The Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) is working with the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct Office, City of Melbourne and government agencies to prepare the Parkville National Employment and Innovation Cluster (NEIC) Framework Plan (the Framework Plan).

This document provides an update on what has been learned since the project commenced in July 2017, including the stakeholders engaged thus far, how the Framework Plan relates to the Victorian Government’s 10-year strategic plan for the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct and the City of Melbourne’s work on the Melbourne Innovation Districts.

Next steps and a project timeline for the development of a draft plan for consultation are also enclosed.
WHAT WE HAVE DONE SO FAR

Existing physical context and planning policy controls have been considered as part of the future planning for the Parkville NEIC.

Between July 2017 and January 2018, the VPA consulted with the City of Melbourne, key government agencies and major stakeholders to further understand how the cluster currently works.

The VPA heard that there are a number issues the Framework Plan needs to address, including:

• **Continued co-ordination of growth** - The institutions and organisations that are vital to the success of the Parkville NEIC are continuing to grow and expand. A coordinated plan is needed to make the best use of available space over the long term.

• **Utilising opportunity** - similarly, there is already a lot of construction and development already underway or planned for the Parkville NEIC. It is important to leverage opportunities from current major projects, such as the Metro Tunnel.

• **Benefiting from research** - Commercial space in Parkville is important to help translate research into commercial outcomes. There is a risk that commercial uses could be ‘crowded out’ by residential uses.

• **Open and accessible** - Open and accessible places for community innovation and experimentation will also be important to connect researchers and research insights with students, start-ups and the general public. For example, co-working spaces, fab labs and smart parks, including access to affordable spaces.

• **Utilising public spaces** - The NEIC includes a range of parks, forecourts and other spaces where people can sit, relax and meet others – but these are under-utilised. Vibrant public areas are as important as high-quality buildings. These spaces knit the institutions together and offer respite for workers and residents.

• **Connectivity** - Hyper-connectivity to and through the cluster supports collaboration. Opportunities to make the cluster more pedestrian-friendly should be explored. Bike lanes will support a growing proportion of those who cycle to work from neighbouring areas. The Metro Tunnel will make it easier to connect to other NEICs.

• **Co-location** - The personal relationships and interactions forged through co-location, sharing of facilities, and networking spaces support collaboration and are important to plan for and protect.

As a result, the VPA is developing a series of themes to underpin the Framework Plan:

• **Support appropriate growth of the cluster** - The Framework Plan will support the growth plans of key partners. With space in the cluster at a premium, establishing the complementary relationships of Arden, East Melbourne and Parkville West will help to achieve this outcome.

• **Deliver a mix of activity** - The Framework Plan will make sure there is space to support the commercialisation of research. This may include a review of the existing planning tools to ensure enough commercial space is provided to support a range of activities.

• **Create economic inclusion** - The Framework Plan will seek to enable the provision of low-cost space for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups.

• **Design places for people** - The Framework Plan will help create an attractive place for people who want to work, live and invest in the cluster.

• **Create better hyper-connections to and within the cluster** - The Framework Plan seeks to make it easy for people to move to and within the cluster by walking, cycling and public transport.

• **Bring people together** - The Framework Plan will promote networking, co-operation and foster relationships. This includes involving stakeholders in key decisions affecting the cluster and encouraging the co-location and sharing of facilities.
WHAT IS THE PARKVILLE NEIC?

The Parkville NEIC is an internationally known education, health and biomedical employment hub. Parkville is one of seven NEICs in Melbourne.

WHAT IS A NEIC?

*Plan Melbourne* defines NEICs as places “to improve the growth clustering of business activity of national significance, particularly in knowledge-based industries”. These areas are to be developed as places with a concentration of linked businesses and institutions providing a major contribution to the Victorian economy, with excellent transport links and potential to accommodate significant future growth in jobs and in some instances housing.

WHERE IS IT?

The Parkville NEIC is part of Melbourne’s central city. It has access to high-quality public transport, housing, people, open space and cultural assets. It is one of 10 state-significant central city urban renewal precincts.

The Parkville NEIC comprises the suburbs of Parkville and includes parts of Melbourne, North Melbourne, East Melbourne, Carlton and Fitzroy. It is also an important part of complementary projects and initiatives, specifically the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct and Melbourne Innovation Districts.

The NEIC has competitive advantages of having an established, globally competitive biomedical community, and being close to an international airport. The new Metro Tunnel and future station at Parkville will connect the Parkville NEIC to other NEICs such as Sunshine, Monash and Dandenong, Melbourne’s Central Business District and the Arden urban renewal precinct.
WHAT IS A FRAMEWORK PLAN?

The Framework Plan being prepared by the VPA is a high-level coordination tool that will guide existing and future state and local government policy, development and investment in the Parkville NEIC. This shared plan will allow the Victorian Government, the cluster’s partners, the City of Melbourne and the private sector to ensure that public and private development is coordinated and well-planned.

As the Parkville NEIC continues to thrive, it will need to utilise existing inner city spaces and network effectively, with nearby precincts to accommodate more people and facilities.

The Framework Plan will:

- develop a shared vision and desired outcomes
- define specialised activities and capacity to expand over time
- identify land-use constraints on employment and business growth, and the preconditions necessary to facilitate investment
- evaluate whether existing planning controls are appropriate
- identify investment opportunities

The Framework Plan provides the spatial elements to support the ongoing complementary projects and initiatives, including:

- the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct Strategic Plan which sets out a whole of Victorian Government vision to drive healthcare advances, economic growth and jobs
- the Melbourne Innovation Districts, a partnership between the City of Melbourne, RMIT and the University of Melbourne to support and stimulate new enterprises and activate the public realm.

WHY PREPARE A FRAMEWORK PLAN FOR THE PARKVILLE NEIC?

The Parkville NEIC is well placed to lead the growth of high-skilled jobs in the medical technologies and pharmaceuticals and international education sectors. These are two priority sectors identified by the Victorian Government. The NEIC owes its global reputation for excellence to its existing biomedical, educational and research institutions.

The Victorian Government, through the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct Office, has established a vision for the cluster to become:

“A renowned, world top 10 biomedical precinct and a driver of healthcare advances, economic growth and jobs for Victoria.”

To achieve this vision, government continues to invest in infrastructure to help shape the future of the cluster, including:

- The $11 billion Metro Tunnel project, which includes a new station at Parkville
- The nearby Arden urban renewal precinct, which will be home to 34,000 new jobs

WHAT WILL WE DO NEXT?

Over the next six months, the VPA will continue to consult and work with both local and state governments and engage with key partners.

The VPA plans to publicly release a draft Framework Plan early to mid 2019.

A period of consultation will follow. Feedback from these consultations will inform the Framework Plan.

In collaboration with the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct Office, the City of Melbourne and government partners, the VPA are progressing the key parts of the Framework Plan:

- Consult & work with local and state governments and engage with key partners to develop Draft Framework Plan
- Public consultation of the Draft Parkville NEIC Framework Plan
- Final approval of the Parkville NEIC Framework Plan

Stay Informed

To receive updates about the progress of the project, subscribe now and visit: https://vpa.vic.gov.au/project/parkville/