



PLANNING IN GLEN EIRA: ASK US ANYTHING

Planning in Glen Eira: Ask us anything was held on 20 August 2020. The following presents questions and answers were taken on notice from the Q&A components of the event.

Did the original proposal [C184] that the Council put forward and the Minister rejected include allowing 4 storey developments in some residential areas of Bentleigh, as the current C184 proposal does?

The original structure plans for Bentleigh had sought to reduce the amount of Residential Growth Zone land available (RGZ – 4 storeys) and the commercial strip (Centre Road) was proposed as 4-5 storeys. The Commercial 1 Zone currently has no height controls. Once Council sought authorisation from the State Government, there was feedback requesting more higher density areas. Therefore, the addendum that was endorsed by Council on 4 February 2020 extended the existing RGZ slightly in the northern precinct in response to the State Government feedback. The commercial strip has remained the same.

Could Council please advise numbers of effective full-time staff & consultants in strategic planning currently and at the end of 2015?

A breakdown of staff, contractor and consultancy numbers specific to the planning and strategic planning functions is not available as we do not collate or report on resourcing figures in that way. Council's Annual Reports provide high level details on expenditure and FTE staffing numbers year on year if they are of interest.

What is the occupancy rate of the newer developments please?

Council does not hold this information.

So Caulfield North, Caulfield South and East Bentleigh will NOT have structure plans, but urban design frameworks which are nothing more than 'guidelines'? Is this correct?

Neighbourhood Activity Centres (NACs) in Caulfield North, Caulfield South and East Bentleigh will have urban design frameworks. These frameworks are not guidelines only but will form the basis of interim and permanent planning controls that could include Design and Development Overlays (DDO) or similar to inform appropriate building heights for these centres.

The *Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning* [State Government] launched Living Melbourne on 5th July 2019 - to increase the overall Urban Forest Canopy. Do State Government Strategies endorsed by the City's in Melbourne (including Glen Eira) have a legal strength to support compliance through the Planning Schedules?

The State Government's Living Melbourne sets out key actions to achieve a vision of a more liveable city in Melbourne. In endorsing Living Melbourne, Glen Eira demonstrates support for and commitment to, this vision. Endorsement of Living Melbourne by Council does not give the strategy legal strength per se. Council can give effect to the vision and goals of Living Melbourne through a range of actions. Some

of these are set out in a report to Council on 30 April 2019 (<https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/media/files/043019-Council-Meeting-Agenda.pdf>).

An important way that we can look to give effect to Living Melbourne is through a new Urban Forest Strategy, currently in draft form (<https://www.haveyoursaygleneira.com.au/urbanforeststrategy>). This strategy will see Council look to implementing urban forest goals through a range of ways, including via the current rewrite of the Glen Eira Planning Scheme.

A Classified Tree Local Law was adopted by Council on 1 September 2020.

How are you planning for jobs in for activity centres to work as 20-minute neighbourhoods and not too much housing or car-parking in most accessible spots?

Council is planning for jobs in our activity centres through our structure planning work, and the provision of a mix of zoning to accommodate a variety of jobs in office, retail and other commercial activities, along with housing and community uses.

There are advantages in striving for 20-minute neighbourhoods in our activity centres as these centres have good access to public transport with opportunities to support walking and cycling improvements. This reduces the reliance on car travel and demand for car parking. By providing a safe and pedestrian central environment in an activity centre, the 20-minute neighbourhood can exist.

Council planning and implementing local neighbourhoods seeks to encourage active and independent travel as well as protecting and enhancing neighbourhood amenity.

Regretfully, a target of 14% [Urban Forest Strategy] in 20 years' time is an average increase of 0.075% per year. Which will probably happen with no action through existing tree canopy growth. So, why the strategy?

As outlined in the draft Urban Forest Strategy, without action, canopy cover in Glen Eira, is likely to continue to trend down, similarly to elsewhere in Melbourne. This loss is due to factors that include trees not being realised as valuable assets, urban development, and lack of plantable space.

A key aim of the draft Strategy is to address this trajectory in alignment with the goals of the Living Melbourne strategy which Council has endorsed. Setting targets for urban forest cover is part of achieving this aim.

The draft Strategy's recommended target of 14% in 20 years' time recognises that target for canopy cover needs to be suited to local conditions and governance in order to be realistic and achievable. Glen Eira is an urbanised municipality with extensive private ownership of land experiencing growth and development, as well as significant State Government infrastructure projects, which have cumulatively reduced canopy cover in our City over time.

To work with the nature of our municipality, the draft Strategy considers utilising mechanisms such as the planning scheme and local laws to protect the existing canopy and slow loss.

In addition to Council's program of tree planting on land that falls within our capacity to directly manage, the draft Strategy also recommends exploring ways to incentivise the community to plant and protect trees in private spaces.

How is Glen Eira facilitating/requiring new public and social housing. I'm really sad when I see homeless people sleeping rough in our shopping streets and new developments so expensive.

Public housing is housing that is provided by the State Government. However, Council does have a role in supporting the provision of other types of affordable housing.

In recognition of the need for more housing options for Glen Eira residents, Council has developed the *Social and Affordable Housing Strategy 2019–23* which sets out our role in this area.

The plan identifies four areas where Council can act to support the provision of social and affordable housing in our municipality. These include advocacy to State Government, partnership with Registered Housing Agencies and property developers, leverage of social and affordable housing through the planning system (through agreements), and direct investment. The second-year action plan for the Strategy has recently been adopted by Council that sets out actions for the next financial year. This can be found on page 479 of Council's agenda: <https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/media/files/Agenda-010920.pdf>

A current example of where Council has been able to pursue these actions is the East Village project, where Council reached an agreement with landowners to provide social and affordable housing. This Agreement sets out the landowner requirements for the provision of affordable housing within the precinct. The agreement includes a provision for 5% of housing be affordable housing. More information on this project is available on Council's website here: <https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/services/planning-and-building/planning-scheme-and-amendments/current-planning-scheme-amendments/east-village>

[Council's] Integrated Transport Strategy - how is this being applied? If it's yet to be applied, what is the first step?

Goals and actions of the Integrated Transport Strategy are currently being applied through a range of different initiatives. These include:

- **pilot projects**, including the safe cycling pilot and a pedestrian safe neighbourhood project
- **action plans** to guide investment in infrastructure and advocacy
 - Walking and Accessibility Action Plan - A plan for improving the walkability of Glen Eira's neighbourhoods, busy centres, streets, parks and the links between these
 - Cycling Action Plan - A plan for improving cycling opportunities and connections, making safety improvements and filling in gaps in the cycling network
 - Public Transport Advocacy Plan - A plan setting out the initiatives and projects that Council is focused on advocating for, to improve the level and quality of public transport in Glen Eira
- a **policy** to more effectively manage space given to parking, prioritise needs of parking users, and work to reduce future car usage growth.

What is happening with the review of the "Better Apartment Guidelines" to improve streetscapes for new developments?

Council officers reviewed the proposed changes to the Better Apartment Guidelines that included:

- **Green space in common areas of buildings**, which preferably include trees to provide shade and urban cooling, and landscaping that softens the street.
- **High quality building facades** made from robust, durable and attractive materials that complement surrounding buildings and provide visual interest.
- **Protection from wind impacts on surrounding streets and open space**, so the spaces are comfortable to use and likely to be used more often.
- **Attractive, engaging streets** that enhance the amenity, safety and walkability of the neighbourhood.
- **Better managed construction impacts of building work** on existing neighbourhoods.

Council officers prepared a report with a submission attached to send through to State Government providing comments. The Council report and attached submission can be found here:

<https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/about-council/meetings-and-agendas/council-agendas-and-minutes/ordinary-council-meeting-tuesday-24-september-2019>

The State Government website provides details of the timeline of these proposed changes to the Better Apartment Guidelines here: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/building-better-apartments-in-neighbourhoods>

With the hard build structures, Glen Eira is now the hottest - Urban local urban heat effect - on local residents, and the city's liveability when compared to its adjacent cities.

Why is not environmental controls, including permeable surfaces, volume of canopy trees for shade - a gatekeeper to any building permits?

Whilst not a 'gatekeeper', environmental controls represent an important part of building permits. Environmental controls are also important considerations in planning permits and building policy for Council development. The following provides details.

- **Building permits**

For single dwellings on blocks where a town planning permit is not required, a uniform set of building regulations applies in Victoria (called Rescode). These regulations set maximum amounts of impermeable surfaces and land coverage that can be built on any block of land. Rescode allows applicants to apply to Council for consent to vary a building regulation, but this can only be done within State Government guidelines. Such applications in the area of permeability are rare.

- **Planning permits**

An Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) policy is currently being developed with input from the Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) and other stakeholders. The policy will ensure new development includes consideration of sustainability measures such as, improved energy efficiency, stormwater management, site permeability, building materials and increased urban ecology. Glen Eira is currently encouraging voluntary ESD as part of the Sustainable Design Assessment in the Planning Process (SDAPP) and the use of the Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard (BESS) for new development applications while we progress the Planning Scheme Rewrite project.

- **Building policy for Council development:**

Council is working on a new Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy to ensure projects we build consider the environment. We are also working to increase the tree canopy cover across the municipality in public spaces.

Council is embedding environmentally sustainable design (ESD) principles in buildings and infrastructure projects. This means that the buildings we deliver for residents, (such as swim centres, libraries and community sporting pavilions) include features that improve climate change resilience. In some of these new projects, we have large water tanks to collect water for irrigation and toilet flushing. Thirty-eight Council buildings have solar panels that will help to reduce carbon emissions.

The policy aims to establish a consistent approach to ESD in all stages of a project – be it a building, new pavement or road, or park upgrade.

Is the Aug 27th deadline for submissions fair and reasonable during the current pandemic? [C184]

The Planning and Environment Act 1987 requires at least a 4-week exhibition period for planning scheme amendments. The exhibition period for Amendment C184 Bentleigh and Carnegie Activity Centres spanned five weeks between 27 July and 27 August 2020 in recognition of the current circumstances.

Glen Eira Bicycle Users Group has been advocating for Council to implement Integrated Transport Plan and Cycling and Walking Action Plans - nice plans but seems glacial pace after slow and limited previous plans. Important with growth of cycling and walking with Covid and climate emergency.

Council has committed funding to start the implementation of the Walking and Cycling Action Plans during the current Financial Year 2020-2021. As part of the implementation of these plans, officers will be working on the following projects:

- Pedestrian Safe Neighbourhood project which focuses on supporting/enhancing active travel and place making opportunities in a study area of Bentleigh East
- Implementation of a network of cyclist counters
- Development of a bike parking strategy
- Investigation of a connection between Djerring Trail and Gardiners Creek
- Development of Street Design Guidelines for Glen Eira
- Change Traffic Impact Assessments to Transport Impact Assessments as part of the rewrite of our Planning Scheme.

Officers are currently assessing opportunities to promote and enhance active transport as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to support travel to and from key activity centres.

Any plans for some charging stations (for electrical vehicles) in big development projects?

Yes, as part of Council's major development projects. Council will be looking at testing 1 or 2 at the Town Hall and at the carparks that are being planned for in Bentleigh and Elsternwick.

When we go back to future dwelling capacity and opportunities, we had 45,000 that we listed back in 2018. How many additional dwellings do we have at this point in time, how many do we have capacity for and how does that relate back to Melbourne, Plan Melbourne. Do we have available capacity for the future? (East Village, Bentleigh and Carnegie and the outcomes of 8-10 storey developments in Glen Huntly)

As outlined in Council's City Plan, projections indicate that Glen Eira will grow, in line with Greater Melbourne. Council's responsibility is to plan for growth, and provide clear directions on location, sustainably balancing housing requirements set by Government, with maintaining local character.

Housing capacity figures reflect assumptions on how much additional housing could (theoretically) be built under current planning controls if all opportunities were realised.

In practical terms, the Victorian Planning System is performance based, which means that every application requires analysis of its context and the application of policies and established planning principles. The planning system is designed to enable development while protecting amenity.

As such, the total dwelling capacity of the municipality is not fixed.

Council however monitors the number of new dwellings that have been constructed against State Government housing targets identified in Victoria in Future. Glen Eira is on track to meet the State Government housing targets.