Supplementary Report:
Expert Evidence Statement:
Urban Design

Amendment C176 to the Wyndham Planning Scheme
Riverdale Draft Precinct Structure Plan
Planning Panel Victoria hearing

Prepared by
Simon McPherson, SJB Urban
04 February 2014
# Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction 5

2.0 Draft Site Structure Plan 6
   2.1 Plan ‘layers’ 6
   2.1.1 Land use 6
   2.1.2 Activity Centres 6
   2.1.3 Community and Culture 6
   2.1.4 Density 6
   2.1.5 Open Space 6
   2.1.6 Pedestrian routes / Cycle routes 6
   2.1.7 Public transport 6
   2.1.8 Biodiversity link 7
   2.1.9 Principles and targets (data tables) 7

3.0 Review of issues from Statement of Expert Evidence 8
   3.1 Components 8
   3.1.1 Neighbourhood Activity Centres / urban structure 8
   3.1.2 Sayers Road alignment 8
   3.1.3 Train Station location 8
   3.1.4 Bus network 8
   3.1.5 Town Centre location and configuration 9
   3.1.6 Residential density 9
   3.1.7 Recreation location 9
   3.1.8 Interface to creek 9

4.0 Location of Indoor Recreation Facility 10

5.0 Response to Mr Jason Black’s Supplementary Report (2 February 2014) 11
   5.1 Response to specific comments/concerns 11
Table of Contents

List of Figures
No table of figures entries found.

Tables
No table of figures entries found.

List of Attachments
No table of contents entries found.
1.0 Introduction

I have been instructed to prepare an Addendum to my Statement of Expert Evidence, prepared in November 2013, relating to the Riverdale Draft Precinct Structure Plan.

Since preparation of the original Statement:
- I have led the consultant team in continuing work on the Site Structure Plan for 110 Sayers Road, which is currently in Phase 2: Feasibility Study;
- Met with the Metropolitan Planning Authority and Wyndham City Council officers on 20 January 2014, to discuss ‘points of difference’ between Council’s position as landowner and MPA’s position on various matters;
- Met with Council officers on several occasions; and
- Reviewed other evidence statements to the hearing, as noted below.

I have also been instructed to prepare a diagrammatic plan for the whole of the 1160 Sayers Road site, noting that only the southern portion of the site falls within the Riverbank PSP, with the northern part to be covered by the future Oakbank PSP.

This Plan has been prepared and is attached to this statement. I understand this Plan has been circulated to the Planning Panel and parties to the hearing.

Within this Addendum, I have been instructed to respond to matters raised by Mr Jason Black of Insight Planning Consultants Pty Ltd, in his Supplementary Report, dated 2 February 2014, to his Expert Evidence Statement regarding Amendment C176 to the Wyndham Planning Scheme.
2.0 Draft Site Structure Plan

The Draft Site Structure Plan, attached, comprises several layers of information, as explained below. This Plan was discussed with MPA officers during our meeting on 20 January 2014.

2.1 Plan ‘layers’

2.1.1 Land use
This plan indicates the major activity centre / town centre, of approximately the same land area as indicated in the PSP, but in a modified shape/configuration. The town centre is located on both sides of the railway corridor, placing the Station at the centre of the town.

The plan also shows two (2) additional, small activity centres, both located on both of the rail corridors, reflecting the intent to deliver a compact, walkable urban environment across the site.

2.1.2 Activity Centres
This Plan shows the activity centres as discussed above, with their walkable catchments, located to maximise coverage across the site, while taking into account potential barriers to movement such as the railway corridor and creek.

2.1.3 Community and Culture
As shown in this plan, community infrastructure will be located within the activity centres and co-located with open space, with clear connections between community hubs or nodes.

2.1.4 Density
Corresponding to activity centre locations, this plan indicates areas of high- and medium-density across the site. It also indicates preferred density outcomes beyond the site boundaries. It is understood that higher residential densities within catchments will support the viability of the activity centres.

Our work generally assumes modest-scale development (1-3 storeys) with potential for some larger built form in the major centre. The specific proposed densities and yields are still being developed.

2.1.5 Open Space
This plan shows proposed areas of open space (also shown in the Land Use plan), comprising:
- Major active open space area in the south-east corner of the site (8 ha), for ovals and sports fields;
- Network of passive open spaces (generally approximately 1ha);
- Pedestrian and cycling connections across this open space network, incorporating the creek corridor; and
- Site for Indoor Recreation/Aquatics Facility, adjoining the subject site, on the land to the south (across Sayers Road) (6.5 ha); his aspect is discussed further below.

2.1.6 Pedestrian routes / Cycle routes
These plans show a notional path/street network across the site, connecting the activity centres and open spaces, as a guide for potential street layouts.

2.1.7 Public transport
This plan shows the walking catchments to the proposed public transport stops, including the train station (proposed to also incorporate a bus interchange), high frequency bus on Leakes Road, and local buses, which align with the planned activity centre network.
2.1.8 **Biodiversity link**
The proposed biodiversity link incorporates the creek corridor and established Spiny Rice Flower reservation along the Sewells Road alignment.

2.1.9 **Principles and targets (data tables)**
These draft tables set out numerous parameters for the development of the site. These parameters are currently being assessed, tested and costed as part of the feasibility study stage of the Site Structure Plan.
3.0 Review of issues from Statement of Expert Evidence

In preparing this Addendum to my Statement of Expert Evidence, this section sets out any updated information, focussing on identified outstanding issues relating specifically to the Riverdale PSP.

3.1 Components

3.1.1 Neighbourhood Activity Centres / urban structure
As shown above, I retain the position that planning in growth areas should seek to deliver sufficient residential densities (and therefore housing type mix) to support the viability of a network of walkable activity centres (mainly Neighbourhood Activity Centres).

The Draft Plan Melbourne provides strategic support for this approach, as follows:

- Current initiatives that are assisting to achieve a city of 20-minute neighbourhoods include updating Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines to increase activity centres in growth areas.
- Initiative 2.2.4: Increase housing choice within walkable distances of railway stations in the growth areas
- Initiative 3.3.2: Improve outer-suburban rail and bus networks
- Direction 3.4: Improve local travel options to increase social and economic participation
- Initiative 3.4.1: Make neighbourhoods pedestrian-friendly
- Initiative 3.4.2: Create a network of high-quality cycling links
- Direction 4.3: Create neighbourhoods and communities that support healthy lifestyles
- Initiative 4.8.1: Promote urban design excellence
- Direction 5.7: Reduce energy consumption and transition to clean energy

3.1.2 Sayers Road alignment
Our work on the Site Structure Plan has continued based on the realignment of Sayers Road as shown in the Riverdale PSP. Therefore this matter is not contested.

3.1.3 Train Station location
Our Site Structure Plan proposes the relocation of the Station platforms approximately 250 metres north to link between the planned Sayers Road alignment to the north and the land acquired for Station purposes to the south. I understand that this can be achieved without requiring additional land acquisition, while retaining direct access between the Station and commuter parking in the acquired ‘triangle’ of land.

This relocation of the Station is designed to integrate the Station with the proposed Sayers Road overpass, allowing for a transit interchange at Sayers Road (including potentially bus stops on the overpass, with pedestrian access down to the Station platforms), and for the train station to have a major public ‘address’ and presence on Sayers Road.

MPA officers expressed support for the integration of the Station with the road overpass, in our recent meeting, subject to funding and technical considerations.

3.1.4 Bus network
With reference to Arup’s work on the Site Structure Plan project, I retain the opinion that the Principal Public Transport Network should be designed to meet/intersect with the proposed train station to provide for convenient modal shifts for public transport users. It should also continue into the town centre core to provide direct and convenient access to the town centre from surrounding neighbourhoods.
3.1.5  Town Centre location and configuration
As shown in the Site Structure Plan, I retain the opinion that the major town centre should be located around the train station, on both sides of the rail corridor and have a sensitive yet direct physical relationship with the creek corridor.

The area north of the rail corridor is outside the Riverdale PSP area (it will be within the future Oakbank PSP), and is therefore not directly applicable to this Statement. However I note that MPA officers have advised that current thinking for the PSP is to have additional retail/town centre functions (nominally 10,000 sq. m GFA) on the north side of the railway corridor, and connected as closely as possibly to the major town centre on the south side of the rail corridor.

Therefore I understand that the MPA generally supports the position reflected in the Site Structure Plan.

3.1.6  Residential density
I retain the position that the PSPs for Riverdale and Oakbank should facilitate significantly higher densities than are currently typically delivered in growth areas. I acknowledge that the Riverdale PSP will not stipulate particular densities for specific areas, and that the PSP in its current form does not specifically limit densities.

3.1.7  Recreation location
This matter is discussed separately, below (part 4.0).

3.1.8  Interface to creek
I retain the opinion that the town centre should be located adjacent to the Davis Creek tributary to allow the creek system and associated landscape character to have a positive ‘sense of place’ benefit for the town centre.
4.0 Location of Indoor Recreation Facility

I retain the opinion that the Indoor Recreation Facility should be positioned around the intersection of Sayers Road and Sewells Road at the gateway to the town centre. Our plan shows relocation of indoor recreation (6.5 ha) to adjoining land south of the existing Sayers Road alignment, for reasons as follows:

- Locating it close to the town centre, but not occupying valuable land in the heart of the town centre;
- Not having large-footprint ‘box’ occupying valuable Creek frontage / northern aspect; and
- Creating a "recreation gateway" to the precinct and town centre as one arrives from the east along Sayers Road.

I note that this land take on adjoining property is ‘in lieu’ of town centre occupation of the same property as shown in the PSP (further west). SJB can measure the land-take difference if required. That is, the PSP indicates an extension of the town centre and associated open space into the adjoining land south of the existing Sayers Road alignment, whereas our Site Structure Plan removes this portion of the town centre.

Wyndham City Council, as landowner and client to SJB Urban for the Site Structure Plan, has informed this initiative to relocate the recreation facility on adjoining land. While the facility could be accommodated on Council’s land at 1160 Sayers Road, it would reduce the potential development yields, and therefore detrimentally affect the potential to achieve a higher-density, walkable urban structure on this site.

It is relevant to reinforce that, as stated in my evidence, Council purchased the land at 1160 Sayers Road to establish town centre community services, commercial enterprise, recreation facilities and residential development with the unique opportunity to demonstrate world’s best practice in sustainable greenfield development on an urban fringe.

I also understand, through CBRE as sub-consultant on the Site Structure Plan project, that the presence of such a facility is likely to bring significant value uplift, and market price increases, to residential land in the vicinity of the recreation facility. Therefore the presence of this facility on or near the adjoining land should be seen as a commercial asset to that landowner.
5.0 Response to Mr Jason Black’s Supplementary Report (2 February 2014)

The Supplementary Report prepared by Mr Black, which I understand has been provided to the Planning Panel for the Amendment C176 hearing, considers the Wyndham City Council draft Structure Plan dated 16 January 2014, which was prepared by SJB Urban with the assistance of others and specifically focused on matters associated with the active open space and indoor recreation facility.

Mr Black has prepared the report for the owners of the land at 1245 Sayers Road, which is located immediately south of Wyndham City Council’s land at 1160 Sayers Road. Council’s land is the subject of the ‘Draft Structure Plan’ prepared by my company, SJB Urban, that Mr Black refers to.

5.1 Response to specific comments/concerns

I will respond to Mr Black’s four (4) main comments or concerns in turn.

5.1.1 The configuration of the Active Open Space (AOS) is inconsistent with the practices typically applied in growth areas

This comment applies to facilities on the land at 1160 Sayers Road.

As explained in my Statement of Evidence, many aspects of the proposed Site Structure Plan for 1160 Sayers Road do not reflect ‘typical’ practice in growth area planning. The objectives, brief and purpose, and funding structure for this project specifically require a different approach, which focuses on more compact, diverse development, walkable access, sustainable outcomes and ‘best practice’ greenfield planning.

As also discussed previously, the alignment and design of the realigned Sayers Road presents challenges for development and access on the land at 1160 Sayers Road, including the town centre and future recreation space, and other development, as it ‘triangulates’ the site. However the Site Structure Plan is working within this constraint.

SJB Urban has prepared a notional layout plan indicating how sports fields and facilities may be laid out in the nominated area and location, to demonstrate to Council the extent of facilities that may be accommodated. This layout plan will be presented to the Planning Panel. It reflects the principles of north-south alignment of sports fields and courts.

As the Site Structure plan develops, the shape and size of this AOS area may be modified or refined.

5.1.2 The division through the active open space that is caused by Sayers Road will impact on the coordination of uses on the site

The Site Structure Plan, including the layout of the AOS area, is being informed by Council’s Recreation Planners, who bring experience of active recreation in growth areas.

The Site Structure Plan team has been advised by Arup, providing transport planning inputs to the project, that signalised crossings to Sayers Road will/can be provided at approximately 200m intervals along Sayers Road, including:

- At the corner or Sewells Road
- Mid-way along the AOS area
- At the northern end of the AOS area.
Our planning is focussed on making this road as permeable as possible, to minimise its barrier effect to cross-movement for pedestrians. Signalised crossings would address safety concerns.

We would assume a large AOS area such as this would have multiple ‘focus’ points of buildings/club rooms, and therefore can effectively operate on both sides of the realigned Sayers Road. It seems unreasonable that single or centralised pavilions could serve a 9 ha area of sports fields and courts, even if the area was not divided by a road.

5.1.3 The plan provides no clear justification for siting the indoor recreation facility on the land at 1245 Sayers Road or reasoning for not siting elsewhere

- In my view it is not reasonable to expect a ‘conclusive’ rationale for any planning decision in this type of broad, high-level planning – a whole range of spatial configurations and locations are possible, and could be accommodated/pursued.
- The 6.5 ha area is located immediately adjoining the town centre area, and within approximately 8 minutes’ walk of the proposed train station location.
- The spatial planning reason to locate the recreation facility away from the creek frontage and rail corridor, is to optimise higher-density, mixed use development potential in the town centre, around the Station (proposed to be located further north) and along the Creek frontage.
- As set out above, the reasons for the proposed location of this facility on 1245 Sayers Road are:
  o Locating it close to the town centre, but not occupying valuable land in the heart of the town centre (and also locating it on the PPTN bus network and major road network);
  o Not having large-footprint “box” occupying valuable Creek frontage / northern aspect; and
  o Creating a “recreation gateway” to the precinct and town centre as one arrives from the east along Sayers Road.

I agree with Mr Black’s assertion that the facility could be located anywhere else, but this is not a reason to locate it somewhere else, and this principle applies to anything in this high level Precinct Structure Plan, except for fixed elements like the railway corridor and creek.

In terms of land-take impacts on the land at 1245 Sayers Road, I note the following:

- The PSP shows town centre and open space within the 1245 Sayers Road land, as shown below. We have measured these areas as totalling 5.32 ha (excluding 1.79ha community hub area), as shown in the diagram below;
- This area is excluded in the current SJB Urban draft plan, while the 6.5ha area for active recreation is included. Therefore the difference in land occupation at 1245 Sayers Road is approximately 1.18 ha (noting that the town centre area would be considered partially ‘developable land’, while the recreation facility area would not);
- Wyndham’s land at 1160 Sayers Road is accommodating 9.01ha of active open space in the south-eastern corner of the site (0.8% of total site area);
- The adjoining land at 1245 Sayers Road would accommodate 6.5 ha + 3.818ha (as noted in Mr Black’s evidence) of active open space, totalling (0.95% of total site area).
- I understand that active open space areas provided on the land at 1245 Sayers Road would be compensated by Council through DCP funding, while this does not apply to AOS areas on Council’s land.
- As will be discussed by Mr Dominic Arcaro of CBRE, the recreation facility is expected to bring significant marketing potential and land value uplift for surrounding residential areas, thereby providing a commercial benefit to the land at 1245 Sayers Road.
5.1.4 The interface between the indoor recreation facility and surrounding residential will result in a poor planning outcome

Mr Black, in his Statement of Evidence (5 December 2013), states that: An indoor recreation facility can be designed to ensure street level activation, an appropriate interface with the Regional Rail Link and Davis Creek tributary and colocation of car parking with other town centre uses;

This comment appears to contradict his assertion in his Supplementary Report the interface between the indoor recreation facility and surrounding residential will result in a poor planning outcome.

I am conscious of the interface challenges presented by large recreation/aquatic centres in that, as Mr Black points out, they tender to contain at least some areas of blank walls (enclosing sports courts, pools, change areas etc.

This is a key component of the rationale for not locating this facility adjoining the valuable landscape asset of the creek corridor. We have investigated floor plans for several similar facilities in suburban Melbourne, to present to the Panel.

I also note that the location shown in the PSP currently also adjoins residential development, as well as the creek corridor.

While these types of facilities present interface challenges (as do many other land uses and building types), these can be addressed through siting, building design, landscaping and other factors.