

## **Attachment 1 – North Richmond Draft Master Plan - Yarra City Council Submission, May 2022**

### **Summary**

Yarra City Council welcomes the opportunity to comment of the *North Richmond Draft Master Plan* (NRDMP). Council notes the draft master plan is intended to provide a holistic summary of Homes Victoria's revitalisation of the North Richmond housing estate.

The draft master plan is a key strategic document that provides a framework for the delivery of a staged development approach on the site.

Overall the direction and Key Moves in the NRDMP align with the Community Vision, Council Plan, Planning Scheme and other adopted strategies of Council.

However, this submission does identify where the draft master plan could provide clarification or further direction regarding the intent for the site. It is also noted many of the specific details referred to in officer briefings have not been incorporated into the draft master plan and have therefore been included below.

### **Key Considerations**

The following considerations are considered priorities for the Council and critical for the successful delivery of the *North Richmond Draft Master Plan*.

#### **Key messages**

1. The draft Masterplan is an important document for North Richmond to guide the development of the housing site over the next decade and improve outcomes for residents and the broader North Richmond community.
2. The draft Masterplan proposes many important improvements to the housing site for its residents and potentially for the wider community, including upgraded open space, walking and cycling routes and increased social and affordable housing.
3. A key focus of the draft Masterplan is the concept of a 'connected neighbourhood' and 'stitching' the suburb back together. However the draft plan needs to more clearly demonstrate how it:
  - (a) connects to the broader neighbourhood of North Richmond and Abbotsford;
  - (b) integrates with the neighbouring residential areas; and
  - (c) connects to Victoria Street, North Richmond Train Station, the Yarra River and Victoria Gardens.
4. The document states that the draft Masterplan is not detailed to allow room for adjustment at the planning permit stage. While some level of flexibility is necessary, there are some details around the proposed development which are missing and would help to provide more certainty for residents and the wider community.
5. The status of the document and how the document will be used to guide planning approvals is also unclear.

#### ***We are on Country, a shared vision***

6. Concept of on Country and Six layers of Country is strongly supported.

### **1.2 Masterplan process**

7. Provide more information on the next steps including the approval process, the status of the draft Masterplan and how it will be used in any assessments.

### **2.1 Past: Early settlement**

8. Suggesting there is the inclusion of history around the shopping spine of Victoria Street given its proximity to the site.

### **2.2 Present: Challenges and opportunities**

9. This section would benefit from inclusion of further detail regarding on-site or adjacent constraints and opportunities the master plan is seeking to address.
10. This section would benefit to include more analysis of the key interfaces:
  - commercial and mixed use development on Victoria Street Major Activity Centre
  - the sensitive low rise residential areas to the west and the small residential area to the east
  - the more robust Commercial 2 zoned area to the east.

### **2.3 Future: Drivers for change**

11. This section references statistics for North Richmond however it is unclear if these statistics are referring to the housing site or the wider community. Clarification is sought on this and suggest including a source for the statistics. If the statistics are referring to the wider neighbourhood, include a map of the area.
12. Figure 1.17 Social infrastructure needs - Update Figure to explain what the numbers on the x axis refer to.

### **2.3 Future: Better outcomes for residents and the community**

13. Figure 1.18 Scenario assessments – Further detail is requested to describe the three scenarios tested more clearly i.e. Housing and community infrastructure vs Housing complementary mixed use. Does Housing plus complementary mixed use include community infrastructure?
14. Further detail is requested to explain what some of the benefits mean e.g. 'Retention of local community connections', 'Victoria Street revitalisation benefits' and 'Inner city agglomeration benefits'.

### **3.0 The six key moves**

15. Yarra supports the Six Key Moves.

### **3.0 Master plan key outcomes**

16. New skills and learning opportunities - The draft Masterplan provides the space for these uses rather than the uses themselves. Suggest this is redrafted to 'Create new spaces for new skills and learning opportunities'.

### **3.0 Illustrative draft master plan**

17. Numbers on the plan are potentially confusing as they don't identify all of the upgraded towers or all the new social and affordable housing. Suggest this plan could be used to highlight the specific key features of the draft master plan rather than high level outcomes e.g. new open space in X, new north-south pedestrian link to Highett Street, new Youth Recreation Hub.

### **3.1 Key move 1: Neighbourhoods and mix of uses**

18. Stitching back into the urban fabric - Support the concept of the draft master plan provides the site with improving street presence, stitching it back into the urban fabric of North Richmond. However the draft Masterplan could do more to support and demonstrate how it will achieve this. E.g. More analysis of the interfaces, additional sections across the site and into residential areas and mapping showing facilities outside the housing site that are mentioned in the text (see comments below).
19. Neighbourhoods - Support the idea of creating distinct neighbourhoods.
20. Mix of uses - Draft Masterplan identifies there will be 23,000 sqm of space 23,000 square metres of community, commercial and other local services with various locations for mixed uses shown on various plans. A mix of uses in various locations is supported. However there is little discussion around the footprint size; mix of uses; or how this might work in practice e.g. how they might complement / work with the nearby Victoria Street Activity Centre or Commercial 2 zone on Church Street.
21. Yarra is supportive of the inclusion of community uses such as library services on site, and request to work with Homes Victoria to ensure this is achieved.
22. Requested there is more detail around the mix of uses that are envisaged and how they would work in practice.

### **3.1 Key move 1 Distinct neighbourhoods**

23. Names of the neighbourhoods are confusing as they end in street. Suggest neighbourhoods are renamed:
  - (a) Elizabeth Street - Neighbourhood Street to Elizabeth Street Neighbourhood;
  - (b) Lennox Street - Housing, Community and Health Street to Lennox Street Neighbourhood (Housing, Community and Health);
  - (c) Church Street - Housing, Jobs and Training Street to Church Street Neighbourhood (Housing, Jobs and Training); and
  - (d) Highett Street - Housing and Recreation Street to Highett Street Neighbourhood (Housing and Recreation).
24. Refers to mixed commercial use to enhance the site. Further detail is sought to ensure that the commercial offering does not undermine existing businesses within the Victoria St activity centre but adds value. Details suggested include the amount of commercial space, type of commercial offering etc.
25. Does not comprehensively describe the key details / attributes of each of the neighbourhoods. Different information is provided in this section and in Section 4.1-4.4. One location with comprehensive information would assist the reader.
26. Suggest this could be reframed as a 'vision' or a description of the character of each neighbourhood with a reference to Section 4.0 which provides a more comprehensive picture about each neighbourhood.
27. Elizabeth Street - Does not explain what the three nodes are in this neighbourhood – it is assumed they are open space.
28. Lennox Street - Has a node shown on the southern side of Elizabeth Street but does not say why this is a node or describe its function.
29. Church Street - Does not explain what the node is in this neighbourhood.

30. Highbury Street - Plan is confusing as the boundary of the precinct seems to run through proposed buildings at the northern end of Vere Street and along Belgium Avenue.
31. Reframe this section to provide a vision or description of each neighbourhood with the detail provided in Sections 4.1-4.4.

### **3.2 Key move 2: Homes**

32. Principles are generally supported.
33. Support the concept of a range of scales i.e. low to medium-rise buildings that range in height between three and eight storeys.
34. This section does not clearly state that the housing is proposed to be social and affordable housing, however this is assumed to be the case.
35. There is no detail provided on how social and affordable housing will be provided (housing associations, private developers, etc).
36. Suggest providing a definition of social and affordable housing. (e.g. reference to the definition in the Planning and Environment Act 1987).

### **3.2 Key move 2: Building heights and locations**

37. Building heights plan is difficult to read. Colours are too similar. Update the colours on the plan to make the heights more easily distinguished.
38. Introducing a mix of low and medium scale buildings:
  - (a) Support 3 storey buildings facing Belgium Avenue - responds to the character along the eastern side;
  - (b) Support lower scale buildings fronting secondary streets and paths between 4 and 5 storeys;
  - (c) Support taller buildings of 6 and 8 storeys at key street intersections, along Elizabeth Street and around major public open spaces; and
  - (d) Approach to heights appears to align with the approach taken in Planning Scheme Amendment C291. For example, draft DDO49 proposes heights of 8m (5 storeys) to 24m (7 storeys) for Victoria Street north of the housing site. In other locations where there are sensitive residential interfaces or a transition in scale is sought, heights of 11m and 15m (3 and 4 storeys) are proposed.
39. Creating well-defined streets and spaces - Strongly support the principle of active frontages and orienting development to the street, paths and open space.
40. Creating identity - Strongly support the use of various materials and colour palettes to create identity within the housing site.
41. Upgrading the existing towers:
  - (a) Strongly support upgrades to the existing towers; and
  - (b) It is not clearly articulated what the low scale additions around the base of the towers are.
42. The following gaps have been identified:
  - (a) Draft Masterplan does not reference housing diversity and ensuring a range of dwelling sizes and styles;

- (b) Draft Masterplan should seek to ensure that taller buildings are well spaced and sited to avoid visual bulk and provide equitable access to an outlook, good daylight and views to the sky;
- (c) It should also ensure that buildings with a wide street frontage into smaller vertical sections or separate elements to provide breaks and modulation in the street façade; and
- (d) No guidance provided around separation from boundaries e.g. the northern boundaries with the properties fronting Victoria Street.

### **3.2 Key move 2: Limiting overshadowing**

- 43. Overshadowing of open space - Strongly support the requirement for no additional overshadowing of the Elizabeth Street Neighbourhood Park, Recreation Hub, and Highett Street Park between 11AM-2 PM on the spring equinox. However these spaces are not identified on the Overshadowing Plan.
- 44. Overshadowing of footpaths - Plan should include a requirement that the southern footpath of Elizabeth Street and the opposite side of Church and Lennox Street do not receive additional overshadowing. This would link to Council's recent draft C291 Planning Scheme Amendment for Victoria Street which identifies Elizabeth Street, Lennox Street and Church Street as 'Green Streets' - enhanced pedestrian and cycling routes.

### **3.3 Key move 3: Open spaces**

- 45. It should be clearly articulated if the wider community will be encouraged to use the new spaces or which spaces they could access. Spaces should be designed to ensure that this is clear i.e. which are private, and which are publicly accessible spaces.
- 46. It is unclear whether resident communal open spaces will be at ground level or elevated or access restricted. Suggest this detail is included.
- 47. Yarra support the use of pathways and streets to connect spaces, but design should ensure these are wide enough to accommodate walking, cycling and trees, and are visually linked to make the connection obvious.
- 48. Support links to the nearby Egan Reserve and Citizen's Park but the location of these should be shown on the plan.
- 49. Suggest aligning the hierarchy of open space with definitions provided in Yarra's *Open Space Strategy 2020*.

### **3.3 Key move 3: A network of open spaces**

- 50. Clarification is sought if the key open spaces - Elizabeth Street Neighbourhood Park, Elizabeth Street Youth Recreation Hub, and Lennox and Highett Street Community Park are new spaces or existing spaces to be enhanced. Further detail is requested on these spaces.
- 51. Creation of a Neighbourhood Open Space is supported at Lennox & Highett Streets.
- 52. Dissecting pathways through the Highett Street park are not supported as this reduces functionality of the park.
- 53. There is a significant opportunity to improve the interface of the estate with Lennox street/Highett Street with high quality plantings of trees and garden beds, particularly with the removal of the existing fencing.

### **3.3 Key move 3: Way finding and signage**

- 54. This section overlaps with the Pedestrian and Cycling Plan in Key Move 4. Suggest it could be relocated there.
- 55. Support straight paths and clearer way finding.

### **3.4 Key move 4: Connections**

- 56. The master plan is very limited in scope and does not consider the wider strategic transport context. Lennox St and Elizabeth St are key strategic bike corridors than could bring people into and through the area from across inner Melbourne. This would change the look and feel of the place and help address some of the longstanding existing issues.
- 57. Opportunities for the tram and train network to support the development are not mentioned. Further detail as to how the master plan links to and supports further upgrades, such as DDA compliance, is encouraged.
- 58. Strongly support the promotion of walking and cycling in the Masterplan.
- 59. The principle of prioritising pedestrian and cyclist access and amenity within the development is supported. The following key design outcomes are supported in principle:
  - (a) Pedestrian and cyclist priority along Village Street with low vehicle numbers and speeds;
  - (b) On-street parking limited to small vehicle loading and disabled parking;
  - (c) Limiting the number of locations providing vehicle access to individual sites (from the internal access roads) which in turn reduces vehicle and pedestrian/cyclist;
  - (d) The use of laneways and other access ways to increase the permeability through the site;
  - (e) High quality streetscapes; and
  - (f) CPTED design to ensure safe movement through the site.

### **3.4 Key move 4: Pedestrian and cycling**

- 60. Support the concept of north-south primary connections that clearly link the site from Victoria Street to Risley and Highett Streets, connecting the three main public open spaces and the NRCH.
- 61. Support proposed east-west connections that link Lennox Street through to Church Street - connecting the NRCH, the Youth and Recreation hub, and the car park building on Risley Street.
- 62. Pedestrian and Cycling Plan:
  - (a) Clarify if the 'slow speed streets' are also primary pedestrian links; and
  - (b) Church, Lennox, Highett and Elizabeth Streets should be identified as key pedestrian streets as well as primary bike routes. Draft Planning Scheme Amendment C291 identified Church, Lennox and Elizabeth Streets as 'Green Streets' - key pedestrian/cycle route' which could be enhanced over time.

### **3.4 Key move 4: Access and parking**

- 63. Street network plan:
  - (a) Redraft the Street Network Plan to make the hierarchy of streets clearer both within and outside the site. For example, make the differences in the widths of lines showing the hierarchy more distinct. Show new roads as dots; and

- (b) Roads outside the site e.g. Risely Street, Belgium Avenue and Verre Street also need to read more clearly to provide context.
- 64. Car parking across the entire site and in adjacent streets needs further investigation and comment, particularly in relation to safety and surveillance for residents.
- 65. More direction about the amount of car parking and what is driving it is sought. Suggest including an estimate of car parking spaces or a ratio.

### **3.4 Key move 4: Public Streets interfaces**

#### 66. Elizabeth Street:

- (a) Unclear if the proposed setbacks on Elizabeth Street - the existing 1.6 metre footpath to the north plus a 3m building setback, and a 3.3 metre footpath and a 2m building setback to the south provide enough space for new and the established gum trees;
- (b) It is also noted that building heights of 6 to 8 storeys along Elizabeth Street with no street wall and upper level setback;
- (c) It is noted that at the western end of Elizabeth Street, in Draft Planning Scheme Amendment C291 Yarra Council has proposed a 6m upper level setback above 11m;
- (d) However the built form along this end of Elizabeth Street east of Cooke Court has no upper level setbacks. This form is also proposed for new buildings at 141-167 Elizabeth Street (part of the Big Build); and
- (e) In the absence of any upper level setbacks, some form of definition between lower levels and upper levels would be desirable to create a visual reference to a street wall and any low-scale 'domestic' interfaces.

#### 67. Lennox Street:

- (a) A 3 storey street wall with 5m upper level setback on Lennox Street is supported. Noting in Draft Planning Scheme Amendment C291 Yarra, Yarra has proposed upper level setbacks of 6m; and
- (b) The section shows a 24m / 8 storey building which does appear tall in this context. Six storey height buildings along Lennox Street would provide a better transition to the single storey dwellings to the west.

#### 68. Belgium Avenue / Vere Street:

- (a) No details are provided around the 6-8 storey building proposed to replace the decked car park at Vere Street. This site appears heavily constrained and will need careful design to provide an outlook and amenity for future residents.

#### 69. Church Street:

- (a) Clarify built form outcomes for Church Street, noting it is a less sensitive frontage than other streets.

### **3.5 Key move 5: Sustainability and culture**

- 70. Alignment with the Victorian Climate Change Framework is supported.
- 71. Prioritising sustainable building design and appropriate management of energy, waste and water is supported.
- 72. Incorporation of indigenous and multicultural diversity across the site is supported and encourage.

73. The principles seem appropriate and should be reflected in the other relevant sections of the document. It is recommended these statements are honed down to provide specific outcomes.

### **3.6 Key move 6: Concentrate activity**

74. This Key Move appears to be focussed on staging of the development and temporary activation. The name of the key move suggests activity as in land use, activity nodes or activation.
75. Suggest the content in Key Move 6 should be moved to Implementation or included in the other Key Moves.
76. Alternatively this Key Move could concentrate on encouraging different uses and activity, including temporary uses and activation.

### **4.0 Staging and implementation**

77. There is little direction on timing and staging included in the NRDMP.
78. Suggest Section 3.6 on transitional uses is relocated to this section.
79. Further specific details regarding on site specifications and management plans required for applications can be provided separately to Homes Victoria.

### **4.1 Elizabeth Street neighbourhood**

80. Clarify what is meant by a new northern arrival to the NRCH. Could show the proposed forecourt.
81. Does not mention proximity to the shops and services of Victoria Street as it does in Section 3.1. Should show proposed links.

### **4.2 Lennox Street neighbourhood**

82. The proposed role of the purple mixed use building on the northern side of Elizabeth Street is not discussed.
83. Doesn't mention building on the existing uses such as the NRCH, the RWPS, and the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association (AVWA) as well as connecting to the Epworth Hospital to the south which is highlighted in Section 3.1.
84. Does not mention new community, offices and health care uses to help drive daytime and extended hours activity particularly in the area north of Elizabeth Street as mentioned in Section 3.1.
85. Suggest this neighbourhood could also include the Health Centre and School although no changes are proposed except possible enhancements to the forecourt. (It is included as part of this Neighbourhood in the Plan in Section 3.1.)
86. No mention of the relationship with the residential areas on the western side of Lennox Street.
87. Also suggest the role of Lennox Street itself could be referenced. E.g. link to Victoria Street, Butler Street park, bike route, etc.
88. It is unclear if the upgraded 3,200sq.m of open space is in one location. Clarification is sought regarding if this is the site on Lennox Street or does it include the space to the rear of the Victoria Street shops.



#### ***4.3 Church Street neighbourhood***

- 89. Describe the proposed use of smaller blue building on the corner of Church and Elizabeth Streets.
- 90. Clarify whether the existing multi-deck car parking will be demolished and rebuilt.

#### ***4.4 Highett Street neighbourhood***

- 91. Neighbourhood has less of a coherent identity than other neighbourhoods as it reads as a long, skinny neighbourhood focussed more on Belgium Avenue than Highett Street.
- 92. Bromham Place link to Church Street is supported but it is unclear if this runs through private land / between properties.
- 93. Identify the location of the existing Director of Housing stock at Bromham Place. (Correct spelling to Bromham Place.)
- 94. Section 3.1 references nearby open spaces and community uses such as BANH, the Factory, and the nearby Citizen's Park, and Richmond High School to the east which are not mentioned in this section or shown on the plan.
- 95. Could make clearer that a new 6-8 storey affordable and social housing replacing the decked carpark on Vere Street.
- 96. It is not clear from the model image that there are new 3 storey buildings to the east of the tower on Belgium Avenue.
- 97. Plans in terms of streets and pedestrian links are very confusing in this area. Is new east-west link proposed from Belgium Avenue between the tower and the community garden? Unclear what is proposed in terms of streets and pedestrian links.