

Ormond & McKinnon Walks

Response to Draft Glen Eira Community Plan

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Glen Eira City Council for the opportunity to comment on the Glen Eira Draft Community Plan.

Below is an outline of our feedback on the Glen Eira Draft Community Plan.

Who are Ormond & McKinnon Walks?

Ormond and McKinnon Walks is a residents' walking advocacy group working to make the neighbourhood safer for pedestrians and promoting walking as a viable mode of transport, thereby improving the health of residents and the quality of suburban life.

Introduction

From the outset, it should be noted that it is very disappointing and reflects poor community planning for this plan to be developed based on population statistics that are 6 years old. Had there been the foresight to develop the plan after the release of the 2011 census data, this community plan would be far more effective and reflective of the needs of the current Glen Eira population; not one reflecting the population profile of six years ago. As must be acknowledged, most first world cities have mobile populations and Melbourne and Glen Eira are no exception.

It would be of value to outline what council acknowledges as reasons why people are attracted to Glen Eira (p3).

Advocacy & Partnerships

Accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities should include well maintained pedestrian infrastructure with good lighting and amenity

Council must be prepared to match fund to ensure funding opportunities are maximised.

It appears that the priority list should be reordered to better reflect what community members see as important:

- Funding for children's services including childcare and kindergarten services;
- Funding for aged care facilities and home and community care services to support the ageing population;
- Funding to deliver a comprehensive range of immunisation and public health services;
- Accessibility and inclusion for people with a disability;

- Improved public transport services in **and through** Glen Eira;
- More open space for the City of Glen Eira;
 - **Adequate pedestrian infrastructure must be ensured to give residents access to the parks.**
 - **Pedestrian infrastructure must include adequate seating for all members of the community including the aged and the young**
 - **Pedestrian infrastructure must include adequate lighting to increase real and perceived safety.**
 - **Pedestrian infrastructure must include adequate shelter and shade from the sun as well as wind and rain. Suitable vegetation can be used. Joyce Park, Ormond, is an example of where such shade and seating is inadequate for young and aged members of the community**
- Advocate to the State government for funding for volunteering and community groups.
- Adequate funding and support for local recreational and sporting organisations;
- Cleanliness of railway stations;
- Adequate lighting at railway stations;
 - **Adequate lighting for pedestrians on residential streets**
- Funding to deliver environmental initiatives that foster biodiversity and sustainability;
- Flood mitigation works to Melbourne Water drains to ensure adequate capacity;
- Removal of graffiti on State Government owned assets;
- **Measures to improve safety and amenity in the vicinity of major roads controlled by the State Government, and upgrade of cycling and public transport infrastructure and services;**
 - **Better pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will help to reduce road congestion and minimise the need for ‘upgrades’ which often induce road demand. Providing viable alternatives such as safe pedestrian and bicycle paths will reduce the need for these perceived and short term ‘upgrades’;**
- All residents and businesses to have access to high speed broadband through the National Broadband Network; and
- Improved operation of intersections of railway lines and major roads (e.g. grade separation or boom gates down for shorter periods consistent with safety);
- Changes to State planning policies where Council considers reasonable community desires and expectations are at odds with existing State planning policies;
- Council planning decisions to be given greater weight before VCAT;
- Adequate access options for new developments;
 - **This draft objective encourages the continued over-reliance on cars as a primary mode of travel. Demand for parking can be reduced with improved access options including car share schemes, public transport services and walking and cycling infrastructure. Better pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure should be ensured and provided for with adequate Developer Contributions.**

Sustainability and the Environment

The importance of active modes of travel, such as walking and bicycle riding cannot be overlooked.

Vision and Values

- “quality transport, traffic and parking infrastructure that enables safe traffic flow and provides a range of transport options for people moving around and through our City. “
 - As explained under Theme 2 below, this vision should be re-phrased to include sustainable transport modes without the assumption that movement by way of private motor vehicle as the only option.
 - **Safe, universal access to employment, education and other community activities and facilities enabled primarily by quality pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and public transport services.**

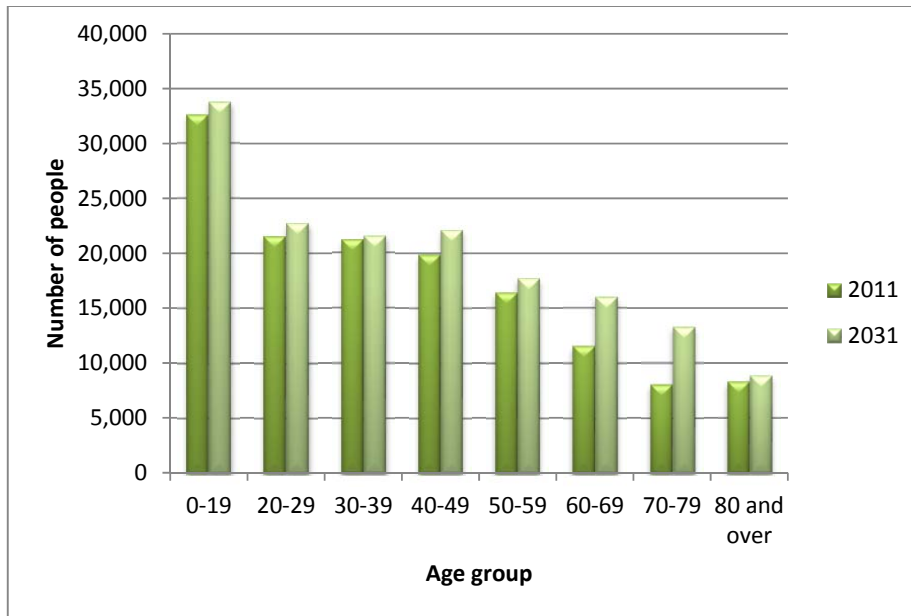
About the Community Plan

It should be stressed that this plan, based on the 2006 census data is outdated before it is ratified by council. As a community group, we find it very disappointing and reflective of poor community planning for this plan to be developed based on population statistics that are 6 years old. Had there been the foresight to develop the plan after the release of the 2011 census data on 20 June 2012, this community plan would be far more effective and reflective of the needs of the current Glen Eira population; not one reflecting the population profile of six years ago.

Demographic changes and future planning implications

Glen Eira demographics now and in the future

This plan has a very strong focus on an ageing population. In addition to a growing number of people over 55 years of age, population forecasts also show significant growth in residents aged between 5 and 25, particularly the 10-19 age brackets (see table 1). *In other words, an increasing proportion of people in Glen Eira will be either too young to drive, or of an age where driving competence is in decline.* This demonstrates the importance for Glen Eira to focus on access that is not dependent on private motor vehicle use. The increase in residents of driving age under 25 also has worrying implications for road safety.



Source: DPCD, 2012

Table 1: Projected population 2011 and 2031 based on 2006 census data.

Physical activity will be crucial to ensure quality of life and good health outcomes for an aging population. Activities such as walking can provide both physical activity and assist residents to participate in their community and thus their society. The “walkability” of neighbourhoods will be a critical determinant of whether such physical activity takes place.

Similarly, the ability of younger residents to safely develop independence and resilience will depend upon the suitability of the urban environment for walking and cycling to schools and other local facilities.

Strategic objectives and strategies

Theme 1: Services to the community

Reflecting the importance of physical activity and the aging population, we propose an additional strategy:

- *Apply universal access principles across each of the other themes*

We propose:

- School based programs encouraging and facilitating active travel to school. This will require a Council Officer to be dedicated to relationship building with schools to consult with the school community and to facilitate such programs. The power of school newsletters in disseminating a message should not be overlooked.

Theme 2: Traffic, parking and transport

Traffic volumes and speeds were a recurrent concern across the various forms of consultation undertaken in preparation of the draft plan. For example, phone surveys identified traffic volumes as the attribute most in need of improvement in Glen Eira, while the most commonly raised visions for the future included “less traffic and parked cars” and “less people using cars”.

The instinctive reaction of many people who are concerned about congestion and parking pressures is to call for increased road capacity and parking supply. However, experience now demonstrates that this approach does not work. Counter-intuitively, increasing road space and parking supply can actually make traffic worse. Transport experts now understand that increasing road capacity (and parking supply) generates more traffic in a number of ways, including:

- additional low value journeys are made that were previously not considered worth-while;
- existing journeys are shifted from other routes to the new/expanded road;
- in the longer term, land use and location changes occur based on use of the additional capacity, where previous land use required less travel;
- journeys shift onto the road from other modes such as public transport, which can lead to reduced service frequencies and consequently even more journeys shifting onto the road.

The only outcome of increased road capacity and traffic flow that transport planners can be confident of is that the road will attract even more traffic (induce demand). As this outcome is contrary to the clearly expressed wishes of the community, a different approach to managing traffic is needed.

Recognising the existence of generated traffic, and the numerous reasons for aiming to reduce motor vehicle traffic, modern transport planners now focus on providing access rather than

facilitating vehicle movement or mobility¹. Where mobility is required, best practice transport planning gives priority to walking, cycling and public transport (in that order) ahead of private motor vehicles.

For this reason, the strategic objective for Theme 2 is in great need of updating to an approach that also reflects the community’s desire to reduce traffic. For example, we propose:

To promote safe, universal access to employment, education and other community activities and facilities in a way that minimises the impact of traffic and parking on local amenity and the physical environment.

This proposal consciously omits mention of infrastructure as we believe these items are more properly considered as individual strategies under the strategic objective.

The related point in the draft vision statement should also be amended based on the above proposal.

Strategies

Reflecting the need and expressed wishes to reduce traffic and improve alternative forms of transport, we propose the following amendments to the strategies under Theme 2:

Current wording	Recommended wording
Improve safety and movement of road users and provide a fair and equitable balance of parking	Improve safety and movement of road users and provide a fair and equitable balance of parking (addressed by revised final strategy)
Continue to promote walking, cycling and public transport options in Glen Eira as alternatives to motor vehicle use	Continue to promote walking, cycling and public transport options in Glen Eira in preference to motor vehicle use
Inform the community about local active transport options including pedestrian, bicycle and public transport options	Consult and inform the community about local active transport options including pedestrian, bicycle and public transport options
Improve safety around shopping centres, parks and schools by maintaining safe school crossings and installing traffic management	Improve safety around shopping centres, parks and schools by maintaining safe crossings ² , installing traffic management treatments to protect and

¹ <http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm84.htm>

² More crossings should be provided for pedestrians of all ages, including around transport interchanges to facilitate inter-modal transfer (e.g. train to bus), and along preferred routes to local facilities such as parks.

treatments to protect vulnerable road users such as children	prioritise vulnerable road users such as children and older residents, and reducing speed limits³
Plan, construct and maintain interconnecting bike paths and lanes to facilitate safe bicycle transport options bearing in mind the need to facilitate safe traffic flow	Plan, construct and maintain interconnecting bike paths and lanes to facilitate safe bicycle transport options bearing in mind the need to facilitate safe traffic flow
Improve road safety and manage congestion on the local road network	Pursue a travel demand management strategy that reduces traffic volumes, demand for parking ⁴ and exposure to the risk of road trauma

Advocacy

As a significant amount of traffic in Glen Eira is traffic passing *through* Glen Eira, Council should not only advocate for improved public transport services in Glen Eira itself, but also improved services across the wider area.

As noted above, catering for private motor vehicles will only encourage greater motor vehicle traffic. This applies just as much to parking supply as it does to road capacity. Forcing provision of parking in new developments will also add to the cost of providing the range of housing types needed to meet the needs of residents across the different stages of their life-cycle.

Rather than advocating for the provision of parking that will encourage motor vehicle use, council should instead advocate for alternative forms of access, such as car share schemes for new developments⁵, secure bicycle parking and other travel demand management programs.

³ The commendable reduction in the speed limit on Centre Road is worthy of replication in other locations such as McKinnon Road.

⁴ e.g through encouraging car share schemes.

⁵ <http://theage.domain.com.au/real-estate-news/green-with-flair-car-share-20120520-1yz1s.html>

Theme 3: Town Planning and Community Development

Strategies

In keeping with the general desire to reduce traffic, we propose additional strategies under this theme:

- **Encourage a mix of land uses that reduces the need to travel**

- **Crime Prevention through Environmental Design is required to ‘design out’ crime.**
 - **Better design including lower fence heights will increase real safety which in turn will encourage greater travel by active means such as walking. 20% of congestion on Melbourne roads in morning peak hour is attributed to school traffic, with more children walking, riding or scooting, road congestion will be reduced.**

- **Fence heights to increase passive surveillance and better view lines for pedestrians and drivers moving out of home driveways and council laneways.**

Theme 5: Recreation and Open Space

Access to recreation and open space by transport modes other than private motor vehicle must be provided. Safe walking routes including suitable pedestrian crossings and wide footpaths to recreation and open space is required. This is in addition to adequate seating in the open space, in addition to shelter (from sun, wind and rain) and toilets. Joyce Park, Ormond is an example of passive recreational space with inadequate seating and shelter.

Theme 6: Waste, Grafitti and Cleanliness

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design will increase amenity within the Glen Eira community by increasing incidental community interactions as well as passive surveillance reducing the amount of dumped waste. Reduce fence heights should be considered.

Theme 7: Sustainable Community Assets and Infrastructure

Strategies

The emphasis of this strategy needs to be refocused:

Current wording	Recommended wording
Maintain, renew and upgrade footpaths, crossings, street signs and local roads to ensure safe movement of traffic, bicycles and pedestrians	Prioritise the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists through maintenance, renewal and upgrading of footpaths, bike paths, crossings, street signs and local roads

Greater consideration should also be given to the following:

- Street lighting for pedestrians (rather than the existing frequency and orientation for motor vehicles);
- Greater frequency of toilets (for pedestrians);
- Greater frequency of park benches for pedestrians, particularly the aged to stop and take a break between their origin and destination. The destination may be someone on a residential street or a community park;
- More holistic traffic calming measures should be implemented to reduce fast moving through traffic on residential streets. Speed humps alone do not reduce traffic volumes on residential streets; used in conjunction with other traffic calming measures in a range of locations, they can be successful;
- Roundabouts are unsafe for pedestrians as motor vehicles accelerate through them. Pedestrians are forced to walk further and are forced to cross in locations where view lines are reduced;
- Pedestrian infrastructure must include adequate shelter and shade from the sun as well as wind and rain. Suitable vegetation can be used. Joyce Park, Ormond, is an example of where such shade and seating is inadequate for young and aged members of the community.

Advocacy

As mentioned in our comments regarding Theme 2, increasing the capacity of roads will result in more traffic in Glen Eira. It is therefore exceptionally disappointing that the draft plan proposes advocacy for major roads, but includes absolutely no mention of advocacy for public transport or cycling infrastructure in this section. We propose the following rewording to bullet point 3:

- *Measures to improve safety and amenity in the vicinity of major roads controlled by the State Government, and upgrade of cycling and public transport infrastructure and services.*

Theme 8: Community Building and Engagement

We would encourage council to engage community groups, such as Ormond and McKinnon Walks and to work with organisations with recognised interests and expertise.

Users of the space should also be carefully consulted. The benefits of engaging these users can be seen with the successful outcome of the road traffic and parking conditions around McKinnon Primary School. These outcomes were achievable following the active engagement of parents, users of this space.

“Residents of cities must be involved in decisions, at a metropolitan and at a local level. In our sample, such involvement appears to have been critical to making tough decisions that were then actually implemented. This level of engagement is an order of magnitude different from what happens in Australia today.” (Kelly 2010, p.45)