

Shaping the Future of Knox

Focus Group &
Community Forum
Outcomes

Focus Group & Community Forum Outcomes:

Thank you to those who attended one of the focus groups in November, our community forum on 1 December, or both! We appreciate the time and effort given to considering the opportunities and challenges facing our community, and value your contribution to planning for the future of Knox.

Five focus groups were run over the week beginning 9 November 2020. The session topics were based on the Goals of [the current Community and Council Plan 2017-2021](#), of which some were grouped as follows:

- Environment and housing
- Safety and mobility
- Employment and education
- Health and wellbeing
- Engagement, inclusion and wellbeing

During the sessions, we discussed:

- The data and research around the current Goal areas and whether anything may have come as a surprise;
- What success might look like in those areas; and
- What we as a community could do to get there.

At the Shaping the future of Knox Community forum, we:

- Looked at what participants of the previous engagement sessions have told us is important;
- Identified what might be missing and what else we should focus on over the next 10 years; and
- Discussed how Council could contribute to the success of the community's priorities.

There were some great conversations and lots of ideas and suggestions, and for that, we are grateful.

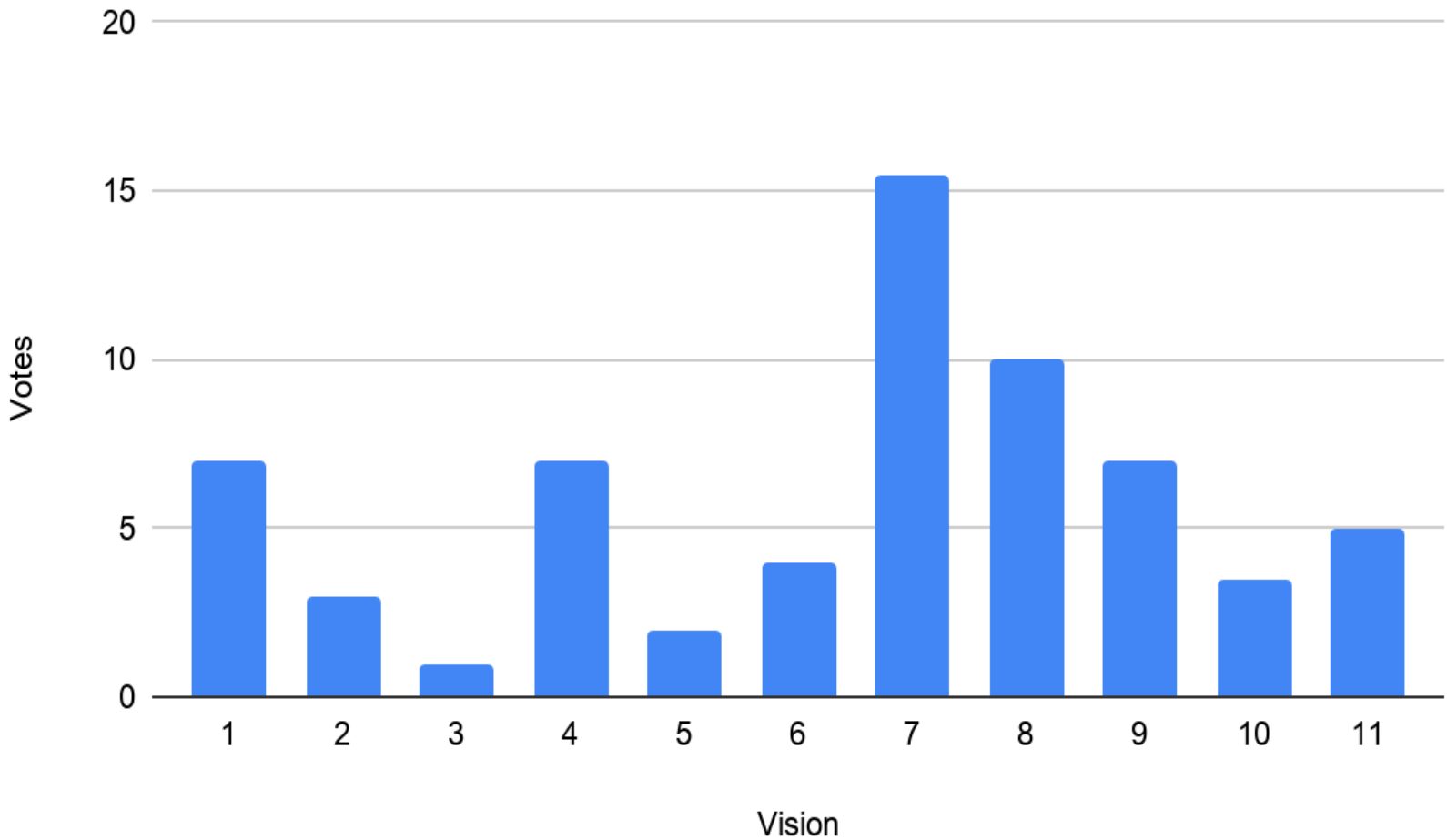
In the following pages, you will see some of the findings from the focus groups and December community forum.

Vision for Knox:

Based on feedback collected from the September community forums, 11 sample statements were developed and provided to the focus groups to start trying to understand what the community would like to see in the Vision:

- 1. An embracing and diverse community that cares for its people and the environment.
- 2. Knox: A place that you can come home to.
- 3. Hopeful, healthy, community focused Knox.
- 4. Knox is a place of opportunity and potential, where our people are supported and our environment flourishes.
- 5. A safe and supportive community where everyone has a voice.
- 6. Knox is a safe and friendly place that is inclusive of the whole community.
- 7. A vibrant, accessible and inclusive community that nurtures and supports its people, businesses and the environment.
- 8. Knox: where we connect with our people and our environment, ensuring they are safe, supported and have every opportunity to thrive.
- 9. A clean, green, happy and healthy place, now and for future generations.
- 10. Knox: Growing, sustainable, connected communities.
- 11. Knox: A safe, vibrant, healthy and innovative city.

Which sample visions resonated the most?



Success, Priorities and Council's Role

1 During the November focus groups, participants were asked to consider what success could look like in Knox over the next 10 years, and what we, as a community, might need to prioritise to ensure we get there.

2 At the community forum, we asked participants what else we might consider in terms of success and priorities. We also asked what Council's role could be to contribute to that success.

The following pages outline what we heard.



Goal 1: We value out natural and built environment

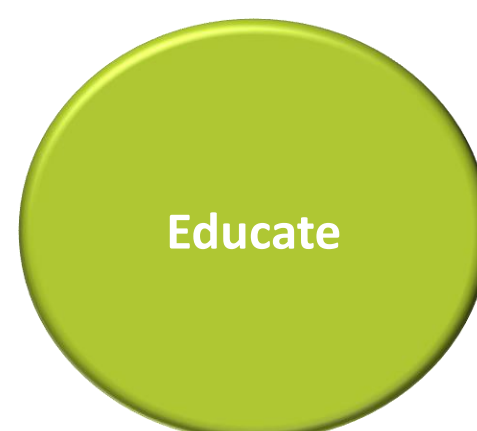
What success could look like:

- Circular economy - Knox becomes a centre of excellence with energy and materials conservation
- Increase canopy coverage
- Walking and cycling tracks are preserved and built upon
- Closer relationships between environment and sporting clubs
- Energy from waste disposal management
- User pays - waste disposal - pay per Kg
- Vertical farming to provide local produce
- Housing lot sizes that allow for a tree to be planted next to homes
- Community micro grid - community level battery storage, p2p electricity
- Rate payer incentives to reduce carbon footprint at the household level

Priorities:

- Encourage individual actions to reduce waste and care for the environment
- Strengthen and support local environment groups
- Protect and preserve original bushland and ensure it belongs to the community
- Encourage local businesses to reduce waste, particularly food waste
- Pest and feral animal control
- Promote and support permaculture education
- Community awareness about the importance of being responsible for reducing litter
- Increased maintenance of all Council assets (reserves & walking connections, not just sporting fields)
- Manage and protect our waterways - too much rubbish ending up in our waterways
- Don't construct buildings too high that we lose the beauty of the views and surroundings
- Encourage local businesses to use buying power for social impact

What Council could do to contribute to our success



Goal 2: We have housing to meet out changing needs

What success could look like:

- New housing developments should not be at the detriment of the environment
- Housing for everyone - no homelessness in Knox
- Appropriate mix of housing to suit different needs
- Community has a greater say in planning decisions than developers
- Things in place to protect the few historical buildings that we have in Knox
- Accessibility for people with disabilities
- Sustainable subdivision
- Approve architecture that is conducive to the surroundings
- New urbanism design principals

Priorities:

- Embrace innovations such as 3D printing and tiny houses
- Consider what type of housing is appropriate for just one or two people, for families, for the elderly, for people with disabilities
- Funds to help bridge the gap between social housing and private market
- Take control and less hand off to state government

What Council could do to contribute to our success



Goal 3: We can move around easily

What success could look like:

- Public transport is equally accessible, no matter where in Knox you live or your level of mobility
- Access to different transportation options to get to key areas e.g. Knox shopping centre
- Equal focus on safe walkability, wheelchair ability, as well as transport
- Separation of different forms of transport to reduce points of confluence
- Driverless taxis/ electric buses/ smart transportation - digital updates when buses are to arrive
- Mixed transport options. Less reliance on cars more on walkable suburbs
- Safe footpaths for people with mobility issues and gradients on footpaths and other areas e.g. parks and reserves

Priorities:

- Rowville rail line and public transportation options for north-south corridor
- Extend the tram to Knox
- Addressing the monkey bike issue along walking tracks
- Footpath and bike track upgrades and maintenance
- Increasing transport segregation
- Increased bus shelters

What Council could do to contribute to our success



Goal 4: We are safe and secure

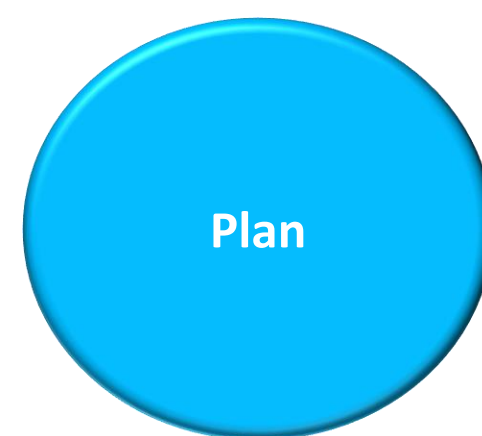
What success could look like:

- Access to appropriate people to call on for help when feeling unsafe
- Increased perception of safety within Knox
- Smart lighting - sensor/ CCTV based providing safety

Priorities:

- Neighbourhood watch or similar community-led system
- Identifying and fixing possible areas of concern
- Proactive policing and local 24 hour police station; PSOs at train stations
- Clean up and facelift of Boronia train station

What Council could do to contribute to our success



Goal 5: We have a strong regional economy, local employment and learning opportunities

What success could look like:

- Knox is a renewable energy leader with a sustainable economy (link to environment)
- Increased attractiveness of Knox as location for organisations and industries to set up and do business
- Growth in local employment
- Increased number of people who live and work in Knox
- Increased number of people with disability who are gainfully employed
- Increased youth engagement and employment
- Parental education for primary school aged children
- Innovation hubs and start-ups encouraged
- Stable, supportive and accessible local employment for aging population
- STEM education, e.g. to improve oral health
- Quality early childhood education - education starts at the beginning

Priorities:

- Establish renewable energy grid in Knox and lower cost of electricity
- Establish Knox as a strong business hub and leverage its geographic position
- Conduct research to understand and identify possible growth industries and jobs of the future
- Establish co-working hubs, spaces and networking opportunities
- Ensure that infrastructure and built environment helps support businesses
- Ensure that regulatory environment is easy to deal with
- Ensure that residents have access to reliable internet coverage/ Lobby NBN to upgrade infrastructure
- Train youth to make use of change and opportunities
- Ensure that businesses are aware of available programs and resources
- Work with high schools and businesses to promote local employment
- Help and advice for young people (20-35 years old) who have innovative business ideas
- Support and education for people with disability who want to establish own small or micro business
- Support working and learning from home post COVID
- Incentives for innovative start-ups
- More three-level education sites in Knox
- Link education programs and facilities to local sporting clubs.

What Council could do to contribute to our success



Goal 6: We are happy, healthy and well

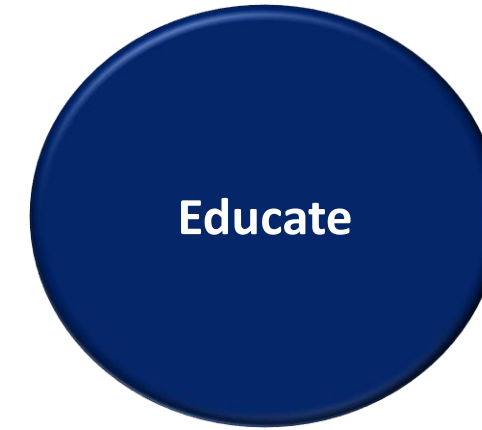
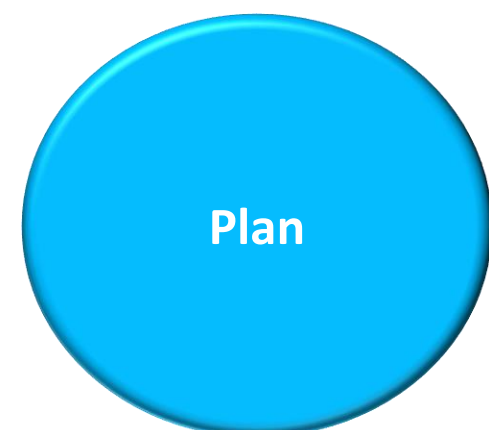
What success could look like:

- Reduced obesity rate (e.g. by 10%)
- Reduced abuse of alcohol rate
- Maintain level of immunisation and resilience
- Improved mental health, reduced levels of depression
- Everyone has a home and is living life to the fullest (link to housing)
- Increased number of people you call on in their local area for support
- Visual and performance art to improve mental health and reduce depression
- Use of technology to improve health and wellbeing
- Spiritual well-being for those who are unable to access religious services due to transport/mobility issues
- An active community
- Housing and wrap around health services together
- Men's and women's circles
- Comprehensive drug treatment centre
- A community with good oral health

Priorities:

- Ensure continued support and education about healthy lifestyle choices for parents beyond early years
- Reduce number of alcohol outlets in Knox
- Educate community on how to live a more balanced and healthy lifestyle
- Ensure that environment and infrastructure is age friendly and supports healthy lifestyle
- Increase community connection, particularly at a neighbourhood level using community champions
- Directory of community groups to get involved in - no matter their size
- Drug and alcohol education for youth, focused on harm minimisation and eliminating the binge culture
- Programs to increase mental resilience, especially among young people
- Invest in neighbourhood houses and cultural centres to increase community connection
- Increase arts engagement in supporting mental health promotion and recovery
- Develop a men's shed in central Knox
- Partnering with Health Services to promote mental health awareness through Council webinars

What Council could do to contribute to our success



Goal 7: We are inclusive, feel a sense of belonging and value our identity

What success could look like:

- Increased sense of being valued and sense of empowerment
- Cultural festivals & use community space to bring the community together like markets, etc.
- Street parties
- Recognition of First Nations People
- Aware of barriers which inhibit community inclusion
- Emotional safety for diverse people - limiting structural barriers and prejudice, and enhance acceptance for individuals
- Reconnection with land with facilitation from first nations
- Free Wi-Fi hubs so people can engage online when transport is an issue

Priorities:

- Welfare and support services should be non-judgemental
- Train community leaders to create hyper local support groups
- Strong link between this and accessibility for those with disability
- Highlighting and working with the link between this area and mental health
- Promote partnership between community clubs
- Invest in neighbourhood houses and the Knox learning alliance

What Council could do to contribute to our success



Goal 8: We have confidence in decision making

What success could look like:

- Council is talking and getting feedback from everyone, particularly those in circumstances prone to social isolation
- Representatives and leaders are accessible and approachable
- Community voice is heard, acknowledged and acted upon
- One-stop shop service hub for all Council services with online forms
- Increased accessibility to council data, e.g. previous budgets
- Those impacted the most are engaged with trust and respect
- Increased oversight of council plan goal tracking
- Greater council transparency of decisions and actions

Priorities:

- Communications from Council on available services
- Language used is inclusive rather than exclusive and isolating
- Reduced reliance on forms, especially for at need community members
- Getting out into and across the community - going to where the people are - to get feedback (listening posts, community forums)
- Ensure all demographics are represented in responses
- All councillors to get on "next-door" to get local immediate current issues and feedback
- Better feedback to ratepayers on where money is spent
- Use of Citizen Juries, selected by lot, for engagement on strategic decision making

What Council could do to contribute to our success



What's next

We will be keeping the conversations going as we continue to develop the new Community and Council Plans.

If you're interested in participating in future events, or would like further information on the development of the new Community and Council Plans, please email communityplan@knox.vic.gov.au and keep an eye out on our website – www.knox.vic.gov.au/communityplan.