

MELBOURNE EAST REGIONAL SPORT AND RECREATION STRATEGY



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About this document

The Melbourne East Regional Sport and Recreation Strategy is delivered in two parts.

Part A - The Strategy

Provides a summary overview of the region, identifies the gaps in regional sport and recreation facilities and shared trails, and outlines the vision for the future provision of regional facilities in Melbourne's East.

Part B – Regional Planning Framework

Part B is a planning framework designed as a resource tool to support Councils and other regional stakeholders to prioritise, plan and deliver regional facilities and shared trails collaboratively and effectively.

Other documentation developed which provides the evidence to support the strategy and framework include:

- Background, Research and Consultation Findings Report
- Preliminary Situational Analysis and Key Findings Report
- State Sporting Association Consultation Report

These documents were delivered early in the process and are available separately.



PART A: THE STRATEGY

Introduction

About this document

The Melbourne East Regional Sport and Recreation Strategy has been developed to support and guide Melbourne East Councils and stakeholders in the planning and delivery of regional level sport and recreation facilities and shared recreation trails.

Regional level sport and recreation facilities play an important role in contributing to the health and well being of communities, as they generally serve a broad catchment and cater for a diverse range of activities. This strategy investigates the issues and opportunities impacting the planning and provision of regional level facilities, using the information provided by the seven represented Councils, State Sporting Associations, State Government and other regional stakeholder groups.

The Melbourne East Regional Sport and Recreation Strategy identifies the current gaps in regional facility provision and provides clear strategic directions and a planning framework to assist stakeholders and funding providers to prioritise and develop regional projects.

The strategy is supported by the **Background, Research and Consultation Findings Report**. As part of the development of this strategy the following reports were also delivered and have been provided as appendices to the Background Report.

- Preliminary Situational Analysis and Key Findings Report
- State Sporting Association Consultation Findings Report

The following priority areas have been identified through the development of this strategy and require collective action from Councils and other regional stakeholders to enable the successful planning and future development of regional sport and recreation facilities and shared trails in Melbourne's East.

- **Governance and partnerships**
- **Knowledge and understanding of the region**
- **Sustainable, flexible and efficient facility development**



REGIONAL LEVEL SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE HEALTH AND WELL BEING OF COMMUNITIES.

Introduction (cont.)

Project governance

The following regional stakeholders were consulted and have influenced the development of the Melbourne East Regional Sport and Recreation Strategy.

PROJECT STEERING GROUP (PSG)

Provided high level strategic direction on key issues, opportunities, and responsible for the delivery of the final strategy.

- ▶ Seven Local Government Authorities
- ▶ Sport and Recreation Victoria
- ▶ Regional Development Australia

EXTERNAL REFERENCE GROUP (ERG)

Provided technical advice and a formal mechanism to consult with key sport and industry leaders and organisations.

- ▶ Aquatics and Recreation Victoria
- ▶ Victorian Trails Committee
- ▶ VicSport

STATE SPORTING ASSOCIATIONS (SSAs)

Provided an opportunity for state and regional sporting associations to have input in to the development of the strategy.

- ▶ 33 peak sporting bodies participated in the development of this strategy.

OTHER REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

- ▶ Parks Victoria, Vic Roads, Melbourne Water, Melbourne Planning Authority, Bicycle Network Victoria, YMCA, Belgravia Leisure, Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

About the region

The Melbourne East Region connects the city to the bush. The seven Councils comprising the Cities of Boroondara, Manningham, Monash, Maroondah, Whitehorse, Knox, and the Shire of Yarra Ranges are linked by the Yarra River. Extensive waterways and parklands traverse from Melbourne's urban heart to the clean air and national parks, forests and gardens of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges.

Melbourne East includes developed residential areas and accommodates over 1 million people; includes major employment clusters and agricultural areas in the Yarra Valley, considered the food bowl and wine district of Melbourne. The diverse and unique green spaces provide the lungs to the city.

There is a diverse and unique network of regional sport, recreation and tourism experiences in Melbourne's East that are highly valued. The unique characteristics of the region offers further opportunities to expand this network to generate social, economic and environmental benefits.



Image: Melbourne East Region

KEY REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- 1.044 million people (24.5% of Melbourne population).
- Additional 140,000 by 2031 (55,000 aged 55 and over).
- 70 identified regional level sport and recreation facilities (including regional play spaces) catering for a range of activities.
- Approximately 25 regional trails and mountain bike tracks.
- Walking, jogging, cycling and swimming are the most popular recreation activities.
- Basketball, Australian Rules Football, netball, soccer and gymnastics are the highest participation sports.
- Adventure and lifestyle sports, badminton, table tennis and personal training are also popular.

Source: The above information is derived from ERASS and ABS, SSA participation data and consultation with local government officers and considers the current and future population of Melbourne's East.

Strategy purpose and objectives

The purpose of this strategy is to undertake a regional planning approach that supports the development of both current and new sport and recreation infrastructure for the Melbourne East Region for the next 20 years.

The development of a planning framework that improves collaboration across local government areas and delivers regional facilities that support healthy and active communities is a key outcome of this strategy.

THE KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY ARE TO:

- Identify the vision and principles that will guide future planning and development of regional level sport and recreation facilities.
- Develop a sustainable governance model to drive regional project delivery, improve stakeholder collaboration and create a structure for assessment and decision making.
- Identify and map current and proposed regional level sport and recreation facilities and shared trails across the region.
- Identify gaps in existing regional facility provision and recommend future development priorities that meet current and future demand.
- Develop a regional project assessment criteria to support future project selection and prioritisation.



Executive Summary

The delivery of the Melbourne East Regional Sport and Recreation Strategy is driven by the need to identify and plan for the development of new, and the renewal of existing, regional level facilities and shared trails that address the future needs of the region.

A key aim of this strategy is to improve collaboration across local government areas on planning for regional level facilities, and to establish a governance model and project management structure involving stakeholders to help assess, prioritise and fund regional projects.

Many of the current regional level facilities in Melbourne's East have been implemented by individual Councils without the knowledge and guidance of a regional strategy. This strategy aims to address the current gaps in the regional planning process, facilitate stakeholder collaboration and ensure future project delivery avoids unjustified duplication of facilities and maximises return on investment for the region.

Melbourne's East Region has some unique characteristics that support the variety of sport and recreation activities offered. The region covers 2,964 square kilometres, extending from densely populated urban to less populated rural areas.

Higher density metropolitan municipalities such as Boroondara, Whitehorse and Monash offer different sport and recreation opportunities and experiences to some of the semi rural and rural areas of Maroondah and Yarra Ranges, creating a unique city to bush experience.

This strategy recognises the diverse needs of the region and provides recommendations which complement the existing landscape and geographical challenges and opportunities that exist across the region.

Local sport and recreation plans and participation trends for Melbourne's East were considered in the development of a planning framework that will guide the future provision of regional sport and recreation facilities and shared trails for the next 20 years.

Sport and recreation is highly valued across the region with walking, cycling, jogging and swimming the most popular recreation activities for adults. Participation in organised sports such as basketball, football and netball are high, with other sports such as soccer, gymnastics, table tennis and badminton currently placing significant demand on facilities. (Source: SSA participation data).

A number of gaps in the current provision of regional level sport and recreation facilities in Melbourne's East have been identified. These include:

- The connection and development of shared recreation trails.
- Fit for purpose indoor sports courts for basketball, netball and other compatible sports.
- Development of specialised purpose built facilities for gymnastics.
- A destination for mountain biking that caters for the strong recreation market.

Funding the development of regional facilities is a challenge for local government in the current financial climate. The broad range of services that Councils provide and their limited financial capacity means they will rely heavily on state, federal and commercial partnerships to deliver regional level projects.

Establishing strategic partnerships and improving collaboration across key sport, government and community stakeholder groups will provide more opportunities for Councils to secure funding for regional projects. This strategy recommends a governance model and project management structure to support future regional decision making, and a process for evaluating, assessing and prioritising regional projects. Projects that address the regional sport and recreation needs of residents and demonstrate the broader health, social and economic benefits to the region have been prioritised.



Why we need a strategy

The development of a regional strategy for sport and recreation provision in Melbourne's East will address a range of issues which may otherwise prevent future successful project delivery.

- Gaps in the shared recreation trail network create opportunities to better connect and link trails and develop a comprehensive network of regional trails.
- There is currently no regional approach to identifying sport and recreation priorities for the region.
- There is no formal governance structure or advocacy platform to support the planning and development of regional level facilities.
- There is no alignment of stakeholder policies and strategic directions that supports a collaborative approach to investment.
- There is a lack of stakeholder collaboration on planning regional projects that meet broader sport and recreation needs.
- There is a gap in strategic partnerships across key stakeholder organisations including state and regional sporting groups, schools and government departments.
- The capacity and ability of Melbourne's East Region Councils to fund regional priorities as well as servicing local sporting needs is increasingly difficult. Councils are generally unable to exclusively deliver regional level facilities.
- The constraints on Councils working across borders, resulting in some duplication and oversupply of facilities across the region is evident.
- The need to provide a regional approach to regional facility planning and delivery that is consistent with peak sporting bodies, Councils and State Government.
- An ageing community with changing demographics will create a focus on accessible and affordable facilities with broader recreation objectives.



What we found

Following is a summary of key findings identified through the development of the strategy and consultation with regional stakeholder groups. These high level findings have informed the strategic directions recommended for the region.

- There is a strong supply of regional level sports facilities and shared recreation trails in Melbourne's East catering for a range of formal and informal activity.
- Local Government rate capping will deliver increased financial pressure on East Region Councils, and is likely to result in Councils prioritising the renewal of existing community facilities over committing to regional projects.
- Councils exist to provide facilities and services that serve their local communities and are constrained on the level of support they can provide to regional level projects.
- Those municipalities located in the outer east such as Yarra Ranges can offer different sport and recreation experiences than densely populated inner region municipalities, due to having greater access to land and open space provision.
- Informal sport and recreation activities such as walking, swimming and gymnasiums are popular with adults in Melbourne's East.
- Structured sports such as basketball, netball, football, cricket and soccer have high participation rates, particularly in the junior category.
- The quality of facility and participation information received from State Sporting Associations was mixed. The key sports have provided data that will support regional planning and key projects delivery.
- There is an adequate supply of regional swimming pools and athletics facilities to service current and future demand across Melbourne's East at a regional level.
- There is an appetite from state and local government to plan and collaborate on shared recreation trail development projects to service the region.

Regional influences

The development of a strategy that supports regional planning and project identification must consider the objectives of all three levels of government, peak sporting bodies and community organisations.

Successful regional level sport and recreation facilities provide a range of sport and community benefits and recognise what key stakeholder organisations view as important. Collectively, the objectives of key stakeholder organisations have had a direct influence on the development of this strategy.

The adjacent diagram illustrates that although key stakeholder organisations want and expect similar outcomes for regional facilities and project, each have their own specific areas of focus and interest which need to be recognised.



Vision and principles

A way forward together –

The vision for Melbourne's East is to:

Improve the health and wellbeing of the Melbourne East Region through the provision of high quality regional level sport and recreation facilities and experiences that meet a demonstrated need.

To help stakeholders achieve this vision the following principles have been developed. These principles will be used to guide the future planning, development and delivery of regional level facilities and shared trails.

- Support projects with a demonstrated Universal Design approach that deliver social, health, economic, tourism and environmental benefits to the region.
- Ensure alignment of community sport, government and stakeholder needs and objectives, and develop a collaborative environment that builds partnership opportunities.
- Provide facilities and shared trails that maximise participation and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to Melbourne's East to be more physically active.
- Support projects with an emphasis on participation in community recreation opportunities, and consider the regional level facility requirements for respective sporting associations.
- Invest in facilities that improve access and promote efficient service delivery and flexible multiuse outcomes.
- Recognise opportunities to upgrade and build the capacity of existing facilities to serve a broader regional catchment.
- Avoid duplication and over provision of regional level sport and recreation facilities and shared trails across the region.
- Support projects that have fully considered the local impact of a regional level facility.
- Provide increased opportunities to bid for and host regional, state and national sporting events, resulting in economic benefit to the region.



Strategic priorities

The following strategic priorities have been identified for the region and are considered critical to the successful planning, funding and delivery of regional sport and recreation projects. It is recommended that all participating Councils in the region endorse these strategic priorities to ensure a collaborative approach to future regional planning.

1. GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

It is essential that the Melbourne East Region establishes a strong and sustainable governance structure that provides a process for decision making and helps to identify, prioritise and implement regional projects.

The proposed governance and project management structure will require Councils and other stakeholders to collaborate and invest resources into the regional planning process to ensure the objectives of the strategy are achieved.

The following key enablers have been identified to support the development of a sustainable governance structure and strategic partnerships that will drive regional planning and project delivery.

- A governance structure with a decision making authority informed by a Terms of Reference (refer proposed governance structure on page 17).
- Local council policies that support regional facility development.
- Regional stakeholder collaboration and resourcing.
- Strategic advocacy and alignment with state and national sporting bodies.

2. KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING THE REGION

Recognising and responding to the region's unique attributes and continuing to challenge, assess and review identified priorities through the use of current sports participation, recreation trail and future population data will be a high priority for the region.

The strategy has identified the current suite of regional level sport and recreation facilities and shared trails and the gaps in regional facility provision. To ensure the identified facility gaps remain applicable to the region it is essential that the baseline trail usage and sport participation data collected as part of the strategy is kept up to date and reviewed annually.

The following key enablers are considered essential to ensuring regional stakeholders have the most current and accurate information about the region from which to make decisions.

- Understanding regional demand and projecting future trends.
- Responding to community change and diversity.
- Providing targeted participation opportunities for residents and visitors and utilising the region's unique places and characteristics
- Learning from previous projects and conducting ongoing research and data collection.
- Responding to ongoing change (climate, political, economic, demographic).
- Regular strategy review and refinement.

The strategy for the future planning and provision of regional level sport and recreation and shared trails will be underpinned by the above priorities. These priorities are supported by a list of recommended actions that can be implemented at the regional level.

The implementation of strategic priorities and associated recommendations requires stakeholders to play three important roles in their delivery:

INITIATE - refers to the commencement of planning and coordinating the scope and timing of action(s) to be delivered.

DELIVER - refers to the on-the-ground delivery of identified actions and the acquisition and management of key partner and stakeholder contributions.

SUPPORT - refers to the organisational support for action delivery through the provision of resources, people, skills, funding, equipment and/or promotional activities.



STRATEGY 1

GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS - Develop a governance model and a collaborative project management structure to support future regional decision making.

Regional facility planning and development requires commitment and input from a range of stakeholder groups due to the size and scale of projects. A formal governance and decision making structure is essential in managing and driving successful project implementation.

Identification of regional priorities is only the first step in the cycle of regional project development. Creating a model of ownership and accountability amongst regional stakeholders is required to support a regional approach, and ensuring the future delivery of regional level sport and recreation projects are well planned and targeted to meet the needs of residents.

Developing and strengthening partnerships with key national and state sporting associations and all levels of government is important to supporting the delivery of regional projects, and to maximise the use and sustainability of regional facilities.

Formal adoption of regional priorities identified in this strategy is recommended to create a sense of ownership and to demonstrate each Council's ongoing commitment to regional planning and collaboration. Councils have agreed on a process for identifying and assessing regional projects and established a governance structure that involves individual Councils as the decision making authority, with other important regional stakeholder represented and informing the process.

The governance model utilises existing stakeholder groups to create a structure of engagement and decision making, and is designed to support future regional sport and recreation and shared trail planning and provision.

The existing Melbourne East Region Group of Councils (CEOs and Mayors) will be required to support and endorse regional projects, with individual Councils the final decision making authority on regional level project funding and delivery. A sport and recreation pillar has been established within the Melbourne East Region Group to provide a platform for key regional stakeholders to identify, assess and nominate regional projects.

To help Councils prioritise regional projects and ensure a consistent approach to project development, a framework which includes a project assessment criteria and regional facility planning tool has been developed.

The assessment criteria is relative to the key characteristics and requirements for the development of sustainable, effective and efficient delivery of regional level facilities, and are designed to assess the benefits and impacts of new or existing facilities. The assessment criteria is provided as a planning tool and recognises the key stages of regional planning and delivery, along with the lifecycle of regional projects.

Governance and partnerships – recommended actions

NO.	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBLE		
			INITIATE	DELIVER	SUPPORT
1.1	East Region Councils to endorse the strategy and planning framework to ensure a collaborative approach to future regional planning.	Immediate	Individual LGA	Individual LGA	Regional PSG
1.2	Councils recognise the need for improved collaboration and allocate appropriate resources to ensure a commitment to ongoing participation in regional planning processes and working groups to support regional project planning and delivery.	High	Regional PSG	Individual LGA	Individual LGA
1.3	Review the Terms of Reference for the Melbourne East Region Project Steering Group to ensure it continues to operate effectively and provides leadership in the development of regional level sport and recreation projects.	High	Regional PSG	Regional PSG	Individual LGA
1.4	Ensure the Melbourne East Region Group of Councils includes sport and recreation as a key strategic pillar and that it acts as the governing body to support and endorse regional project proposals. Individual Councils will be the final decision making authority for projects within their municipality (refer proposed governance structure and key stakeholder framework provided on the page 17).	Ongoing	Regional PSG	East Region CEOs	Regional PSG
1.5	Strengthen relationships with the Department of Education and Training to enable opportunities for community access to existing and future sport and recreation facilities on Department of Education and Training land.	High	Regional PSG	Regional PSG	SRV
1.6	Establish partnerships with key organisations including Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, Vic Roads, Bicycle Network Victoria, the Victorian Trails Committee, Bushwalking Victoria and Cycling Victoria to identify high priority recommendations for the development of the regional shared trail network.	Medium	Regional PSG	Regional PSG	SRV, VicTrack, DEWLP, Railtrails Australia, Active Transport Vic

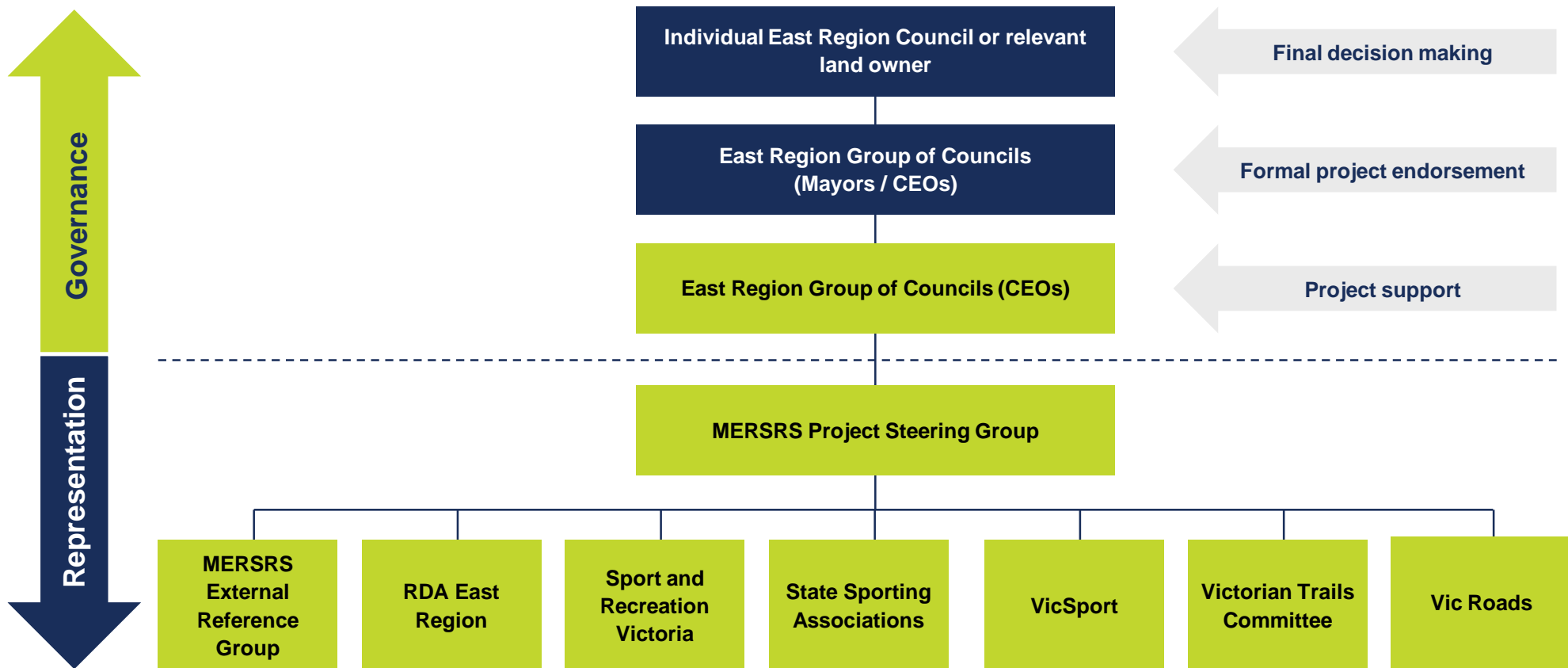
Governance and partnerships – recommended actions (cont.)

NO.	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBLE		
			INITIATE	DELIVER	SUPPORT
1.7	Improve collaboration and the sharing of participation and facility information with State Sporting Associations to ensure sport development priorities and needs are considered in all future regional projects.	Medium	Regional PSG	Regional PSG, SSOs	SRV
1.8	Through the active operation of the Melbourne East Region Project Steering Group, ensure ongoing collaboration across all seven Councils on future regional opportunities for sport and recreation. Integrate and share regional mapping information to ensure facilities are well planned into the future.	Medium	Regional PSG	Regional PSG	IE, NGIS
1.9	Continue to partner with Regional Development Australia (East Region) on the implementation of this strategy and advocate for federal and state government funding support to deliver regional projects.	Medium	Regional PSG	Regional PSG, RDA	RDA Committee

Proposed governance structure and key stakeholder framework

The structure below recognises individual Councils as the final decision making authority where proposed regional sport and recreation facilities are located within their specific municipal boundaries.

The Eastern Region Group of Councils (CEOs) will be required to provide in principle support for regional project proposals following presentations from the Melbourne East Project Steering Group, with Mayors and CEOs asked to endorse projects before a final decision is made by the individual Council. A Terms of Reference will be used to define roles, responsibilities and membership of the Project Steering Group and the Eastern Region Group of Councils.





STRATEGY 2

KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING THE REGION - Recognise and respond to the regions unique attributes and review priorities using current participation data to make informed decisions.

To continue to assess the relevance and appropriateness of regional priorities identified as part of this strategy, Councils and other stakeholders will need to respond and maintain an understanding of future changes to the region.

Understanding future trends, preferences and influences on sport and recreation provision and activity, and recognising the demographic and population changes that will impact regional planning and development, will be important to successful project implementation.

Through the development of this strategy regional facility needs and participation numbers for various State Sporting Associations were collected, analysed and mapped.

The ongoing review of regional sports participation numbers and strengthening partnerships with State Sporting Associations will be important to ensuring Councils are up to date with current issues, priorities and opportunities that influence the regional planning process.

Melbourne's East Region has a diverse mix of people and infrastructure which will require ongoing monitoring to ensure future facility development continues to respond to the needs of the region.

Understanding the size and unique characteristics of the region will be important when planning the location of future regional facilities and shared trails to ensure these facilities are providing the greatest benefit for sport and the community.

Large scale regional projects require significant financial investment which can only be justified if there is sufficient evidence that the project can address the health, social and economic benefits of the region.

It will be important for Councils to collaborate with a range of sport, government and community stakeholders to build a case for regional facility development which can be supported by clear evidence and have an understanding of the broader impacts for the region.

Understanding the region – recommended actions

NO.	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBLE		
			INITIATE	DELIVER	SUPPORT
2.1	All participating Councils to allocate appropriate levels of co-funding to service the below initiatives, including the proposed regional sports forum and SSA data collection.	Critical	Individual LGAs	Individual LGAs	Regional PSG
2.2	Commit to quarterly meetings of the Melbourne East Region Project Steering Group to enable Councils to discuss regional issues impacting the future provision of sport and recreation facilities. Review and develop regional priorities using the agreed project assessment processes and regional planning framework.	High	Regional PSG	Regional PSG	Individual LGAs
2.3	Through enhanced relationships with State Sporting Associations, develop a process of surveying and collecting participation and facility data for the region to monitor demand and analyse participation trends every three years. Maintaining current participation information will support future regional funding applications.	High	Regional PSG	Regional PSG, SSOs	SRV
2.4	Continue to engage with Vic Roads and Bicycle Network Victoria on the prioritisation of on and off road trail projects in Melbourne's East, and regularly collect current recreation trail usage data for the region (Bicycle Network Victoria Super Tuesday and Super Sunday).	High	Regional PSG	Individual LGAs	Vic Roads, SRV
2.5	Consider the regional impacts of current participation data being developed for organised sport by Federation University, in conjunction with Sport and Recreation Victoria and VicHealth (Sports Spatial). Results of the upcoming Australian Sports Commission AusPlay Survey (commencing in 2016-17) should also be incorporated into future regional sport and recreation planning.	Medium	Regional PSG	Regional PSG	SRV

Understanding the region – recommended actions

NO.	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBLE		
			INITIATE	DELIVER	SUPPORT
2.6	Maintain and update the regional sports participation and demographic data that is being used to create the online mapping program, and ensure ongoing access is provided to all Councils to support local and regional planning studies.	Ongoing	Regional PSG	Regional PSG	IE, NGIS
2.7	Facilitate an annual sport and recreation forum for the Melbourne East Region that brings together all relevant state and regional sport and recreation organisations to discuss current issues, participation trends and future facility development opportunities.	Medium	Regional PSG	Regional PSG, SRV	SSOs
2.8	Maintain contact with Regional Development Australia (East Region) officers regarding any specific research or project work relating to demographic or community change which is likely to influence the future development of sport and recreation facilities.	Medium	Regional PSG	Regional PSG, RDA	Individual LGAs



PART B: THE REGIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Introducing the framework

THE MELBOURNE EAST REGIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK HAS BEEN DEVELOPED AS A TOOL TO DRIVE THE REGION'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES.

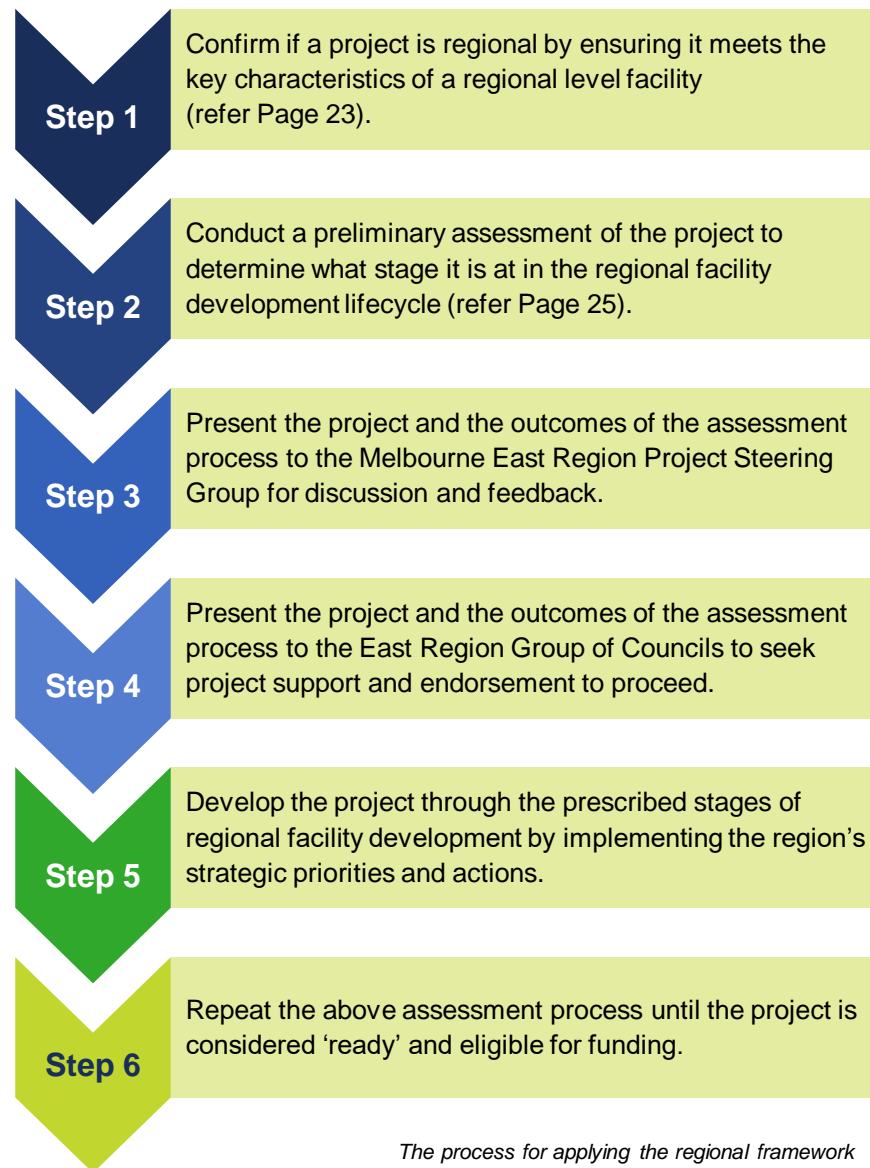
The Melbourne East Region has its own unique characteristics, and with changing populations and new trends in sport and recreation, the development of a planning framework is crucial in reaching an agreed position as to how the region should respond.

There is a need for sport, government and community stakeholders to work together more effectively on planning and delivery of regional facilities, to ensure future provision is targeted, sustainable and successful. The delivery of regional projects require significant investment from a range of funding providers, so the development of a regional framework to guide future investment and provide the evidence to secure support from potential investors is vital.

The increasing demand for quality facilities from peak sporting bodies, regional associations, local community sporting groups and residents creates significant pressure on land owners and facility providers. Through improved collaboration and better understanding of the future needs for regional facilities, stakeholders can move towards an agreed vision for the region and deliver this vision using the regional planning framework.

The sport and recreation needs of the region and the role and function of existing regional level facilities have been considered in the development of the framework. The framework identifies and prioritises future regional level facilities and shared trail development that will be required to service the region for the next twenty years.

The key components of the framework are outlined in the following pages and are designed to guide the planning and development of regional level sport and recreation facilities and shared trails. Councils and regional stakeholders are encouraged to use this framework as a platform for collaboration and as a key resource when planning regional level facilities.



The process for applying the regional framework

Defining regional level facilities

Reaching agreement on the definition of regional level sport and recreation facilities was a challenge throughout the development of the strategy as regional facilities mean different things to different people.

For instance, State Sporting Associations primarily view regional level facilities as venues for elite sport whereas government, in particular local government, see regional facilities as catering for a broad range of sport and community use.

For the purposes of this strategy regional level facilities are defined by their broad characteristics and benefits rather than one single component. A key outcome of the strategy is the delivery of a range of sport and recreation facilities and shared trails that provide the following key characteristics.

SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES THAT....

- Provide a range of participation outcomes which benefit the community, allow for a range of competitions (local, state and/or national), and have the ability to host medium to large scale events.
- Cater for a broad catchment across multiple municipal boundaries.
- Offer flexibility of use by one or more sports / activities.
- Deliver quality management and service levels that are maintained to a high standard.
- Consider the defined regional facility training and competition standards of the relevant Council or Councils, and State Sporting Associations.

SHARED TRAILS THAT...

- Are integrated and connected across municipal boundaries.
- Provide infrastructure and amenities to support walking and cycling.
- Provide safe off road alternatives.
- Support both recreation and commuter use.

All regional facility gaps identified in this strategy have been assessed as meeting the above criteria.



Facility categories

Regional level sport and recreation facilities and shared trails have been grouped into five categories to assist with prioritising future facility development opportunities. These categories were also used to support and identify the current gaps in regional facility provision.

AQUATICS	 
OUTDOOR SPORTS GROUNDS	    
RECREATION	  
INDOOR SPORTS	    
ADVENTURE BASED ACTIVITIES	   
OUTDOOR SPORTS COURTS & SPECIALIST SPORTS SURFACES	    

Stages of regional facility development

There are six key stages involved in the planning, development and delivery of regional level facilities and shared trails.

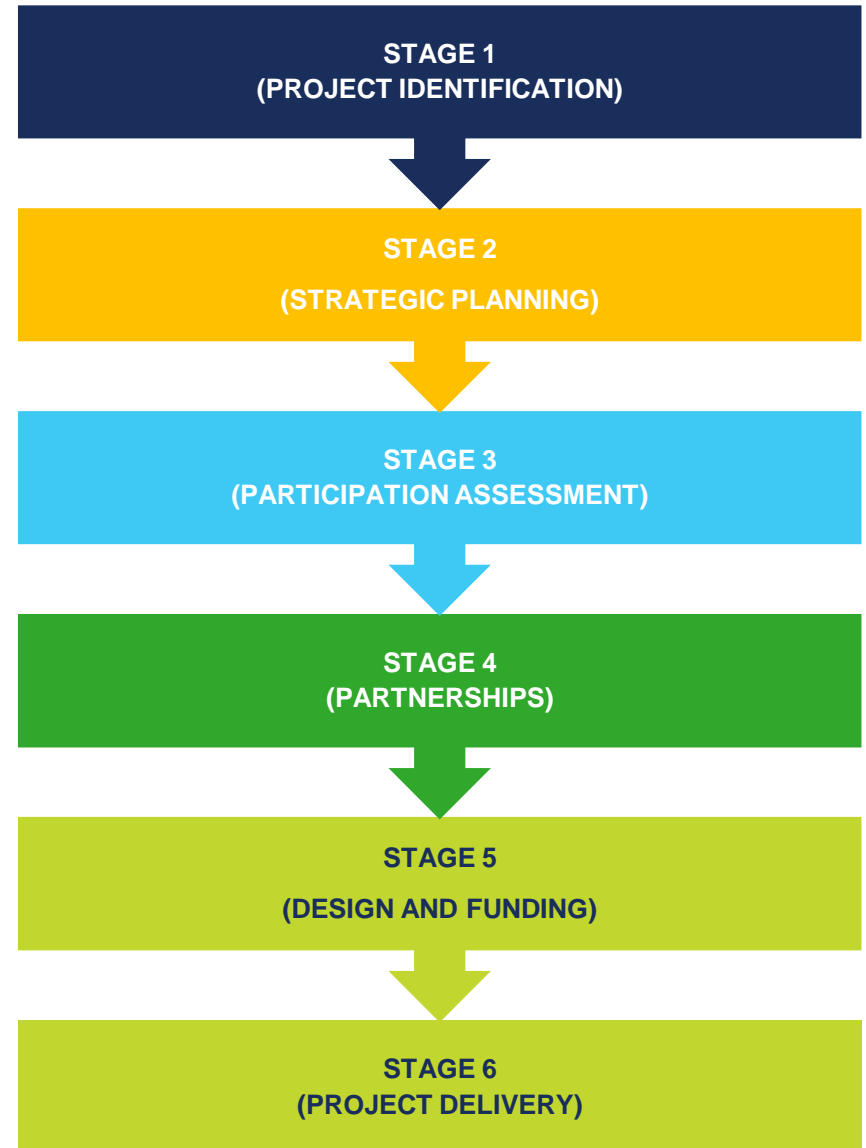
The first stage is to identify if the project is regional and will serve a regional function. Individual Councils will need to confirm that a project is regional by demonstrating that all of the key characteristics of a regional level facility or a shared trail have been met. Current regional facilities that require renewal or upgrade should also be tested against these key characteristics.

Once the project has been confirmed as regional it can then proceed to the second stage of strategic planning. This stage must demonstrate the strategic intent for the development of a regional level facility by at least one Council, and an understanding of the broad regional demand and likely health, community and economic benefits the project will provide to the region.

Stage 3 includes the development of formal documentation such as a regional planning study or benefits assessment that provides evidence and support for a regional level facility. The planning study must demonstrate how the project will increase participation, identify opportunities for multiuse, meet the future sport and recreation needs of the community and sporting organisations and identify the social, economic and environmental benefits of the project.

The focus of Stage 4 is to establish and confirm key strategic partnerships with a range of organisations that will benefit from the delivery of the project. Support from relevant sport, government and community organisations will be essential to securing appropriate funding and delivering a successful project.

The final two stages involve detailed design, funding, and project procurement and delivery. Stage 5 focuses on detailed design, approvals and finalising project funding, whilst Stage 6 is project construction, confirming management options and finalising usage agreements with stakeholders.



As part of the development of the strategy the current gaps in regional facility provision have been identified and are at different stages of development. All identified projects have been assessed to determine where they are positioned in the regional facility development lifecycle.

The information below provides the key stages of regional planning and development in further detail and the criteria used to assess projects. Stages have been colour coded to understand projects readiness for the identified projects listed on Page 29.

CONFIRMING A REGIONAL PROJECT

NEW OR EXISTING FACILITIES THAT:

- Provide a range of participation outcomes which benefit the community, allow for a range of competitions (local, state and/or national), and have the ability to host medium to large scale events.
- Cater for a broad catchment across multiple municipal boundaries.
- Offer flexibility of use by one or more sports / activities.
- Deliver high quality management and service levels and are maintained to a high level.
- Consider the defined regional facility standards of local governments and state sporting associations for training and competition.

TRAILS THAT:

- Are integrated and connected across municipal boundaries
- Provide appropriate supporting infrastructure and amenities
- Provide safe off road alternatives
- Support both recreation and commuter use

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Evidence of demand for a regional level facility identified by at least one LGA and supported by other LGAs and included in a corporate plan or strategy.
- Will the project provide health and wellbeing, as well as social and community benefits to the region?
- Evidence of demand for a regional level facility from NSOs, SSAs or relevant peak bodies and is consistent with current development guidelines.

- Has SRV or other relevant government agencies acknowledged the need for a regional level facility and does the project meet potential funding criteria?
- Will the project create ongoing job opportunities and deliver economic benefits to the region?
- Does the project demonstrate best practice and a commitment to ESD and Universal Design?
- Have the infrastructure, construction and ongoing maintenance responsibilities of the asset been agreed?

PARTICIPATION ASSESSMENT

- Has there been an increase in local and regional participation in the relevant sport or activity over the past five years by one or more LGA?
- Do current and future sport and recreation participation projections for the region warrant a regional level facility?
- Will the project provide opportunities for multiuse and offer broad participation outcomes for both sport and the community?
- Do population and demographic projections for the region provide a strong participation market and support the development of a regional level facility?
- Will the project provide a participation pathway from beginner to elite level?

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Have local sporting clubs, associations or relevant community groups been consulted and any impacts identified, and have these groups provided in principle support for the project?
- Has dialogue commenced and in principle support received for the project from relevant SSA and NSO?
- Are SRV or other relevant state or federal government agencies engaged in the process and given in principle support for a regional level project?
- Will the project increase partnership opportunities due to its proposed location, land ownership and community and commercial interests?
- Have likely future management arrangements been identified and will this provide enhanced stakeholder support for the project ?

DESIGN & FUNDING

- Are the overall financial costs for the project known and has funding for the project been secured?
- Does the project provide opportunities to seek external funding from a range of sources including government, commercial and the private sector?
- Is the proposed site for future development available (and supported by in principle agreements or MOUs), and have schematic designs been endorsed by all stakeholders, including SRV?
- Has the project design been developed using a Universal Design principle based approach?
- Has business and management planning with operational / programming and ongoing infrastructure maintenance obligations for the project been completed?
- Have all project design components been completed and approved by key stakeholders and funding providers and is the project ready for tender?

Regional priorities

Prioritising and developing sustainable, flexible and efficient regional facilities and shared trails that meet the needs of the Melbourne East Region is a key outcome for stakeholders using the regional planning framework.

The Melbourne East Regional Sport and Recreation Strategy identifies the future sport and recreation needs of communities living in Melbourne's East. The regional planning framework, developed by the Project Steering Group, was used to help identify the facility development priorities identified on the following page. An overview of these projects was presented to the Eastern Region Group of Councils (CEO level) and have received in principle support to be included in the strategy.

In accordance with the regional planning framework and project endorsement process, projects will be required to undergo a full assessment and be subject to a presentation to the Eastern Region Group of Councils (CEOs and Mayors) before final endorsement can be achieved.

High priority projects required to meet the future sport and recreation needs of Melbourne's East have been grouped into four broad categories to help guide future planning, development and decision making

1. shared recreation trails
2. indoor sports courts
3. specialised indoor facilities
4. and a destination for mountain biking

Although other key regional sport and recreation facilities, such as aquatic centres and athletics tracks, are not considered high priorities, the renewal and upgrade of these facilities to meet local demand is recognised and will be required in the future.

Exploring opportunities to expand and increase the capacity of existing facilities to meet future regional demand for sport and recreation activities should be considered, and balanced with the need and opportunity for new facility development.

WHAT'S REQUIRED TO SERVICE THE CURRENT AND PROJECTED SPORT AND RECREATION NEEDS FOR THE REGION?



A network of well connected shared trails to support unstructured recreation



More multipurpose indoor sports courts



Specialised indoor facilities for a range of sports



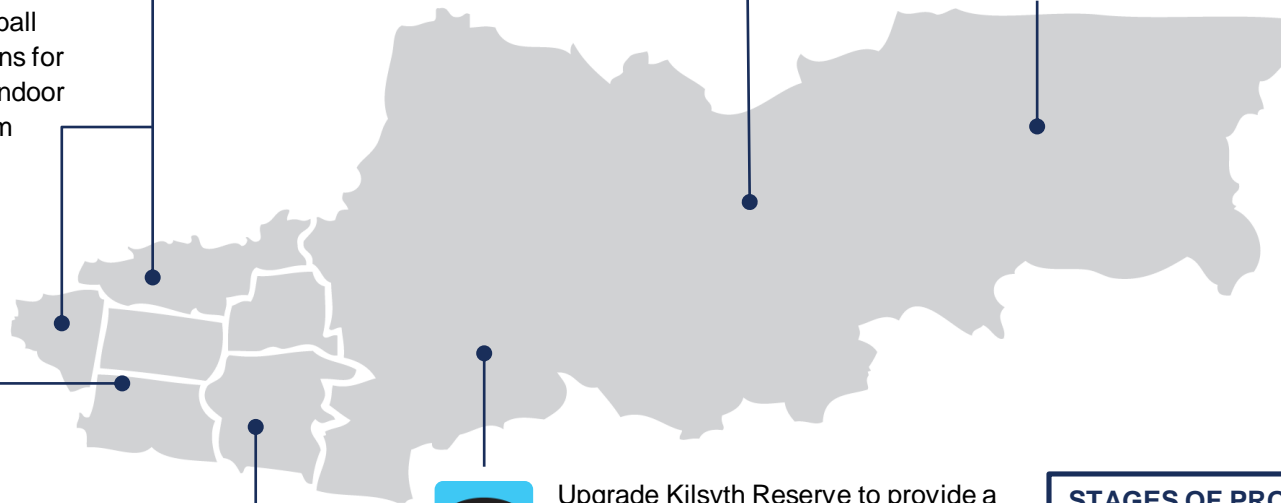
A destination for mountain biking

Summary of high priority facility development projects

Develop additional indoor sports courts to meet the current and future demand for basketball and indoor netball across the region, and to support the existing State Basketball Centre in Knox. Identified locations for the future provision of additional indoor sports courts include Manningham (Mullum Mullum Reserve), and facilities in Boroondara and Yarra Ranges.



Development of a destination for mountain biking in Warburton.



Support the development of a multi use regional gymnastics facility in Monash that caters for a broad range of participants from introductory programs to regional level events and competitions.



Upgrade Kilsyth Reserve to provide a regional Australian Rules Football Hub in the east that caters for male and female participation programs, events and competition, and to supports the AFL's athlete development pathway.



Investigate the redevelopment of a regional level baseball / softball facility at Gilbert Park in Knoxfield that includes multiple floodlit diamonds and caters for regional and state level events and competitions.

STAGES OF PROJECT READINESS

-  Identified regional project
-  Strategic planning
-  Participation assessment
-  Establishing partnership opportunities
-  Detailed design and funding procurement

Priority regional trail connections

The region has a widespread and extensive network of on and off-road trails. These trails are heavily used for commuting and recreation purposes and provide considerable social, physical and economic value to the region. The existing regional trail network is well supported by a capillary of connector trails that provide transport opportunities and access into other regional areas.

The map on the following page identifies the high priority gaps in the regional trail network for Melbourne's East. These projects were identified through consultation with a range of key stakeholders including local councils, Bicycle Network Victoria, Vic Roads, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water and the Melbourne Planning Authority.

Recommended trail projects were based on information from the Principal Bicycle Network (PBN) data sourced directly from Vic Roads, and the bicycle participation data collected from Bicycle Network Victoria (Super Tuesday and Super Sunday data). A complete list of Vic Roads and Bicycle Network Victoria trail priorities were provided by these organisations and have influenced the development of future trail projects for Melbourne's East.

The recommended trail projects will require further investigation both locally and regionally to establish a final set of trail priorities. As well as prioritising the missing links of regional trails, there will also be an emphasis on renewing existing regional trails to ensure that they meet best practice and are fit for purpose now and in the future. The Project Steering Group will be required to develop a suitable project assessment criteria that considers current and proposed local trail strategies. Local trail priorities identified within each municipality are provided in the Background, Research and Consultation Findings Report.

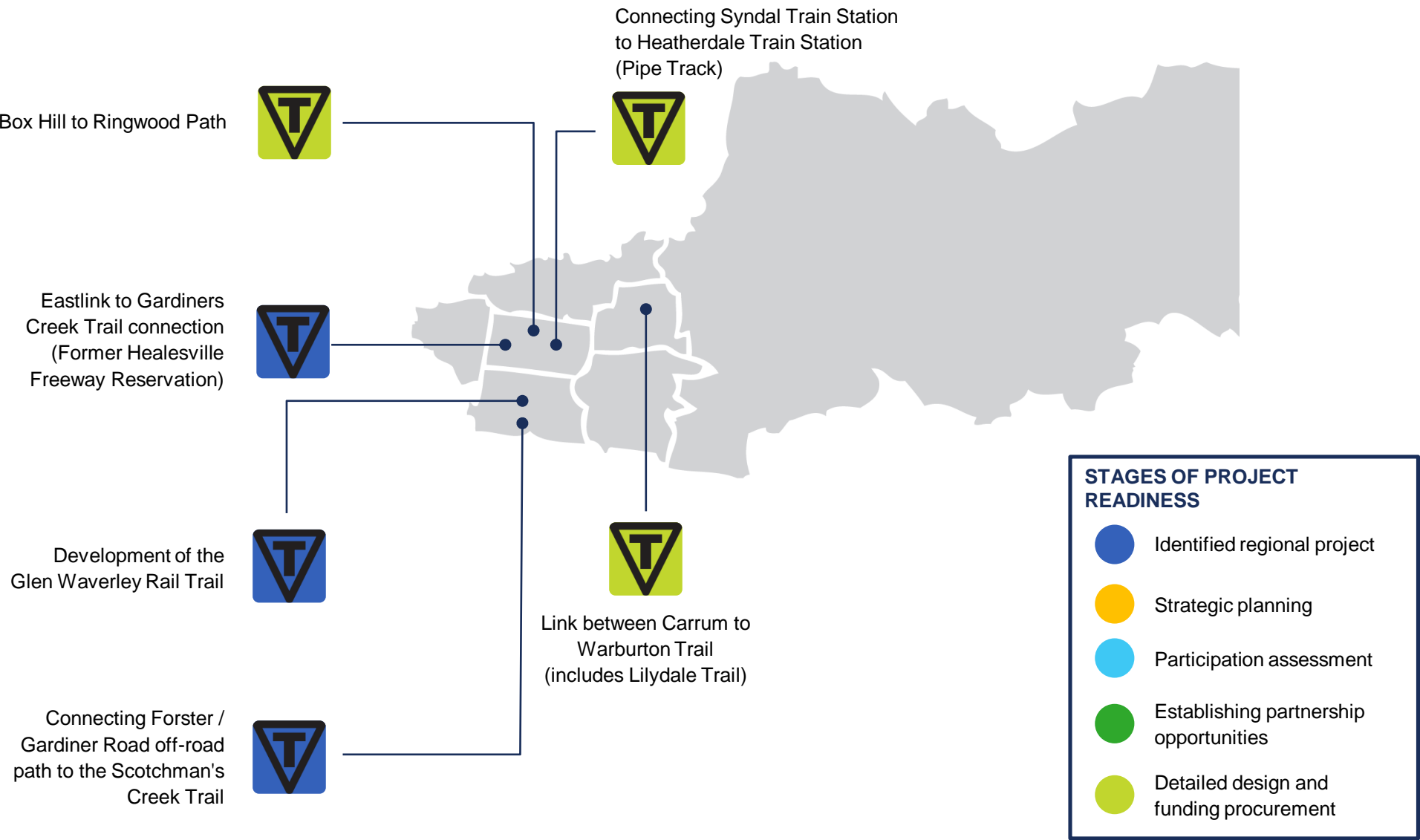
The ongoing improvement and development of the regional trail network in Melbourne's East should be a high priority for stakeholders and decision makers due to the significant benefits they provide to the region.

The usage of trails is rapidly increasing and whilst there are significant benefits from this, it can also lead to safety concerns between cyclists and pedestrians. Therefore more focus is required to proactively facilitate greater respect between cyclists and pedestrians to maximise the level of safety of all users.

A comprehensive map of the existing regional trail network in Melbourne's East is provided in the Background, Research and Consultation Findings Report, as well as Super Tuesday, Super Sunday and Strava participation maps.



Priority regional trail connections (cont.)



Facility and shared trail development – potential projects

The following list of regional projects have been identified as important to meeting the future sport and recreation needs of the region. These projects are at different stages of development however all projects will be formally assessed and put through the assessment (criteria) and governance framework before they can be considered for future funding support. It is acknowledged that projects will proceed through the assessment (criteria) and governance framework at different times depending on their level of readiness.

PROJECT NO.	POTENTIAL PROJECTS	TIMEFRAME	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBLE		
			INITIATE	DELIVER	SUPPORT
1	Develop a multi use regional level gymnastics facility in Monash that caters for a broad range of participants from introductory programs to regional level events and competitions. A number of satellite gymnastic facilities will also be required across the region to meet current and future demand for the sport.	High	Monash	Monash	SRV, Regional PSG
2	Develop additional indoor multi-use courts to meet the current and future demand for basketball, indoor netball and other highball sports across the region. Projects include the development of indoor multi-use courts at Mullum Mullum Reserve in Manningham, and proposed facilities in Boroondara and Yarra Ranges.	High	Individual Council	Individual Councils	SRV, SSOs, Regional PSG
3	Upgrade Gilbert Park in Knox to a regional level baseball / softball facility that includes multiple floodlit diamonds and caters for regional and state level events and competitions.	Medium	Knox	Knox, SSOs	SRV, Regional PSG
4	Upgrade Kilsyth Reserve to provide a regional Australian Rules Football Hub in the east that caters for male and female participation programs, events and competition, and to support the AFL's athlete development pathway.	Medium	Yarra Ranges	Yarra Ranges, SSO	SRV, Regional PSG
5	Develop a destination for mountain biking in Warburton that meets the recreational and competition needs of mountain bikers.	Medium	Yarra Ranges	Yarra Ranges	SRV, Regional PSG

PROJECT NO.	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBLE		
			INITIATE	DELIVER	SUPPORT
6	<p>Further investigate the needs of recreation trail users through consultation with Bicycle Network Victoria, Vic Roads, Cycling Victoria, Victorian Trails Committee, Bushwalking Victoria, local cycling groups and land owners.</p> <p>Following this additional consultation, update the online trail maps and develop a customised project assessment tool to help confirm priority trail projects for the region that consider individual Council's Walking and Cycling Strategies and Integrated Transport Plans.</p>	Medium	Individual Council	Individual Councils	SRV, RDA
7	Conduct further investigation into the future demand for a purpose built badminton and table tennis facility. Further detailed planning will be required as well as consideration of the findings from the City of Dandenong Table Tennis Strategy.	Low	Regional PSG	Individual LGAs, SSOs	SRV, Regional PSG
8	In partnership with Canoeing Victoria (CV), investigate the demand for a Regional Paddle Sports Centre at Westerfolds Park to provide a venue for slalom training, competition and paddler skill development, and an education and administration hub for the sport.	Low	Manningham	Manningham	SRV, CV, Regional PSG