



SRL EAST BUS NETWORK STUDIES

Client: Department of Transport and Planning (DTP)

Location: VIC, Australia

Project value: \$320,000

Project lifecycle stage: Strategise

Duration: Jul 2019 – Nov 2023

At a glance: The 90-kilometre Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) will link every major rail line from the Frankston line to the Werribee line via Melbourne Airport, better connecting Victorians to jobs, retail, education, health services and each other. It is Victoria's biggest infrastructure investment. Stage 1 of the project represents the SRL East alignment from Cheltenham to Box Hill.

Objectives

For SRL East to reach its full potential, a reform of the surrounding metropolitan bus network was needed to provide fast, direct access to SRL stations and precincts. Across 2019 - 2020, DTP set out to develop an initial Reference Design Network to inform the planning of SRL and input into the VITM model. In 2022 and 2023, building upon the Reference Design Network, DTP sought to undertake a more detailed review to provide more certainty around the Reference Design Network and key bus interchanges, while allowing for flexibility for network changes that may arise in the next 10-15 years.

Our services

In 2019 and 2020, SmedTech was engaged to develop the Initial Reference Design Network for the SRL project from Cheltenham to Melbourne Airport. During this engagement, we:

- Performed a desktop analysis and patronage assessment of current bus routes that either operate within each SRL precinct or provide connections to key activity nodes along the SRL corridor.
- Produced the Reference Design Network to inform the planning of SRL and provided input to the VITM model.

In 2022 and 2023, SmedTech was re-engaged by DTP in association with the Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA) to undertake the SRL East Bus Network Study which built upon the earlier work in 2019 and 2020. This more detailed study entailed undertaking an integrated set of tasks at a network and precinct level, which involved:

- Identification of primary travel markets for routes within the review area.
- Review of existing DTP network against SRL Reference Bus Network to identify where it aligned/doesn't align.
- Identification of Movement & Place classifications of strategic bus links to understand other modal networks using key routes (e.g., general traffic, walk, cycle, bus, tram, interchange).
- Review of the SRL Reference Bus Network considering the above, as well as the impacts of North East Link, Victoria's Bus Plan, bus reform principles and any other key network changes.
- Identification of and/or further development of the key strategic bus routes providing access to each SRL East precinct.
- Development of an evaluation framework to assess route alignments.
- Modelling of SRL East Bus Interchanges including the development of more compact, integrated bus stations.

Our impact

SmedTech produced a foundational plan for the broader bus network to support a fully integrated transport system along the SRL East Corridor. The roadmap included significant proposals for route reform to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the network and to enhance access to SRL precincts.

This roadmap provided the foundation for future more detailed network planning in the lead up to the opening of SRL East.