

CITY OF PORT PHILLIP REPORT

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL
10 APRIL 2012

2	EMERALD HILL MASTER PLAN
ADDRESS / LOCATION:	SOUTH MELBOURNE
GENERAL MANAGER:	SUE WILKINSON, ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING
PREPARED BY:	DAMIAN DEWAR, COORDINATOR PLACES & PROJECTS
FILE NO.:	66/01/124
ATTACHMENTS:	ATTACHMENT 1: REVISED DRAFT EMERALD HILL MASTER PLAN ATTACHMENT 2: CONSULTATION SUMMARY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 A draft Master Plan for the Emerald Hill precinct has been developed to strengthen the existing civic, community and arts hub and is intended to be a long term framework to guide the future activation of the precinct.
- 1.2 Council presented the draft Master Plan to the community for consultation through the 'Have Your Say' webpage and three information sessions.
- 1.3 This report provides a summary of all the submissions received in relation to the draft Emerald Hill Master Plan and recommends that Council adopt the Master Plan subject to revisions outlined in this report.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 2.1 Notes and receives all submissions received in response to the draft Emerald Hill Master Plan.
- 2.2 Writes to all submitters thanking them for their submissions and feedback.
- 2.3 Adopts the revised Emerald Hill Master Plan.

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Emerald Hill precinct of South Melbourne is the civic and cultural heart of South Melbourne. It is architecturally significant, relatively intact and has close associations with the local community who treasure it.

- 3.2 In August 2010, Council endorsed a draft Vision for Emerald Hill for consultation. The Vision provides a framework for the long term future of the precinct. It aims to guide public realm improvements and suggest future uses for key Council assets at Emerald Hill including the South Melbourne Town Hall. The Vision is informed by extensive earlier consultation which occurred as part of the South Melbourne Central Structure Plan and the South Melbourne Shopping Precinct Streetscape Master Plan in 2007.
- 3.3 In November 2010, Council held a stakeholder forum to consider the draft Vision for Emerald Hill. Some of the key opportunities identified at the forum were the:
- potential of the space to act as a civic square
 - removal cars from the forecourt area
 - opportunities for small fun interventions
 - closure of Marshall Street and activation of the rear of the Town Hall
 - providing consistent lighting to improve safety
 - programmed events on the Town Hall steps
 - the use of symbolic red and white colours which have been South Melbourne colours since 1878 and have represented the South Melbourne football team 'the Bloods'.
- 3.4 The draft Emerald Hill Vision was revised following the stakeholder forum to:
- "Council's vision is to create a vibrant arts and community hub to reinvigorate the precinct around South Melbourne Town hall and to re-establish it as the cultural and civic heart of South Melbourne."*
- 3.5 Jackson Clements Burrows Architects were then engaged to prepare a series of design concepts for public realm improvements around the South Melbourne Town Hall. The public realm concepts were prepared to highlight opportunities to:
- develop a cohesive precinct character
 - frame key views of the Shrine and of the Town Hall from Park Street
 - maintain views from Dorcas Street to the rear of the Town Hall
 - improve the forecourt to allow the space in front of the Town Hall to be used for public events
 - improve the amount of shade and green in the precinct through the planting of new trees and low lying planting
 - create a new public space in the north courtyard, with short, medium and longer term possibilities
 - identify possible long term uses for the Ballantyne Room
 - widen the footpath around the Town Hall building to improve its setting and the general levels of accessibility in the precinct
 - re-organise car parking around the building to provide better amenity
 - enhance the profile of existing entrances
 - screen 222 Bank Street and provide an attractive backdrop to the Town Hall
 - improve night time appearance and safety
- 3.6 The design concepts and draft Vision for the precinct were publicly released for community feedback and on 12 September 2011, Council adopted the Emerald Hill Vision for the precinct to be an engaging civic, community and arts hub.

- 3.7 At that meeting, Council also resolved to prepare a Master Plan for the precinct in response to the community feedback on the public realm concepts and to also present a coordinated view of future projects by precinct and priority.
- 3.8 The draft Master Plan is provided at **Attachment 1** and includes:
- a focus on the heritage of the precinct
 - principles for future design directing a contextual and sensitive approach to the Emerald Hill setting
 - significant areas of soft landscaping
 - a reduction of car parking, staged to manage car parking demand in the precinct
 - more uses to enable community access to more parts of the Town Hall
 - integrated public art
- 3.9 On 14 February 2012, Council resolved to purchase Emerald Hill Lane land to use as open space. This creates an opportunity for local retailers to create another point of address for their businesses and use this as a plaza space. It is appropriate that the Master Plan be amended to reflect the purchase of this land and the opportunities that this open space presents.

4 CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 4.1 Community consultation was held on the draft Emerald Hill Master Plan from 15 November to 21 December 2011. An advertisement was placed in the local papers on 21 November 2011. A stakeholder meeting was held on 28 November 2011. Two information sessions were held on 1 December and 6 December 2011.
- 4.2 The online survey received four submissions. The majority of community responses were captured during the stakeholder meeting and information sessions. Two late written submissions were received on 31 January 2012.
- 4.3 In total, 19 submissions were received: one from South Port Community Housing Group, three from art organisations, six from local business owners and nine from residents.
- 4.4 Consultation also occurred with internal stakeholders including Sustainability, Traffic and Parking Design, Open Space Planning, Arts and Festivals and Council's Heritage Advisor.
- 4.5 Specific internal advice was sought from Council's Traffic & Parking Design Department regarding the proposal to reduce car parking spaces in the precinct. Under the exhibited draft Master Plan, the existing car parking would be reduced by the removal of:
- 6 spaces in Fishley Street
 - 7 spaces in Layfield Street
 - 11 spaces in Daly Street
 - 8 spaces in Bank Street drive way

4.6 Council's Traffic & Parking Design Department have advised:

Existing conditions:

- *car parking in Bank Street, Perrins Street, Fishley Street, Daly Street and Layfield Street is generally utilised at 80% or above during weekdays*
- *evening periods are generally 40%-60% utilised*
- *traffic and parking utilisation is at its highest during business hours, when a mixture of offices workers, patrons and a portion of residents are using the area*
- *weekend usage is moderate and this is reflective of the restrictions where a majority of the restricted days are Monday – Friday or Monday – Saturday*
- *usage of the parking around the perimeter of the Town Hall is mainly associated with Council services, Art Access, Music Academy etc. followed by visitors to the area and residents*

4.7 Council's Traffic & Parking Design Unit supported the removal of car parking because:

- *Parking will be maintained close to ASSIST's main entrance in Fishley Street and in Daly Street, both of which can also service the residential dwellings on the opposite side.*
- *There is Permit Parking available to residents in Fishley Street and Daly Street during the time when parking utilisation of the area is at its highest (business hours). These times are outside of the hours when residential parking demand is at its lowest.*
- *After hours the utilisation of on-street parking is generally low in Bank Street between Cecil Street and Clarendon Street.*
- *If events do occur in the evening, the demand for parking is not likely to affect the current provision.*

Traffic & Parking Design recommend the following actions to manage the proposed removal of parking:

- *Control event parking demand through event conditions*
- *Organise Green Travel Plans for existing and future tenants of Town Hall as part of lease agreements*
- *Provide way finding signs to indicate the excellent public transport available in the area as well as the bicycle routes running in Cecil Street, Park Street and Moray Street*
- *Investigate the potential for car share use by tenants and residents*
- *Optimise loading/unloading on-site available in Town Hall*
- *Provide and clearly delineated occasional vehicle access to the forecourt*
- *Maintain two accessible parking spaces but relocate these to end bays*
- *Provide pram crossings to enhance access between the two sides of Bank Street near Perrins Street*
- *Rebuild all vehicle crossings to the Town Hall to current standards*

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1.1 Some of the concerns that were raised during the previous consultation on the Vision have been resolved through the preparation of the draft Master Plan. These include:

- the significance of the heritage of the precinct and the appropriateness of contemporary design
- the extent of green/soft landscaping compared to hardstand
- care to be taken in any additions to the South Melbourne Town Hall.

5.1.2 The consultation feedback indicates that there is continuing support for

- the incorporation of public art
- a vibrant culture and greater activity in Emerald Hill's public space
- making activation more explicit in the Master Plan.

5.1.3 Some new requests to add to the Master Plan have been received:

- the need to improve accessibility of public spaces and building entrances
- for the inclusion of a public housing history of Emerald Hill precinct.

5.1.4 The main issue raised during the consultation is the proposed car parking reduction (32 spaces) in Fishley, Daly and Layfield Streets. Submissions from business property owners argue the need for additional parking in this precinct. There are a number of options to address car parking:

5.1.5 Maintain the current car parking around the South Melbourne Town Hall. This option does not address the need to improve accessibility around the Town Hall building and is considered to be a poor long term option.

5.1.6 Implement the car parking reduction as proposed (preferred option).

5.1.7 In summary, most submissions either supported the draft Master Plan or offered qualified support which can be accommodated by minor changes. These are discussed in the consultation summary at **Attachment 2**.

5.1.8 **OPTIONS**

Option 1 - Receive and note submissions to the draft Master Plan. Adopt the revised Emerald Hill Master Plan. Council has conducted extensive consultation and most issues can be resolved through minor amendments to the Master Plan. This is the recommended option.

Option 2 - Receive and note submissions to the draft Master Plan. Adopt the Emerald Hill Master Plan at a later date.

5.2 **ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN**

5.2.1 The preparation of a Master Plan for Emerald Hill is consistent with the Council Plan:

- Support and revitalise arts precincts across the city as integrated arts, learning and cultural centres (Action 3.2.3).
- Integrate approach to the revitalisation of neighbourhoods based on sustainable urban design (Action 4.1.1).
- Ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to the public realm (Action 4.2.1).

5.3 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.3.1 The development of the Emerald Hill precinct as a civic, community and arts 'hub' implements a key strategic direction of the South Melbourne Central Structure Plan and associated planning scheme policy for this area.

5.4 FINANCE / RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.4.1 Staged delivery of Emerald Hill Master Plan is proposed to be carried out over the next 10 – 15 years subject to usual budget processes.

5.5 LEGAL & RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.5.1 There are no known legal risks.

6 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

6.1 TIMELINE

- 6.1.1 The staging of the Emerald Hill Master Plan actions will be the subject of future capital budget bids.

7. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

- 7.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.