

1.7 MONASH BOULEVARDS - RELEASE DRAFT UDF FOR CONSULTATION (SM:F18-104174.003)

Responsible Director: Peter Panagakos

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Notes the content and actions in the Draft Monash Boulevards Urban Design Framework appended to this report.*
- 2. Release the Draft Monash Boulevards Urban Design Framework for community consultation in accordance with the consultation program set out in this report.*
- 3. Notes that a further report will be presented to Council upon the completion of the community consultation.*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to consider the draft Monash Boulevards Urban Design Framework (BUDF) and to seek endorsement of the draft BUDF for community consultation.

BACKGROUND

Monash Housing Strategy 2014

Adopted in 2014, the *Monash Housing Strategy* contains a Residential Framework Plan that identifies 8 separate housing and built form areas. These give overall strategic direction to the level of change and dwelling intensity planned for each of these areas. The Monash Boulevards Urban Design Framework (BUDF) is a project that was identified in the *Monash Housing Strategy 2014*. The Monash Housing Strategy designates Dandenong Road/Princes Highway and Springvale Road as Category 4 – Boulevards, with the objective to provide for housing change and diversification along boulevards and main roads.

Monash Boulevards Discussion Paper and Stage 1 Consultation

As part of this project, a discussion paper was prepared which outlined some of the issues and opportunities for the boulevards. Consultation on the discussion paper (Stage 1) was undertaken across August and September 2021, and included owners of larger properties, government agencies and a Shape Monash page.

Twelve submissions were received and six surveys were completed. There was broad support for the project and many of the issues and opportunities outlined in the Discussion Paper.

However, there were also a range of matters that the submitters wanted us to consider further in the development of the Urban Design Framework (UDF). At a high level, the submissions and survey results focused on:

- Maintaining and growing canopy cover
- High, mid-rise quality built form outcomes with a mix of uses and amenities
- Improving pedestrian and cycling connectivity (with particular emphasis on providing routes away from the arterial roads)
- Water sensitive urban design and tree watering through passive irrigation
- Importance of landscaping within setbacks and on built form (e.g. green roofs and walls)

A detailed report on this engagement stage is provided in the Consultation Report included as **Attachment 1**.

DISCUSSION

Draft Urban Design Framework

Following on from the discussion paper, the draft Monash Boulevards Urban Design Framework (BUDF) has been prepared and is provided as **Attachment 2**.

It is important to consider the BUDF as part of a diverse range of housing development areas and in the context of the range of housing provision areas across Monash. This includes structure plans that promote higher density development in and around key activity centres and more conventional unit/townhouse development in the broader suburban areas of Monash.

It is structured as follows:

Draft vision and principles

The draft UDF includes a vision and high-level principles for the Monash Boulevards.

Vision for the Monash Boulevards:

“The Monash Boulevards are great places to live. They are green, safe, well connected, and offer a range of housing choices for all.”

Principle 1 - Built Form Diversity:

“High quality, contemporary buildings will line the boulevards providing a range of housing options for residents. Taller built form will be located at key gateways and nodes of activity creating identifiable neighbourhoods and sensitively transitioning to adjoining low scale residential areas.”

Principle 2 - Movement & Connectivity:

“The Boulevards will be enhanced as safe and convenient places for people to walk and cycle between their homes and surrounding destinations. The service

roads will be transformed into active transport spines that prioritise people and provide easy access to public transport hubs.”

Principle 3 - Landscape Character and Public Realm:

“The boulevards will play a key role in enhancing the garden city character of Monash. A leafy landscape outlook will dominate views along the boulevards, strengthened with additional tree and understorey planting. The service roads will play a vital role in greening the boulevards through canopy trees and pocket parks providing quieter places of refuge for residents. Front gardens will further strengthen the landscape dominated environment.”

Principle 4 - Sustainable and Resilient Communities:

“The boulevards will benefit from a range of environmental and social sustainability initiatives. New buildings will lead the way in energy efficiency and energy production while opportunities to capture, treat and re-use water within the boulevards will be maximised. Pocket parks, pedestrian and cycle links will provide places for people to gather and interact around concentrated nodes of activity, and will further strengthen a sense of belonging for residents.”

Strategic framework

The strategic framework is arranged under the same four themes and provide objectives and strategies for each. The objectives are:

- To create a contemporary mid-rise residential character for the Monash Boulevards through high quality building design and an architectural form that respects the surrounding context.
- Create low stress walking and cycling environments through improved networks and infrastructure along the Boulevards.
- Enhance the boulevard landscape character through high quality canopy tree planting, lush understorey landscaping and generous front gardens.
- To create a well-connected and sustainable community along the Boulevards.

Each theme in the strategic framework includes high-level maps that identify the extent of built form change, opportunities for public realm and transport improvements. Some of the key takeaways from this are:

- Preferred building heights of predominantly 4 storeys, with 6 storeys preferred for residential areas along the boulevards that are also within short walking distance of major activity centres, and 6-8 storeys in gateway / strategic sites and areas where interface impacts to other residential properties can be minimised. Site consolidation and generous front setbacks for landscaping / canopy trees would be encouraged in all areas.
- Strengthening walking and cycling priority within the service roads.
- Providing additional canopy shade and landscape to service road areas, outer separators, and central medians.

- Identify opportunities for water sensitive urban design initiatives to reduce runoff and re-use water locally (including for street tree watering).
- Create informal community meeting points / hubs along the boulevards.

Precinct plans

Detailed plans are provided for each of the 12 precincts across the boulevards, 6 along each road. These plans include public realm improvements (e.g. street furniture, open space, tree planting, landscaping, WSUD treatments, layout changes to service lanes), and access and movement recommendations (e.g. new / improved crossings, shared paths and trails, connectivity with bus stops). Some maps and illustrations are provided to outline what these interventions could look like.

Built form design guidelines

Built form design guidelines are provided to guide development of the residential land along the boulevards, including appropriate heights, setbacks (front, side and rear), form, design and materiality, landscaping, and designing access / car parking to promote pedestrian priority and ensuring it doesn't dominate the frontage.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The development of the draft Monash BUDF has considered, and is consistent with a range of Council policies including, the *Monash Housing Strategy 2014*, *Monash Urban Landscape and Canopy Vegetation Strategy 2018*, and the *Monash Integrated Transport Strategy 2017*.

Ultimately the Monash BUDF will provide detailed policy guidance for increased housing provision along the two key boulevards of Dandenong Road / Princes Highway and Springvale Road.

CONSULTATION

As outlined above, targeted stakeholder engagement in an initial stage based on the Discussion Paper was undertaken in August/September 2021. The next stage of engagement will be on the Draft BUDF (i.e. Stage 2).

An earlier version of the Draft BUDF was provided to DELWP and Department of Transport and their comments have helped shape the final draft that is attached to this report.

In summary, the Stage 2 community consultation will feature:

- Monash Bulletin article (consultation commencement timed to coincide with the circulation date in July)
- Brochure outlining the Draft BUDF (enclosed with letters sent to owners/occupiers and available in libraries / service centres proximate to the boulevards)

- Letters (with brochures enclosed) to owners and occupiers of affected and adjacent properties along the boulevards
- Shape Monash page with information about the Draft BUDF, a survey (and other social tools), and a submission portal. Surveys and other social tools can be completed anonymously but submissions would not be anonymous. The survey would ask for basic demographic information such as suburb, age and gender identity.
- Information available in libraries and service centres proximate to the boulevards (4 of the 6 libraries, both service centres) – including copies of the Draft BUDF and the brochures.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Draft BUDF seeks to enhance social sustainability through creating a sense of community along the boulevards by providing new spaces for social activity, improving community health and well-being by enhancing walking and cycling opportunities, and ensuring development is designed to mitigate the impacts of noise and air pollution along busy main roads, and enhancing vegetation.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

It is considered there will not be any human rights implications as a result of the release of the Draft BUDF for community engagement.

GENDER EQUITY ASSESSMENT

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) is being prepared for this work.

The GIA was commenced prior to the Stage 1 consultation, with amendments made to the Discussion Paper in consultation with the Gender Equity Advisory Committee (GEAC) prior to release for consultation. A new section was added to the Discussion Paper that discussed public realm improvements that could enhance perceptions of safety and needs of different user groups.

Whilst the consultation in Stage 1 was targeted to key stakeholders (most of whom made submissions), it was open to anyone to provide feedback via a survey that had the option to provide their contact information *or* to provide demographic questions such as age, gender identity and relationship to Monash. Only 6 surveys were completed and all of those who chose to remain anonymous identified as men.

Building on the Discussion Paper, the draft BUDF includes various references to safety and perceptions of safety, and the needs of different user groups – e.g. Part A Section 3.4 (Sustainable and resilient communities framework) and Design Objective 07 (in Part C). There are, however, some aspects of this that are outside of the scope of the UDF such as street lighting and DDA compliance.

The Stage 2 community consultation will include a survey that asks demographic questions and seeks feedback on the draft BUDF from the Gender Equity Advisory

Committee. The feedback provided in this consultation will be used to assist in the finalisation the BUDF prior to a consideration of adoption after community consultation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The development of the draft BUDF (including the discussion paper) was funded in the 2020/21 Council Budgets. The draft BUDF is an aspiration statement of Council's intent to address the future needs of the two boulevards, and the recommendations from this UDF will ultimately guide future decisions around capital works and future planning scheme amendments.

CONCLUSION

A draft UDF has now been prepared for the Monash Boulevards (Dandenong Road and Springvale Road) that has been informed by background analysis and an initial round of targeted stakeholder consultation on a discussion paper.

The next stage of the project is to seek feedback from the community and stakeholders on the draft Monash Boulevards Urban Design Framework.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 (Stage 1 Consultation Report)
- Attachment 2 (Draft Boulevards Urban Design Framework)