

GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL

BENTLEIGH

DRAFT STRUCTURE PLAN

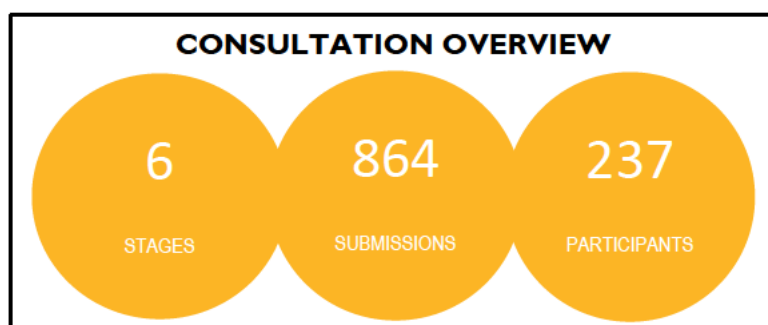
- CONSULTATION OVERVIEW



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INTRODUCTION



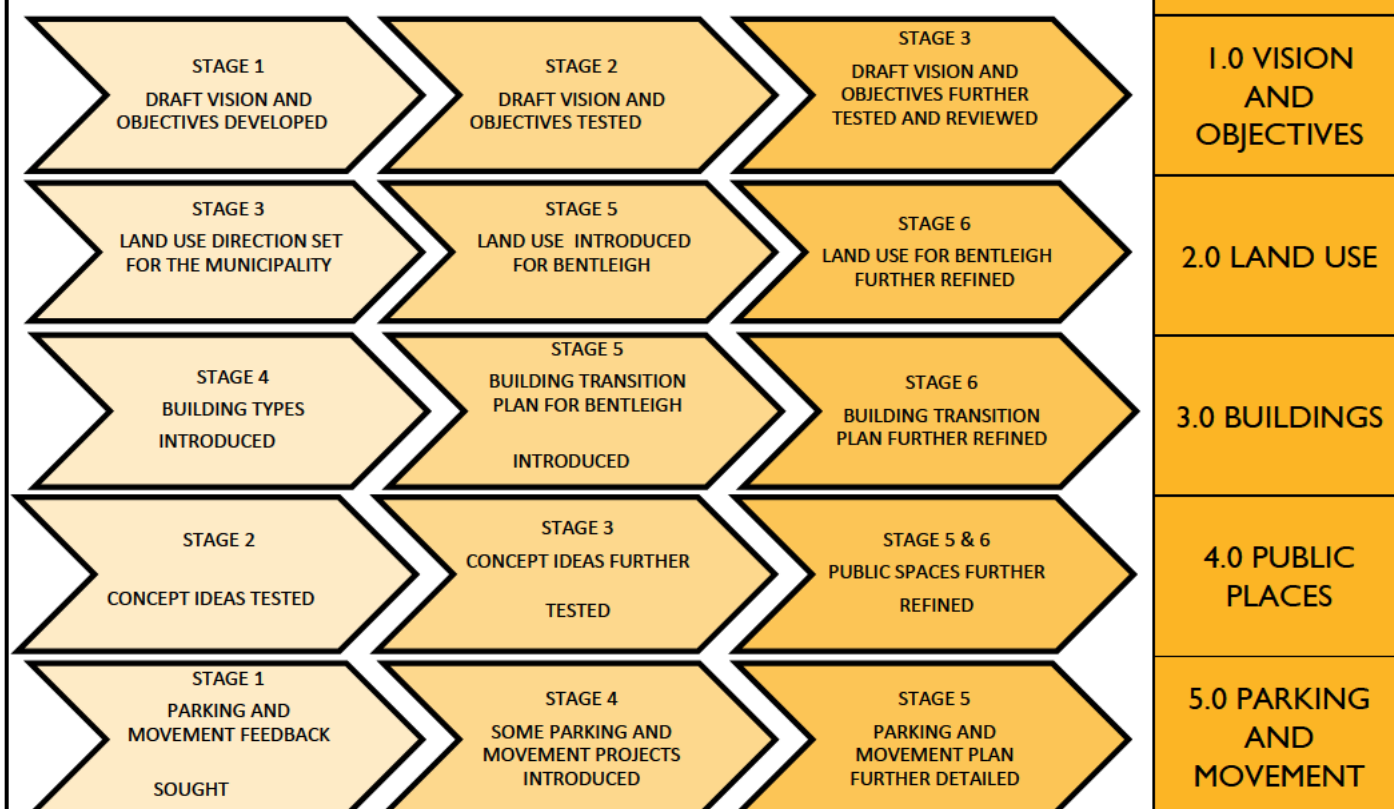
It is evident that Glen Eira is undergoing an exciting time of transition and now is a golden opportunity to set a new direction for our municipality. This period of change is driven by multiple external factors including the Melbourne-wide housing boom, multiple level crossing removals and a transition in the way businesses are operating in this digital era.

In 2016 Council undertook a major *Planning Scheme Review*. Feedback during community engagement indicated that our community would like greater clarity on how our municipality will respond to these changes and manage growth. It also identified the need for the introduction of *Structure Plans* for Bentleigh, Carnegie and Elsternwick activity centres.

Council has since embarked on an extensive structure planning program to ensure a clear vision will be set for the future of our municipality. Ultimately, the activity centre planning program will result in the implementation of *Structure Plans* for our major activity centres along with municipal-wide direction and planning guidelines.

Through six stages of community engagement, a range of engagement methods were used, including surveys, community forums and drop-in sessions. A total of 866 submissions were received for Bentleigh while 237 people participated in community forums and drop-in sessions.

HOW CONSULTATION HAS INFLUENCED EACH CHAPTER OF THE STRUCTURE PLAN



STAGE ONE

TELL US WHAT YOU LOVE ABOUT YOUR SHOPPING STRIP

28 NOVEMBER 2016 TO 19 FEBRUARY 2017

CONSULTATION SNAPSHOT

Surveys: 443

Facebook comments: 80

METHODOLOGY

Council began the *Structure Plan* process by asking residents what they like and don't like about their local shopping strip and their vision for the centre in the future. The consultation also explored how people use and access their centre. This started conversations about open space, transport and development.

Feedback was sought through an online survey on Council's *Have Your Say* website asking what people value or would like to change about the Bentleigh activity centre. Surveys were promoted through Facebook posts and ads, *Glen Eira News*, various Council publications, *Leader* newspapers, posters and flyers were distributed to local businesses and on Council's website. Additionally, letters were posted to households in the Bentleigh activity centre and to those who participated in the *Planning Scheme Review* consultation.

Surveys were undertaken in all 17 Glen Eira activity centres with more than 2,100 surveys completed in total. This allowed the identification of both centre-based and broader municipal-wide themes for Council to explore and address as part of the structure planning process.

KEY THEMES

IN THE FUTURE The survey identified that into the future people would like to see Bentleigh have a stronger family friendly focus with more greenery and activity in the evening. They want it to remain affordable and local, but responsive to the new, younger community.

OPEN SPACE AND AMENITY Survey respondents were supportive of increasing open space and amenity in the centre. The rotunda was raised regularly in the survey as needing updating or removal, with the opportunity to create an inviting vibrant community space with trees, plants and seating.

COMMUNITY SERVICES Nineteen percent of respondents were satisfied with the current provision of community services in Bentleigh, although many were upset with the removal of government services in the area such as Medicare and Centrelink and felt these needed to be reinstated.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT Almost two-thirds (65%) of residents are in favour of development, under the conditions that:

- height controls be implemented to ensure they don't compete with the local shopping strip; and
- adherence to material and design guidelines that fit in with the local character.

SHOPS AND RETAIL The survey results indicated that it was the shops and retail that people loved the most about Bentleigh, however, feedback suggested opportunities for redirecting the focus of retail businesses in the area with a further mix of businesses and bustling cafés and restaurants.

MOVEMENT There were a number of comments relating to the positive impact the removal of the level crossing would have with 39% of respondents particularly commenting that the public transport in the area is good.

OUTCOMES OF STAGE ONE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

The first stage of consultation explored what people like and don't like about their local shopping centre as well as how they use and access the centre.

This feedback led the development of a draft vision and objectives for each of the activity centres in Glen Eira, including Bentleigh (see below). As well as guiding the development of the Bentleigh *Structure Plan*, the vision and objectives would also outline the role of the Bentleigh activity centre as part of the municipal-wide *Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy*.

This stage of consultation also initiated a range of concept ideas which started out broad with a number of options (below) and were refined throughout the consultation process to become the public space projects in the draft *Structure Plan*.

DRAFT VISION

Into the future Bentleigh will remain an affordable, family-friendly centre with a vibrant community feel.

DRAFT OBJECTIVES

- Increase open space and amenity.
- Update Bentleigh Plaza or re-imagine the space.
- Encourage and support small businesses.
- Increase night-time activity.
- Ensure height controls are implemented and material and design guidelines fit in with the local character.

DRAFT CONCEPT IDEAS

1. Create a new green space in the heart of Bentleigh

Redesign Bentleigh Plaza and extend to Vickery Street to create a more usable and inviting community town square for public gatherings and events.

2. Create new community hub and additional car parking

Create more public car parking within one centralized structure that includes a new community hub and a large green park.

3. Transition Bentleigh to a pedestrian friendly centre

Redesign Bentleigh Plaza and extend to Vickery Street to create a more usable and inviting community town square for public gatherings and events.

4. Create a vibrant and safe train station precinct

Look for opportunities to deliver place-based improvements to the station precinct and surrounding area.

STAGE TWO

TRANSFORMING OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS TOGETHER

10 MARCH TO 9 APRIL 2017

METHODOLOGY

Stage two of the consultation process — *Transforming our neighbourhoods together* sought to test with the community a draft vision, objectives and four concept ideas which were developed based on the feedback received in the first stage of consultation.

Details of how to provide feedback were mailed to Bentleigh residents and emailed to those who completed the stage one survey as well as being promoted in various Council publications.

CONSULTATION SNAPSHOT

Surveys: 122

Drop-in sessions: 77

Email/mail submissions: 6

Facebook comments: 6

Feedback on the ideas was captured through an online survey, at community drop-in sessions, via mail/email submissions, Facebook comments and phone calls.

KEY THEMES

VISION Feedback regarding the vision suggested wording that expanded or made the vision stronger and more visionary and encouraged a strong business economy.

OBJECTIVES There was a high level of community support across all of the objectives which were confirmed that they accurately represent the community's feedback from stage one. It was suggested that additional objectives could be added around such things as development and quality design, parking and active transport.

CONCEPT ONE 'CREATE A NEW GREEN SPACE IN THE HEART OF BENTLEIGH' – 56.4% SUPPORT

Those participants who supported the idea wanted to see the area activated, wanted more passive community spaces to sit, rest and gather and felt that it would create a 'heart' which the centre currently doesn't have. Others either didn't like the idea or didn't like proposed Vickery Street location — suggesting near the station, rotunda or post office as better locations. Some were concerned about the possible impact on traffic flow and loss of parking spaces.

CONCEPT TWO: 'CREATE A NEW COMMUNITY HUB AND ADDITIONAL CAR PARKING' – 72.6% SUPPORT

A high level of community support was shown for introducing more parking into the centre and creating a community hub. Less support was expressed for a green space. Some felt there was already enough green space or that parking was more important, however, the car park design would have to be well considered, including the location.

CONCEPT THREE: 'TRANSITION BENTLEIGH TO A PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY CENTRE' – 66.4% SUPPORT

Centre Road was considered by some residents to be too car centric, with making the centre more pedestrian friendly considered likely to make the area more appealing. However some respondents felt that Vickery Street wasn't the right location or were concerned that traffic flow would be too negatively affected.

CONCEPT FOUR: 'CREATE A VIBRANT AND SAFE TRAIN STATION PRECINCT' – 88% SUPPORT

This concept was the most widely supported during community consultation with respondents feeling that there is space for this area to grow. It was thought to be an opportunity to define Bentleigh and create something new and exciting that will bring people to the area, strengthen the strip and unite shopping areas on either side of the station. Some concerns were raised about the implications on safety in the area.

DEVELOPMENT A mixed response was received from the community around development. Some respondents didn't want any high rise development at all. Others saw a need or advantage in bringing more people into the strip to make it more viable and to grow. Some respondents nominated areas which they thought would be best suited for development — namely around the station and rail corridor.

OUTCOMES OF STAGE TWO COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

This stage of consultation tested the draft vision and objectives of the *Structure Plan*. It also introduced a range of broad concept ideas with a range of possible options, which following subsequent stages of consultation have been refined to form the public space projects in the final *Structure Plan*.

REVISED VISION

Bentleigh will continue to thrive with its strong local community and family focus. It will support a diverse community with a range of quality housing, business, community service and vibrant public spaces.

HOW CONCEPTS WERE PROGRESSED

1. Create a new green space in the heart of Bentleigh

The new pedestrian-only 'eat street' concept was further progressed, comprising revamped rotunda area extending across Centre Road to Vickery Street, and then running east/west along a newly activated rear laneway between Vickery and Bent Streets. This concept envisaged a redeveloped Coles site to the north, and a redeveloped Vickery Street car park site to the east, with cafes and restaurants at ground floor fronting 'eat street', and with office and diverse housing above.

Additionally, the concept of the Bent Street car park becoming a public green space was progressed. This concept envisaged that the car park would be activated by the current Sunday market, new night market and events space with opportunities to connect across the station, if there is a future station redevelopment.

2. Create new community hub and additional car parking

This concept was progressed, maintaining the existing Bentleigh Library location and exploring expansion of the facility and introduction of new civic forecourts and a possible second entry to Robert Street.

Further investigation regarding the viability of constructing a multi-deck car park within the centre was progressed to allow for this expansion and maintain short term car parking in the centre.

3. Transition Bentleigh to a pedestrian friendly centre

This concept of converting Mavho Street to one-way north bound and Loranne Street one-way south bound was progressed. In response to concerns regarding potential traffic concerns, a transport, movement and parking plan would be developed in the draft *Structure Plan*.

4. Create a vibrant and safe train station precinct

This concept was progressed, to include a new plaza and shops above the sunken railway line, south of Centre Road to complement and connect the existing retail strip.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

The draft vision was further tested during the *Stage three: Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy and early structure plan exploration* consultation.

The concept ideas would be further explored and refined in the *Stage five: Draft Concept Plan* consultation.

STAGE THREE

ACTIVITY CENTRE, HOUSING AND LOCAL ECONOMY STRATEGY AND EARLY STRUCTURE PLAN EXPLORATION

24 MAY TO 13 JUNE

METHODOLOGY

Stage three consisted of two parts – consulting on a draft *Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy* which included the vision and role for each activity centre including Bentleigh; and a Bentleigh community forum where the vision was tested and the *Structure Plan* process was discussed. Feedback on the *Strategy*, including feedback on the visions was collected on Council's community consultation pages for each activity centre.

CONSULTATION SNAPSHOT

Online feedback forms: 38

Email submissions: 26

Bentleigh forum attendees: 39

The opportunity to provide feedback was promoted widely including via an email to participants (approx. 2,200) with email addresses from the first two stages of the activity centre consultation; a four page summary of the *Strategy* included as a lift-out in the June edition of *Glen Eira News* and delivered to traders in each activity centre.

KEY THEMES

Most of the feedback received reinforced concepts already presented in the *Strategy*, with overall support.

ACTIVITY CENTRE FRAMEWORK The *Strategy* was largely supported by most respondents. Although supportive, some respondents felt the key challenge will be how to achieve the visions, stating that in some centres it is too late. Additionally, there were some questions about how the framework translates into specific planning measures, with respondents wanting more detail about each centre.

THEME ONE: PLACE-MAKING AND VISIONS Place-making was seen by respondents as vital to support increased development and that capturing and strengthening the identity of a place is important.

BENTLEIGH VISION The most common discussion points were around the word village and whether this represents Bentleigh. A focus on 'community' was preferred. 'Family-friendly' was also seen as being limiting and that the focus should be on the centre being accessible and welcoming for all.

THEME TWO: LOCAL ECONOMY The important role small local businesses play within a centre was highlighted through the feedback, along with the need to make sure businesses survive/thrive by making the activity centres attractive and functional places to be. Support was shown for shared use of commercial spaces.

THEME THREE: HOUSING Respondents called for a mixture of housing to suit people of all ages, abilities and socio-economic backgrounds and be built with family living in mind. Some felt higher density should be restricted to main activity centres and on arterial roads, not small, local streets. The protection of heritage was seen also as a priority for respondents.

OUTCOMES OF STAGE THREE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

An activity centre strategy is an overarching strategic document that sets the future direction and vision for activity centres within the municipality. It provides a focus for housing, retailing, community services, employment, transport, leisure, open space and entertainment, and nominates neighbourhoods where people shop, work, meet, relax and live. The *Strategy* will be a key basis for Council's updated strategic vision (*Municipal Strategic Statement*) and is critical to inform subsequent projects such as structure plans. The revised vision for Bentleigh resulting from this round would feature in both the *Strategy* and the draft *Structure Plan*.

REVISED 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.

CHANGES TO THE DRAFT ACTIVITY CENTRE, HOUSING AND LOCAL ECONOMY STRATEGY

- All vision statements were reviewed and strengthened based on feedback received throughout stages two and three of activity centre consultation.
- A new objective was included under theme two: local economy around supporting local business through a focus on a connected economy.
- A reference to student housing was included in the housing types.
- A reference to short-term accommodation was included in housing types.
- More detail was included on how housing types may be applied to each centre, linking to the *Quality Design Principles* which would be consulted on during stage four.
- An additional reference was included to buildings embracing universal design for all ages and lifecycles.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

The final *Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy* was adopted by Council on 25 July 2017.

The adopted *Strategy* would provide direction for future local area planning in Glen Eira, including the draft *Bentleigh Structure Plan*.

Council committed to the *Strategy* being updated in early 2018 following the release of data from the 2016 *Census of Population and Housing*.

STAGE FOUR

QUALITY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

26 JULY 2017 TO 3 SEPTEMBER 2017

CONSULTATION SNAPSHOT

Online forum participants: 82

Quality design principles document
downloads: 1,056

Facebook comment: 5

Email/mail/phone submissions: 9

METHODOLOGY

Stage four: *Quality Design Principles* and stage five: *Draft Concept Plans* consultation was undertaken simultaneously (see below for stage four). Residents in the study area for Bentleigh, Carnegie and Elsternwick were informed by mail while previous consultation participants for all centres were also emailed. The consultation was also promoted in various Council publications. Feedback was captured through an online forum, mail/email/telephone submissions, Facebook comments and meetings with stakeholders. *Quality Design Principles* were also discussed at community forums held for each of the structure plan areas.

The *Quality Design Principles* presented in phase one outlined what the types of buildings are preferred in Glen Eira's streets. This first phase aimed to set clear building design principles and define particular building types that will occur in our municipality. The following themes were evident in the feedback received in Phase One.

KEY THEMES

MORE INFORMATION While many respondents agreed that the *Quality Design Principles* were a good start, they felt more detail was required to better understand how the different building types would look.

ENSURING IMPLEMENTATION The *Principles* were seen by the community as a positive step, however, there was concern from some about how we can ensure that they are implemented and enforced.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT More detail was requested by participants about community benefit, including weighting and quantifying benefit and the suggestion that this would need to be very clear to developers. Some participants felt that community benefit should be external to the building and accessible to all. Some felt that community benefit does not make up for the extra height that would be allowed.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN While the current principles were well supported by the community, there was also suggestion that there should be more of a focus on environmental design, including energy reduction, noise reduction, emissions, solar power and water management.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN Accessibility and diversity in housing to meet the needs of all community members was seen by respondents as important and that this should be a major focus of the guidelines.

PARKING The inclusion of adequate car parking provisions in both residential and commercial building principles was identified by participants as being of high importance.

BUILDING TYPES Lower-scale building types were most often preferred by participants. Some questions were raised regarding terrace townhouses and whether they are achievable or desirable and the level of 'garden' required to be provided by garden apartments.

OUTCOMES OF STAGE FOUR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

This stage of consultation introduced a range of building types that seek to provide an appropriate transition in height, character and housing types throughout Glen Eira. Following the feedback received in this stage, along with detailed background research and consultant advice, a comprehensive set of *Quality Design Guidelines* were developed that included further detailed requirements for building setbacks, heights and building design for future residential, commercial, mixed use and urban renewal development within Glen Eira.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

The *Building Transitions Plan* introduced in stage five (in conjunction the *Quality Design Principles*) provided a draft framework for applying the proposed building types to the Bentleigh activity centre.

Consultation on the more comprehensive *Quality Design Guidelines* and draft *Structure Plan* — which tied together all of the previous stages of consultation — was undertaken concurrently in stage six.

STAGE FIVE

BENTLEIGH DRAFT CONCEPT PLAN

26 JULY 2017 TO 3 SEPTEMBER 2017

METHODOLOGY

Stage four: *Quality Design Principles* and stage five: *Draft Concept Plans* consultation was undertaken simultaneously. Residents in the study area were informed by mail while previous consultation participants were also emailed. The consultation was also promoted in various Council publications. Feedback was captured through an online survey, mail/email/telephone submissions, Facebook comments and meetings with stakeholders. Some transport and movement concepts were introduced for community feedback.

CONSULTATION SNAPSHOT

Online surveys: 60

Forum comments: 3

Concept plan document downloads: 569

Facebook comments: 28

Email/mail/phone submissions: 31

Community forum attendees: 58

KEY THEMES

BUILDING TRANSITIONS PLAN Many participants felt that the *Plan* was better than the existing planning controls and previous *Plan*, and that it was a step in the right direction. However, some felt that the plan did not adequately respond to the origin of the process — to reduce overdevelopment in Bentleigh and protect the character of the area. Some felt that more justification was required.

HEIGHTS ARE EXCESSIVE There was a strong call from participants at the community forum for no more than four storeys anywhere in Bentleigh, with the suggestion that levels of development in Bentleigh and Glen Eira are excessive; that Bentleigh is already providing enough housing; and that development should be appropriately controlled. This was echoed in the online survey, while there was also some suggestion that the current interim control which allows five storeys is the appropriate maximum height.

INFRASTRUCTURE Concerns were raised by participants about whether current infrastructure could match development and about the potential impact further development may have on amenity, services and livability. More open/green space was highlighted as a key community need.

STUDY AREA Some questions were raised at both the forum and online about the activity centre boundary, with calls for justification about how the study area was selected. Some felt that the boundary was creeping too far into residential areas. Others felt that the study area was appropriate.

COMMUNITY VIEWS Some participants felt that residents' views had not been adequately taken into consideration and the concept plan did not adequately reflect the community's view. Some at the community forum called for a longer and clearer consultation process and more information to be provided, including regarding community benefit and the number of properties that could be developed to a higher scale.

SALE OF COUNCIL LAND Some submissions called for no sale of Council land for development.

PARKING Parking was a key community concern that many felt needed addressing. The car park proposal received a mixed response. While there was general agreement that more parking is required, some did not support a multi-level structure, suggesting that parking should be underground or located near the station or the Coles site. Participants suggested that Council should ensure developments provide adequate onsite parking and provide no waivers on statutory car parking requirements.

TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS A high level of general community support was shown for the transformation projects. There were calls for more information about 'night life' and that consideration must be given to residents living close to the centre. Of particular importance was the need for the proposed Bent Street open space design to be suitable to cater for the Bentleigh Market. There was support expressed for the rotunda area upgrade but design was seen as important to ensure it is effective.

OUTCOMES OF STAGE FIVE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

This stage of consultation introduced building heights and building types as well as more detailed transformation projects to improve public spaces.

This stage aimed to establish a framework to locate the right buildings in the right locations, by applying the principles outlined in the *Quality Design Principles* and *Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy*.

Following this stage, the following changes were incorporated into the draft Structure Plan for consultation in Stage 6:

- Reducing the height of all strategic sites in Bentleigh to a maximum of 5 storeys and reducing the southern extent of townhouses to align with current zone boundaries.
- Maintaining parking in the Bent Street car park and continuing Sunday market activities in that location and minor amenity improvements, rather than transitioning this site to a public green space.
- Creating a new green park over the Godfrey Street car park site.
- Reducing the area proposed to be four storeys in residential zones to three storeys.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

Following this stage, the Buildings Transitions Plan was updated to reflect the draft Quality Design Guidelines and feedback on the Concept Plan. Transport, parking and movement plans were also incorporated into the draft Structure Plan which brought together all previous stages of consultation into one complete Plan for the centre.

STAGE SIX

BENTLEIGH DRAFT STRUCTURE PLAN/QUALITY DESIGN GUIDELINES

29 OCTOBER 2017 TO 11 DECEMBER 2017

METHODOLOGY

This was the final stage of consultation, seeking feedback on a complete draft Structure Plan. Feedback was sought and recorded through an online survey and forum on *HaveYourSay*; in person at a community forum as well as a series of drop in sessions and also submissions made by email, mail and telephone.

Letters were sent to all owners and residents within the structure plan study area and also to residents in the surrounding areas likely to be most affected. This included residents in neighbouring Councils.

The plans were also promoted by Facebook posts and ads, in the Leader newspaper 4 page lift out, message on hold, service centre TV screen, table in the libraries and service centre.

KEY THEMES

HEIGHTS General community support was shown for the turn-down in building heights from the draft Concept Plans with some participants wanting to further reduce development, particularly in residential areas. There was a desire expressed for planning controls to be mandatory and to be implemented and adequately enforced as soon as possible. Some submissions called for higher building heights – particularly in the commercial area, with suggestion that Bentleigh has further opportunity for growth.

PARKING Concern was raised by some respondents that parking is already limited, and that more parking needs to be provided within the centre. Feedback was received regarding the proposed location of parking with a strong feeling that parking should be spread throughout the centre rather than in one centralized location.

TRAFFIC The existing level of traffic, particularly in residential streets and the further impact that increased development was raised as a concern by participants, along with the potential further impact that closing off or limiting traffic to cars may have on traffic in the future.

BUILDING TYPES Community feedback focused on the need to provide suitable family housing. Respondents called for fewer apartments, more town houses or garden townhouses and a minimum size to be enforced.

DEVELOPMENT There were calls to further prevent inappropriate development, minimize impacts on residents during construction and manage and plan for future increased population and infrastructure requirements.

QUALITY DESIGN GUIDELINES Feedback was received from respondents about the building types – in particular apartments and townhouses. There were some suggestions around environmentally sustainable design as well as other general design details. Some respondents asked for more detail or clarity about how the Guidelines will be applied while others pointed out potential duplications or inconsistencies in the Guidelines.

CONSULTATION SNAPSHOT

Email submissions: 28

Surveys: 42

Online forum comments: 5

Facebook comments: 10

Bentleigh forum attendees: 42

Bentleigh drop-in sessions: 60

Quality Design Guidelines submissions: 46

NEXT STEPS

The final stage of community consultation reflected feedback about the draft concept plans in order to refine and add more detail.

Details of proposed changes from the final round of consultation and a final draft Bentleigh Structure Plan will be presented to Council for consideration and adoption at the February 27 2017 Council Meeting.

To ensure that the land use and development outcomes outlined in the *Plan* are delivered and enforceable, the objectives need to be translated into the *Glen Eira Planning Scheme*.

The *Scheme* guides decision-making on planning permit applications and governs issues such as design and development; land use; heritage; neighbourhood character; and amenity.

This statutory translation is achieved by undertaking a Planning Scheme Amendment.

If the Structure Plan is adopted by Council, the Planning Scheme Amendment process will commence. As part of this translation process, the specific statutory tools and mechanisms will be developed to best translate the relevant objectives of the *Structure Plan*. Potential statutory implementation measures are listed in the relevant sections of the *Plan*.