

7 October 2019

Mr Tony Marks
Acting Director – Outer Melbourne
Victorian Planning Authority
Level 25, 35 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Mr Marks:

Re: Beveridge North West Precinct Structure Plan (PSP)

I am pleased to provide Resilient Melbourne's submission in response to the PSP currently exhibited for Beveridge North West.

Resilient Melbourne was borne out of 100 Resilient Cities – Pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation (100RC). This program was developed to help cities around the world prepare to meet the physical, social and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21st century. Resilient Melbourne works across the breadth of Melbourne's metropolitan councils to develop an integrated approach to urban resilience. In 2016, we released the first resilience strategy produced by an Australian city, which was the culmination of work by over 1,000 people from 230 organisations across sectors, council boundaries and community groups. During strategy development, we identified rapid urban development in the northern growth corridor, and in Mitchell Shire in particular, as a dynamic that will shape the future of the city as a whole.

Our vision is for a Melbourne whose diverse communities are viable, liveable, sustainable and prosperous. Through our 'Resilient Communities in Residential and Mixed-use Developments' action, we are working with partners to test new models of planning and development that encourage community and multi-stakeholder engagement. The purpose of this action is to achieve development outcomes that prepare communities to better manage current and future stresses and shocks. At Beveridge North West, we are partnering with Mitchell Shire Council, the Victorian Planning Authority, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Yarra Valley Water, RMIT University and a number of service providers to develop a holistic approach to resilience planning within the precinct.

In keeping with Resilient Melbourne's objectives and strategy, we offer the following feedback on the Beveridge North West PSP:

Vision and objectives – We strongly support the vision and objectives as articulated in the PSP and commend the commitment to the integrated approach to planning for Beveridge North West. The physical design objectives that promote walking and integrated transport, diversity of housing offerings and early delivery of services will contribute to the creation of neighbourhoods that can meet the majority of residents' needs locally, which is consistent with *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* and its focus on 'Living locally – 20-minute neighbourhoods'. Care for the environment through provision of open space, responsiveness to local biodiversity and use of integrated water management principles highlights the need for greenfield developments to respond to the chronic stresses that climate change presents and the commitment of

Resilient Melbourne and our partners to deliver on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Similarly, we commend the flexibility provided in the PSP that can facilitate opportunities for ongoing engagement with nearby and future communities about the ultimate built outcomes at Beveridge North West.

Housing – We are pleased that Beveridge North West will offer a range of housing options that can serve diverse communities and allow residents to age in place. We support the inclusion of a minimum of 10 percent affordable housing, and would request that this be strengthened to become a requirement instead of a guideline (G16).

In addition, we strongly support the inclusion of R3 as a requirement to mandate minimum densities of 30 dwellings per hectare in a meaningful part of the precinct. The proposed densities will be beneficial to providing the type of walkable, convivial urban environment that facilitates social connection. It is important for affordable housing in particular to be located in walkable catchments close to services and public transport (G17).

With regard to housing and urban design / street layout, we would recommend an approach that promotes the use of passive design in homes. This design principle would allow residents to take advantage of the sun and natural ventilation to comfortably heat and cool their homes much of the year, rather than relying on energy-intensive systems. Given the focus on affordability in the precinct, such an approach would benefit residents by contributing significantly to reduced utility bills. It would also lessen the environmental impact of running heating and cooling systems.

Finally, we would recommend the inclusion of additional guidelines, or considerations to the overall planning process at Beveridge North West, to support the application of innovative housing development / financing models; this may serve to encourage strong community connections and a mix of tenure types (in addition to a mix of physical typologies).

Education and community facilities – The integrated approach to providing education and community facilities will benefit future residents at Beveridge North West. In keeping with the PSP vision and objectives, we recommend that adequate levels of service provision within the precinct be made available to residents at the time that they move in, both to ensure that social, health and wellbeing needs are met and to establish patterns of ‘living locally’. It is well understood that behavioural patterns once established are hard to shift. Shared-use spaces and temporary infrastructure to provide such services should be considered to ensure that residents are appropriately supported upon their arrival. Such spaces will be important for establishing social connections early and building social cohesion among residents.

Biodiversity, ecosystems and open space – Over the last two years, Resilient Melbourne and The Nature Conservancy have collaborated with a range of government, private and non-profit organisations to develop *Living Melbourne: our metropolitan urban forest*. This strategy, endorsed by the Victorian Planning Authority, DELWP, Mitchell Shire Council and Yarra Valley Water, among others, provides a bold approach to improving greening, biodiversity and liveability in metropolitan Melbourne. We would strongly recommend that the principles and

directions from the strategy be applied to Beveridge North West. Specific elements of the strategy that can apply at Beveridge North West include:

- *Targets* - Ambitious regional tree canopy cover targets of between 20 and 30 per cent have been proposed across the metropolitan region, with particular need in the western and northern regions. Because native understorey and tree canopy cover of at least 30 per cent benefits biodiversity, both tree canopy and shrub targets of between 30 and 50 per cent by 2050 are proposed. In providing for ‘tree canopy’ and ‘tree canopy and shrub’ cover targets, *Living Melbourne* acknowledges the increasing difficulty of getting canopy trees into some densely developed, established urban areas, and into new greenfield developments. This applies to both public and private land. It also acknowledges that shrubs are important for shading, aesthetics and habitat. In the case of Beveridge North West, we would recommend that provisions for street trees (e.g., G55) align with the approaches presented in *Living Melbourne*.
- *Locations for increased / focused canopy cover* – In addition to the proposed placement of trees along streets and in the public realm, canopy cover should be emphasized in the following places:
 - larger consolidated cool spots, to protect areas that contribute to reducing urban heat islands;
 - areas with a combination of high land surface temperatures, low percentage of canopy cover, and higher proportions of vulnerable community members (e.g., young children, older persons, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, public housing tenants, and socio-economically disadvantaged people);
 - schools, childcare centres, kindergartens, activity centres and neighbourhood shopping strips in hot areas; and
 - road reserves and streetscapes (where safety guidelines permit, for example behind flexible wire-rope safety barriers).
- *Principles for implementing urban greening and biodiversity elements* – These principles from *Living Melbourne* apply to both existing and new development areas:
 - no net loss of tree or shrub cover on public or private land in each metro region;
 - regional targets for canopy cover must apply to both public and private land;
 - implementation partners must strive to achieve the targets set for each category of public land (both open space and road reserves) and private land;
 - no more than 70 per cent of the additional canopy and shrub cover planted to achieve targets should be on public land; and
 - at least 30 per cent of the additional canopy and shrub cover planted to achieve targets should be on private land.

Drainage and water – We support the PSP’s strong requirements for integrated water management, including the rehabilitation of Kalkallo Creek, and would encourage adherence to strict standards in keeping with objectives for urban resilience and liveability in *Water for Victoria*. We would also encourage Yarra Valley Water and Melbourne Water to pursue innovative approaches to green infrastructure, water re-use on site and water-use-efficiency practices. These should integrate with and support the implementation of *Living Melbourne*, described above.

Town centres and employment – The proposed town centres generally offer a mix of scales and uses that will enable residents to meet most of their needs locally, and ideally within a short walk or bicycle trip from home. As per guideline G22, small enterprises that reflect the specific needs of future communities (e.g., specialised grocery shops) should be encouraged. Support for small and home businesses, such as through the provision of co-working spaces or start-up employment hubs, are also recommended to encourage a thriving local economy within the precinct and reduce residents’ need for long commutes.

Transport and movement – Active and public transport options should be prioritised within the precinct and as means of connecting to employment and other amenities outside of Beveridge North West. As with community services, public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure should be provided as soon as residents move to the precinct in order to establish positive mobility patterns that encourage physical activity and reduce environmental impact.

Delivery timelines – The development staging of the Beveridge North West PSP is critical to its success. While we understand that the precinct will be built over an extended period, we also know that early delivery of key infrastructure – including active and public transport and social infrastructure, as outlined in sections above – will be vital to prevent negative outcomes too frequently associated with greenfield developments in metropolitan Melbourne. To this end, we strongly support requirement R21 and guideline G66 (which arguably could be upgraded to a requirement). Along these lines, we would find it useful for the PSP document to define precise timelines associated with the ‘short, medium and long’ notations in the table in Appendix 4.1. Specifically, we would like to understand whether many of the elements intended for short-term delivery will in fact be completed by the time the first residents arrive.

In summary, we support the vision proposed for Beveridge North West and encourage relevant authorities to pursue best practice in applying the recommendations and guidelines provided.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require additional information.

Yours sincerely



Toby Kent
Chief Resilience Officer
Resilient Melbourne

E: toby.kent@melbourne.vic.gov.au

P: 03 9658 9894

M: 0439 031 253