



Town and Country Planning Association Bulletin

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Games Village Development

The Association has written to the Minister for planning to register our opposition to the government's decision to bring the 'Village' development under the provisions of the Commonwealth Games Arrangements Act 2002.

We made the point that we saw the development as a "long term residential sub-division, one stage of which will be used temporarily for the Village Games. The final development will become part of the planning scheme of the City of Melbourne and will need services provided by the City. As such it should be treated like any other new major sub-division and be subject to the normal planning process."

Under what is in effect a secret land deal, the major part of a residential development (649 apartments in 15 3-to-9 storey tower blocks to be constructed after the Games) will remain outside the jurisdiction of the Minister for Planning and will remain exempt from the normal planning process. In specifically overriding application of Division 5 of Part 6 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, the planning provisions deny affected citizens or their local government authority from the democratic rights to appeal any aspect of the development

The removal of a major inner city sub-division from the planning jurisdiction of the City of Melbourne is inconsistent with the policies and intention of Melbourne 2030, which emphasise the involvement of local government and the community. It is vital that a relatively high-density inner-urban development be subject to scrutiny under the planning scheme of the responsible local government authority.

The only avenue for public comment is the Advisory Committee process, which is limited by the terms of reference and based on no more than a concept plan or the equivalent of a UDF and whose terms of reference are limited.

In our submission to the Advisory Committee, we have reiterated our opposition to the redevelopment of the Parkville site for other than open space and community purposes.

The site and the present design will not deliver a Games Village which obviously meets the standard requirements of the Commonwealth Games Federation as set out in its regulations covering the conduct of the Games. The imperatives of a village for 6000 athletes will require the removal of over 600 mature trees, inconsistent with the intent of the Neighbourhood Character provisions of

ResCode.

As a residential sub-division, the site would be an urban development not compliant with the Neighbourhood Principles of Melbourne 2030 and not meeting the many ResCode standards for new subdivisions.

Bounded on three sides by barriers which are either non-permeable or do not lead to services, its distance from any activity centre and services, and in particular its lack of attractive public transport, will all make this a highly car-dependent development.

The site has three access roads only; its surrounding local roads are already affected by peak hour through-traffic, and arterial roads are subject to peak hour congestion.

Its suitability for 900 dwellings or 50 dwellings/hectare (compared with the 15 per ha proposed for growth areas under Melbourne 2030) needs to be closely examined and subject to an EES.

The major contribution to the overall density of the development and to its traffic movements will be 15 tower blocks of apartments to be built on the freeway boundary after the Games. The TCPA is not convinced by the argument that an acoustic 'wall' is needed to protect the suburb.

The 649 apartments would occupy land that could be used to provide a wider and continuous corridor of open space linking Royal Park and the Moonee Ponds Creek, and open space to serve the residential suburb of Brunswick West. This would be in line with the latest open space strategy for Melbourne (*Linking People + Spaces*).

The TCPA submission has criticised the limited provision of social/public housing, which meets neither the original undertakings by the Government nor the expectations raised by the importance Melbourne 2030 places on the provision of affordable and social housing.

If this valuable publicly owned green-field site is to be handed over for private development, the Government has a responsibility to ensure that it is environmentally sustainable, with densities commensurate with the site's access to public transport and services. The Government should maximise the opportunity to add to the stock of social and public housing.

The development should not be driven by shortfalls in the Commonwealth Games budget.

Melbourne 2030

There are concerns within the general community about

the implications of recent VCAT decisions in favour of developers who ignore local DDOs and the dangers that developers will be unduly empowered by the increased density objectives of Melbourne 2030 to override local government structure plans. One of our member associations has concerns about the impact on its municipality of having been designated with multiple activity centres.

Concerns that medium density re-development will not be complemented with improvements in public transport has not been helped in recent weeks with the news of a \$1 billion commitment to the existing services and severe budgetary restraints.

The TCPA has broader concerns about Melbourne 2030 and may seek a meeting with the head of DoI, Lindsay Nielsen, to raise issues that have not been adequately covered in Melbourne 2030, and other key problem areas. We hope to address the following topics at this meeting:

Oil depletion and replacement energy technologies: members of the Committee believe this is a fundamental factor, which any long-term plan for Melbourne must recognise in its land use and transport planning.

Public transport: there is widespread scepticism about the 20/2020 objective in the absence of any current plans or funding. The TCPA is particularly concerned at the proposals to develop separate bus, tram and train plans as a first step, rather than emphasise integrated seamless mobility in public transport.

Activity centres: the definitions, concepts and multiplicity of activity centres, with apparently obvious ones missing from the list, seemingly continuous linear activity centres such as Sydney Road and Chapel Street treated as separate centres are some of the issues. The lack of any State Government response to the further expansion of Chadstone and the opening of the new Victoria Gardens complex in Richmond raise issues about how the State Government sees the relationships between levels of centres and how local centres will be protected from heavyweight competition.

Netherlands "ABC" land use planning system: the TCPA advocates the application of the Dutch "ABC" planning system, which locates people-intensive activities on the public transport network, and goods-based activities (such as warehousing) on the main road network.

Urban growth boundary: the TCPA is concerned that the government may buckle under pressure from land developers to relax the urban growth boundary, thereby weakening the drive to consolidate Melbourne.

Demonstration projects: public acceptance and confidence in the densification objectives of Melbourne

2030 will be critical to political success of the strategy.

Demonstration that the basic objectives of the plan can work and maintain suburban liveability is one key to the success of the plan.

The Committee would like to hear from any member who has any specific points that should be raised or specific concerns relating to any of the topics. Activity Centres development is likely to concern members across municipalities as their definition and how local government is responding is the first step in the implementation of Melbourne 2030.

South Melbourne Activity Centre: the City of Port Phillip has commenced developing a strategic plan (structure plan) for the South Melbourne Central precinct, which includes the South Melbourne Major Activity Centre designated in Melbourne 2030. The area is bounded by three tram routes and the freeway, and is a genuine mixed-use precinct comprising a mix of residential, business and industry zoning, with a substantial heritage overlay covering the residential zones, as well as heritage designations of individual industrial buildings. Its proximity to the CAD, Southbank and Docklands adds to its strategic significance.

An integral component of the Structure Plan will be an Urban Design Framework, as much of the precinct does not have any heritage, neighbourhood character, design or development overlays, and is experiencing considerable pressure for redevelopment. There are 14 sites known to have major development potential.

The planning process will include a series of strategies covering integrated public transport and pedestrian networks, parking, retail, community services and the public realm (open space) together with business, employment and residential development action plans. The Council has stated that it 'believes that affordable housing should be an objective for planning for any future residential development in the area.' A five-day planning forum involving the key stakeholders will be held in July.

This is likely to be the first exercise in local strategic planning for a complex activity centre. The process, outcome and implementation will be one test of the Melbourne 2030, particularly the implementation of a local plan where there is developer pressure for higher density developments.

TCPA submission to Melbourne 2030: members who do not have access to the Internet and would like to receive a copy of our submission, should contact the secretary, David Littlewood (tel. 9534 5379).

TCPA Committee for 2003

The Committee remains very much below optimum, strength and is very keen to hear from any member interested in joining the Committee.

Address for Correspondence

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