



20-Minute Neighbourhoods Municipal Strategic Planning Project (2022)

Expression of interest information for councils.

Summary

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is seeking expressions of interest from councils interested in planning for 20-minute neighbourhood within their municipality.

The 20-Minute Neighbourhoods Municipal Strategic Planning Project (the Project) will provide grants to councils of up to \$70,000 to develop an approach to the definition, designation, and prioritisation of Neighbourhood Activity Centres (NACs).

Focus on NACs

The focus is on NACs. These centres are considered integral to creating a city of walkable 20-minute neighbourhoods by enabling local living and filling in service gaps between the larger Metropolitan and Major activity centres. NACs are also key to the city's sustainable recovery from the pandemic as continued remote working maintains the daily reliance many people have in their local neighbourhood centres.

The 2018-2020 [20-minute neighbourhood pilot program](#) and recommendations from the 2019 [20-minute neighbourhoods: Creating a more liveable Melbourne](#) report identified issues facing Melbourne in planning for Neighbourhood Activity Centres (refer to Box 1). Subsequent consultation with local government has identified the need for further State Government

guidance around the definition, designation, prioritisation, and planning for NACs.

Partnership opportunity

Through partnerships with 3-4 metropolitan councils, DELWP is seeking to address identified barriers in implementing 20-minute neighbourhoods and to develop robust frameworks for NAC definition, prioritisation, and strategic planning. This will further assist DELWP to create new tools, processes, and guidelines that can be more widely used by councils across Victoria to plan for and deliver 20-minute neighbourhoods.

Resources, including grant funding and DELWP staff support over a period of six months, will be made available to support strategic work undertaken by councils.

The final scope and deliverables resulting from this partnership can be tailored to the individual needs of each partnering council and could focus on:

- Defining and designating NACs in accordance with 20-minute neighbourhood policy
- Mapping NACs across a municipality and analysing their role in the network
- Aligning 20-minute neighbourhood and NAC planning with other council strategies, such as

activity centre, housing, economic development, transport, open space, and community services strategies

- Identifying high priority NACs for further targeted planning and investment.

Benefits to councils

- Grants of up to \$70,000 to contribute to staffing costs or technical advice
- Direct assistance from the DELWP 20-minute neighbourhood team during the term of the Project
- Integration of 20-minute neighbourhood policy across council processes and plans
- Identification and prioritisation of NACs for further planning work
- Opportunity to be considered for further grants and partnerships to develop local place plans for individual NACs.

Benefits to DELWP

- Real world case studies to inform development of fit-for-purpose practical guidance and tools for local government to assist in the delivery of 20-minute neighbourhoods
- Developing consistent definitions for different types of NACs that can be applied across Victoria
- Identification of existing gaps or improvements to the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs) to enable delivery of 20-minute neighbourhoods
- Potential to develop relationships with councils which could lead to additional work to implement best practice neighbourhood planning.

Policy context

The 20-minute neighbourhood principle underpins [Plan Melbourne 2017-2050](#) (Plan Melbourne) policies outlined in Plan Melbourne to deliver 20-minute neighbourhoods, guide sustainable growth and create healthier and more liveable places and communities.

Local government is integral to the successful delivery of 20-minute neighbourhoods. Some councils are already adopting 20-minute neighbourhoods as an organising principle for planning and service delivery while others have communicated a need for greater

support and policy direction from State Government on how to do this.

This Project will focus on NACs, the smaller local centres that fill the gaps in the activity centre network between the larger Major and Metropolitan activity centres. NACs are critical in achieving the aspiration of ‘a city of 20-minute neighbourhoods’ set out in Plan Melbourne. If these smaller centres are lost to other uses, such as residential, many people will need to travel further (often by car) to access their daily needs.

NACs are not currently consistently designated by councils. Different definitions of what constitutes a NAC are applied across different local government areas. Strategic planning work has not occurred for most centres, often due to resourcing constraints and policy and priorities which preference Major or Metropolitan activity centres.

The lack of an agreed definition on what constitutes a NAC, how they are identified, and which centres should be prioritised, as well as limited guidance on how to plan for these centres, have all been identified as barriers to delivering 20-minute neighbourhoods.

BOX 1

Issues facing Melbourne’s Neighbourhood Activity Centres:

- Ad-hoc and inconsistent designation of Neighbourhood Activity Centres
- Varying levels of planning being undertaken, with many centres not planned for at all
- Planning for Activity Centres disconnected from other 20-minute neighbourhood relevant planning e.g., housing, community infrastructure, open space, active transport
- Existing planning processes are lengthy and can be cost prohibitive for smaller centres
- Focus of and investment by councils, state and agencies is concentrated on larger activity centres

20-minute neighbourhoods pilot program

In 2018, DELWP partnered with the Heart Foundation, Victoria Walks, and councils to pilot the delivery of the 20-minute neighbourhood principle in the established neighbourhoods of Croydon South (Maroondah City Council), Strathmore (Moonee Valley City Council) and Sunshine West (Brimbank City Council). Each pilot project identified opportunities for the practical delivery of 20-minute neighbourhoods in partnership with the local community. The 2018 pilot demonstrated the success of place-based planning and the importance of community partnerships and NACs to local communities and the delivery of 20-minute neighbourhoods.

Unlike the 2018 pilot, which was site specific to a single NAC within a local government area, this project will focus on municipality-wide planning processes. The current Project aims to develop resources and processes to better define, prioritise and plan for NACs as well as explore opportunities to embed 20-minute neighbourhoods across all parts of local government business.

Another medium-long term priority for DELWP is to develop processes for better and more efficient planning for NACs that are place based, developed in partnership with communities and more streamlined and cost effective than traditional structure planning processes. In conjunction with this, there may arise opportunities for councils successful through this EOI to continue to collaborate with DELWP after the current Project.

Expressions of Interest (EOI) process

A more consistent approach to identifying NACs and improved guidance surrounding best practice planning for NACs will help to target future investment and deliver 20-minute neighbourhood outcomes on the ground. DELWP invites EOIs from metropolitan councils interested in partnering with DELWP towards this goal.

The EOI process is designed to enable potential partner councils to influence the scope of the project to align with their own context within the limits of the overarching program objectives. This flexibility ensures that the partnership maximises benefits for both parties.

In the first instance, councils are invited to submit a non-binding EOI to DELWP addressing the questions and criteria set out in Appendix 1. This initial information gathering exercise will gauge council areas of interest and identify opportunities to align the Project with any existing work being undertaken by councils.

Councils which can demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering 20-minute neighbourhoods and clear

opportunities for program integration and alignment will be invited to meet with DELWP to discuss potential partnership opportunities in more detail.

Following an evaluation of all potential partnership opportunities, preferred councils will be selected. Together with these councils, DELWP will commence a co-design process to define the scope and intended outputs of each Partnership Agreement.

Elements within the scope for the Project include but are not limited to:

- Identification and categorisation of NACs across municipalities
- Integration of NACs into municipal activity centre mapping
- Identification of priority NACs for further investment and planning
- Inputs into possible activity centre framework plans and strategies

Councils seeking to progress updates to their existing Activity Centre Strategy are in an optimal position to apply.

DELWP encourages submissions from councils about other related potential program alignments. This could include:

- implementing 20-minute neighbourhood outcomes surrounding NACs into municipal planning for housing, economic development, transport, or community services
- exploring metrics and tools (such as for density, economic viability, walkability, and service provision) which support analysis of existing neighbourhoods and planning for neighbourhoods across municipalities.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Plan Melbourne is the State Government's planning strategy to guide the growth of metropolitan Melbourne until 2050. As 20-minute neighbourhoods is currently metropolitan policy, only metropolitan councils are asked to submit an EOI for this Project. Councils will be assessed and selected to meet with DELWP to discuss potential partnership opportunities based on their:

- Demonstrated commitment of council to applying 20-minute neighbourhood policy
- Opportunities for the project to leverage existing council work, and/or opportunities to input into and align with current council priorities and work programs

- Having an underperforming network of NACs in terms of delivering outcomes consistent with the hallmarks of a 20-minute neighbourhood
- Capacity to commit staff and resources to the Project and partnership with DELWP
- Capacity to deliver within the proposed timeframes
- Alignment of the expression of interest with project objectives
- Alignment with DELWP's broader program objective of 'delivering policy and guidance which supports state government, municipal councils, and private sector stakeholders to understand, plan for and implement 20-minute neighbourhoods.'

EOI timeframes

Approximate timeframes for delivering the Project are as follows:

EOI opens:
28 April 2022

Information session for councils (online):
11 May 2022

Due date for EOIs:
30 May 2022

Shortlisting and selection:
June 2022

Project planning and partnership development
June and July 2022

Grants provided to councils:
July 2022

The Project will then be delivered over 6 months from July 2022.

Funding

Councils will be supported to participate in the project with grants of up to \$70,000 per council. The final value of each council grant is dependent on:

- The number of councils DELWP decides to partner with
- The final scope of each partnership agreement as co-designed between DELWP and each partner council.

Funding can be used by councils to meet or contribute to any resourcing costs associated with their participation in the project such as staffing or other project costs.

Council information session (online)

An online information session for councils will be hosted by DELWP on 11 May 22 at 3pm.

Council officers interested in learning more about the project are invited to attend. [Register here](#) to sign up for the information session and to let the 20-minute neighbourhoods team at DELWP know what information you would like to see covered within the session. Time will be allocated to allow for questions and answers.

Further information

For further information about the Project or this EOI, please get in touch with one of the following members of the 20-minute neighbourhoods team:

Georgia Wellington

P: 03 8508 0960

E: georgia.wellington@delwp.vic.gov.au

Jo O'Byrne

P: 03 8508 3284

E: jo.o'byrne@delwp.vic.gov.au

APPENDIX 1 - Expression of Interest for 20-minute Neighbourhoods Municipal Strategic Planning Project

[INSERT COUNCIL NAME]

Basic details:

Primary council contact:	<i>Name</i> <i>Position</i> <i>Email</i> <i>Phone number</i>
Secondary council contact:	<i>Name</i> <i>Position</i> <i>Email</i> <i>Phone number</i>
How did you hear about the project and EOI?	<i>Please specify (i.e. online council briefing / social media / formal correspondence from DELWP / professional networks):</i>
Is this a council endorsed or officer level submission?	

Core information required:

Please reference any council plans, strategies and ordinance which support your claims.

How is your council currently delivering 20-minute neighbourhoods? How well integrated is 20-minute neighbourhoods across different departments / parts of council business?	
What opportunities are there for your council in participating in the project? Are there opportunities to align with existing or planned work program?	
Based on the scope, what would the focus of council be?	
What is your capacity to participate in the project, considering the proposed timelines and likely availability of staff and resources?	<i>Please include details of the area/s of council that would lead/contribute to the work, and (if possible) an approximation of staff FTE over the proposed 6-month period.</i>

<p>What is the status of activity centre planning within your municipality?</p> <p>Has any work been undertaken to identify or assess smaller activity centres (centres below Major Activity Centre level) either individually or more broadly?</p>	
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Optional additional information:

Please reference any council plans, strategies and ordinance which support your claims.

<p>Please comment on how you think planning for 20-minute neighbourhoods and NACs should best inform planning for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing? - Economic development? - Community development? - Transport? 	
<p>To what extent do place-based / placemaking / place management / community partnerships approaches influence your councils planning and service delivery?</p>	
<p>Does your council support housing growth in and around NACs in your municipality where appropriate?</p>	

Attachments and Links

Please supply links, or confidentially attach to this EOI, any municipal strategies or any other work that is relevant to this expression of interest, such as:

- Activity centre strategy
- Economic development strategy
- Housing strategy
- Open space strategy
- Health and wellbeing strategy
- Transport strategy

If work is currently underway but not yet adopted, please advise of this even if not yet available to share publicly.