



URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK FOR

MEGAMILE (WEST)

MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTRE AND

BLACKBURN NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTIVITY

CENTRE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The City of Whitehorse is seeking to engage consultants to prepare an Urban Design Framework (UDF) for the land along Whitehorse Road, which includes the area known as the 'MegaMile' between Nunawading and Blackburn and Blackburn Neighbourhood Activity Centre. The area of the Mega Mile to the east of Springvale Road and including the Nunawading and Mitcham Activity Centres has already been investigated.

The Urban Design Framework is to:

- Provide a comprehensive review of the existing conditions including (but not limited to) policy framework, infrastructure, future trends and challenges
- Identify future opportunities and their constraints to inform objectives and strategies
- Develop an Urban Design Framework (including an access and mobility study) for the Mega Mile (west) and Blackburn Neighbourhood Activity Centre.

The Mega Mile has been the recent focus of substantial streetscape and parking improvements and is now recognised as one of the key retail strengths within the municipality and a primary location for bulky goods retailing in metropolitan Melbourne. Existing and proposed transport improvements in the vicinity (including Eastlink, grade separation of Springvale Road and a third railway line between Box Hill and Ringwood) will increase the focus on the area.

The State Government has reinforced the role of the MegaMile by designating Nunawading/MegaMile as a 'Major Activity Centre' within *Melbourne 2030*. Major Activity Centres are envisaged to be the focus of high quality development, activity and living for the whole community.

A number of studies and programs have previously been undertaken by Council to enhance the functionality of the Mega Mile. However, a number of sites along the Mega Mile are now in need of redevelopment.

An integrated approach is required to address:

- Redevelopment pressures on a number of large sites, both retail and industrial
- Future opportunities for the growth and enhancement of the activity centre.
- Growing traffic flow issues around the intersection of Surrey and Whitehorse Roads
- Introduction of the Yellow Orbital Bus Route
- Longer term issues surrounding the possible lowering of the Belgrave/Lilydale railway line
- Pedestrian and cycling connectivity and amenity

In order to meet the strategic intent of *Melbourne 2030* and prepare for these demands and changes, an Urban Design Framework needs to be in place to ensure that incremental changes are considered in their overall context. It is intended that the Urban Design Framework for the Mega Mile (west) Major Activity Centre will be incorporated within the Whitehorse Planning Scheme and will provide an outline for the integrated development of the Mega Mile (west) over the short, medium and longer term.

2.0 PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the project is to produce an Urban Design Framework for the Mega Mile (west) and Blackburn Neighbourhood Activity Centre.

The preparation of an Urban Design Framework for the designated area seeks to understand the surrounding context, sense of community, connectivity, human scale and richness, diversity of built forms, experiences and uses and the needs of all stakeholders. This understanding will translate in strategies to achieve viable places, high quality design and a sense of community.

The following specific objectives have also been proposed for the project:

- To establish a **vision** or 'preferred future' for the Mega Mile (west) Major Activity Centre as an entity. The vision should amalgamate existing studies, address gaps and integrate environmental, economic and social factors. The vision for the Nunawading/Mega Mile Major Activity Centre should be the starting point.
- To establish **overarching principles** for the development of the Centre in areas such as:
 - Social inclusion
 - Open space
 - Economic development
 - Land uses
 - Access and mobility
 - Preferred development outcomes
 - Physical and visual connections between uses
 - Function and appearance of public spaces
 - Quality of design and amenity of the area
- To establish **strategies and actions** that address:
 - Key redevelopment sites
 - Opportunities in available land
 - Options for the Belgrave/Lilydale rail reserve if works occur to lower and/or expand the rail line
 - Infrastructure for utility provision, and waste management
 - Sustainable transport modes, particularly walking and cycling
 - The gaps of community facilities and services
 - Options for environmentally sustainable development
 - Interface issues
- To prepare an **implementation strategy report** that identifies planning, project and management actions regarding:
 - Immediate, medium-term and long-term actions
 - Key stakeholders and beneficiaries
 - Potential sources of investment or finance
 - Milestones/measurements and review mechanisms.
- To identify what **Planning Scheme amendments** are required to achieve the framework. This should include (as appropriate):
 - Any zoning or overlay changes or additions
 - Potential for a development contribution plan
 - Local policy and any related changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement
 - Key elements to be addressed in design guidelines.

3.0 BACKGROUND

For over 10 years, Whitehorse Road between Blackburn and Mitcham has been developed as a major focus of bulky 'homemaker' goods and vehicle retailing. The area serves a wide catchment but is subject to increasing competition from new homemaker precincts around Melbourne.

Council recognises the importance of this area to the municipality's economy and employment opportunities and has conducted a number of studies, which together are intended to form the basis for a Structure Plan. These studies include:

- The City of Whitehorse Housing Study 2003,
- Moving into the Future: Integrated Transport Strategy for the City of Whitehorse,
- The City of Whitehorse 1997 Retail Centre Inventory,
- The Whitehorse Economic Development Strategy 2008-2013.
- The Nunawading/Mega Mile Structure Plan 2008 (although this is outside the study area, the methodology and relationship to the Mega Mile balance study area is important here so we should list it I think) ?

In addition, Council is currently undertaking a feasibility study of the Springvale/Whitehorse Roads intersection to grade separate traffic in Springvale Road and the railway line. Grade separation of the traffic would provide significant benefits to the Mega Mile Activity Centre including improved accessibility to the Railway network and improved circulation and viability of the Blackburn shopping centre and the Mega Mile shopping precinct.

4.0 STUDY AREA & DEFINITION OF PRECINCTS

The study area for the project is shown in *Appendix 1* and extends east-west along Whitehorse Road from Varman Court, Nunawading to Vine Street, Blackburn.

It includes the business zoned areas north and south of Whitehorse Road, the Belgrave/Lilydale rail line and the Blackburn Neighbourhood Activity Centre. Residential zoned land adjoining Whitehorse Road to the north is also part of the study area. While the surrounding residential areas north and south of the study area are not proposed to be specifically included in the Urban Design Framework, consideration must be given to factors that will affect and involve these areas, such as potential interface issues between industrial/ commercial and residential uses and connectivity between different uses.

It should be noted that the nominated study area might not form the final boundaries of the activity centre and is subject to review during the study process based on the application of strategic criteria and additional consultations.

5.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Nunawading/MegaMile is one of the four Major Activity Centres designated in *Melbourne 2030* within the City of Whitehorse; the remaining three include Burwood Heights, Forest Hill and Tally Ho. Box Hill is designated as a Principal Activity Centre. *Melbourne 2030* envisages that activity centres will be the focus of major change in metropolitan Melbourne over the next 30 years. The key objectives for the development of activity centres are to:

- Reduce the number of private motorised trips by concentrating activities that generate high numbers of (non freight) trips in highly accessible locations;
- Encourage economic activity and business synergies;
- Broaden the mix of uses appropriate to the type of centre and the needs of the population served;
- Provide focal points for the community at different geographic scales;
- Improve access by walking, cycling and public transport to services and facilities for local and regional populations;
- Support the development of the Principal Public Transport Network.

In particular, Major Activity Centres are seen to accommodate ongoing investment and change in retail, office, service and residential markets.

Melbourne 2030 currently does not designate the Blackburn shopping centre as either a Principal or Major Activity Centre and hence its role is a Neighbourhood Activity Centre.

The City of Whitehorse Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) at Clause 21.07 – Economic Development, outlines Council’s commitment to facilitating a thriving and sustainable local economy by enabling appropriate economic growth and increased investment and employment opportunities, whilst improving the amenity of the retail areas. In particular, the MegaMile is identified as one of the main retail strengths and its role is to be consolidated through appropriate land use and development.

Local Planning Policy Clause 22.06 - *Activity Centres* further outlines the objectives and strategies for this area. Key issues identified for the MegaMile in these policies include:

- The need to reinforce the role of the Mega Mile. Redevelopment of a number of sites is required to ensure they are put to optimum use and strengthen the bulky goods retail role of the area.
- Given the importance of Whitehorse Road being a major east-west linkage, improvements are required to the appearance and amenity of the road through streetscape improvements, better urban design and location of utilities and communication infrastructure underground.
- A balance is required between suitable identification of the homemaker retailers in the Whitehorse Road service road and ensuring signage is uncluttered and complements the various streetscape improvements.

A number of recent studies have been adopted by Council which relate to transport, housing and economy issues within the study area, as outlined below.

The City of Whitehorse Integrated Transport Strategy 2002 and Traffic Management Strategy 2003 contain the following specific recommendations relevant to this Urban Design Framework and Study Area:

- Council support the provision of a third rail track between Box Hill & Ringwood railway stations;
- Council lobby the State Government to grade separate the level crossings on Springvale Road (high priority) & Rooks Road. As previously mentioned, a feasibility study is currently being prepared by Council for the Springvale Road level crossing;
- Council seek funding to accelerate the development of the bicycle network in Whitehorse with emphasis on completing the Eastern Rail Trail.

The City of Whitehorse Housing Strategy was adopted by Council in February 2003 and identifies areas that are capable of supporting higher density housing throughout the municipality. These areas were considered in the context of proximity to public transport, activity centres, open spaces and other community facilities and have limited physical development constraints. One of the thirteen suggested higher density precincts is located within the Urban Design Framework study area, and consideration should be given to whether additional or alternative precincts should exist within the study area.

The City of Whitehorse Economic Development Strategy 2008-2013 recognises the one billion dollar turnover that the Mega Mile contributes to the local economy and seeks to continue to develop, manage and promote this retail strip as one of Melbourne's largest shopping districts.

Council is also in the process of undertaking an Industrial Strategy, which will provide a future direction, and planning framework for the municipality's industrial areas. This will include the industrial area adjoining the Urban Design Framework study area, between Whitehorse Road and the railway line. The Industrial Strategy is expected to be completed in April/May 2009.

6.0 RELATED STUDIES & BASE INFORMATION

In addition to the strategic documents mentioned above, the Urban Design Framework must incorporate and respond to information from existing strategies and studies, which include:

Urban Design and Built Form

- City of Whitehorse Neighbourhood Character Study 2002-2003
- Blackburn Lake Surrounds Study 2001
- City of Whitehorse Heritage Reviews (1999 and 2001)
- Homemakers Mile Precinct Physical Improvements Concept Plans 2000
- Mega Mile Street Life Project
- Design Guidelines for Higher Density Housing, Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2004.
- Planning for All of Melbourne (PFAOM)
- Melbourne 2030: a planning update Melbourne @ 5 million
- The Nunawading/Mega Mile Structure Plan 2008

Housing

- City of Whitehorse Housing Study, 2003
- Social and Affordable Housing Policy 2002

Sustainability

- City of Whitehorse EcoVision – A Strategy for Ecological Sustainability 2002

Economic Development

- City of Whitehorse 1997 Retail Centre Inventory
- City of Whitehorse Economic Development Strategy 2008-2013
- Whitehorse Road Economic and Enterprise Development Strategy, May 1997
- Regional Economic Strategy for Melbourne's South East Region 2003-2030
- Blackburn Station Shopping Centre Business Plan 2002-2006, June 2002
- Creating Retail Opportunities – Whitehorse Road Precinct

Transport and infrastructure

- Moving into the Future: Integrated Transport Strategy for the City of Whitehorse
- Whitehorse City Council Road Safety Strategy
- City of Whitehorse Traffic Management Strategy 2003
- Whitehorse Bicycle Strategy 2007
- Eastern Rail Trail Feasibility Study 1996
- The Victorian Transport Plan, December 2008

Open Space, Recreation and Streetscape

- City of Whitehorse Streetscape Policy and Strategy, 2002
- Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2007

Social/cultural development

- Multicultural Policy and Action Plan
- Drug and Alcohol Policy and Action Plan
- Disability Action Plan 2000-2002

Statutory

- Whitehorse Local Planning Policy Framework
- MSS review, undertaken for Council by John Kearney (2002)
- Panel Reports for Amendments C50, C75 and C40

The consultant will also be provided access to:

- Existing surveys
- Traffic counts (for limited areas)
- Existing plans for Urban Improvements
- Aerial photography of the site in digital and hard copy
- Digital topographic, cadastre, zoning information of the study area.
- Advice from infrastructure agencies and government departments

It is the responsibility of consultants to include in their proposals any data gaps for the development of the study and include, as part of their offering, the corresponding activities to address these gaps.

7.0 METHODOLOGY

It is recommended that the Urban Design Framework follow the methodology outlined in the Department of Sustainability's Practice Note- Urban Design Frameworks. It is the responsibility of the consultant to propose a methodology, including a project plan, as part of their proposal. As a minimum, the methodology and project plan should include:

- Proposed tasks and their duration
- Persons to be involved in each task and level of involvement (e.g. number of hours/days)
- Key milestones and deliverables
- Proposed meetings with the project team and consultation activities with stakeholders

8.0 OUTPUTS

In broad terms, the Urban Design Framework should produce the following outcomes:

- A series of reports, plans, and drawings, addressing each of the components in the scope of work, including the implementation strategy report.
- The Urban Design Framework, comprising a set of plans, and accompanying written explanation
- A presentation to Council and key stakeholders of the final Urban Design Framework

A high priority should be given to the use of illustrative images and diagrams to complement written explanations.

Deliverables

As a minimum, the following deliverables are expected as part of the development of this project:

- Analysis and Objectives Progress Report
- Option Development and Assessment
- Draft Urban Design Framework for Public Consultation
- Final Urban Design Framework for Council Adoption

The draft and final Urban Design Framework (including drawings) will be presented to Council in A4 and A1 format as needed. For these, the consultant will be required to present:

- Three (3) bound colour copies
- One (1) unbound colour copy
- One (1) unbound black and white copy
- One (1) electronic copy (compatible with Microsoft Office)
- A1 foam core mounted visual presentation boards to display the drawings of the Urban Design Framework

Council reserves the right to alter information after informing the consultant.

All electronic information shall be forwarded to Council in Adobe Acrobat format and other agreed file formats that allow edition.

9.0 PROJECT CO-ORDINATION

It is proposed that the project will be co-ordinated using a two-tier approach, as follows:

- A Partnership Group, comprising senior members from Council, Department of Planning and Community Development, VicRoads, VicTrack and Department of Infrastructure providing advice and direction. This group will receive presentations from the consultant team at key milestones in the study.
- A Coordination Committee, comprising relevant Council officers and Department of Planning and Community Development staff from the Activity Centres Unit (Expert Assistance Program) or Urban Design Unit) will provide management of the project. Day to day management of the project will be provided primarily by Council representatives.

The consultant will be required to prepare a detailed project coordination strategy, and as part of the submission, should expand on this proposed approach, including number of meetings offered and other communication channels.

The supervising and Council contact for the project is:

Juliana Aya
Senior Strategic Planner
City of Whitehorse
Locked Bag 2
Nunawading Delivery Centre VIC 3110

Ph. 9262 6180
Fax 9262 6542
E-mail juliana.aya@whitehorse.vic.gov.au

10.0 CONSULTATION

Consultation with stakeholders and the wider community, and incorporation of their feedback throughout the project, is essential to ensure support for the Structure Plan. Consultation is also critical to the success of future implementation of the Urban Design Framework recommendations.

The key stakeholder and interest groups include, but are not limited to:

- Councillors and relevant Council departments
- Major property owners
- Government agencies
- Service authorities and transport providers
- DPCD, DSE, DOT, VicTrack and VicRoads
- Residents, workers, trader groups, business proprietors, other land owners, shoppers, commuters within the centre and surrounds
- Whitehorse Business Association and any other special interest/business groups
- Relevant groups or individuals consulted as part of previous studies (refer to Section 6.0 of this brief)

As part of the submission, a consultation strategy is required to be prepared which addresses:

- Presentations and briefings to the Partnership Group, Coordination Committee and other relevant groups. Recommendations of an appropriate structure for the Working Group, with consideration of the proposed coordination structure in Section 9.0.
- Presentations at meetings of Council at key stages of the development of the Urban Design Framework.
- Workshops, focus groups, and other appropriate methods of community participation. This should include information to be prepared by the consultant for the purpose of public display in two Council office buildings.
- Previous consultation undertaken by or on behalf of a Council.
- Methods of consultation based on the best means of communicating and involving the diverse community within the subject area.

Council shall generally manage the consultation process. If deemed appropriate and subject to the approval of Council's Public Relations Department the consultation process may include utilising existing communication channels established by the

City of Whitehorse. These channels include Council's monthly newsletter, weekly column in the Whitehorse Leader, weekly press briefings and media releases and use of on-line interactive surveys via Council's website.

11.0 PROJECT BUDGET & TIMELINES

11.1 Project Budget

The total budget for the program is \$90,000 to be linked to the achievement of key milestones. This includes funding from the Melbourne 2030 Expert Assistance Program. The fee proposal should be itemised to identify each of the components within the scope of the work.

11.2 Project Timelines

It is envisaged that the project will be undertaken as follows:

Engagement of consultants- commence study	January 2009
Baseline report	April 2009
Options and Assessment Report	May 2009
Draft for Public Consultation	June 2009
Final UDF for Council Adoption	November/December 2009

As part of the submission, a detailed project plan, which incorporates the consultation strategy, should be provided. In this project plan the consultant should comment on the proposed timeframes and suggest, if required, modifications when appropriate.

12.0 TENDER

A response to this brief must include:

- A full methodology and Project Plan including all tasks to be conducted, the relationship between them, and the personnel to conduct the task and level of involvement (e.g. number of hours/days)
- An outline of the proposed consultation strategy and project co-ordination required for the project
- Details of the consultants' capability and experience with similar projects including references
- A list of staff that will work on the project and details of their qualifications and experience. For each staff the level of involvement in the project and availability should be included
- A quotation to complete the project, including itemised fee proposal and proposed payment schedule

Submissions shall be delivered to:

**Juliana Aya
Senior Strategic Planner
City of Whitehorse
Locked Bag 2
Nunawading Delivery Centre VIC 3110**

Submissions close --/--/----

13.0 CONSULTANT SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection of the consultant for this project will be based on the following criteria (in brackets is their corresponding weight):

Understanding of the issues, scope and outcomes (10%)

- Demonstrated clear understanding of the scope, aims and objectives of the project.
- Well documented strategic approach and a detailed methodology that draws together all aspects of the project.

Approach, methodology and Project Plan (20%)

- Well documented approach in a project plan

Quality and experience of the consultant team (20%)

- Expertise and performance of the project team, including addressing the range of professional expertise required to perform the requirements of the study brief to a high standard.

Capacity

- Demonstrated ability of the consultant team to undertake and complete the project in the specified timeframe.

Consultation (10%)

- Demonstrated ability to plan and undertake an effective consultation process – the use of a specialist facilitator will be viewed favourably.
- Referee check

Fee (20%)

- Clarity and transparency of the proposed fee
- A comprehensive fee proposal, addressing all required work.
- Value for money

Other

- Innovation and capacity to generate new approaches to complex situations (10%)

- Capability to develop and communicate complex proposals/initiatives in a graphical way (10%).
- Considering the need of visual presentations for this project, it is recommended that proposals include samples (or links to online sources) of previous work developed that demonstrate abilities to develop graphical materials and tools available for this.
- Tenderers record and attitude regarding EEO (pass/fail).
- Tenderers record, policies and attitude to OH&S (pass/fail).

