

1.1 MOUNT WAVERLEY ACTIVITY CENTRE STRUCTURE PLAN – UPDATE ON PROGRESS AND INITIAL CONSULTATION ON DISCUSSION PAPER

(SMC: File No. F17-4975)

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RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Note the content of the Mount Waverley Activity Centre Discussion Paper.*
- 2. Release the Mount Waverley Activity Centre Discussion Paper for community consultation and targeted stakeholder engagement in accordance with the consultation plan set out in this report.*
- 3. Note that the outcomes from the community consultation and targeted stakeholder engagement will inform the structure planning process, and that a further report will be presented to Council upon the completion of a draft Structure Plan.*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Mount Waverley Activity Centre Structure Plan, to consider the content of the Discussion Paper (**Attachment 1**) and to recommend that Council release this paper for an initial round of community consultation and targeted stakeholder engagement.

BACKGROUND

The Mount Waverley Activity Centre Structure Plan is listed as a 'priority project' in the Council Plan 2017-2021 and received funding in the 2018/19 Council Budget. State Government guidance for structure planning for activity centres is set out in Planning Practice Note No. 58 – Structure planning for activity centres, and this has been followed in preparing the brief and by the consultants in undertaking the work to date.

The aims of the Structure Plan are to:

- Set out a clear vision to guide future development within the Mount Waverley Activity Centre, outlining what the community and Council see as appropriate future growth.
- Consider the most appropriate mix of land uses.
- Develop an urban design and built form response that responds to the local context.
- Identify key movement opportunities to improve access and encourage more active transport.
- Identify options for potential value capture mechanisms to assist in funding infrastructure to serve the future growth in the Centre.

Tract Consultants were appointed in July 2018 after a competitive tender process to undertake the project, which involves five key stages:

1. Project Inception
2. Preparation of background reports, including an economic assessment, community infrastructure assessment, transport and access assessment and urban design assessments
3. Discussion Paper and stakeholder engagement
4. Draft Structure Plan and public exhibition
5. Final Structure Plan.

The Background reports were finalised in December 2018 and the Discussion Paper was finalised in March 2019. We are now ready to undertake stakeholder engagement on the Discussion Paper.

ISSUES AND DISCUSSION

Background report findings

The key findings of the background reports are summarised in the table below:

Economic Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low vacancy rate in commercial premises • Ageing population and slowing population growth and potential decline in household expenditure • Need to attract more visitors to the centre to remain viable • An opportunity to improve the supermarket offer by increasing retail floor space in the centre
Social and Community Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good access to local and higher order community infrastructure within walking distance of the train station and retail core • Moderate additional demands for community infrastructure within the next 20-30 years. • Additional aged care facilities and additional early years services may be required. • Opportunity to improve the accessibility to services within the centre for pedestrians and cyclists
Built Form and Public Realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low scale residential and commercial buildings surrounded by canopy trees, with a range of public spaces (civic spaces around the library and community centre, paved plazas, parks and sports reserves) • Future development to respond to the low scale character of the area • Opportunities to provide more meeting spaces in the retail core, and improve the quality of the footpaths.
Traffic and Transport Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephenson's Road provides a key connection to the centre, and it is well-serviced by car parking within close proximity to the shops • Good public transport facilities • Opportunities to encourage more walking and cycling for short trips to the centre, and to reconfigure the central car park to improve safety and increase the efficiency of vehicle movements.

More about the findings of the background assessments are summarised in the Discussion Paper (**Attachment 1**) on pages 8-9.

Purpose and structure of discussion paper

The purpose of the Discussion Paper is to provide a basis for further stakeholder engagement, including valuable feedback from the community and others who use the centre, along with direct stakeholders such as landowners, traders, community groups, government agencies and utility providers.

The Discussion Paper (**Attachment 1**) prepared by Tract Consultants contains the following:

- A project overview
- An introduction that provides a summary of the existing centre and the key findings in the background reports
- A section on developing a shared vision that articulates the positive attributes of the centre to be maintained and enhanced, including the village character, a good range of shops, services and community facilities, a range of open space areas and a garden character.
- A section for identifying the key opportunities (along with associated maps and prompting questions for stakeholders to consider) to:
 - Strengthen the economic viability
 - Provide a diversity of housing options
 - Support the health and wellbeing of the local community
 - Create more places for people to gather
 - Create streets for people
- A short conclusion

In addition to the opportunities outlined in the Discussion Paper, there are also some key questions including:

- *What types of shops and attractions would you like to see in the main shopping area?*
- *What commercial and healthcare uses do you think are currently missing from the Mount Waverley Activity Centre?*
- *How could the strategic sites be better utilised? (including large privately owned sites and Council-owned car parks)*
- *What types of housing do you think should be provided in the Activity Centre?*
- *Where would you like to see future medium density housing located?*
- *Are there any community services or facilities you think are currently missing from the Activity Centre?*
- *How could existing facilities be improved?*
- *What can be done to promote healthy and active lifestyles within the Activity Centre?*
- *What types of public spaces would you like to see within the Activity Centre?*
- *What improvements would you make to the Village Shopping Centre?*
- *Are there currently any barriers preventing you from walking in the Activity Centre?*

- *What improvements would encourage you to walk and cycle more in your neighbourhood?*
- *What improvements would you like to see happen along Stephenson's Road?*
- *What improvements would you like to see made to the Village Shopping Centre car park?*

CONSULTATION

Subject to Council endorsement, community consultation on the Discussion Paper would be undertaken over 4 weeks from early May 2019.

The purpose of the consultation is to seek community involvement in shaping the draft structure plan. Mount Waverley Activity Centre is well regarded by local residents, and it was considered important to involve the community early in the process because of this special relationship.

Mount Waverley is not a centre that is expected to change dramatically over time, particularly compared with Glen Waverley, Oakleigh, Huntingdale or Clayton. However, there may be opportunities to improve the centre in terms of connectivity, maintaining the village feel of the centre through appropriate built form controls, encouraging a change to the land use mix in certain precincts, and enhancing the urban design of the centre. With such a strong community connection to the centre, it is considered important to get the community's views early, and to reflect these considerations in the Draft Structure Plan (which would be subject to further consultation).

The proposed first stage of consultation

The first stage of consultation would utilise a planned Listening Post to be held in May 2019 within Hamilton Place. Publicity for the community consultation would be included with the notification of the Listening Post (involving letterbox drops to residents within at least 1km of the centre). We intend to interview people who are visiting the centre on the day. These people may be there to provide their views or ask questions of Council, or they may be using the centre for other reasons (e.g. shopping, utilising community services, passing through to use the train station).

During the first stage of consultation it is intended to hold 2-3 workshops with key non-resident stakeholders such as traders, key landowners, government agencies (e.g. VicTrack), as well as community groups and special interest groups.

In addition the Discussion Paper will be available for review and feedback through:

- Providing information in the Mount Waverley Library (through a display and copies of the Discussion Paper and survey);
- Making information available on Council's website including the Discussion Paper and background reports);
- Capturing feedback in an online survey (with hardcopies available on request and at the library), from questions asked of people at the Listening Post, or comments made in writing by mail or email;

- Design and distributing 'postcards' containing prompting questions, and directing people to sources of further information and instructions for giving feedback – available in the Mt Waverley Library, in local businesses (e.g. cafés, hairdressers, real estate agents) and at the Listening Post, and
- Including information in the 'First for Business' e-newsletter to local businesses.

Future consultation

The second stage of consultation would occur later in 2019 once the Draft Structure Plan has been prepared and endorsed by Council for consultation. This stage would involve wider community input.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

As discussed previously, the Mount Waverley Structure Plan is listed as a 'priority project' in the Council Plan 2017-2021. This project is supported by strategies that aim to strengthen the Monash Planning Scheme and local policies, and advocate for local needs.

The development of the Structure Plan is supported by Objectives 2.2 and 2.3 in the adopted *Monash Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2018*, which aim to:

Objective 2.2: Plan for attractive and vibrant employment precincts and work in collaboration with other parts of Council to promote employment precincts and activity centres as places to work, recreate and learn.

Objective 2.3: Support the ongoing development of contemporary, vibrant and economically viable retail and commercial Activity Centres.

The development of a Structure Plan for Mount Waverley will also align with the adopted Monash Integrated Transport Strategy 2017, which seeks to improve and increase pedestrian and cycle connections, encourage DDA compliant public access links, lower speed limits and pedestrian prioritisation in activity centres, and to advocate for better public transport to connect residential areas to activity centres. Many of the actions from the Integrated Transport Strategy have been included as opportunities in the Discussion Paper.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The development of the Structure Plan (including background reports and the discussion paper) is funded in the 2017/18 and 2018/19 Council Budgets.

The Structure Plan is an aspiration statement of Council's intent to address the future needs of the Mount Waverley Activity Centre, and the recommendations from this plan will ultimately guide future decisions around capital works and future planning scheme amendments.

CONCLUSION

The Mount Waverley Activity Centre Structure Plan is progressing as scheduled and is at the stage, having undertaken background analysis and preparing a Discussion Paper, to engage early with the community and other key stakeholders to seek their views on future of the centre.

It is also an opportunity to seek the community's feedback on the opportunities outlined in the Discussion Paper, and to add to those. This would inform the development of the Structure Plan.

Attachment 1: Mount Waverley Activity Centre Discussion Paper