



MINUTES
Ordinary General Meeting, Tuesday 18 July 2017, 7.38pm

Present: Helen Angwin-Sato, Nicholas Atkins, Kevin Chamberlin, Emmy Chung, Bill Cook, Jenny Cook, Kate Dundas (guest), Valerie Gerrand, David Godbold, Janet Graham, Katrina Kincade-Sharkey (visitor), Jan Lacey, Colin Long, Bridget Macwhirter, Adam Mills (guest), Jane Poynter, Beverley Rodan, Lorraine Siska, Jacqueline Stevenson and Carolyn Thompson

Apologies: Ray Cowling, Stephen Farrugia, Michael Horscroft, Rosemary John, Duncan Rouch and Geraldine Suter

The Chair, Kevin Chamberlin, welcomed members and the presenters from City of Melbourne. Adam Mills, Senior Strategic Planner, and Kate Dundas, Team Leader City Plans, would present on the draft West Melbourne Structure Plan and then take questions and observations for about 30 minutes.

Presentation by Adam Mills and Kate Dundas, City of Melbourne, on the draft West Melbourne Structure Plan

Kate said they had been working hard since the discussion paper was released and they were presenting for the first time. She was quite excited about the West Melbourne Structure Plan (WMSP) — it was different from any previous ones. Adam continued, saying the draft WMSP had been endorsed by the City of Melbourne (CoM) Planning Committee on 4 July for consultation. After the next period of community engagement (until 20 August) they would finalise the structure plan by end 2017 and start the Planning Scheme Amendment process in 2018.

The first graphic in their PowerPoint presentation showed the site of the structure plan. Adam said we needed to agree a new shared vision for West Melbourne and go through the process ending with a planning amendment. We had seen nearly 100% population growth in West Melbourne in 10 years while employment had dropped by 25%. The strategic context — Plan Melbourne 2017–2050 — doesn't identify West Melbourne as a renewal or growth area. A discussion paper, *Ideas for West Melbourne*, had been presented in February. There had been support from the community for greening and the Spencer Street proposals but concerns about car-parking, building heights and the lack of planning certainty.

The vision hadn't changed since February. He thought West Melbourne was a place where we could have different typologies while retaining the different character of distinct areas. The lack of connection to Docklands had been noted. Heights in neighbouring suburbs were different. They had responded to the different characters by dividing the plan into five precincts celebrating place: Spencer, Flagstaff, Adderley, Station Precinct and Historic Hilltop.

Density controls had been introduced in the form of **Floor Area Ratios (FARs)**. For example, 4:1 equals four storeys plus 100% site coverage, or eight storeys plus 50% site coverage. The reason for this is that West Melbourne contains small sites and large sites, residential and industrial, so this provides an appropriate response to specific sites. Height controls work with the FARs. This system had been devised through a design-led process. It means that CoM can request a proportion to be non-residential, with a minimum employment floor space requirement. There would be 6% affordable housing in some places.

In Flagstaff there would be a FAR of 6:1 with a maximum building height of 16 storeys (discretionary). The current plans work well in Historic Hilltop.

The plan caters for a projected 10,000 jobs and projected population of 8000. West Melbourne is blessed with wide streets. There is a proposed increase in the number of residential-exempt parking places. In Batman Street, they are working with St James Old Cathedral to provide open space, looking at ways of doing this.

Regarding climate resilience, they are working out how to apply CoM's strategy to West Melbourne — use of solar panels, sustainable water use, tree canopy cover, permeable surfaces, etc. The General Residential Zone has a mandatory height control. Adam and Kate support that as part of the plan. The WMSP intends to rezone part of West Melbourne from Mixed Use Zone to Special Use Zone to lock in the employment target.

An architect's impression of Spencer Street was shown. A tram terminus in Spencer Street is under discussion. There is enough growth to support a new school and improved cycling routes.

Kate and Adam hoped everyone would attend one of **two community workshops** (both the same) on the WMSP at the Angliss Conference Centre, 555 La Trobe Street (Level 5, Building A): Saturday 29 July, 1.00pm – 4.00pm; and Saturday 12 August, 10.00am – 1.00pm. Lunch provided. RSVP online at participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/westmelbourne. There is also a **short survey** to fill in on this website.

Questions / comments by attendees and answers by Adam and Kate

Q: I think it's terrific but are heights mandatory or discretionary?

A: We are not mandating heights.

Q: Affordable housing is to be provided in some neighbourhoods. How are you going to achieve that? In which neighbourhoods? I'd like some more information, please.

A: Flagstaff, Spencer and Station Precinct. Other areas are not changing that much. Financial work is being done on how 6% will be delivered.

Q: Is this a housing association model? Where does the figure of 250 affordable dwellings come from?

A: We are looking at the most likely areas to be developed.

Q: I think it's important that the Council owns the affordable housing, because other housing associations move on and accountability for it is lost.

A: Public housing is under DHHS.

Q: With some estates they are proposing to let housing associations run them. There's a real danger in this.

A: We are doing some work on this — we need community support.

Q: The best way is for you to retain the role of landlord.

Q: We get a lot of one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments, so families have to move out. Affordable housing would benefit young families.

A: It's specifically stated affordable housing needs to be a mix. We are looking at mandating a percentage of three- and four-bedroom dwellings. The good thing about FARs is they remove uncertainty in terms of typology.

Q: What is the squarage difference between public housing and private in terms of sizes?

A: Indistinguishable from one another. Same quality. Indistinguishable from middle-market developments.

Q: I think it's a great plan. Spencer Street is terribly ugly at the moment.

A: (Kate) Look at the shorter-term and longer-term images. We'll make sure we don't impinge on public realm improvements further into the future.

A: (Adam) Pedestrian crossings on Spencer Street are planned.

Q: People won't want to open shops because the street is so ugly.

A: It will happen over the next 5–10 years. We'll see what happens when we rezone the area.

Q: The FAR system is interesting. There were mixed results when it was tried in the 1970s. What guarantee is there that half the space is useful to the community?

A: It's ground-level space — objectives for open space aspect.

Q: In the CBD today you can still see plot ratios where small, windswept places of no value resulted.

A: It will provide better spaces at ground level and maintain the West Melbourne character.

Q: We need some inbuilt ongoing policy.

Q: What happens to sites where planning applications have been approved? Developers will be rushing to get their proposals in.

A: The existing planning controls apply.

Q: Looking at Part 4: This WMSP should be included in the MSS, which is itself due to be refreshed in 2017–18. I have a question about local policy, which “cannot be used to replace a numerical value in a standard in Clause 54, 55 or 56”. So, in Historic Hilltop, if you’re saying no change, we’re saying the MSS has to be approved anyway.

A: It will apply in residential zones, and there is still some residential zone in West Melbourne. The MSS currently has a bit about North and West Melbourne. When we update the MSS we will make sure the West Melbourne aspects are updated.

Q: You’ve defined specific areas as neither growth nor stable. We would like to see Council maintaining mandatory heights. It can change them now, as I understand it.

A: The WMSP will be finalised first, then the MSS updated.

Q: We didn’t like the previous one.

A: It will provide clarity and certainty.

Q: Where are there to be mandatory height limits?

A: Areas with mandatory height limits are in Historic Hilltop — the orange area, that’s DDO32.

Q: Until February we didn’t have a height limit. Now, with the General Residential Zone, it’s 11 metres mandatory.

A: In the non-pink and non-orange shaded areas, which don’t have mandatory height controls, the FAR provides them.

Q: There have been cases where up to 2.5 times the recommended (discretionary) limit has been allowed.

A: The FAR works with height controls.

Q: There’s no great incentive to go higher with a FAR.

A: Because the yield is achieved, with activity etc, and doesn’t often reach the discretionary limit.

Q: When you travel along Spencer Street — as with King Street — it’s a terrible street. How do you propose to change it to the envisaged ‘local high street’?

A: The idea is to decrease the amount of traffic on Spencer Street by encouraging bus, tram and bike use.

Q: If the West Gate Tunnel Project (WGTP) goes through, how do you get through to King Street?

A: Traffic modelling predicts minus 200 to minus 700 vehicles in King Street, West Melbourne, with the WGTP.

Q: Along Hawke Street the projected increase with the WGTP is 5000 vehicles.

A: Which is why we’re opposing it.

Q: We won’t be able to park.

A: I suggest you look at the particular page of the WGTP.

Q: The WGTP is saying a decrease where CoM is saying an increase.

A: We are opposing the WGTP.

Q: Many people here have had to battle development over years. It seems that developers game the system. How can we make it so both residents and developers have certainty?

A: (1) Mandatory FAR controls will set goals so speculation is avoided. (2) We’re not talking about transition areas. We’ve done capacity modelling. FARs are a fantastic tool.

Q: It would be good to see buildings going up in West Melbourne where “You won’t be able to ...”

A: (Kate) We have shown that.

A: (Adam) Jeremy [McLeod] from Breathe Architecture will be presenting at the forums.

Q: What can be done before FARs get implemented?

A: It takes a long time for developers to form applications. The WMSP becomes more entertained the further it goes.

Q: Where do you see the WMSP in the next two to three years?

A: We hope to finalise the plan by the end of this year and finalise the whole thing by the end of next year — the amendment process is very slow.

Q: I particularly liked the visual, the aerial view. Given the structure plan is going to take 20 years or so, would it be possible to include some type of community engagement within the planning scheme? The Swiss have a similar thing — they string up notices in streets so you can get an idea of how things work. Could we get some incentives to behavioural change? Then we could get to say how we want it when a developer makes plans.

Q: I still have a problem with the Built Form Testing graphic. What's the ratio on Spencer Street?

A: It's 4:1.

Q: The old plan was based on heights higher at the city end, sloping down. We had an application on King and Roden streets [Zagame site] reduced from the 10 storeys applied for. Seven was actually better than six, but the DDO stipulated four.

Q: Towers are poor from an energy perspective. I am a little sceptical about plot ratios.

It was noted that, besides the two workshops, there would also be **pop-up parks**, all happening soon, in early August.

Kevin thanked Adam and Kate, who departed at 8.45pm. The meeting continued.

1. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting

Moved Valerie Gerrand, seconded Carolyn Thompson:

That the minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on Tuesday 20 June 2017 be confirmed.

Carried.

2. Committee report

(a) West Gate Tunnel Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee Hearing

There were no Committee matters to report other than the IMPA (Inner Melbourne Planning Alliance) submission to the West Gate Tunnel Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee, which included several affiliated organisations as signatories. The NWMA is one of these. A number of individuals, NWMA members among them, had lodged their own submissions. Kevin had chaired a meeting in Hoppers Crossing on Monday 3 July, organised by Spotswood South Kingsville Residents Group. This area's main concerns differ from those of North and West Melbourne. The Directions Hearing is scheduled for Wednesday 19 July, 10.00am, at the Footscray Community Arts Centre, 45 Moreland Street, Footscray, which is the venue for the rest of the panel hearing.

Moved Bill Cook, seconded Emmy Chung:

That this meeting authorise the Chair or his nominee to represent the Association at the Directions Hearing and subsequent panel hearings if required.

Carried.

3. 50-year celebratory dinner

Jane Poynter had been trying to negotiate no charge to hire the venue, City of Melbourne Bowling Club. She had approached local caterers Fred & Ginger. Various other caterers were discussed, including Amiconi and Errol's (recently under new management). The bowling club provides drinks at bar prices. This sort of event is Fred & Ginger's business. They wouldn't provide a three-course meal but, rather, canapés (finger food) at \$5 per item per person — say nine each = \$45 per head. Negotiations continue.

4. Reports from affiliated organisations

(a) Homelessness Action Group (HAG)

Lorraine Siska reported that HAG was starting to get together its art project, *Different Voices, Common Goals*. They have proposed a mural. There will be 18 art workshops on Mondays and Tuesdays,

1.00pm – 3.00pm, starting Monday 31 July and ending Tuesday 26 September, in the main hall at North Melbourne Community Centre, corner Buncl and Mark streets. The project will be launched at the Spring Fling on Sunday 15 October. The Steering Committee wants a mixture of people to take part and say what home means to each one. Professional artist Dan Waters will mount the mural on a canvas, which will later be set onto a wall somewhere in North or West Melbourne. More information from Project Coordinator Maria Keon, phone 0404 771 366, email dvcg2017@gmail.com.

5. Discussion of correspondence circulated in the past month and received by hand

Attendees were asked if they were happy with the emailed circulation of correspondence. There was no dissent.

6. General business

None.

7. Time, date and venue of next ordinary general meeting

Tuesday 15 August 2017, 7.30pm, at the Bastow Institute, 603–615 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.