

BENTLEIGH BACKGROUND REPORT

BUILDING TRANSITION PLAN



GLEN EIRA
CITY COUNCIL

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This report provides background information on the *Building Transition Plan* prepared for Bentleigh.

WHAT IS A BUILDING TRANSITION PLAN?

The *Draft Concept Plans* for Bentleigh contains a *Building Transition Plan*.

The *Building Transition Plan* identifies the preferred type and location of buildings in Bentleigh — aiming to deliver the right buildings in the right locations.

Details about each building type are provided in Council's *Quality Design Principles* document.

HOW DOES THIS FIT INTO STRUCTURE PLANNING?

Council is in the process of preparing a *Structure Plan* for Bentleigh.

A structure plan is a long-term plan that guides important aspects of an activity centre including development, land use, transport and car parking approaches, community facilities, public realm and open spaces, and strategic opportunities. Structure plans provide certainty for the way an area will accommodate growth and change as supported by Council and the community.

The *Building Transition Plan* will inform the built form part of the *Structure Plan*.

STRATEGIC POLICY CONTEXT

The planning system in Victoria is legislated and guided by the State Government. However, the system also gives weight to local strategies and policy direction, allowing council's to plan for outcomes that balance State objectives with the needs of our local community.

STATE GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

PLAN MELBOURNE 2017–2050

The State Government's *Plan Melbourne 2017–2050* is the metropolitan planning strategy that sets the vision and policy direction for managing growth across Melbourne.

The plan sets the direction for each municipality, seeking to increase density and activity in established areas that are serviced with high public transport and employment opportunities and other existing infrastructure, rather than simply continuing to expand outwards with urban sprawl.

Plan Melbourne specifically identifies Bentleigh as a major activity centre that should accommodate increased housing and employment growth. This is due to its location in an established area with good access to public transport.

The plan recognises that each activity centre will have a unique local context and encourages local Councils to set a vision and policy direction for planned growth. Structure planning forms part of this process.

GLEN EIRA'S STRATEGIC PLANNING DIRECTION

GLEN EIRA COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY PLAN 2017-2021

The recently adopted *Glen Eira Council and Community Plan* outlines a clear vision for Glen Eira including the theme Liveable and Well Designed which states the following objectives:

- Create prosperous, accessible and vibrant urban places.
- Encourage development that benefits the community.
- Proactively plan for and manage change within our urban places.
- Invest sustainably in our infrastructure and community assets.

ACTIVITY CENTRE, HOUSING AND LOCAL ECONOMY STRATEGY 2017

Council’s Activity Centre, Housing and local Economy Strategy 2017 provides a local policy link between the Glen Eira Council and Community Plan 2017-2021 and the State Government’s Plan Melbourne 2017–2050. The Strategy sets the city vision, activity centre framework and policy direction for each activity centre in Glen Eira as detailed below.

Glen Eira — city vision

The strategy identifies a vision for our Glen Eira’s activity centres:

Glen Eira will be a city of walkable neighbourhoods that are centred on a network of vibrant, socially inclusive and well designed activity centres, providing for the needs of and reflecting the character of their communities.

Activity Centre Framework

The strategy identifies a network of activity centres in Glen Eira, each with unique policy directions.

Health, education and innovation precinct with urban renewal	■
Caulfield Station Precinct	■
Emerging health, education and innovation precinct	■
East Village	■
Major activity centre with urban renewal	▲
Carnegie	▲
Elsternwick	▲
Emerging major activity centre with urban renewal	▲
Moorabbin Junction	▲
Major activity centre	▲
Bentleigh	▲
Emerging major activity centre	▲
Glen Huntly	▲
Large neighbourhood centre	★
Bentleigh East	★
Caulfield South	★
Neighbourhood centre	★
Caulfield Park	★
Alma Village	★
Hughesdale	★
McKinnon	★
Murrumbeena	★
Ormond	★
Patterson	★
Ripponlea	★
Gardenvale	★
Emerging neighbourhood centre	★
Oakleigh South	★

Please note: other local centres have been mapped that contain existing retail uses but are not currently identified under local policy.



Policy status and direction

The strategy sets the policy direction for each activity centre, with Bentleigh detailed as follows.

POLICY DIRECTION	
CENTRE	BENTLEIGH
POLICY STATUS	MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTRE
FUNCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centres that provide access to a wide range of goods, services and activities, including commercial, retail, entertainment and community facilities with suitable residential development opportunity that responds to their urban context in and around the centre.
EMPLOYMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High focus for employment growth.
ECONOMY / RETAIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail should provide for the weekly needs of an approximate 800 metre to two kilometre residential catchment, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a minimum of (or demonstrated capacity to accommodate) approximately two supermarkets or similar fresh food market; specialty retailing; hospitality; and entertainment.
HOUSING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High focus for housing growth opportunities. Major focus on new family households.
TRANSPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre should be well serviced by public transport, particularly fixed transport with opportunity for active transport options. Due to broader catchment, driving to the centre is required, however aim for majority of visits to be accessible by public transport, foot or bike.
OPEN SPACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level of focus for implementation of new open space or developer contribution.
LIVEABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically, centres should provide services for the wider community, including a range of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a library; a community hub; an entertainment complex; maternal child health care services; child care; a senior citizens centre; medical centres; and a chemist.

OVERALL VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The Bentleigh *Draft Concept Plans* includes the following draft vision and objectives. These will set the overall direction for outcomes within the centre.

VISION

Bentleigh will be an accessible, local shopping destination with a vibrant café and restaurant culture. It will maintain its community feel with open space, places for people to meet and gather and a broad range of local businesses, which meet the needs of a diverse community.

OBJECTIVES

Place-making

- Enhance Bentleigh's role as a premier destination for shopping and socialising.
- Support a network of active streets and shared community and open spaces.
- Encourage landscaping and greenery.
- Promote high quality urban design and architecture.
- Support safe, accessible and friendly streets.
- Encourage development that provides a community benefit.

Housing

- Celebrate Bentleigh's unique heritage precincts and local character.
- Manage the transition between housing densities.
- Manage growth in a way that responds to Bentleigh's suburban residential character.
- Encourage a diverse range of housing options.

Economy

- Embrace Bentleigh's role as a regional shopping and services destination.
- Boost night time activity and encourage various dining and entertainment options.
- Encourage offices and employment opportunities.

Transport

- Encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport.
- Explore innovative approaches to car parking and traffic management

BUILDING TRANSITION PLAN

The *Draft Concept Plans* for Bentleigh contains a *Building Transition Plan*.

The *Building Transition Plan* identifies the preferred type and location of buildings in Bentleigh — to deliver the right buildings in the right locations.

Details about each building type are provided in Council's *Quality Design Principles* document.



View the Building Transition Plan for Bentleigh on Council's website in conjunction with this report.

CONSIDERATIONS

The plan has been prepared in consideration of:

- new strategic direction identified within Council's *Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy 2017*;
- community feedback received to date regarding location and type of development;
- existing built forms and local context;
- planning permit activity;
- existing planning scheme provisions (policy, zones, overlays and building height restrictions);
- preferred locations outlined in Council's *Quality Design Principles*;
- urban design recommendations identified within the *Glen Eira Urban Design Analysis* prepared by Planisphere (May 2017); and
- the State Government's *Plan Melbourne 2017–2050* — metropolitan planning strategy.

The *Building Transition Plan* uses the road network as a border where practical in order to best manage transition between building types. This ensures that different development intensities are separated by road widths rather than individual property boundaries.

However, for a number of reasons, a road boundary cannot be achieved in all situations. In these circumstances, a rear boundary or mid-street border, has been used as the transition point. While these transition points are not as preferred as a road boundary, it is important to note that the *Quality Design Principles* seek to proactively address the matter of character and transition in new developments by outlining how multiple building types can read well together, when located within the same street.

KEY OUTCOMES

The following sections outline the decision making process that has informed the *Building Transition Plan* for Bentleigh.

I. RESPONDING TO BENTLEIGH'S SUBURBAN CHARACTER

Bentleigh is a major activity centre with a distinctly low-scale suburban character. The key aim is to manage growth in a way that is respectful of this context.

The area has experienced a significant transformation in recent years with large apartment developments being constructed in traditionally low-scale areas. Current policy supports dense apartment developments with little consideration for maintaining a garden suburban character, which results in some developments appearing bulky and overdeveloped. The scale, rate of change and quality of new building stock are all issues that have been raised through consultation.

The *Building Transition Plan* looks to limit the amount of four story apartment buildings in the long residential streets of established homes in Bentleigh.

Instead, the plan seeks to introduce a greater spread of housing type, with a particular focus on medium density terrace housing within the suburban streets. This housing type is a good transitional building form linking the lower scale residential areas with the core of the activity centre.

Importantly, the terrace housing building types provide greater opportunity for a range of household types including families to live within walking distance of the activity centre.

The terrace types have mostly been applied where current planning allows four storey apartments, such as in streets including:

- Vickery Street (east side and west side north of Ward Street).
- Godfrey Street (west side).
- Oak Street (east side).
- Blair Street (north side).
- Fitzroy Street (south side, between Oak and Godfrey streets).
- Bent Street (north of Ward Street).
- Nicholson Street (north of Blair Street).
- Mavho Street.
- Lorainne Street.
- Mitchell Street.
- Robert Street.

It is proposed that these areas will see a change in the type of development that can be achieved, from four storey apartment buildings to two to three storey terrace townhouses.

Where possible, the extent of the building types have carried through to a road boundary, this provides a clearer and more legible boundary for transition into lower or higher building forms. It is noted that in some instances carrying the building type to the road border has meant that the current policy boundaries have changed slightly.

South of Centre Road

In certain areas such as the residential land south of Centre Road (ie. Mavho, Loranne, Mitchell and Robert streets) transitional issues are caused by irregular 'radial' zone boundaries and multiple zones within a single streetscape. This creates inconsistency with four storey apartment buildings and low-scale detached housing in the same street.

The *Building Transition Plan* seeks to reduce development intensity to medium density town housing in these streets to improve the transition and respond more appropriately to the low-scale suburban context, while continuing to support growth. The *Building Transition Plan* nominates *Terrace townhouse* (two-three storeys) along the northern section of these streets, with a transition to the lower scale *Side-by-side townhouse* (one-two storeys) at the southern end.

A number of transition options were considered for the location of terrace town housing in these streets, including:

- making the entire street terrace town housing;
- using the same 'radial' borders to separate different building types; or
- straightening the borders across all streets to improve transition, aligning as closely with the current radial borders as possible (the option proposed).

Oak Street

In Oak Street, part of the west side of the street is proposed to down-scale from three storey apartment buildings to two storey townhouses, with the eastside of the street being reduced from four storey apartment buildings to three storey terrace townhouses.

Horsley and Hayes Streets

A new area of town housing has been sought in the streets of Horsley Street (north side) and Hayes Street (south side) in order to manage the transition to the strategic sites. Both of these streets are adjacent to the retail core and are considered appropriate for medium density town houses.

To achieve this greater spread of lower density housing (when compared to the current policy) the plan seeks to balance out the development by creating new opportunities with townhouses on Centre and Jasper Roads and well managed developments on strategic sites (see below sections for further information).

2. PROTECTING BENTLEIGH'S HERITAGE & LOW-SCALE RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Burgess Street, Bendigo Avenue and Daley Street, located south of Centre Road and at the core of the retail strip, have a conflict with the current planning policy, as they are designated both heritage areas and areas for growth. The Residential Growth Zone supports four storey apartment buildings, whilst the Heritage Overlay seeks preservation of the existing low-scale built forms and character. Supporting four storey apartment developments in this context is inappropriate. The *Building Transition Plan* nominates *Heritage/character housing* which seeks a site responsive one or two storey development that is respectful of overlay protections. In addition to structure planning, to best manage change in Glen Eira's heritage areas, Council seeks to implement a clearer *Heritage Policy*. For further information, visit www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/heritagepolicy

A large proportion of the Bentleigh study area is currently protected under the Neighbourhood Residential Zone, which mandates that development must not exceed two storeys (nine metres). The *Building Transition Plan* adopts this approach through provision of low-scale two storey building types in these areas, including *Heritage/character housing* and the *Side-by-side Townhouse*.

3. PRESERVING THE LOW-SCALE CHARACTER OF THE CENTRE ROAD RETAIL STRIP

The Centre Road retail strip has a low-scale character that should be preserved in context of its suburban surrounds. However, the strip's current urban village policy status and Commercial I Zoning encourages major redevelopment.

The *Building Transition Plan* nominates *Heritage/character shop top* (three to four storeys) and *Shop Top* (four to five storeys) along Centre Road to provide direction for medium-scale commercial development that does not dominate the low-scale street. Retail and office uses should be prioritised in this area.

This outcome is partially informed by the recommendations of the *Glen Eira Urban Design Analysis* prepared by Planisphere (May 2017), which notes four to five storeys as appropriate preferred height in response to the suburban context.

Limiting the scale of the shopping strip also limits the number of expected new housing to be provided in the heart of the activity centre. It is important to maintain the opportunity for new housing in Bentleigh as it is a key driver for economic success of the shopping strip and is a clear state objective.

To accommodate the need for renewal of the commercial area, a number of larger sites located behind the lower scale shopping strip have been allocated as strategic sites that can accommodate taller mixed use buildings (discussed in more detail below).

Housing opportunities along Centre and Jasper Roads have also been reviewed. The *Building Transition Plan* nominates the residential areas outside the commercial core to accommodate

three storey terrace townhouse/apartment buildings along these key transport corridors. It is considered that these main streets are best suited to managing the built form and transport demands of townhouse/apartment development, instead of the neighbouring local residential streets. New buildings along these important transport corridors is also hoped to make these streets safer and more walkable, linking the wider residential neighbourhood with the train station and shopping strip.

4. SUPPORTING RESIDENTIAL DENSITY NEAR THE BENTLEIGH STATION AND ALONG CENTRE ROAD

As a major activity centre, Bentleigh must accommodate a growing population. Dense residential buildings will be concentrated around the Bentleigh Station in areas already subject to significant transformation, and with a road pattern than can manage this building type. Development intensity will transition with increased distance from the railway station.

Bent and Vickery Streets Precinct and Hamilton and Bleazby Streets Precinct

There is significant construction and permit activity to the north of Centre Road near Bentleigh Station, particularly around the:

- Bent and Vickery street area; and
- Hamilton and Bleazby Street area.

Apartment buildings in these areas will continue to be supported, however the outcome will be improved by implementation of appropriate building types under Council’s *Quality Design Principles*. The *Garden apartment* (four storeys) building type seeks to ensure that apartments located within these residential streets, look and feel residential, with a strongly vegetated garden setting and a recognisably residential building form.

5. STRATEGIC REDEVELOPMENT PROVIDING A COMMUNITY BENEFIT

A number of larger sites located adjacent to the retail strip, mostly north of Centre Road have been identified as strategic sites.

The intent is that development within *Strategic sites* should provide a community benefit. It is noted that these sites are a combination of private and public owned sites.

Public owned land

Draft projects have been nominated for the public owned sites within Council’s **Transformation Concepts**. Council is currently seeking community feedback on these projects, including:

- additional car parking;
- Bentleigh Hub (expanding existing community facilities);
- creation of a new eat street;



- creation of a new green space;
- employment and diverse housing opportunities;
- new retail and car parking;
- a safe cycling link; and
- a new plaza.

Private owned land

Private owned properties in suitable locations have been nominated due to their strategic location and potential for redevelopment in a way that should contribute to the immediate public realm and provide a wider public benefit. This is an emerging approach that has been explored by a number of councils, each using different methods with varying success.

The areas identified as *Strategic sites* are intended to accommodate taller buildings of approximately six to eight storeys, while not unduly impacting on sensitive areas. It is expected that these sites are able to accommodate necessary transitions to adjoining properties within the site. In particular, consolidation is encouraged within these areas in order to achieve a taller building while managing impacts on sensitive interfaces.

It is not intended that these taller buildings are simply all private apartments. Council seeks to ensure that these taller buildings can provide key community benefits currently not being delivered elsewhere. These community benefits may include:

- Office and other types of needed local employment.
- ‘Anchor’ commercial uses that drive economic sustainability.
- Community uses and spaces.
- Needed housing such as affordable, student and/or aged-care housing.
- Additional public car parking.
- Additional public open space.
- New street connections.

It is not expected that all of these attributes will be provided in one development. Instead that the appropriate provisions would be identified through the *Structure Plan* by understanding the precinct needs and future vision.

It is intended that developments that do not provide these attributes are limited to a lower height, while developments that do provide these community benefits would be allowed to develop buildings to the maximum building height (subject to meeting all the relevant urban design measures).