

6.5 ENSURE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE GREEN OPEN SPACE IN THE GLEN WAVERLEY PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY CENTRE (GWPAC)

Submitting Councillor: Cr L Saloumi

MOTION

Council directs Council Officers to:

- 1. Forecast the future change in the GWPAC by 2034 and determine what is required to meet the open space needs of that change.*
- 2. Identify the land that will be allocated/retained or purchased in order to fully satisfy the needs identified by that analysis.*
- 3. Agree in principle to submit the resultant open space plan for GWPAC to the Office of the Victorian Government Architect for a peer review.*
- 4. Considers these outcomes within the context of the Monash Open Space Strategy*

INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of this Motion the GWPAC is an area loosely bounded by High St Road in North; Euneva west car park; Myrtle Street in West and Bogong Avenue and (southern) Kingsway in South, and Springvale Road in East. It is the area subject to high levels of population density in the near future.

BACKGROUND

This Motion responds to the following advice provided to Monash Council by the consultants who prepared A. Open Space Strategy Stage One in 2013 and B. GWAC Structure Plan in 2014.

- A. Open Space Strategy Stage One advice “Next Steps”
 - Analysis of the forecast future change in the city and what is required to meet the open space needs of the forecast change including demographics and additional population
 - Develop a prioritised and costed program of actions to improve the open space network to better meet the existing and forecast community open space needs. This will include identifying where upgrades to existing open space are required, and the sub-precinct locations and the type of additional open space that may be required in future.
 - Develop design and management guidelines to guide future changes and upgrades to open space.
- B. From the GWAC Structure Plan 2014
 - Work with the State Government to undertake an audit of infrastructure within the GWAC and work with service providers, as required, to ensure that infrastructure is adequate to meet future growth within the Activity Centre.

The Open Space Distribution Report Stage One was completed in November 2013 by Thomas Berrell Landscape Design. Key gaps in Open Space were identified including areas GW2 and GW4 which overlap the GWAC.

The Structure Plan was published first in September 2014 with a revision in June 2016 with a projection that there would be, by 2031, an increase in Glen Waverley's population of 3,743 people. On Page 27 The Structure Plan states *"Economic analysis has forecast the opportunity for 800 - 900 apartments to be supported within the GWAC over the next 20 years"*. However by mid 2017 Monash Council has already approved 1017 apartments in GWPAC. These and perhaps more are expected to be completed by 2021. This indicates that given the rate of approvals and proposals for high-rise and multi-unit developments, these population forecasts are too low and as a consequence the Plan's projected population could be surpassed a full ten years earlier.

The open space components attributed to the Structure Plan and suggested in the Officers Advice as adequate must therefore be revisited. The Montclair Precinct has no obvious opportunity for green space and to grass over the existing library's forecourt seems senseless.

In addition the Structure Plan stated *"Analysis indicates that the majority of existing residents within the GWAC boundary are not located within the 400m of green public open space which is a standard commonly applied when designing a new suburb"* we see from the accompanying map that the nearest green open space requires a 1.2km walk from approved properties (of 12,14,15,20 storeys) on, and adjacent to, O'Sullivan Road. The consultants continued *"there are opportunities to provide new green open spaces within the GWPAC however the size and function of these spaces may be limited because of land available. These sites should be strategically located to serve areas where large population increases are anticipated... additional public spaces will need to be provided to serve increased residents and workers"*.

It should be acknowledged that the Masterplan and Structure Plan consultants were already briefed from the commencement of their contracts in 2012 and 2013 respectively by the Glen Waverley Committee relevant at the time, chaired by Cr Lake, that the Central Car Park was to be deemed the site of a new Library Hub. The statement on page 6 in the 7.2 Report to Council on 24 September 2013 that the "Masterplan **identified** that a library community hub and civic square should be considered for the Central Car Park" is therefore misleading.

It is interesting to note that neither document – Masterplan nor Structure Plan, allocated any sizeable green open space to satisfy what can be predicted now as unprecedented and burgeoning future population growth. This is despite the Masterplan and the Structure Plans including images of Bryant Park, New York and Las Rambla, Barcelona, respectively in their documentation. I have visited both these cities which have preserved open space and the latter has used parking fees to subsidise protection of public open spaces according to Tim Biles, Director of Message, Council's expert in the February 2016 C120 Victorian Planning Panels Hearings. It was also Mr Biles who said that open space levies collected from nearby developments should be amalgamated to ensure a sizeable open space is provided in proximity to the developments supplying those levies. Historically Monash Council has not done this. Instead it has allowed levies to be used to support recreational facilities remote from the areas from which they have been collected. Examples include the redirection of open space levies for synthetic sports pitches for special interest groups up to 11 km from GWPAC.

The C120 Amendment has recently been passed by the Minister for Planning. See Attachment for its boundaries and allowable built forms.

The latest Draft Open Space Strategy by @Leisure was presented to Council on 27 June 2017. A rather simplistic comment *“Maximise opportunities for the inclusion of urban green space in the redevelopment areas of the Glen Waverley Activity Centre”* was included on Page 52, Point 113 under the heading *Glen Waverley*. One wonders why this crucial and soon to be highly densified area appeared quarantined from further discussion.

WHY OPEN SPACE?

Green Infrastructure or green public open space is necessary to counteract the effects of pollution associated with emissions and it is proven greening reduces temperatures in built environments. It is a natural weapon against detrimental effects of climate change. Green open spaces can be places of beauty and discovery – and free seating! They awaken and tantalise the senses – smell, sight, sound and touch.

Open space actually increases the value of surrounding properties, and encourage pedestrian traffic. It is not a detractor, it is an enhancer.

No matter what the age group, ethnicity or capabilities health benefits of parks are of benefit to everyone. They should include public amenities such as toilets, washrooms, water fountains and bike racks. Public parks provide a free place to rest especially for the mobility compromised; encourage Vitamin D absorption which guards against osteoporosis and dementia; are calming - reduce stress; foster incidental and orchestrated social interaction in support of mental health; allow exercise in a world where obesity and diabetes are major threats to longevity and physical health; deter crime by providing a safer environment that facilitates passive surveillance and provide venues for intergenerational and ‘family pet’ encounters.

The ultimate in flexibility – open sites can transform and adapt to support installations; marquees; musical events; multicultural festivals including Chinese New Year [without disrupting Kingsway traders]; theatrical performances; pop ups and family picnics.

Because they are not built they do not date or depreciate in value - nor do they require the intense maintenance and ongoing operational costs associated with structures. They are open all hours.

CONSULTATIONS

When consultations have been conducted the Community’s desire for open space retention in GWPAC appears to have been ignored.

Community responses to the Structure Plan included *“tall buildings will create a concrete jungle”*, and *“there should be consideration for turning the Central Car Park into a green urban park and creating a civic space for festivals and other gatherings”*. It is unfortunate the Council ignored these pleas and responded with ‘no change’ to the plan. In 2015-16 in the C120, and later the Central Car Park Library-Hub consultations of Dec 2015 and Jan 2016 the overwhelming responses of attendees was to retain open space – particularly not to sell/build on Central Car Park.

A survey I conducted involving over 350 respondents in 2017 resulted in 99% rejecting the proposed sale of the 7114sq m central car park to developers in order to achieve a 6000sq m library-hub. These respondents preferred Council to retain ownership of the site. 87% wished for it to be kept as green public open space. Few are aware that the Central Car Park site was the subject of an Amendment C123 passed by the Minister for Planning, without public exhibition, in October 2015 whilst at the same time Council was still accepting submissions regarding the C120 that included that site. The result of the C123 was that the previous design and planning overlay, that restricted its use and heights allowable, was removed. Without retaining ownership council will forfeit control.

In 2017 Monash Council's own survey '2021 and Beyond'* , 75% of 873 respondents to the question regarding What Public Open Spaces are Most Important to the Community? replied "Local parks and Playgrounds". Both are missing in the GWPAC. See this *chart as Attachment.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Attached is a map that includes and focusses on, the precinct considered by Masterplan Architects MGS as an "Urban Garden City", and the boundaries of the Tract Structure Plan. However, neither consultancies specified locations for larger scale usable/easily walkable public green open space and each appeared to completely ignore the lack of playgrounds accessible within, and from, the GWPAC. With 20 minute neighbourhoods a strong focus of Smart Futures thinking – one must consider the needs of densified communities where back yards are no longer the norm.

It is obvious when looking at the map that there is a distinct absence of open space in GWPAC and now is the time to address this issue whilst we still have land in our control.

In preparation for the future growth of Stonnington, estimated at an additional 30,000 residents by 2036, two weeks ago work began on the 9000sq m Cato Square (park) with an underground car park below. With adjoining Municipalities planning for densification by allocating large open spaces for future and existing residents and workers, Monash Council should do the smart thing and seize the opportunity now to secure adequate open space to future proof the activity centre from unbearable congestion and suffocation.

CONCLUSION

Best practice requires repetitive actions i.e. 'Review and Respond' to changing circumstances.

It would be negligent not to plan for green open space to satisfy future growth in GWPAC.

Monash Council's constituents, current and future, deserve their Council to do the right thing by them rather than to seek short term financial gain from opportunistic developers.

See attachments; Map of GWPAC inc. Proposed Developments
 C120 Built Form guide
 Monash 2021 and Beyond survey results