
Request to be heard?: Yes

Precinct: General

Full Name: Hugh Utting

Organisation: Victorian Young Planners, Planning Institute of Australia

Affected property:

Attachment 1: Planning_Institute

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: Please see attachment.



Victorian Young Planners Committee
Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria Division)
Level 3, 124 Exhibition Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000

Friday 15th December 2017
Fishermans Bend Taskforce

Dear Sir/Madam

Victorian Young Planners - Draft Fishermans Bend Framework and Submission to Planning Scheme Amendment GC81

The Victorian Young Planners Committee is pleased to make this submission on the Fishermans Bend Taskforce about the Planning Scheme Amendment GC81 and the Draft Fishermans Bend Framework. Given the significant potential of Fishermans Bend in facilitating the development of an equitable, sustainable and liveable Melbourne, we value the opportunity to provide feedback. This submission identifies and responds to the themes of particular interest and relevance to our members and, more broadly, to young Victorians.

The Victorian Young Planners (VYP) is a group of planning students and recent graduates, supported by the Victorian Division of the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA). A Committee is appointed each year to facilitate connection, provide support and inform young planners through events, regular updates and representation. One of the roles of the VYP Committee is to represent the young planner's cohort by submitting to policy reform and other planning matters to ensure the important voice and professional opinions of young planners is recognised.

Overall the VYP endorse the vision that the Framework proposes. The Framework sets a positive, liveable and sustainable vision for Fishermans Bend. It is evident that the Framework has sought to learn from the outcome of previous urban renewal projects in Australia. However, the VYP has a number of concerns about the Framework relating to transport, affordable housing, built form control and climate change in particular.

Planning Scheme Amendment GC81

The VYP are excited about the proposed Planning Scheme Amendment GC81. We see it as a great opportunity to establish planning controls that promote sustainable, high quality and commercially successful developments and vibrant neighbourhoods. Additionally, we see it as an opportunity to

re-establish transparency and trust in the Fishermans Bend planning system and development process.

The VYP support the introduction of minimum floor area ratios, density in developments, active street frontages and diversity of housing options. The application of Floor Area Uplift to deliver community infrastructure is a positive development. We would like to see some clarity about what the minimum expectations are in regard to the quality and quantity of infrastructure delivered.

Greater emphasis should be placed on ensuring the all proposed developments for residential, commercial or community facilities are of a high design quality. Melbourne is being ruined by the proliferation of badly designed buildings, especially in new waterside high rise residential developments. While we are encouraged regarding the wording of the amendment to 'encourage' and 'integrating' design quality in each proposal. We would like to see the Office of the Victorian Government Architect play a greater part in the development of the site.

Built Form Controls

We note the inclusion of a new Schedule to the Design and Development Overlay to guide built form outcomes within Fishermans Bend. Furthermore, the floor area ratios within the Capitol City Zone provisions and are supportive of these as a mandatory provisions. Having regard to street wall and setback provisions, we are not supportive of mandatory controls. While a mandatory FAR is responsible and will provide for an appropriate density outcomes, we are of the opinion that other urban design measures should be designed on a contextual basis and that mandatory provisions that dictate design do not equate to a positive design outcome.

In addition, it is felt that there is a lack of plain language within the DDO schedule that clearly articulates what these mandatory provisions are attempting to achieve. If design objectives and decision guidelines can clearly articulate the outcome sought to be achieved, then we do not think mandatory controls (have specific regard to street wall and setbacks) are necessary – we are concerned that these will result in a Fishermans Bend that is awash with the same type of building and a lack of diversity in architectural outcome.

Transport

The lack of provision of sustainable transport infrastructure is an issue that faces a number of communities across Melbourne. We applaud the Taskforces commitment and strategic vision to integrate sustainable transport modes at the heart of the communities. As well, as clear designation of where proposed rail and tram infrastructure would be located.

The VYP is concerned that no funding commitments to deliver these works have been earmarked. We are concerned that a lack of funds or political will prevent critical transport infrastructure being delivered to the community prior to a significant population residing or working in the area.

We note and strongly support the introduction of the Parking Overlay schedule for the area. We see this as vital in ensuring a mode shift and would recommend these provisions be extended to other areas of Metropolitan Melbourne. However, as per the above comments; without the appropriate provision of active transport infrastructure the area will fail in its ambition for a complete shift away from the private automobile.

The funding, planning and construction of transport infrastructure is complex and involves multiple stakeholders and agencies. In light of record Federal and State Government investment in public transport, we are surprised that Fishermans Bend would miss out on funding for transport projects. We have raised this issue with other Departments, Agencies and elected officials in submissions and meetings. We believe greater urgency should be placed into constructing shared user or dedicated active transport paths. Which would provide an important transport opportunity for the first residents.

Affordable Housing

Increasing the provision of social and affordable housing in Melbourne and across Victoria is an extremely complex problem. There is no exception at Fishermans Bend. The VYP are aware that the provision of new affordable and social dwellings requires significant capital and political will. Our members feel passionately about the provision of affordable and social housing, because it affects societies most vulnerable. In addition, it ensures that planning can facilitate the development of urban renewal areas that provide for a diverse population, not a homogenous one.

While we support the Frameworks 6% affordable housing target and welcome the proposed mechanism to facilitate the development. Our membership would like to see a more ambitious target set by the Taskforce. Our preference would be at least 10-20% target. In light of strong profits from Australia's largest property development companies, record Melbourne dwelling prices increases and stagnate wage growth, affordable housing is becoming out of reach for many young and middle class Australians.

In addition, we would like to see more emphasis on securing affordable housing via floor area uplift (we're concerned that this option will not be utilised by the development industry). Alternatively, similar to American cities such as Bolder (CO), Denver (CO), San Fransisco (CA) & East New York (NY) we would like to see the option of an affordable housing fund in order to secure land within the precinct to provide for social housing projects.

There is a lack of clarity, having regard to the hierarchy of controls of the Planning Scheme as to the enforceability of the 6% affordable housing provision. We would like to see this as a mandatory provision or with an alternative scenario proposed (such as the above affordable housing fund). We acknowledge that the proposition of an affordable housing fund may not be appealing from a political perspective, we suggest to pre-empt this concern that the fund is explored in association with the reduction or reallocation of funds from the MPL Levy (whereby this levy could be used to fund social housing). Having regard to the design of buildings, we would like to see strict provisions in place to

ensure that we avoid the “poor door” scenario and that the “salt and pepper” approach to affordable housing is adopted. As a flagship urban renewal project, we believe the Taskforce, Victorian Government and private sector stakeholders have a social responsibility to deliver affordable housing options at Fishermans Bend.

Climate Change

Climate change is the most significant social, economic and environmental challenge that the world is facing. We have consistently heard from our peers that it is one of their primary concerns. Regrettably, we have come to the conclusion that the Taskforce is not seriously considering the long term impacts of climate change on the development.

The Framework has addressed the environment impacts of the development for the current and medium term residents and workforce of Fishermans Bend. We know that the Taskforce has spent considerable funds, time and effort to ensure that development meets the Federal and State environmental regulation. We recognise and support this.

Fishermans Bend provides an amazing opportunity for the Taskforce to work with other parts of Government and the private sector to develop an innovative, ecological sustainable development, as has been achieved in urban renewal projects in Denmark and Holland in particular. As we know that sustainable buildings and ecological diverse precincts provide liveable and profitable environments.

Conclusion

It is evident that the Taskforce has learnt the lessons from previous Australian urban renewal developments. We acknowledge that the Taskforce is handicapped by the sites historical strategic planning failures. In light of the successful delivery of mixed use ecological sustainable integrated transport developments with high quality public realms around the world. The VYP has high expectations of the Taskforce and its private sector stakeholders to deliver on the prescribed vision. The catalyst projects undertaken by the Victorian Government have given us reason to be optimistic. Fishermans Bend is too important of a site to be inflicted with substandard buildings, void of infrastructure and an urban vibrancy and culture.

We look forward to providing the Taskforce with further feedback in the future. Should you have any queries about this submission please contact Hugh Utting at 0431 789 572 or by email on vic@planning.org.au

Yours Sincerely,



Hugh Utting
State Convenor, Victorian Young Planners Network