



plān|sphēre [urban strategy planners]

Issues Report- Stakeholder Consultation Version

FRANKSTON PLANNING SCHEME REVIEW

For the Frankston City Council

FEBRUARY 2008



Summary

The role of this Issues Paper is to stimulate your thinking on how to express local planning issues in the Planning Scheme

The Key Issues section presents a number of topics responding to the question: What is important in planning in Frankston? Some of these issues were identified from discussions with Councillors, while others are derived from the Planning Scheme or from our site inspections of the City.

Any written submission that you wish to make can be forwarded to:

John Eichler

Strategic Planning Co-ordinator

Frankston City Council

PO Box 490

Frankston 3199

Email: john.eichler@frankston.vic.gov.au

The closing date for submissions is 20 March 2008.

The Project

What it is

Frankston City Council has appointed Planisphere to review the Frankston Planning Scheme to address the following questions:

- What is working well?
- What could work better?
- What future threats and opportunities does Frankston face?

All aspects of Council's town planning function (policies, controls, processes, procedures, community relations, development pressures, State Government, Councillor and officer roles, delegations etc), must be reviewed as part of the Project.

Council's roles

Council has two town planning roles. One role is to change the planning rules in response to social, economic and environmental changes that impact on the City. The second role is to apply these rules to Planning Permit Applications.

Interested parties can find the full text and maps of the current Planning Scheme can be found at:

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/planningschemes/frankston>.

Steps in this Project

The Project has four stages.

Stage 1 (Oct-Dec 2007)

Background Research

Stage 2 (Jan-Mar 2008)

Consultation with a range of players including:

- Councillors,
- Community Focus Groups,
- Regular users of the planning system in Frankston,
- Council staff.

Stage 3

Reporting on the existing Planning Scheme to determine if it is aligned with State and Local Planning Policies and recommending changes where required.

Stage 4

In Stage 4, documents based on the outcomes of Stage 3 and structured to be ready for exhibition as a Planning Scheme Amendment will be prepared.

The Project will be completed by the end of July 2008.

Introduction to Key Issues

Frankston is an exceptionally diverse municipality.

A multitude of land use activities can be found in the municipality including hobby farms, high rise office buildings, quarries, small town shops, industry and housing from all eras of the 20th Century.

The City has developed at a low and slow rate. As a consequence, the eras of development are highly evident. The older areas are close to the town centres and along the main roads. The newer neighbourhoods fill in the gaps.

Infill development, whether it be new CAD commercial buildings, 1970s freeways or medium density housing cut across the original development with varying levels of success.

The planning issues in the municipality reflect the diverse and slow pattern of growth. Councillors and residents are frustrated with the standard of design quality and the disorderly pattern of medium density development. They see so many opportunities in Frankston.

Councillors are frustrated with their role as decision makers in planning. The rules don't seem to reflect what they want. It is not clear that changing the rules makes enough difference.

Educating residents and developers about planning standards would be beneficial and could take some of the heat and disappointment out of planning. Making local policies more effective would also have this impact.

Key Issues

Dealing with Climate Change

'Do your plans take Climate Change into account?'

The 2007 draft *Victorian Coastal Strategy* says climate change is a real and serious threat that will cause rising sea levels and more frequent, severe storm events. This will have serious implications for infrastructure such as piers, jetties, coastal roads, drainage systems and low lying coastal areas. It suggests the response will be to plan, construct and renew infrastructure at higher standards so that these severe impacts can be withstood.

Some specific impacts of climate change are currently being investigated. It is acknowledged that significant, ongoing research is required to clarify the impacts on the municipality.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- The Review should ensure that the impacts of climate change are considered now. It should recommend that any 'land use' components of strategies to respond to the risks of climate change are included in the Planning Scheme.

An Environmentally Sustainable City

'Being sustainable is the most important thing in the 21st Century.'

The layout of a City, the design of its buildings and the actions of its citizens all impact on environmental sustainability. Some of the impacts planning can have are to reduce the need to travel and to protect natural features. In Frankston, planning for environmental sustainability is demonstrated in:

- In the extensive mixed use centre - Frankston CAD
- the public transport hub around the railway station
- planning for increased housing within and close to the CAD and other Activity Centres or high volume public transport networks at these locations
- planning for increased housing at suburban activity centres
- protection of vegetation on the foreshore and other natural riverside and creek environs

Encouraging sustainable building design will contribute to environmental sustainability. Promoting the best possible design outcomes from current regulations can be a policy direction. Matching local jobs to match local skills is environmentally sustainable as it minimises commuting. On-going encouragement of such businesses in the City is a policy direction for the future.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- The Review should ensure the Planning Scheme promotes broad based environmental sustainability with goals to improve natural ecosystems, sustainable housing, a jobs/housing balance and public transport within reasonable proximity of everyone in the City.

Achieving High Quality Urban Design

'I don't object to units. I object to those off the shelf designs that are mean and ugly.'

The image and status of the City can be lifted by improving the quality of design of new buildings. High quality design should reflect the aspirations of the community, contribute to the area in which it is located and contributing to making a place more attractive overall. The City will be improved with each high quality development.

Lifting standards need not be a long term project. It can be done immediately. Cities such as Knox or Melbourne have promoted high quality design for many years and gradually have reaped the benefits of this advocacy.

Council have recently appointed an Urban Designer to work with building designers and developers to improve the quality of design of new buildings. Workshops on urban design are being organised at present. Other new elements of the urban environment, such as mobile phone towers, can intrude on the visual quality of an area. Measures to ensure this impact is minimised should be encouraged.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- High quality urban design should be an objective of the Scheme and be reflected in outcomes for all parts of the City.
- The Review should consider means to lessen the visual impact of elements such as mobile phone infrastructure and similar intrusive works.

Neighbourhood Character and Housing

'Too many units on a lot is destroying our neighbourhood character.'

A commonly expressed concern of Frankston residents is the intensity of development that is occurring on infill sites in many residential areas. The Council has been applying the State-prescribed ResCode standards, as it is required to, and VCAT (the appeals tribunal) must uphold these standards when it considers appeals. The Council has exhibited a neighbourhood character planning scheme amendment, designed to strengthen protection of locally valued features such as tree cover and setbacks. Approval of these new controls is expected imminently, and their success in achieving the desired outcomes will need to be continually monitored.

In addition to addressing the issue of neighbourhood character, it would make sense to focus more clearly on the kinds of housing that are needed in the Frankston area, and where it should be located. What kind of dwelling would your elderly parents like to move to when they no longer want three bedrooms and a large garden? There is very little housing in Frankston that meets these criteria.

This question can be asked about others in the housing market – including many local people – who are looking for something other than the standard detached house or something affordable for the average family. Should the Council try to encourage development of housing that meets this need? If so, where?

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- In addition to improving neighbourhood character controls, the next priority is to clarify Frankston's housing needs, and introduce policies on what forms of residential development should be encouraged and where this should be located.

Frankston 2025 and the Planning Scheme

'Let's get on an implement Frankston 2025.'

Frankston 2025 is an expression of community views and values based on consultation with over 1500 residents and ratepayers and guided by a committee of community leaders. Council wants its vision to be implemented wherever possible.

The following major themes are the collective vision of Frankston 2025:

Connected community – Our community neighbourhoods support and include all people. We have a strong sense of being connected to each other and to the world beyond our city.

Well governed – Our local decision-making, leadership and strong community representation reflects the needs of our community.

Proud and safe – We are proud of our city and feel safe and confident as we enjoy all our excellent places and facilities.

Active and healthy – The people in our community thrive. We are active and healthy – physically, mentally and spiritually.

Rich and vibrant culture – Our city is a vibrant and exciting destination that shows off our natural assets, rich history and diverse culture.

Learning community – Our community provides opportunities for learning and development for every individual.

Business prosperity and local employment – Our city leads the way in innovative business practices while generating local employment and services.

Well planned, well built and well maintained – Our city is attractive, efficient and accessible.

Clean and green – We are a leader in environmental management, showcasing our proactive approach to conserving natural resources.

The Council's budgeting and forward planning will be guided by the objectives and actions of Frankston 2025. The Planning Scheme is an important tool to ensure that private sector activity and development helps to implement Frankston 2025, the Council Plan and other Council Plans such as the Health and Wellbeing Plan. This Project will investigate and report on how this can be done. The focus will be on those parts of Frankston 2025 and other Plans that have implications for way land is used and developed in the City.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- The Review should integrate the key objectives and outcomes of Frankston 2025 into the Planning Scheme.

Prescription or Performance?

'I thought this area was set aside for families, with one house on each block.'

Councillors are often frustrated that high standards are not consistently achieved. They feel the controls don't seem to say what the standards are. As a result, development doesn't measure up and residents suffer from housing insecurity because they don't know what the standards are.

Prescriptive controls are often called for in order to set mandatory development standards. The upside of such controls are that the standards are clear, however the downside is that it can promote uniformity and a lack of responsiveness to the context of the development.

The standards may not be as clear in performance based controls however individuality or innovation in design can be encouraged by such controls. The State Government is seeking to strengthen local policies by ensuring they are succinct and are expressed in zone and overlay controls. The State Government expects that the planning system will remain performance based.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- The Review should re-examine the balance between performance based and prescriptive controls in the Planning Scheme as a basis for clear expression and standards where possible.

Educating the Community about Strategic Planning

'Who cares about the MSS – whatever it is. I just want you to get it right.'

It is very difficult to gather community opinions on strategic planning. Residents often perceive that these are answered already or are the responsibility of 'the Government'. Yet people often resent strategic planning policy and wish they could have had a say when it is raised as a reason to support a development they don't like.

It is in the realm of strategic planning where community leaders, such as Councillors, can contribute positively to future policies and directions. The up side is that planning legislation provides the Council with the framework to make these positive contributions through the amendments and reviews of the Municipal Strategic Statement and Local Planning Policies. The 'down sides' are that these processes:

- must be approved by the State Government and are required to be consistent with State Planning Policy
- take a substantial time to prepare and, for much of that time, cannot be used to make statutory planning decisions.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- The Review should incorporate the community directions of Frankston 2025 and the consultation undertaken as part of this Project as much as possible.

Educating the Community about Statutory Planning

'I submitted my objections and spoke at the Council meeting but they approved that eyesore anyway!'

Councillors and residents are sometimes frustrated with the statutory planning process. Councillors feel that they are doing the State Government's bidding when approving developments they believe are inappropriate. Residents expect Councillors to play the role of community representative and refuse such developments

The process seems to create a need for an umpire to decide between those supporting and opposing a proposal. The Council is that umpire yet has VCAT looking over its shoulder as the Review Tribunal. Planning professionals, on the other hand, say that the role of Council and VCAT is simply to apply the planning laws.

The biggest issue is infill development in established residential areas.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- The Review should ensure that policies and controls on residential areas reflect Council's directions as much as is possible within the framework of the Victorian planning system
- Council should consider educating and guiding residents and developers through the statutory planning process as much as possible.

Managing Change in Central Frankston

'I ♥ Frankston.'

The *Frankston CAD TAFE to Bay Structure Plan* has been introduced as Interim Controls to October 2009. This Structure Plan introduces planning controls that will allow the CAD to be an active, vibrant Transit City. Council actively encourages high quality design outcomes in the Transit City by using a Design Review Committee for assessment of development proposals.

These planning controls encourage Government and private sector investment by providing certainty about the future of the CAD. The challenges for the Council will be to:

- sustain the momentum for change in the Frankston CAD; and
- link the older and newer parts of the CAD to ensure it operates coherently.

Now that these controls are in place, the strategic planning role is to ensure that higher order activities do not locate in town centres other than the CAD.

These goals for the CAD do not diminish the importance of other town centres. These should be planned and promoted as vibrant places where a mix of activities occur.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- The Review should ensure that the CAD is the primary mixed retail, commercial, business and residential Activity Centre in the City.
- The Review should promote greater walkability and a stronger pedestrian focus in the CAD.
- Council should continue to advocate for Government and business investment in the CAD.

Improving City Pride – Gaming Issues in the City

'There are too many pokies in Frankston.'

Council has a comprehensive social policy to address the impact of gambling in the City. This policy covers a range of actions on advocacy, research and promotion to minimise the harm caused to residents and the community by gambling.

A draft planning policy on gaming is being prepared for a consortium of local governments, including Frankston City Council. The draft policy recommends that gambling venues are located away from the main community hubs and mixed use areas.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

The Review should consider incorporating the local planning policy on gaming, if and when it is adopted by Council.

Non-residential uses in residential areas

'I like having a doctor at the end of the street but parking can be a nightmare at times'

The Planning Scheme allows residential uses such as medical or child care centres, display homes or restaurants in suitable locations in residential areas. Over time, the market conditions of these activities have changed. For example, operating hours of some medical clinics can extend well into the evenings and some child care centres are now as large as small schools.

Council's objective has been to allow these uses to locate in residential areas on the proviso that they maintain the scale and form of the residential area. Given the changes in the market place, this policy may need to be strengthened or given a stronger locational focus.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- The Review should limit inappropriate non-residential uses or provide clear rules and policy on specific non-residential activities areas about what uses are appropriate and where these should be located.

The Impact of Road Infrastructure

'Why don't you get the Frankston Bypass built?'

The quality of road infrastructure has a major impact on travel patterns and traffic congestion in a City. The positive impact of major projects, such as freeways is that it increases connectedness to other parts of the metropolis making Frankston more competitive in jobs and industry. However, there are negative impacts, such as the way that the current freeway and its interchanges dissect the suburbs and create barriers between places. There are some ugly outcomes where exit ramps drop into local streets. Other negative aspects are the impact on habitat, air quality and wildlife corridors.

Eastlink will create a new wave of changes in the City. It will change travel patterns and impact on traffic congestion. Land use changes are possible as the commercial appeal of particular highway frontages either improves or diminishes. The Frankston Bypass would also have an impact.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- The Review should promote a strong role for Council in ensuring the beneficial impacts of road infrastructure are maximised and the negative impacts minimised.

Land Use and Built Form along the Main Road corridors

'I've driven down Nepean Highway every day for the past 7 years.'

The old roads in the City that originate from the time when Frankston was a country town have a human scale and character. What happens along the main roads is important because they form one of the strongest impressions people have of a place.

These roads are:

- Nepean Highway
- Cranbourne-Frankston Road
- Dandenong-Frankston Road
- Flinders-Frankston Road.
- Dandenong-Hastings Road.

These roads are often the ones most travelled by residents going about their business of living in the City. Car or bus trips to shops, schools, work and sport regularly involve travel along these roads, so much so that they become part of the mental landscape of the place.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

The Review should ensure that Land Use and Built form along the Main Road corridors:

- improves these streetscapes consistent with the desired image of Frankston;
- minimises advertising signage and
- ensure that these roads maintain their role in the City's road network.

Conflicts between Industrial and Residential Activities

'I can't sleep because of the trucks and fork lifts.'

In the area north of the CAD, there are businesses or residential areas directly adjacent to Industrial 1 zones. This can cause on-going conflicts between the rights of industry to operate 24/7 and the rights of residence or businesses to a level of quiet enjoyment of their properties.

Planning controls can be improved to introduce limits on building heights and setbacks to improve the situation for residents and other actions can be taken to manage the road network to ensure safe and convenient movement for all types of vehicles.

The rezoning of land can place additional controls on the way the Industrial land is used.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- The Review should require that the controls minimise conflicts with residential land uses. Specific attention should be paid to the enforcement of buffer zones.

Areas in Transition.

'When is the land across the road going to be developed? It's a mess!'

New residential areas in Carrum Downs are a blend of new streets and houses and empty sheds and paddocks. The street network is incomplete and footpaths aren't complete. In some cases, new subdivisions look out across old sheds and unkempt fences. This conflict between land uses needs to be managed.

Some areas of the CAD appear neglected and in need of an injection of new life and activity. These areas are just around the corner from the new developments.

The most important priorities in transitional areas are to:

- maintain the links that join these areas together by ensuring footpaths meet, for example
- make these areas as cohesive as possible, for example by extending streetscape works and landscaping
- consider the loss of housing when residential areas are rezoned and redeveloped for commercial businesses.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- Council should advocate for public infrastructure such as public transport, in areas of transition.
- The Review should promote the provision of adequate parking, footpaths, cycle paths, recycled water canopy trees and habitat in areas of transition.

Heritage Buildings & Sites.

'The City's history needs to be preserved.'

The City's heritage buildings and sites create a strong link to the past. These buildings and sites contribute to the identity and character of the City. They should be preserved and celebrated. Council has almost completed a Heritage Report for the City which will identify the key elements for planning scheme controls.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- The Review should recommend inclusion of the findings of the Frankston commercial centre Heritage Report once it becomes available.

New Subdivisions.

'We seem to have traffic and parking problems in the newer residential areas.'

Many of the new residential streets are relatively narrow and residents park their cars on the streets or nature strips because there is not enough room to park on the block. This creates an unsafe and unpleasant streetscape. Subdivisions from the 1970s and 1980s often only have one or two entry points onto main roads, leading to congestion at these entry points.

When these estates were built, there were fewer cars per household whereas there might be 3 or 4 cars associated with one house. We should try to avoid these things from happening in the future.

Implications for the Planning Scheme Review – do you agree?

- The Review should ensure the Planning Scheme encourages subdivision design that does not reflect the mistakes of the past.

Conclusion

This Issues Paper outlines the scope of the Project. It presents issues that are

- of concern to Councillors,
- expressed in the Local Planning Policies of the Frankston Planning Scheme or
- evident from site inspections undertaken by the consultant team.

The purpose of this report is to stimulate discussion in the community about what are the important planning issues in Frankston.

Any written submission that you wish to make can be forwarded to:

John Eichler

Strategic Planning Co-ordinator

Frankston City Council

PO Box 490

Frankston 3199

Email: john.eichler@frankston.vic.gov.au

The closing date for submissions is 20 March 2008.