

CHANGES TO THE FINAL WEST MELBOURNE STRUCTURE PLAN IN RESPONSE TO ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK



Introduction

The final West Melbourne Structure Plan celebrates the unique characteristics of West Melbourne through tailored built form controls, a celebration of character and heritage buildings, creation of a new high street at Spencer Street and turning 'grey to green' by unlocking 10,000m² of new open space.

The draft West Melbourne Structure Plan (the draft plan) was endorsed for community and stakeholder consultation at the Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) on 4 July 2017. The draft plan was informed by two phases of engagement and a range of supporting background studies.

Consultation on the draft plan, the third phase of engagement, was from 5 July to 20 August 2017. It included community workshops, information sessions for key businesses, landowners, industry professionals and government stakeholders, pop-up sessions on the streets of West Melbourne and an interactive Participate Melbourne page. In addition, an independent review was undertaken by the Office of the Victorian Government Architects, Victorian Design Review Panel due to the importance of the Plan.

Consultation on the draft structure plan

The draft plan was well received by residents, workers and visitors, with almost three quarters of the 157 respondents supporting all or most parts of the draft plan. This included support for the proposed floor area ratio controls (FARs), proposals to deliver affordable housing, new open space and green spaces, and proposed walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure.

Concerns from the community included not having mandatory height controls due to the quality and scale of development recently built, under construction or approved in West Melbourne, as well as concerns about the impacts of the West Gate Tunnel.

Landowners and developers supported the clarity that the structure plan provides and many of its proposals and actions, but suggested the proposed FARs and discretionary height limits are too low and that the requirement for employment floor space may be too restrictive.

The Victorian Design Review Panel commended the robust and design-led process undertaken by the City of Melbourne which 'articulated an alternative vision and place-based approach to urban renewal'. It suggested strengthening the vision of West Melbourne in the context of the city, as a 'counterpoint' to the adjacent high growth areas of the Central City and Arden, and made specific suggestions regarding built form controls. The draft plan was also supported by Transport for Victoria.

The proposed changes to the final structure plan (the final plan) take into account the comments received on the draft plan as well as additional testing.

Main changes to the final structure plan

(all page references relate to the final structure plan)

Actions to mitigate impacts of the West Gate Tunnel added/strengthened

The structure plan establishes a framework to deliver a vision for West Melbourne in line with the City of Melbourne's commitment to making great places for people. The West Gate Tunnel does not alter the vision for West Melbourne. The potential impacts of the West Gate Tunnel have been considered during the development of the plan.

Additional actions have been included in the final plan, including advocating for no expansion of road capacity of local roads in West Melbourne or surrounding areas (Action 22, see page 63) and advocating for all local roads in West Melbourne to be retained as local roads (Action 24, see page 63). Existing actions have been strengthened including to *strongly* advocate to Transport for Victoria to change the status of Spencer Street from an arterial to a local road (Action 17, see page 61).

Vision statements strengthened

Following feedback from the community and from the Victorian Design Review Panel, the overall vision for West Melbourne has been updated to strengthen the understanding of West Melbourne as a distinct neighbourhood with its own identity as distinct from the Hoddle Grid and future renewal area of Arden.

West Melbourne has five identified areas of character and the visions for each of the five places in West Melbourne have also been strengthened to reflect this and the specific qualities of each place.

See the vision on page 11, diagram on page 21 and 'Part 3: Places' from page 80 of the plan for further information.

Floor area ratio calculation changed

The floor area ratio calculation in the draft plan proposed to include underground basements. As basement parking would have been included in the floor area ratio calculation, it was seen as a possible way of discouraging significant off-street parking from being provided.

The calculation has been changed in the final plan to be consistent with the floor area ratio calculation in the central city (which is the gross floor area above ground of all buildings on a site - see page 44 for the full definition and more information). The outcome of this will be more floorspace available for higher order uses. Off-street parking will be discouraged by a proposed maximum parking rate for off-street parking (see below and Objective 13 on page 70).

Additional built form testing was carried out by Breathe Architecture to test the impact of this change. The testing found that development could achieve excellent design outcomes and was unlikely to exceed the preferred maximum heights on the majority of sites. There is no change to the proposed floor area ratios for the different areas of West Melbourne (see Objective 1, page 39).

Preferred maximum heights on Dudley Street and Adderley Street increased

As a result of further testing of built form outcomes in the Spencer and Adderley areas of West Melbourne, and as a result of stakeholder feedback on the draft plan, the proposed preferred maximum height controls along Adderley Street (from Dudley Street to Hawke Street) have increased from 4 to 6 storeys and fronting Dudley Street (the northern side, in the Spencer area) from 8 to 10 storeys. It is considered that the increased height controls can provide a better urban design outcome along these streets and help ensure that development can respond better to a site's context (for example, by stepping down building heights closer to existing lower scale or heritage buildings). While the preferred maximum height controls have increased in these locations, there is no change to the floor area ratio controls as proposed in the draft plan.

Character buildings celebrated

Along with identified heritage buildings, there are some 'character' buildings that are not protected through the planning scheme but which contribute to West Melbourne's visual identity. An action has been included in the final plan to investigate the use of the floor area ratio controls to help incentivise the retention of character buildings to ensure that the distinctive visual identity of West Melbourne is celebrated and retained.

See Objective 3 on page 49 for further information.

Maximum parking rates for off-street parking made more definitive

The action to deliver Objective 13 to update off-street private car parking requirements to support a less car dependent transport system has been strengthened from 'investigate' to 'propose' a maximum parking rate for off-street parking. This is due to new data relating to off-street parking that shows there are only 24 vehicles for every 100 people moving into West Melbourne and that 64 per cent of off-street parking bays are empty. Any new car parking is to be encouraged to be provided through precinct-based facilities of over 50 spaces, which should be publicly accessible and include provision for car share.

Commercial 1 zoning removed

Objective 5 relates to establishing a new local activity centre along Spencer Street and enhancing the area around North Melbourne (future West Melbourne) Station with active uses. While previously these areas were proposed to be rezoned to Commercial 1 zone, the proposed Special Use Zoning (see Objective 4, page 53) can include similar requirements to the Commercial 1 zone.

Illustrative masterplan included

Following feedback from the community to see the proposals on one plan, an illustrative masterplan has been included (see page 17).

Affordable housing requirement strengthened

The wording in the final structure plan has changed from requiring applicants to consider providing 6 per cent affordable housing on development sites in Flagstaff, Spencer and Station Precinct to 'applicants should provide a minimum of 6 per cent affordable housing (measured as 6 per cent of the proposed gross residential floorspace) for developments in Flagstaff, Spencer and Station Precinct. If Victorian Government affordable housing policies are updated, this target will be increased.

Additional references have been included in the accompanying text to state that, if applicants propose not to provide affordable housing, they will need to prove why, through a more rigorous 'open book' approach to demonstrate their concerns.

See Objective 7 on page 57 for further information.

Implementation options strengthened

'Objective 18: Help ensure delivery of public realm and community infrastructure' has been added to the final plan to explain and elevate the need for a Development Contribution Plan (DCP), or equivalent, in West Melbourne. This will help contribute towards the cost of new infrastructure (such as street improvements) to help meet the future needs of the growing community.

See Objective 18 on page 80 for further information.

Employment evidence strengthened

The objective, and related actions, 'to support mixed use development to facilitate a range of business and employment opportunities' has been strengthened by including additional evidence relating to the future employment types and demand in West Melbourne.

See Objective 4 on page 53 for further information.

Stronger references to Plan Melbourne

Plan Melbourne is the Victorian Government's 35-year blueprint to ensure Melbourne becomes more sustainable, productive and liveable as its population approaches 8 million. More reference to how the structure plan will help achieve the principles, outcomes, directions and policies of Plan Melbourne have been included.

See Part 1.4 on page 19 for further information.

Minor changes to the final structure plan

- An additional chapter titled '1.1 The Structure Plan' (page 9) has been added to the beginning of the plan to clarify the approach and structure of the plan.
- A summary of the engagement findings from the draft structure plan has been included in part 1.6.
- Some actions have been consolidated and amended to better reflect the objectives of the final plan.
- Actions that repeated work already underway at the City of Melbourne have been removed.
- The numbering pattern of actions has also been changed for clarity (i.e. from 1.1, 2.1, 2.2... to 1, 2, 3...).
- All the actions related to the planning scheme amendment have been consolidated into one action.