

From: [REDACTED]
To: [amendments](#)
Subject: Consideration of, and opposition to, the Preston Market Structure Plan
Date: Saturday, 10 July 2021 2:30:20 PM

For the consideration of the Victorian Planning Authority,

Regarding the Preston Market Structure Plan:

I am a Preston resident, and I shop at the Preston Market every week. I also own property less than 100 meters from the proposed development border. I think that there are more questions raised than answers by the current planning documents, and I strongly oppose the current plan. The current plan fails to address why a 20 story residential/mixed used building is the center piece of a market revitalisation plan. It presents inadequate protections for existing traders, and the lack of care in the current plan jeopardises the activation of the surrounding land during the train station upgrade.

The biggest problem I see in the current plan is the building height, with six towers between 10 and 20 stories set for construction. While I believe that there should be residential development as part of the plan, I strongly believe that the building heights in each case should be halved, with heights between 5 and 10 stories. While I agree that Preston, and Melbourne are growing rapidly, what we are seeing is an increase in the price of single-title houses, and a tapering off of demand for high-rise apartments. Over the last decade we have seen a flurry of construction and purchasing of apartments in Docklands, but a number of these apartments remain abandoned, which has ravaged the community and sense of place. The COVID-19 pandemic appears to be exacerbating the problems in Docklands as people prioritise open space over apartment living. I do not want to see a similar thing happen in Preston.

The other problem that I see with the current plans for the towers, is that it is a fairly brazen attempt to soak up the future demand for housing in the area by a small group of greedy developers. Citing a report that the area requires 4,500 new dwellings over the next 20 years, and then proposing a plan to provide 2,200 in the short term seems altruistic at first glance. However, the real plan here, as we have seen elsewhere, is to get approval fast, and build fast, before anyone else can. It is likely that if this plan goes ahead, it will be much more difficult to get planning permits for more considered, more reasonable housing projects in the area for the next 20 years. And we do a disservice to the community by allowing that to happen. For this reason I believe that height should be capped at 10 stories, so that the buildings in the plan have to be more carefully considered, and to allow the growth of the area to stabilise. This also allows a wider variety of projects, such as mid-rises and townhouses to be established in the area.

With so much attention on the towers, it is not clear how the protections for the existing traders in the market are set to work. The current plan demarcates an area where the market can continue and stipulates that they will "avoid franchises" going forwards. Ignoring the fact that this is a weak protection, the plan does not stipulate any policy for the rest of the mixed-use developments. It appears that chain stores won't have to worry about eroding the protections of the market footprint, since they can set up 10 meters across the road.

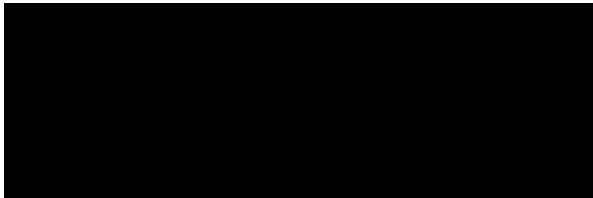
We have seen before how developers try to get approvals by offering plans of "mixed-use" space, without ever considering what the non residential half of "mixed-use" entails. The plan itself acknowledges that, due to the rise of online shopping, it is becoming harder to entice businesses into the lower floors of mixed use spaces. When I see the amount of

vacant ground-floor business space along Nicholson street in Brunswick I find it hard to imagine that similar spaces in the Preston Market Structure Plan will not just be parcelled to however is will to pay, regardless of whether they are a chain or not.

The current work to remove the level crossing and upgrade the Preston station is a boon for the community. There is an excellent plan for using the additional space provided by the work for parklands and recreational areas. The current Preston Market Structure Plan proposes that we sandwich the recreational areas between towers that are between 10 and 20 stories high. The current plan sees the building abut right next to the new parks that are to be constructed. And even with the setbacks stipulated in the plan, the amenity of the open space provided will be significantly diminished by overshadowing.

For these reasons I believe that the Preston Market Structure Plan is offered in bad faith, and is a bad result for the community. I sincerely hope that you will consider this letter and reject the plan in it's current form.

Regards,



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