

Information Release to Members 30 March 2015

Hampton Neighbourhood Association welcomes confirmation that Bayside Councillors will make the final decision and trade-offs between liveability and negative traffic and public transport impacts

HNA recognises the opportunity presented by further development of the Hampton Activity Centre to clean up a windswept rubbish strewn car park.

HNA is addressing this opportunity in 2 stages:

1. Traffic, parking and broad area impacts
2. Building form and overlooking impacts when details are known about the VicTrack development

Early traffic solutions presented by Council officers had their origins in a traffic and transport focussed working group made up of Public Transport Victoria, VicRoads, Department of Transport Planning and Council. These Options would appear to have had a focus on a public transport and traffic solution because that was the make up of the group that initially developed the options.

HNA presented 2 further options (Options D & E) that had reduced traffic impacts and improved liveability for residents.

HNA recognises that depending on the importance in the decision making process attributed to traffic and public transport or retail and residential amenity then a different option may become a preferred solution. Thus the final decision depended at least in part on the frame of reference of the decision makers and their advisers.

It is for this reason that HNA has continued to ask Council Officers to provide a matrix of factors they will consider and also the relative importance of those criteria. These requests have continually declined culminating in a question in Public Question Time at the Council meeting on 24 March 2015.

The question was:

'Are Council officers declining to provide a further reasonable explanation of the decision making criteria they intend to use and the relative importance that they assign to each criteria and if so how can an open and transparent decision-making process and an outcome that can be understood by residents and traders be achieved?'

The response was:

"The assessment criteria published on Council's website and as listed in the question is considered to be appropriate. It is not intended that the criteria be weighted, but that a balanced, qualitative assessment against this criteria will be undertaken. This assessment will be presented in a report to the April 2015 Council meeting within the publically available agenda, ensuring an open and transparent decision making process. Officers advise that they have explained to the Hampton Neighbourhood Association and the community in general that whilst the

published criteria will inform their assessment and recommendations, Councillors are not bound by this assessment criteria in making a decision.”

HNA is disappointed that a clear matrix of criteria will not be provided and totally rejects the assertion that it cannot be done as it is common practice in public decision making. However, HNA is pleased that the final decision on competing interests will be made by our elected representatives rather than a faceless working committee of public transport and traffic focussed engineers and planners.

HNA believes that Councillors are the elected custodians of “liveability” in Bayside and the responsibility falls to them to make the trade offs required between competing objectives (e.g. traffic congestion, noise and fumes created by new developments versus liveability).

HNA welcomed the response to a HNA Question on Notice at a recent Council meeting confirming that Councillors are not bound by the recommendations of Council planners and have a responsibility to make their own judgements on trade offs between competing objectives.

Hampton Neighbourhood Association welcomes decision by Council to commission new traffic report based on revised and increased apartment numbers in Hampton Activity Centre

The traffic study relied upon by Council officers in considering the impacts emanating from the development of the Hampton Activity Centre upon liveability in Bayside was based upon a development estimate of 339 apartments.

A Yield study completed by HNA has indicated that the number of apartments when the current Activity Centre development plans are completed is closer to 700 and may be as high as 800 apartments.

HNA believes that the current apartment number used in planning by Council officers is low when one considers that there will be close to 300 apartments on the VicTrack and Trackside Gymnasium sites. The scout hall site (3 levels), the Council/Safeway Carpark (6 levels) and redevelopments on the Safeway side of Hampton Street and both sides of Willis Street will accommodate far more than another 40 to 50 apartments.

HNA welcomed the response to a HNA Question on Notice at the Council meeting on 24 March 2015 that Council officers will revisit the current traffic study as any increase in apartment numbers will increase the current estimated traffic load of 2,000 vehicles per day entering residential streets.