

## Planning for the Preston Market Precinct

### Frequently asked questions

[www.engage.vic.gov.au/preston-market-precinct](http://www.engage.vic.gov.au/preston-market-precinct)

You can contact the project team (03) 9651 9600 or [preston@vpa.vic.gov.au](mailto:preston@vpa.vic.gov.au)

### **Background information**

#### **What is the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA)?**

The Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) is an independent statutory authority that reports to the Victorian Minister for Planning and is a key source of strategic planning advice.

The VPA's main task is to make sure Melbourne and Victoria's regions remain great places to live. This requires vision and long-term planning to ensure Victorians have equitable access to employment, public transport, attractive public space and affordable housing for our growing population.

The VPA is responsible for delivering a number of planning projects, including the review of planning controls for the Preston Market Precinct and preparation of the draft Structure Plan and associated draft planning scheme amendment.

#### **What is a Structure Plan?**

A structure plan is a land use plan that sets a long-term vision for how an area will develop in the future. It provides certainty for community members and developers about what change is expected in an area and can respond to land use and development, transport and parking, building and urban design, heritage, character, employment, open spaces, infrastructure provision and other matters. The intention is for the structure plan to be implemented through a planning scheme amendment which rezones the land.

#### **What is a planning scheme amendment?**

A planning scheme amendment is an essential legal process that needs to occur to change the planning rules that apply to an area.

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* sets out all the steps that must be followed to amend a planning scheme. The planning rules that apply to Preston are included in the Darebin Planning Scheme.

Any proposed changes to the Darebin Planning Scheme such as rezoning or changes to maximum building heights will be subject to public consultation and independent review. The final decision on changes to the planning scheme is made by the responsible Minister.

### **Why is this work happening?**

Melbourne's major planning strategy, *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*, designates Preston-High Street as a Major Activity Centre, which means that it must continue to grow and evolve to accommodate increasing demands for housing and jobs in this area.

The Preston Market Precinct is a strategic development site due to its proximity to public transport, the High Street shops, services, employment opportunities and Preston City Oval. The proposed structure plan and planning controls will provide increased certainty around the future development of this important precinct, including the ongoing operation of the market, the quality of development, environmental outcomes, provision for a range of housing types (including affordable housing), community facilities and accessible open space.

### **How is the VPA working with the City of Darebin?**

The Victorian Planning Authority is leading the review and preparation of planning controls for the Preston Market Precinct in consultation with the City of Darebin.

### **What does it mean for the project to be "Fast Tracked"?**

The strategic importance of the Preston Market precinct and the Victorian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the Preston Market Precinct project being identified as part of the VPA's Fast Track Program. You can read more about the VPA's Fast Track Program online at [www.vpa.vic.gov.au/fast-track-projects](http://www.vpa.vic.gov.au/fast-track-projects).

Following the final phase of public consultation, the VPA will ask the Minister for Planning to refer unresolved submissions to the VPA Projects Standing Advisory Committee to consider unresolved matters and provide advice to the Minister and the VPA prior to the VPA finalising the amendment for the Minister for Planning's consideration.

## **Project information**

### **What is this project?**

On 31 July 2017, the Minister for Planning, the Hon. Richard Wynne MP, requested the VPA to review the current planning controls that apply across the Preston Market Precinct in consultation with Darebin City Council, landowners, businesses, and the community.

In 2018 and in response to the findings of that review, the Minister asked the VPA to prepare a structure plan and planning scheme amendment to guide future development in the precinct.

### **What is the boundary of the precinct?**

Preston Market Precinct is bordered by Murray Road, Cramer Street, St Georges Road (excluding the existing apartment building and rail corridor) and the rear of the High Street shops to the east.

### **Who owns the land?**

Preston Market Precinct includes the Preston Market that is predominantly owned and operated by Preston Market Developments Pty Ltd, which is a privately owned company. There are additional owners for several parcels of land on the site of the market who are also engaged in this planning process. VicTrack also owns some land in the precinct.

### **What changes can I expect to see?**

In addition to having a fresh food market, the precinct will allow for commercial and retail buildings, housing (including affordable housing), entertainment, open space and community uses. Improved walking and cycling access to the precinct and better connections to the new train station, local roads and the High Street shops will also be delivered.

### **How has the VPA reached its decision about the planning changes?**

At the direction of the Minister for Planning, the VPA reviewed the precinct's planning controls and identified misalignment between the existing controls and the strategic planning intent expressed in *Plan Melbourne* and other state and local policies.

The VPA worked with the City of Darebin, Victorian Government departments and agencies and consulted widely with the local community to prepare a draft structure plan and planning scheme amendment that would guide future development in the precinct.

### **Why can't the precinct remain as it is?**

The Preston Market Precinct is a strategic development site that is well placed to accommodate more housing, jobs and services for the future population. Its location next to major public transport facilities is particularly valuable to people of all abilities and incomes.

The market building also needs investment to address its ageing physical condition and upgrade its back-of-house facilities so that it can continue to operate safely into the future.

### **Will there be spaces for the community to gather?**

The precinct will be more than a market and a parking lot, it will be a significant new part of the Preston community. Our draft plan includes places for people to live, work, meet and shop.

The draft plan proposes community spaces including:

- A 10% public open space contribution encouraging different activities and green open spaces
- A community centre with kindergarten and related facilities
- Public spaces along the major pedestrian links through the precinct and adjacent to the market
- A new public space along the southern edge of the market fronting Cramer Street

## **The Market**

### **What will happen to the current market?**

The draft structure plan and planning controls would retain the market in the precinct. They protect the market's heritage and character and set objectives for its ongoing operation and requirements for new market buildings and communal spaces. The planning controls can't control how the market is run because it is privately owned and operated.

Under the proposed planning controls, the existing fruit and vegetable shed will remain in place and the rest of the market will reorient around it to extend towards a new main entrance on Cramer Street.

Any redevelopment of the market must be of a similar size and provide similar numbers and sizes of stalls.

### **What about the market traders?**

The market is an essential component of the Preston Market Precinct and the draft structure plan and controls will retain the market, its character and ensure the diversity of traders and their stalls is retained. When the time comes for a portion of the market building to be moved to run parallel to High Street, market traders will be able to move from their current stalls into their new stalls with minimal disruption during the building and transition stages.

Proposed changes to the market building will not take effect until the planning process for the Precinct has commenced and the Minister has made his decision about the proposal put forward by the VPA.

### **How will the market be managed in the future?**

Unlike most fresh food markets in Melbourne, the Preston Market is privately owned and managed. In addition to protecting the market through strong planning controls, the VPA supports Council and the market owner to commit to a management agreement.

The agreement should address community priorities that cannot be solely addressed by the planning scheme, such as:

- A commitment to keep the market open and operating regardless of whether or when the site is redeveloped
- Retaining a minimum proportion of stalls as fresh food-focused
- Avoiding franchises
- Prioritising and supporting existing traders and ensuring new traders fit with the market's identity and ethos
- Ensuring a multicultural mix of products
- Programming community events within and around the market
- Building a new public connection from the market through to High Street
- Maintaining public spaces and community gardens throughout the precinct.

### **How is the heritage of the market and its diverse offering being protected?**

Heritage Victoria and the Victorian Heritage Council have both determined the market does not have State heritage significance and that it not be included in the Victorian Heritage Register.

However, the Heritage Council of Victoria recommended we consider a local heritage overlay to protect local significance.

Our heritage consultant recommends that the market has local heritage significance so our plans include a new heritage overlay which will require new development to appropriately address materials, signage and other elements, to protect the cultural heritage significance, identity and character of the market.

You can read about the market's heritage significance on our Statement of Significance document found in the Document Library under "Incorporated Documents".

### **Will it be safer for pedestrians (especially children) to enter and exit the market?**

Our plans include new traffic signals and improved connections to make it safer to walk and cycle through the precinct. The plans also move carparking away from pedestrian areas.

These changes, along with a welcoming new entrance and public space on Cramer Street, will make the market easier and safer to access.

## **Buildings**

### **What is the proposed height of new buildings and why?**

Most of the market area will be restricted to 12 metres in height. To accommodate new residents and businesses, building heights of up to 12 storeys adjacent Cramer Street, 16 storeys in the centre of the precinct and 20 storeys towards Murray Road are being proposed in the draft Structure Plan, subject to meeting the design guidelines on overshadowing, heritage and urban design in the draft Structure Plan.

Under the proposed planning controls, the varied building heights will prevent unreasonable overshadowing of public spaces.

## **Carparking and traffic**

### **Where will I park my car once development occurs?**

The current level of public car parking for market users will be maintained either below or above ground in new buildings. Car parking for new residents and workers will be provided either below or above ground in new buildings as development progresses in the remainder of the precinct.

## **What new infrastructure will be put in place to handle the additional load on transport, traffic and parking?**

The Preston Market Precinct is already being improved with new infrastructure, such as the new Preston Train station that is currently being delivered by the State Government.

The new Preston Station and elevated rail line means that locals and Preston Market shoppers can enter and exit the new station safely via an open forecourt, allowing safer and more convenient access to the heart of Preston.

There is also plenty of existing public transport, including buses and nearby trams on High Street and St Georges Road which service the area.

The Structure Plan proposes new traffic and pedestrian/ cyclist signals and improved connections to walk, cycle or catch public transport to the market, making it easier for more people to travel through the precinct and access the new train station. Other community infrastructure and facilities, including a community centre with a kindergarten and related facilities, will be introduced over time.

## **Previous community feedback**

### **What previous consultation has occurred?**

Several phases of community consultation have been undertaken on the Preston Market Precinct planning project.

In 2018, the VPA interviewed market traders, released an on-line survey, held community drop-in sessions, and pop-up information and discussion sessions.

We also established a Community Reference Group to identify some guiding principles for the future of the precinct.

In 2019, further community consultation occurred. This included a series of deliberative workshops with community representatives to help identify future aspirations for the precinct. You can read the outcomes of previous community consultation in our summary reports at [www.vpc.vic.gov.au/preston](http://www.vpc.vic.gov.au/preston).

### **I've had a say previously, what happened to my feedback?**

The VPA received lots of feedback from the community as it prepared the draft planning documents. The reports from each phase of previous consultation can be viewed under "Supporting documentation" online at

The VPA has addressed community feedback wherever possible in the draft Structure Plan. We have prepared a community brochure which summarises what we heard previously and explains how this feedback has been considered. You can learn more in the community brochure online at [www.engage.vic.gov.au/preston-market-precinct](http://www.engage.vic.gov.au/preston-market-precinct).

## **Get Involved (community events and making a submission)**

### **I live at or own a property around the perimeter of the Preston Market Precinct – what now?**

You are invited to have your say on the proposed changes to the Preston Market Precinct, even if the plan may not directly impact you.

More information on preparing a submission can be found online at [www.engage.vic.gov.au/preston-market-precinct](http://www.engage.vic.gov.au/preston-market-precinct)

### **How can I get involved this time?**

If you would like to ask a question about the proposed planning documentation, you can attend any of the VPA's public events. These are advertised online at [www.engage.vic.gov.au/preston-market-precinct](http://www.engage.vic.gov.au/preston-market-precinct). Some events require registration, so please be sure you refer to the event details online.

If you would like to provide feedback to the proposed planning documentation, you can make a written submission that will be considered as part of the VPA's review process.

Submissions must be received by Tuesday 13 July 2021. Submissions received after this date may not be considered as part of the VPA's review and will be assessed to determine how they can be considered.

You can learn more about how to make a submission online at [www.engage.vic.gov.au/preston-market-precinct](http://www.engage.vic.gov.au/preston-market-precinct) or call the project team on (03) 9651 9600.

### **I've got questions, when can I meet with the project team?**

If you have questions or would like more information about this planning process, you can meet with the project team at one of our drop-in sessions. All the event details are online at [www.engage.vic.gov.au/preston-market-precinct](http://www.engage.vic.gov.au/preston-market-precinct).

- In person: Saturday 19 June, any time from 10:00am - 12:30pm (drop-in at any time!)
- Online: Friday 25 June, commencing 12noon - registration essential via this online form
- Online: Tuesday 29 June, commencing 5:30pm - registration essential via this online form

## **Next steps**

### **What are the next steps?**

After the consultation period ends, the VPA will review all submissions received to address concerns wherever possible. As part of this process, VPA staff will contact submitters if further clarification of their feedback is required.

If the VPA is not able to resolve all submissions, it will request the Minister for Planning to refer submissions to the Victorian Planning Authority Projects Standing Advisory Committee (VPA SAC).

If submissions are referred to the VPA SAC, the SAC will invite submitters with unresolved submissions to participate in an independent review process via the VPA SAC. The SAC will determine the best way to consider unresolved matters – either by round table discussions, written submissions, or a public hearing.

### **When will development commence?**

The draft structure plan and planning controls will guide development in the precinct for many years to come.

Once public consultation concludes on Tuesday 13 July 2021, the VPA will work to resolve submissions it receives to the draft planning documents. If submissions cannot be resolved, an independent body will hear outstanding issues and provide recommendations to the VPA to address them.

The plans will then be finalised and provided to the Minister for Planning for consideration.

If approved, any development applications that are lodged after that time will need to go through an assessment process, to determine whether the application adheres to the planning controls in the Darebin Planning Scheme.

If applications are approved, development can then start. However, construction is not expected to commence until after 2024 and this will be subject to demand. Subject to approvals and demand, development is expected to continue in stages into the 2030s.