

MEA SUBMISSION TO THE SHIRE ON MORNINGTON'S STRUCTURE PLAN

Submission prepared by then President, Dr Mark Fleming, October 2007.

This submission influenced and continues to influence development down Main Street and its surrounding buffer zone.

1. Gateway Park

- 1.1.1. The Structure Plan is intended as a mud map for future development. That is the defining of community and government aspiration with regard to local development. When a particular development is proposed it is compared to the structure plan to see how it fits.
- 1.1.2. Due to the real estate boom developments are being submitted and prepared now for Mornington Activity Centre. The most significant of these is the retirement villages at 2 Phillip Street and Pearson Street. Each proposal has around 100 beds.
- 1.1.3. These villages are really apartment blocks for the elderly and as such quality local openspace needs to be provided for the people. This space would also be used by other people in the area. For example apartments may be built on the car park land behind Blamey Place South of Barkly Street. In fact it could be argued that without quality openspace developers would be reluctant to build such apartments as buyers would want to compensate for the loss of personal openspace with quality public openspace.
- 1.1.4. Page 63 section 6 defines this quality openspace as being:
'Develop high quality pedestrian and cycling routes, using the network of parkland as a guide for links between the residential precincts and the activity center.'
- 1.1.5. That is maximize the potential for people to walk and ride in places away from roads, cars and car parks. This is why Melbourne 2030 sees car parking as wasted space. That is car parking isolates the activity center from surrounding neighbourhoods and thus encourages car usage. To overcome this isolation a layered approach was proposed in which car parking was placed underneath and openspace and shops above. The attached plans for Gateway Park and McLaren Plaza fulfill these Melbourne 2030 goals.
- 1.1.6. MEA, 4M and the Chamber approached Michael LaFontaine Garden Design to draw up these plans. These groups have now reviewed the plans and all agree it is the right way to go. The reason we took this unusual action was that we were not happy with the direction of the structure plan for this area. We believed it did not fulfill state and local goals.
- 1.1.7. These key issues were:
 1. Provide quiet open space. The proposed Gateway Park is currently a small square of grass on a noisy road. With no acoustic protection. The proposal does not have these problems.
 2. Provide a series of linking linear reserves not isolated grass boxes as shown in the Structure Plan.
 3. Link to Main Street. We are concerned that we will see a continuation of blank concrete walls that create visual and physical barriers.¹
 4. Link the Bay Trail to the Bay as a Trail and not a footpath². Create a destination point for people coming into Mornington from the Tourist Rail and Bay Trail.
 5. Use flowing water to create a focus that links the Plaza to Gateway Park to naturally lead people along.
 6. Reduce stormwater runoff by creating local storage through lakes, wetlands and water retention in the surface of the plaza. Create ecological zones of varying wetness of local indigenous plants. That is make Gateway Park, Steadman Reserve and Barry Reserve the 'Mornington Indigenous Gardens'. These gardens would be watered from the local stormwater not drinking water.
 7. Create quality non-concrete based community spaces.
 8. Provide car parking under the plaza rather than multi stack above ground car parks as proposed in scenario 3a.

¹ The more detailed version of the structure plan, scenario 3a, showed the plaza area with a three stack above ground car park with a shopping block facing Barkly Street. This approach is not a Melbourne 2030 layered method. The net effect being to isolate Gateway Park from Main Street and not create quality linking openspaces.

² Page 16 figure 4.2 shows a series of linking greenspaces away from roads from Empire Square to the Bay on the Eastern side. This same approach should be applied to the Western side as it contains the Bay Trail and two retirement villages. The attached plans achieve this goal. The current structure plan does not.

9. Provide some retail outlets (e.g. open air Coffee Shops, Art Shops) around the Plaza to pay for the development and hopefully reduce Council debt.
 10. Replaced the proposed line of apartments (concrete boxes) with Gateway Park containing Bay Trail, stream, lakes, wetlands, various ecological zones, sunken amphitheatre, community contact house and open air entertainment. With an open plaza running up to Main Street. Thus linking the people to the activity center away from roads and cars.
 11. Encourage commercial establishments currently facing Main Street to utilize their backs and improve security, visual amenity and link this area with Main Street shops.
- 1.1.8. In short providing a corner park at Barkly Street and Gordon Street is planning from the 1950's. We need quality openspace that links to Main Street and provides a non-road link to the Bay as per the State Government's planning objectives for the Bay Trail.
 - 1.1.9. Therefore we request the panel recommend to the Planning Minister that the structure plan be altered as per the attached plans to better reflect Melbourne 2030 planning objectives
 - 1.1.10. If we want people to move into apartments in activity centers we need to provide quality linking openspaces first not corner pockets of grass with a few trees.

2. Development Height

- 2.1.1. Figure 4.2 page 16 defines the development heights for the various zones. We strongly support the Council in proposing a three storey limit for the town. We believe this level of development is sufficient to meet the growth objectives of the State and is far more in keeping with the local character than five storeys.
- 2.1.2. The 5metre set back above the second storey is to be encouraged to limit over shadowing. If the government wants to encourage apartments creation of personal openspace through set backs would be very helpful.

3. Peak Oil, Greenhouse and Water Conservation

3.1. Peak Oil/Transport

- 3.1.1. Some time in the next few years we will hear that peak oil occurred globally 12months ago. That is production capacity will peak shortly and then decline. Current growth is around 8%. In Australia this occurred in 2000/01 and we now import around 50% of our oil demand.
- 3.1.2. The impact of peak oil will be large and rapid increases in petrol prices which will place significant financial strain on families and businesses. This is why the State government is investing in buses and has a target of 20% of car trips being non-car.
- 3.1.3. Each community will need to prepare for peak oil. The two key issues for Mornington residences are local access and access to Frankston and onto the city. The attached paper details MEA's submission to the bus review on these matters.
- 3.1.4. The three key actions for Mornington transport are: 1) Local Buses, 2) Regional Buses 3) Cycling/Scooter Paths. Within Mornington people want to access services within 15minutes. The two most effective non-car options are a dial a minibus³ services and cycling/scooters⁴. The current Met buses should focus on regional transport not local transport. That is providing access to Frankston and beyond (the city).
- 3.1.5. With regard to the structure plan we need to:
 1. Establish a dial a bus service for all the community not just the retired.

³ Peak Oil will make diesel expensive therefore we propose that these buses be run on recycled cooking oil from the local takeaway shops. Thus making the fuel renewable, cheap and no greenhouse emissions. The met buses will also need to consider alternatives such as CNG and methanol made from stream reformation of rubbish.

⁴ For details of the path network please refer to the attached plans. Note electric scooters have been included. These vehicles usually have a 200watt motor and can travel at up to 30kph. We need to provide safe passage of these vehicles as they will be very popular when peak oil occurs. It should be noted that the path network doubles the movement capacity of private transport in Mornington for minimal capital and running costs.

2. Build a network of off-road paths as per the attached plan.
3. Construct a bus interchange on Nepean Highway midway between Main Street and Tanti Ave.
4. Complete the Bay Trail as per State government objectives not Council objectives.

3.2. Greenhouse and Water Conservation

- 3.2.1. To help tackle water shortage and greenhouse issues Melbourne 2030 suggested Councils develop eco-zones in which special attention be given to these issues. That is the Council would plan for housing infill that had a small ecological footprint. Whilst the structure plan does make reference to these issues it does not define such an area or suggest how these goals could be met.
- 3.2.2. We suggest that the area around Fleet Street to York Street be defined as an eco-village. Please refer to the attached paper for a discussion on the type of infrastructure that could be used to fulfill the State Government's objectives of reducing water demand and energy consumption. Net Water, electricity and gas demand could be largely eliminated in this area through appropriate infrastructure planning and development.
- 3.2.3. It should also be noted that the hardening of this area together with increase storm event intensity (greenhouse) will cause flooding problems in the Fisherman's creek area and the establishment of an eco-village as per the attached paper would help avoid this liability.

4. Other Issues

4.1. Bay Trail

- 4.1.1. The State Government's goal is to build an off road Bay Trail for families to use. This trail would link Mornington and Baxter. The plan is for the trail to then travel along the Esplanade to Safety Beach however, there may be some engineering, environment and community problems with this route. An alternative would be to take the Bay Trail through Civic Reserve, along Harrap Creek, into the Briars and through to Safety Beach. This approach would also mean Devil Bend Reservoir and Hastings could be linked in. As a first step the 600metres from Craigie Road to the Briars should be completed to provide quality openspace to the people of East Mornington as they are lacking such space.
- 4.1.2. The above notes have been provided as background material to reference the discussion below.
- 4.1.3. The current proposal for the Bay Trail from Nepean Highway to the Bay is not in keeping with the State Government's goal of an off-road path. Around 75% of the path is to be a shared path on streets that will struggle to fit the required 2.5metre width. The route up to Main Street lights and back on Nepean Highway is not practical or safe. Children and youths will not take this detour.
- 4.1.4. If the following changes are made the percentage of shared path drops to around 25%:
 1. Build Gateway Park as per the attached plans.
 2. Install pedestrian lights on Nepean midway between Tanti Ave and Main Street as part of the Bus interchange and Bay Trail. It should be noted this plan links cycling routes directly to the bus interchange.
 3. Route Bay Trail on land set aside for this function South Elizabeth Street. An alternate after hours route along Spray Street can be sign posted. In the short term this section of the Bay Trail will provide off-road access for the tourist rail and then for people using the Bay Trail from Baxter. In addition, when peak oil hits this path will be an important part of the local cycling/scooter network. The current plan of using footpaths for the Bay Trail is simply inappropriate. North Mornington
- 4.1.5. Area on Bungower Road is undergoing major development with a new school and a number of retirement villages. As part of our peak oil strategy we need to link these people to services and homes (the students). That is the Bay Trail needs to be built to Bungower Road so students and retirees can use it for their transport needs when petrol become very expensive.

4.2. State Funding of Infrastructure & Traffic Congestion

- 4.2.1. Traffic modelling in Mornington Peninsula Access and Mobility Study found that traffic speeds on the Peninsula will drop from 51kph to 30kph due to increased traffic congestion. We need planning and resources allocation that avoids this undesirable outcome. The current growth forecast for the peninsula is around 50%. To maintain traffic levels at current levels we need 33% reduction in car usage. This is

higher than Melbourne 2030 target of 20% reduction. The reason is our forecast growth is double that of Melbourne's.

- 4.2.2. Our goal should be to reduce traffic congestion or at least not make it worse. This will require people to reduce the distance traveled in cars. Peak Oil will cause this. Government's responsibility is to provide alternative infrastructure. That is why the State Government is spending a billion dollars on buses.
- 4.2.3. These buses will provide regional transport links but not local links. The local links need to be provided through local minibuses and a cycling/scooter network as per the attached plan.
- 4.2.4. To fund this infrastructure we need to reduce our spending on roads. That is the money for the proposed Traffic Lights on Nepean Highway at Wilson Road and Tanti Ave should be used to complete the path network as per the attached plan.
- 4.2.5. It is time we invested in the transport options of the future rather than the past. More traffic lights will create more traffic jams and more greenhouse pollution and less oil.
- 4.2.6. Currently the Council can get traffic lights for free and has to pay 100% for paths and local buses. If the State Government wants cash strapped local governments to fulfill its policies in this area the funding model needs to change.
- 4.2.7. With regard to the structure plan peak oil means we need a path network not more traffic lights.

4.3. Tennis Courts & Information Centre

- 4.3.1. The zoning of the Mornington Tennis Club as part of the professional services precinct on page 15, figure 4.1 is not appropriate as this is public use land.

5. Summary

5.1. Building Height

- 5.1.1. The building height limit of three storey with 5metre set back above the second floor is more appropriate than five storeys.

5.2. Gateway Park

- 5.2.1. The proposed corner park is bad planning please refer to attached plans for a better approach. We need a park that links to Main Street other greenspaces, the Bay and provides varied quality openspace not another corner park of grass and a few trees.

5.3. Bay Trail

- 5.3.1. Putting 75% of the Bay Trail from Nepean Highway to the Bay on footpaths is not appropriate. It is not safe to run the route upto to Main Street Nepean Highway lights. The Trail should travel along the route that has been set aside for this function with an after hours alternative on Spray Street.
- 5.3.2. The Trail needs to pass through Gateway Park and other greenspaces.

5.4. Transport

- 5.4.1. We need to prepare for Peak Oil. This means extending the dial a bus service and path network as defined by the attached plans. Money from traffic lights should be used for the path network.
- 5.4.2. The bus interchange should be placed on the Highway midway between Tanti Ave and Main Street. With pedestrian lights linking the two sides.

5.5. Eco-Village

- 5.5.1. An eco-village focusing on water and energy conservation and re-use should be considered for the area South of York Street in keeping with Melbourne 2030 objectives.
