

CITY OF GREATER DANDENONG
MUNICIPAL HOUSING STRATEGY
2012

Municipal Housing Strategy Statement of Intent



GREATER
DANDENONG
City of Opportunity

Access to secure, appropriate, affordable and well designed housing is vital to peoples' health and wellbeing. A strong housing market that meets community needs can be an important source of wealth creation and contribute to the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the municipality. This Statement of Intent proposes that Council take a comprehensive view of housing, acknowledging that it is affected by and influences other aspects of people's lives, such as age, employment, education, family type, income, socio-economic status, and lifestyle.



Purpose

The Statement of Intent establishes the scope and direction for the future Housing Strategy and states Council's position on a number of housing-related matters, such as housing affordability, design and diversity, liveable neighbourhoods, revitalisation and investment and population growth. The following statements will guide Council decision-making and underpin engagement with the development sector, government agencies and key stakeholders until the Housing Strategy is finalised.

Context

This Statement of Intent stems from a program of research and consultation, conducted largely by Council staff during the past 12 months. This has included a review of local and national research and data, coupled with mail and intercept surveys of 648 residents about housing and community conditions, and a workshop with members of the local development industry on housing market trends and issues. In addition, discussions were conducted about housing issues with boarding house tenants; disabled and older residents; homeless people; recent humanitarian arrivals, and other residents.

The findings of this research have been documented in a detailed report, accompanied by a summary of the relevant challenges facing Greater Dandenong.

Most recently, a series of discussions were held with Council staff, the local development industry, residents and the housing and service sector, about local housing issues and possible roles for Council in improving housing conditions.

The Statement also takes into consideration Council's corporate, health and wellbeing, economic and land use planning policies. It is expected that those policies shall be amended at a later date to accommodate the outcomes of the final Housing Strategy.

The future Housing Strategy will describe intended Council actions in further detail, outlining the means by which these actions shall be implemented, and recounting the steps required for monitoring and sustaining such efforts.

Council has established an interdepartmental and Councillor Steering Group to provide strategic advice and oversight for the development of the Housing Strategy.

Affordability



An increase in house purchase prices and rental costs in Greater Dandenong during the past fifteen years, has aggravated housing-related financial stress among residents, forcing some into caravan parks, boarding houses and other less secure accommodation, and swelling the number of homeless people in this city.

Among the primary goals of the Housing Strategy is to increase the level and range of affordable government-subsidised and private housing, including advocacy to government, encouragement of private affordable housing development, support for the work of local housing agencies, and efforts to improve the security and standards of alternatives such as caravan parks and boarding houses. These measures are described below.

- Advocate for increased emergency and other supported accommodation, and for the addition of further Office of Housing accommodation, of an appropriate range of sizes, and dispersed across the city to avoid creation of communities of acute disadvantage.
- Support the work of housing associations in providing affordable housing for single parents, older residents, larger families, refugees and other vulnerable residents.
- Explore means to encourage private development of local affordable housing such as through legal instruments; inclusionary zoning; fast-tracking of planning applications; financial subsidies; the use of Council land and other mechanisms. Consider forming partnerships with developers or housing providers to promote the inclusion of affordable housing in urban development projects.



- Encourage diversity of housing choice and establish targets for affordable housing.
- Encourage innovative approaches to improve affordability and assist low-income earners into home ownership.
- Advocate for the improvement of tenancy rights to ameliorate sub-standard and insecure accommodation, including more robust design guidelines for caravan parks and strengthened legal protection for their tenants.
- Continue monitoring rooming houses to ensure regulatory compliance, while seeking to enhance the standard of local rooming houses beyond the scope of current legal requirements.



Housing Design and Diversity

A further goal is to extend the range of housing types available to residents, to meet the differing needs of individuals and families, and accommodate changes in their circumstances throughout life. To this end, efforts may be made to encourage the provision of a range of housing sizes and types, and to present older residents with affordable and varied accommodation choices to ensure their security and comfort. At the same time, measures are required to encourage the construction of housing that is energy and water-efficient, responsive to climate change, and accessible to people with disabilities. Proposed Council activities relating to housing design and diversity are set out below.

- Promote the development of diverse housing stock to accommodate people of differing ages and various household sizes – including number of bedrooms – to foster the growth of balanced and diverse communities.
- Identify and promote examples of best practice residential design and encourage the development industry to adopt these practices.
- Manage residential development and neighbourhood character through the application of the Local Planning Policy Framework of the Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme. Apply Council's Residential Development & Neighbourhood Character Policy (at Clause 22.09) to enhance valued elements of neighbourhood amenity. Encourage higher densities and more intensive built form in identified Substantial Change areas, while maintaining lower densities in the incremental change areas.
- Inform residents, developers, designers, architects and others about the application of environmental and accessibility guidelines.

- Encourage local developers to design and build houses that reflect principles of adaptable and accessible housing. Advocate for the reform of relevant laws, codes and planning schemes, to require that the design of new homes better meets the needs of older people and residents with a disability.
- Encourage housing development that adopts best practice environmentally sustainable design principles with respect to energy efficiency, responsiveness to climate change, waste management, building materials selection and water sensitive urban design. Advocate for the inclusion of mandatory environmentally sustainable design standards in the Victorian Planning Provisions.
- Promote and encourage high-quality design and construction of lower-cost, purpose built housing, including rooming houses and student accommodation and develop design standards for incorporation into the planning scheme.
- Encourage the development of retirement housing which offers a blend of localised aged accommodation and housing dispersed among the wider community, to meet the disparate needs and preferences of older residents
- Provide Home and Community Care services to older and disabled residents, to assist them to remain at home, adjust service delivery to accommodate evolving patterns of local need, and advocate for the appropriate provision of government funding to support local HACC and Commonwealth Aged Care Package services.
- Advocate for the local provision of a number of residential aged care beds that matches Federal Government guidelines.



Liveable Neighbourhoods



Thoughtful design of neighbourhoods entails the development of quality, affordable housing near shopping and commercial centres, to enable residents to walk to shops, transport and other local facilities. A related priority is that housing growth be accompanied by the provision of family services, parklands and other amenities. In areas of major redevelopment, such as central Dandenong, such steps may be coupled with efforts to provide a suitable level of affordable housing.

- Foster housing development near public transport, medical services, shops, entertainment, cultural facilities and other essential infrastructure.
- Encourage and plan for medium-density residential development within walking distance of activity areas in accordance with the Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme, coupled with the establishment of infrastructure that encourages walking.
- Advocate for improved public and active transport to match the needs of residents in new housing developments or localities of increasing housing density.
- Apply urban design principles that reduce crime through opportunities for surveillance, installation of appropriate lighting and other means – thereby encouraging residents to participate in community activities.
- Encourage the provision of affordable housing in and around major activity areas, particularly those where revitalisation efforts are focused, to ensure the development of healthy and diverse communities with a balance of incomes and other personal and household attributes.



Revitalisation and Investment



Relative to metropolitan Melbourne, established residential areas in Greater Dandenong have a disproportionate number of low-income households and an excessive supply of poor quality, low cost, ageing housing stock. Alongside efforts to address the needs of residents experiencing housing stress, the Housing Strategy will also contain measures to attract broader commercial investment into the local housing market; improve the quality of new housing stock, and encourage housing development that appeals to middle and upper-income market segments. Attracting a broader range of income segments to the city will help bolster the local economy, while providing a range of housing products will result in increased housing choice for people of various life stages, incomes and lifestyles, thus creating a more balanced and sustainable social mix.

Council will actively support and work in partnership with the private sector in the delivery of quality residential development that complies with Council planning policies and meets current and future housing needs.

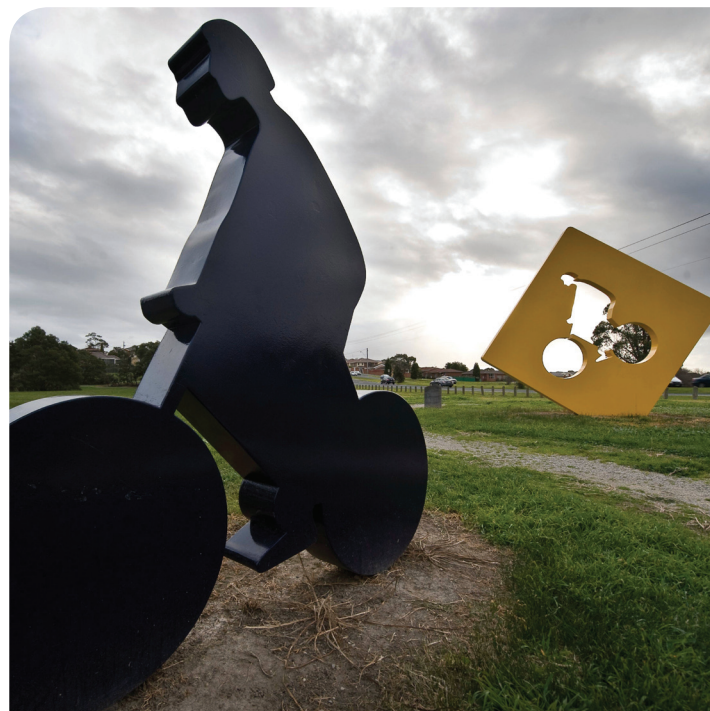


Steps to attract private sector investment and revitalise the urban environment are outlined below:

- Identify large public and privately-owned strategic renewal sites that, when redeveloped, will maximise the utility of the land; attract further private sector investment and stimulate revitalisation in localities, thereby improving the quality of the urban environment. For identified publicly-owned strategic renewal sites, explore how Council could leverage those assets to pursue mixed use, multi-partner development of sufficient scale to stimulate further private investment into that locality.
- Investigate incentives to attract private sector investment in the housing market, including the use of Council assets and resources, capital works and public realm improvements, the application of planning concessions and fast-tracking planning permit applications.
- Discourage inappropriate development that fails to satisfy planning policy, deliver housing that enhances the built environment, or meet the needs of current and future residents. Discourage multi-unit residential development that retains the existing dwelling at the front of a site if that dwelling fails to positively contribute to the local streetscape or neighbourhood.
- Encourage design excellence and architectural innovations that will attract middle and upper income buyers to the local housing market and enhance the appearance, attractiveness and safety of neighbourhoods and streetscapes.
- Strengthen local mixed-use development, to foster higher levels of street activity in activity areas, thereby attract increased levels of private investment.



Population Growth



Greater Dandenong's population is expected to grow by 33,426 in the two decades to 2031, placing pressure on transport networks, services and public open space. Ensuring sufficient housing supply is available to address demand, while also managing the impact on neighbourhood character as development pressure intensifies, will be crucial in the years to come. To this end, Council will:

- Prepare a residential land supply strategy that investigates opportunities to redevelop redundant business or light industrial areas to residential use; identifies further areas for housing intensification which makes the most efficient use of existing urban infrastructure and curbs expansion to green wedge areas and areas with infrastructure or environmental limitations.
- Encourage housing intensification near activity areas and public transport, managing the built form outcomes in line with the provisions of Clause 22.09 of the Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme.
- Advocate for the timely planning and establishment of schools, kindergartens, child care and other generalist services in areas of burgeoning urban development, and plan for the creation of quality open space in growing urban areas.
- Undertake further technical studies of traffic and car parking demand to allow differential car parking rates that enable a relaxation of requirements, where appropriate. Advocate for improved sustainable and active transport in areas experiencing significant urban growth.

- Investigate the environmental impacts of increased urban development on storm water management, urban ecology and climate change, exploring mechanisms to mitigate these effects.
- Respond to State and Federal Government initiatives that influence local population and residential growth including the forthcoming Residential Zones Review, Metropolitan Strategy and Housing Growth Requirements.



Monitoring and Supporting the Housing Strategy



To sustain and enhance Council's efforts, its Housing Strategy should be informed by an understanding of housing conditions and supported by collaboration and consultation among local, regional and state-wide agencies. Related activities are to:

- Monitor contemporary trends in social circumstances, housing provision, and State and Federal Government policies, with consideration of their implications for local housing issues.
- Monitor the delivery of all new housing in the city against Council's housing objectives and targets.
- Engage with the development industry sector to document changes and trends in the local housing market to ensure that Council's Housing Strategy responds to, and brokers around, market realities.
- Participate in the activities of local, regional and inter-council bodies to exchange information about housing issues, collaborate in regional initiatives, and advocate for improved housing conditions.
- Liaise with housing providers and other relevant agencies, to monitor local housing requirements and ensure that the implementation of Council's Housing Strategy continues to meet the needs of residents.
- Improve efficiencies in the planning permit application process and consider innovations that may enhance organisational capacity to more promptly determine applications.





Telephone
9239 5100



Facsimile
9239 5196



TTY **9239 5153**



TIS **13 14 50**



Internet
www.greaterdandenong.com



Email
council@cgd.vic.gov.au