identified the need for new research that could shed light on the potential to more consistently achieve 20-minute neighbourhoods in greenfields.

Four “Living Locally” research projects were consequently funded by DELWP to build knowledge for facilitating the creation of resilient 20-minute neighbourhoods in greenfield settings. Due to the alignment between 20-minute neighbourhood principles and Resilient Communities program objectives, two of these projects involved Resilient Communities partner sites in Melbourne’s western and northern growth areas (see Case Studies box).

RMIT University undertook research focused on the planned Beveridge North West precinct in Mitchell Shire, investigating scenarios to support walkability in the precinct; this drew on literature about outcomes from established greenfield developments.<sup>7,8</sup> Monash University explored strategies to support early delivery and staging of social infrastructure in greenfield developments, with the Mambourin estate in the City of Wyndham as the case study.<sup>9</sup> Two additional studies provided insights into the economic benefits of the 20-minute neighbourhood and the design implications of the typical retail model applied in greenfield developments.<sup>10,11</sup>

This report highlights findings and recommendations from the four research projects, as well as insights from local government, developers and community groups, to inform a roadmap for embedding 20-minute neighbourhood ‘hallmarks’ in greenfield settings. These findings and recommendations seek to support planning and delivery of new suburbs to best serve our diverse communities. They are not exhaustive: they do not unpack the evolution of and relationship between greenfield planning and delivery over time,

nor do they claim to address all existing challenges inherent in greenfield development. Rather, along with previously published, ongoing and anticipated future 20-minute neighbourhood work, this report forms part of a cumulative, collaborative, long-term effort to bring together a number of organisations and sectors to more fully realise 20-minute neighbourhoods in Melbourne and throughout Victoria.

### CASE STUDIES

**BEVERIDGE NORTH WEST** is a greenfield precinct in Mitchell Shire in Melbourne’s northern growth corridor. It is located 40km north of the Melbourne CBD and comprises approximately 1,250 ha of land. Beveridge North West is anticipated to house up to 50,000 residents.<sup>8</sup>

Beveridge North West presents an opportunity to set a benchmark for greenfield development. Success requires early and timely delivery of infrastructure, employment and services that support health, improve resilience and future-proof communities’ liveability and livelihoods. This is being pursued through a partnership approach that brings together service providers, policy makers and other authorities to anticipate and respond to challenges early in the planning process.

**MAMBOURIN** is a master-planned, mixed-use community located in the City of Wyndham, 35km southwest of the Melbourne CBD. Currently under development by Frasers Property and planned for completion in 2026, Mambourin covers 115 ha and is expected to house more than 3,500 residents over 1,200 lots, with 24,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail space.<sup>12</sup>

Mambourin’s vision is to provide a resilient, socially cohesive and connected community. Key to this vision is the provision of community infrastructure to allow residents to access their daily needs and public services, including during the development process. Stakeholders are exploring temporary activation methods and application of place-making principles in order to enhance local liveability and community development.



# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

## ISSUES AND PATHWAYS TO ACHIEVING HALLMARKS OF 20-MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOODS IN GREENFIELD SETTINGS

The four research projects identified a range of liveability issues facing some existing greenfield settings; these were most broadly described in the literature reviews of past outcomes that were undertaken for the projects at Mambourin and Beveridge North West. The issues focus on the built form experienced by residents. They reflect results of both the unique challenges in planning for growth areas and complications that can arise in delivery. Many of the issues captured are from older, established growth areas, the result of historical planning and development processes. The research also identified potential pathways to alleviate these issues, some of which are incorporated into current planning and development, such as at Beveridge North West and Mambourin.

The issues and pathways have been grouped according to the 20-minute neighbourhood 'hallmarks', and range in complexity and scale. This section therefore does not prescribe solutions for each pathway, but rather highlights potential areas of focus and suggests early steps for change based primarily on researchers' insights.

Practitioners also identified the need for strategies to distribute employment to growth areas, such as through digital connectivity, co-working and business incubation. Such topics are beyond the scope of this report, but further investigation is warranted to fully understand these ideas and opportunities.

## BE SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND WELL CONNECTED FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS TO OPTIMISE ACTIVE TRANSPORT (WALKING AND CYCLING)

### ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN SOME EXISTING GREENFIELD SUBURBS

- Typical car-centric, low-density design and long timelines for provision of public transport (if eventually delivered) result in a lack of up-front availability of public and active transport options in greenfield developments; these factors inhibit walkability in new suburbs from the outset.
- Similarly, differences in completion timelines for neighbouring developments, or for residential and retail/service centre construction in a given development, hinder patterns of local active and public transport use from forming early.
- Walking infrastructure and clear active transport links to public transport are inconsistently available, making it hard to walk or cycle to public transport nodes (i.e., 'last-mile' connectivity to residences and points of congregation is limited).
- Walkability is more difficult to achieve in outer suburban growth areas due to lower housing and job densities: not enough people are near hubs of activity or destinations to encourage walking as a primary mode of transport, and reaching jobs often requires long daily commutes.
- In addition, retail and services (e.g., grocery stores) are difficult to access by active transport due to the design of these centres for primary access by car.
- Walkability is constrained by urban design patterns that create long, indirect routes to daily-needs destinations. A lack of variation and specificity in urban design also results in street-scapes without visual interest and building frontages that do not prioritise pedestrian experience.
- These urban design patterns, combined with infrastructure promoting car use, limit investment made available for walking infrastructure, such as path networks that provide shade and comfort, prioritise safety and ensure year-round useability.
- Large, enclosed-format malls with excessive provision of car parking generate an actual and/or perceived disconnectedness from residential areas.
- Due to retail and grocery outlets' later delivery in the development cycle, residents often must travel away from their neighbourhoods, primarily by car, to access grocery and, frequently, healthier food options in the earlier years of the development.

## PATHWAYS TO IMPROVE LIVEABILITY

- Re-envision the design process, beginning with Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) and master-planning, to better encourage active transport.
- Enhance active transport in neighbourhoods up front by identifying and prioritising corridors to invest in as primary pathways, both for transport and for leisure, in the earliest development stages.
- Increase walking and cycling paths that are safe, accessible and permeable to encourage active transport for exercise and to meet daily needs.
- Plan to provide trees in streetscapes and the public realm early in development, particularly along key active transport paths and in parks, for shading and cooling, stormwater retention and aesthetic value to enhance walkability.
- Design precincts to seamlessly integrate public and active transport infrastructure and corridors during planning to ensure connectivity throughout.
- Establish active transport links to existing and planned public transport nodes to facilitate multi-modal transport.
- Provide seats, shelters and lighting in and near public transport stops to promote safe, comfortable use of these spaces.
- Facilitate revision of the retail model to prioritise a finer grain, more centrally located model to encourage retail development that blends with the neighbourhood and is easily accessible by active transport; this can draw on the traditional 'high street' approach (i.e., not big box retail) with retail, community infrastructure destinations and a wider range of employment types along a central, accessible street that has ample walking space.
- Revise car parking strategies in activity centres to better accommodate alternative modes of transport and access, and provide temporary measures to facilitate centre access during development.



## OFFER HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACES

### ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN SOME EXISTING GREENFIELD SUBURBS

- Public realm and open spaces in new suburbs, including parks, lack adequate amenities for recreational use (e.g., toilets, shelters, seating, play spaces for children), limiting the use of such places for events and social gatherings.
- Public realm design in current greenfield models prioritises car use and access over pedestrians, limiting viability and investment in walking to connect places, public squares and open spaces.
- Current retail models focus on enclosed designs that do not promote walkability or connectedness between elements of the public realm, even when public spaces are located near retail precincts.
- These models also focus on maximising profit and funnelling in customers, rather than integrating enjoyable space for retail and recreation.
- Building frontages are often designed uniformly and 'in one go', particularly in retail areas, resulting in a monotonous or inhospitable public realm.
- Street designs often lack canopy trees to make walking more comfortable and shaded, and canopy trees that are planted take a long time to mature.
- Large house-to-lot ratios in some developments lead to less space for tree planting and therefore limit canopy cover in the private and public realms.
- In contrast, where large backyards are prioritised over investment in public green space, residents do not have sufficient places for public gathering.
- Green spaces are not designed for biodiversity and interconnectivity, which reduces habitat and limits residents' connections to nature.



## **PATHWAYS TO IMPROVE LIVEABILITY**

- Allocate sufficient land in the planning process to support quality public realm and amenities provision over time to future communities.
- Design public open spaces, open urban-form retail centres and streetscapes that promote use as both destinations and thoroughfares, and connect these spaces with clearly defined, walkable paths and corridors that integrate into the neighbourhood.
- Design attractive public realm and building frontages, potentially via the application of alternative planning philosophies such as form-based codes, that raise the appeal for residents to travel through and spend time in these spaces.
- Plan and implement the public realm to provide important social and community infrastructure, creating both gathering hubs and potential 'pop-up' spaces for markets, fetes and community events.
- Provide facilities and amenities (e.g., toilets) in public realm and open spaces to allow for comfortable, safe and equitable long-term use.
- Increase interconnection of green spaces that reflect the local geographical context to provide a sense of place (e.g., through heritage features), critical habitat for nature and a means for people to interact with nature.
- Strengthen corridors connecting green spaces, both within and beyond neighbourhoods, to generate a broad network of green spaces for people to connect to nature.
- Implement mixed-use temporary activation strategies where community and social infrastructure will be developed in future in order to visually anchor social spaces and community hubs before permanent infrastructure is built.

## **PROVIDE SERVICES AND DESTINATIONS THAT SUPPORT LOCAL LIVING**

### **ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN SOME EXISTING GREENFIELD SUBURBS**

- Infrastructure planning reinforces reliance on cars for inter-region travel, such as to large shopping centres and employment hubs, and minimises perceptions of centrality of local sites in residents' travel patterns.
- Poor provision of community infrastructure and retail early in development increases car reliance because residents must travel to access goods and services; such habits, once established, are shown to continue even after community infrastructure and retail spaces are eventually provided locally.
- A lack of community infrastructure, retail and places to meet, especially in early development stages, limits opportunities for residents to build local social connections and form meaningful relationships within their neighbourhoods; this also leads to social exclusion and lack of community cohesion.
- 'Cookie-cutter' precinct planning separates the design of greenfield developments from the requirements of the diverse residents who are increasingly moving to these places. This results in under-representation of the types of retail and services needed to meet the daily needs of a range of cultural and age groups.
- Prevalent retail formats promote single ownership of town centres that often hinder provision of fine-grain, resident-representative local businesses.
- Temporary infrastructure provided during development is often built without monitoring protocols to ensure delivery of intended outcomes.
- Some developments provide temporary community hubs or pop-up offerings ahead of planned late-stage infrastructure in designated community spaces, but these often do not consistently meet holistic daily needs of early move-in residents.



## PATHWAYS TO IMPROVE LIVEABILITY

- Ensure community infrastructure, retail and other employment opportunities are diverse, co-located, integrated, accessible and proactively developed to meet evolving needs of diverse growth areas.
- Understand the needs and wants of future resident cohorts through meaningful engagement practices, catalysed by professional community development consultation and supported by inclusive community governance structures, in order to better respond to diverse requirements for living locally.
- Utilise activation strategies that can provide temporary infrastructure before development is complete as a means to provide gathering spaces for residents and early access to services and foster community engagement during development.
- Understand the space requirements in new developments for future social infrastructure, and ensure land is secured to provide such infrastructure over time as the community grows.
- Employ temporary activation strategies, including strategically located temporary community hubs, and raise awareness about the hubs' purpose and accessibility to mentally anchor destinations within new estates and distinguish future community gathering spaces.

## FACILITATE ACCESS TO QUALITY PUBLIC TRANSPORT THAT CONNECTS PEOPLE TO JOBS AND HIGHER-ORDER SERVICES

### ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN SOME EXISTING GREENFIELD SUBURBS

- Extended commutes, especially by car, disproportionately affect greenfield residents, leading to time-poor communities with decreased local access to daily needs.
- Greenfield suburbs in Victoria often represent varied and diverse demographics with a wide range of needs, including employment and education services, which are not sufficiently provided by the typical development model.
- Fragmented provision of public transport infrastructure inhibits connectedness of multiple and inter-precinct public transport services, which reduces access to employment opportunities and other higher-order services.
- Low-density housing scenarios typical of greenfield estate planning impede the commercial feasibility of public transport at a local level.

### PATHWAYS TO IMPROVE LIVEABILITY

- Link homes with employment centres and necessary services via reliable, high-quality public and active transport options, especially at earlier stages of development before travel patterns and behaviours have been engrained.
- Connect employment-seeking services and agencies, co-working options and education services with traditional retail centres in order to centralise a multitude of destinations.
- Connect multiple public transport routes and types in order to provide a network of transport options for differing needs—both within and beyond the neighbourhood.
- Provide interim public transport solutions, such as on-demand services, until permanent, regularly scheduled services are feasible to implement.



## DELIVER HOUSING / POPULATION AT DENSITIES THAT MAKE LOCAL SERVICES AND TRANSPORT VIABLE

### ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN SOME EXISTING GREENFIELD SUBURBS

- Sprawling planned estates involve considerable land clearing and produce single-use zones that inhibit walkability and do not enable a commercially viable mix of retail and service offerings and scales.
- Low-density housing estates, larger lots, and trends toward greater house-to-lot size ratios have all been observed in greenfield developments and limit the capacity for achieving '20-minute' walkable catchments, as most daily needs cannot be located within close proximity to all residences.
- While housing in greenfield developments is often seen as more affordable than options in more urban settings, it comes with trade-offs such as car dependency that can lead to increased household cost of living in order to maintain employment and expected standards of living, and household members (more often women) without access to a car or other transport options isolated at home.

### PATHWAYS TO IMPROVE LIVEABILITY

- Plan for more compact residential and retail scenarios, including stronger connections between activity centres and residences, to encourage walkability and facilitate informal interactions among neighbours.
- Increase housing density standards, particularly in and around town centres and transport nodes, and introduce mixed-use design strategies that combine residences, businesses, transport corridors and nature, and integrate these uses more seamlessly with the public realm.
- Ensure that housing density standards are met at the precinct scale—both minimum requirements and best practice targets—to make local retail and social infrastructure more viable and public transport options more commercially feasible.

## FACILITATE THRIVING LOCAL ECONOMIES

### ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN SOME EXISTING GREENFIELD SUBURBS

- Promoting close proximity of businesses to residences and supporting local economies is difficult when large-scale commercial enterprises have been embedded as the standard and community behaviour is difficult to change.
- The diversity of residents in outer suburban communities means that some cohorts may not be well-served by 'standard' business and retail models, leading to a gap between individuals' daily needs and commercial interests.
- Forced car dependency in outer suburbs comes with considerable costs to what tend to be lower socio-economic communities, negating the relative 'affordability' of these new suburbs and affecting freedom of choice for local goods and services.

### PATHWAYS TO IMPROVE LIVEABILITY

- Ensure accessibility to regional and locally-oriented retail and civic resources through alternative retail models, such as the traditional "high street" model, which integrate active, public and car-based transport access to local businesses and services.
- Support growth of small and local businesses, which are more likely to cater to community needs and accurately reflect resident demographics.
- Promote alternatives to cars early in the life of the community as preferable for accessing retail, and facilitate public and active transport as the primary form of transport for local shopping trips.
- Assess how people currently (and may more easily) meet daily needs, including through local initiatives that encourage community self-sufficiency.
- Develop neighbourhoods that support local business start ups and more diverse retail, whether through community infrastructure, co-working spaces, alternative retail models or other ways.



# EXISTING CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION

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Greenfield planning and development processes present unique challenges that must be addressed in order to achieve 20-minute neighbourhood outcomes in outer suburbs. The following barriers to implementing 20-minute neighbourhoods reflect both research findings and local government experience, relayed through direct consultation and a workshop held for local governments to highlight their needs for developing 20-minute neighbourhoods.

## **INTRA- AND CROSS-ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE**

Siloed operations within and across levels of government and across sectors hinder the place-based planning necessary for identifying, agreeing upon and implementing 20-minute neighbourhoods in outer suburban developments.

## **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND ENFORCEMENT**

Outcomes are often constrained by policy that does not consistently facilitate 20-minute neighbourhood outcomes. For example, while some design approaches that promote 20-minute neighbourhood principles are mandated through PSP Requirements, PSP Guidelines are non-enforceable, and requirements which are enforceable often are not stringent enough to enable appropriate, comprehensive design changes. Even when new policies are implemented, local government representatives can find them difficult to enforce when developers are not driven to strive further than the baseline of what is mandated through PSPs.

## **MAKING GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENTS WORK WITHIN BROADER GEOGRAPHIC SCALES**

The success of 20-minute neighbourhood planning at a precinct or community level is dependent on economic and transport dynamics at a regional scale. Local, pedestrian-oriented town centres are only relevant if they fit within residents' daily travel patterns. 'Living locally' can be difficult to achieve when employment and education options require car-based commutes. In such cases, as is prevalent in outer suburban growth areas, residents are more likely to incorporate daily-needs trips into car-based travel. Similarly, retail, service and community infrastructure needs must be understood at a regional and sub-regional scale. Without an integrated approach to planning, such destinations are fragmented and imbalanced in their delivery across catchments.

## **INVESTMENT, FUNDING AND BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS**

Development of community infrastructure, including public spaces and social services, is restricted by tight budgets, a lack of funding and insufficient land provision (often due to commercial yields that limit land reserved for public realm and services). In addition, long gaps exist between the delivery of housing and the provision of public transport infrastructure, social infrastructure, retail and other privately-provided services, until a critical mass of residents has been reached and such investment is deemed commercially viable. Moreover, Development Contribution Plans and Infrastructure Contribution Plans largely fund road infrastructure and not active transport infrastructure. Pre- and early development stages are critical times for anchoring communities with local neighbourhoods, and this is lost when supporting infrastructure lags residential development.

## **UNDERSTANDING OF RESIDENT/USER PERCEPTION AND NEED FOR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE**

Ingrained car dependency and perceptions of the (as well as the real) need for cars pose a challenge to the achievement of living locally in both established neighbourhoods and new developments. Residents consider car transport as their preferred or only option, and this is not helped by the car based design of developments, which lead to delayed provision of active and public transport alternatives. By the time such options become available, if they do at all, patterns of behaviour are established. In addition, with a lack of alternative development models to consider, it is difficult to shift communities' perceptions about the need and nature of change required for greenfield development.

# KEY OPPORTUNITIES

The findings from the four research reports and supporting input from practitioners point to a set of key opportunities to promote and facilitate the development of 20-minute neighbourhoods in greenfield settings. These range in complexity and time required to be fully implemented, but all represent early steps on the long-term trajectory that is required to ensuring development of sustainable, resilient 20-minute neighbourhoods. A number of the below opportunities have already been identified as priorities by relevant stakeholders, and in some cases steps are being taken by stakeholders listed to act on them.

## PLACE

### OPPORTUNITIES

**1. Start the design process with a focus on people, places and activities, rather than shaping neighbourhoods that ultimately determine car use**

In line with DELWP's recommendations in *20-minute neighbourhoods – Creating a more liveable Melbourne*, assess and identify whole-of-government pathways to improve design, planning and development processes to shift to a pedestrian-centric approach to development of all types of neighbourhoods

**2. Develop 'Local and Regional Access Plans' to accompany neighbourhood master plans, which outline how residents will access jobs and services**

Encourage the creation of 'Local and Regional Access Plans' during master-planning that outline how residents will access jobs and services locally and regionally, with a focus on active and public transport options, including interim and more permanent services to be provided both during and following the completion of greenfield developments

**3. Develop 'Temporary Activation Toolkits' to promote best practice for staging social infrastructure and to inform specific design elements and implementation roadmaps for temporary infrastructure**

Drawing on existing resources, design up-to-date toolkits containing guiding materials on planning for temporary activation, informed by existing case studies and new examples; provide these toolkits for use by local governments and developers to ensure that growing communities are connected and have access to necessary and adequate social infrastructure throughout all stages of development

**4. Draw on relevant principles from alternative planning methodologies, such as form-based codes, to create best-practice guidelines for built environments and place-making**

Understand how design methodologies that increase certainty in outcomes, such as form-based code and new urbanism, whereby specific design elements of structures are dictated by policy, might be implemented in the Victorian context, and develop a strategy for their incorporation into state and local planning processes that reflects 20-minute neighbourhood objectives

## PARTNERSHIPS

### OPPORTUNITIES

**5. Develop collaborative, innovative models for funding and implementing 20-minute neighbourhood designs and policies to ensure a 'whole-of-government approach to 20-minute neighbourhoods'**

Identify best practice and test innovative cross-organisational and cross-sector approaches to funding, partnerships, governance and management of plans for implementing 20-minute neighbourhoods, as per *Plan Melbourne's* five-year implementation plan, including plans for transitioning community infrastructure and asset management from developers to local government and input from community action groups and local representatives

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**6. Meaningfully engage with current and future residents to inform the design of new greenfield neighbourhoods**

Engage with current and future residents and community groups in greenfield developments to understand their daily needs and inform the design and governance of new neighbourhoods so that they meet those needs from the outset

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**7. Develop an approach to monitor progress in the delivery of 20-minute neighbourhood outcomes**

Design indicators, benchmarks and measures of progress for ongoing monitoring of 20-minute neighbourhood delivery to ensure a long-term commitment to these principles (identified as a requirement through DELWP's pilot program); use these benchmarks to assess the delivery of 20-minute neighbourhood hallmarks in greenfield case studies

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**8. Promote the uptake of the Growth Areas Social Planning Tool to facilitate holistic, place-based planning in line with DELWP's pilot program findings**

Re-launch and build ongoing support for the Growth Areas Social Planning Tool (GASPT), an existing set of social planning principles previously utilised in planning suburbs in outer Melbourne growth areas to help local governments and development partners build trusted relationships and strong, connected, healthy and resilient communities

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**9. Undertake additional research to identify further changes to policy and practice to achieve 20-minute neighbourhood outcomes**

Identify additional, relevant existing research and undertake new research, including 1) lessons from current and recent global events and 2) a more detailed study of the evolution of planning and delivery in greenfield settings over time, and associated built-form outcomes in growth areas, to understand specific design elements and policy changes required to increase certainty around delivery of 20-minute neighbourhoods



## POLICY

### OPPORTUNITIES

**10. Amend PSP Requirements and Guidelines to incorporate 20-minute neighbourhood hallmarks as central tenets of greenfield development**

Amend existing PSP Guidelines and strengthen PSP Requirements to better incorporate the hallmarks of 20-minute neighbourhoods, as informed by research findings in this report and recommendations alluded to in *20-minute neighbourhoods – Creating a more liveable Melbourne*

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**11. Develop 'Temporary Infrastructure and Service Delivery Masterplans' to ensure the inclusion of temporary infrastructure in new greenfield estate development**

Create 'Temporary Infrastructure and Service Delivery Masterplans' to be implemented as an early part of the master-planning process in new greenfield estates, reflective of individual developments' timelines and phasing; incorporate temporary infrastructure guidelines and policies into relevant strategies to ensure residents' needs are met in earlier stages of community development; embed 'Local and Regional Access Plans' in policy within these masterplans; support individual planning and design elements and strategies within these masterplans through the 'Temporary Activation Toolkits'

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**12. Encourage the uptake of alternative retail and town centre models that are designed to enhance walkability and increase diversity of retail and service offerings**

Increase commercial development stakeholders' understanding of how alternatives to the existing retail model can improve liveability and walkability outcomes and meet needs of local residents; explore how these alternatives can be feasibly implemented in new greenfield developments while retaining and potentially increasing commercial viability

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## IMAGE CREDITS

**Front cover and page 8:** Point Cook Pop-up Park, photo by David Mullins at [Relativity 3D](#), provided by [CoLocal](#), a not-for-profit social enterprise for projects that build capacity for social connection and local economy, focused on the high-growth outer metro areas

**Pages 2, 6, 7:** [Tract visions of Mambourin Estate](#)

**Page 3:** [DELWP 20-minute Neighbourhoods](#)