



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 13 October 2017

Whitehorse Planning Scheme Amendment C175 Panel Report Released

Planning Panels Victoria has released the Whitehorse Planning Scheme Amendment C175 Panel Report for the Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre. The amendment endeavours to introduce new planning controls in Box Hill to help manage the design and height of buildings in the rapidly growing, significant, activity centre.

'I don't think anyone could have anticipated this level of development in Box Hill over a decade ago,' Whitehorse Mayor Councillor Denise Massoud said.

"Through this work, Council has tried to manage height and maximise positive outcomes for the community and our residents –this approach has not been accepted by the panel," Cr Massoud said.

The state government has recognised Box Hill as a Major Activity Centre since Planning Schemes have existed and Council has always acknowledged the opportunity for growth in Box Hill.

"Contrary to the panel's findings, the proposed controls would still encourage new development and growth in Box Hill," Cr Massoud said.

"Councillors around the state are starting to question how much influence they can exercise on behalf of their communities," Cr Massoud said.

After hearing from submitters, which included major land holders such as Box Hill Central Shopping Centre, Epworth Hospital, and Box Hill Institute, the panel raised significant concerns with the amendment and concluded that;

- The proposed rezoning of land is supported; and
- The proposed changes to local policy in the planning scheme and the proposed Design and Development Overlay should be abandoned;

Council was disappointed by the Minister's independently appointed panel's derisive assessment of the amendment and the manner in which the technical report was at times quite emotively written.

Elgar Ward Councillor Tina Liu said, "I am disappointed that the report does not appear to place sufficient weight on feedback from our residents. We all understand that development is occurring, but this report suggests Council will have no powers to manage the growth, more sustainable design guidelines and planning outcomes in the future which is very concerning."

Elgar Ward Councillor Blair Barker said, "Residents overwhelmingly tell me they want Council to deliver sensible and balanced responses to the growth in Box Hill. The report effectively rejects our attempt to apply some limits and controls on the growth. The state government and Planning Minister now need to ensure the development doesn't spiral out of control completely."

Council will release the panel report to the public today and all parties who made a submission to the amendment will be advised in writing. The panel report is available for viewing at Council's Service Centres and on Council's website.

Officers will prepare a report to Council for its consideration, which is anticipated for the December or January Ordinary Council Meeting.

The report will outline the options available to Council regarding the Amendment, which may include:

- Proceed as exhibited
- Split amendment into two parts to; adopt zones, abandon Design Development Overlay and policy changes
- Abandon amendment in its entirety

Council's recommendation will then go back to the Minister for a final decision.