

Town of Cambridge : Planning for Our Future Strategic Community Plan

This is a submission on the Town of Cambridge : Planning for Our Future Strategic Community Plan.

Names

Rename “Local Planning Strategy” or “Local Planning Scheme”, both abbreviated to LPS which will cause confusion. Maybe change to “Cambridge Planning Strategy (CPS)” and keep “Local Planning Scheme (LPS)”.

Vision

The three proposed CPS scenario maps as presented for public comment, are too similar in design and are presented as a choice. There is in principle no option for a totally different opinion. Initial ideas should be bold concepts that make people think, that is if the Town want real input from the population. There must be a wealth of ideas amongst the residents and it is a waste and condescending not to make use of them. May need a more interactive way of getting public ideas. Now people select a scenario that has the least impact on them. That means possibly not the best but the least bad.

The Cambridge Planning Strategy looks too much like an LPS where we are just planning for the next few years. The aim for the CPS should be laying a framework for the coming decades with a *vision*. As clearly demonstrated in Tony Seba’s address to Nordic Energy Summit, Oslo, that it took only 13 years, from 1900 to 1913, for horses to disappear from the streets in New York to be replaced by cars (Tony Seba, 2016). If change in technology could change society so quickly a 100 years ago, then we have to think even more visionary now.

Terms of reference

The proposed strategic plan suggests three scenarios with major density increases in West Leederville. *Was that the brief given to the consultants?* When will that be available to the public.

Public Open Spaces

All Public Open Spaces (POS) to be retained, especially with increased Property Density there will more need for more POS. Using Council owned land to increase density is only a very short term solution with long term disadvantages in the form of reduced options for Council solutions.

Heat Islands

With the higher density and high rise proposed for West Leederville it is very important to realize that this could easily create *heat islands*, which are a health hazard (Brown et al., 2013). Heat Islands should be considered in any development strategic plan.

Alternative Scenario

At end of this submission a map shows an alternative proposal (**Scenario-HB**) where the density increase is basically along main roads of Floreat and Wembley. So no increased density in West Leederville at all. Using a back of the envelope calculation with the following parameters:

- Total length of streets with increased density about 18.4km.
- Assumed block width 20m.
- Creates about 920 blocks (only on one side of the street) over the total length of the road segments.
- Depending on where on which street there are 1 or 2 sides for densification.
- With mixed use of properties it is assumed that only the ground floor is commercially used.
- Use number of levels as multiplier
- This would give around 4500 dwellings. Therefore the target by the WA Gov can easily be met.
- The ESRI shapefiles of the HB-scenario are enclosed to the submission.

Advantages of Scenario-HB

- West Leederville has not been touched.
- Increases walkability.
- This alternative plan would make increased public transport more likely to occur, because higher densities close to existing bus routes.
- The outcome also indicates than the needed target of around 3500 is feasible without going too high.

Open Space in Development

- Open Space in developments is a general term should be split up in **Paved Space** and **Green Space**. So that Open Space not just exists of paved driveways.
- The minimum amount of Green Space should be set at **20%** of block size. This will ensure maintaining the "Garden Suburbs".

City Beach

In City Beach the situation is different. Besides the Boulevard Shopping Centre and a redevelopment of the City Beach IGA there is no opportunity for corridor densification.

However there is the opportunity for “Corner Lot” and “Manor” style development concepts as in the proposed Amendment 31.

Fig-1 is an aerial image of a typical corner block in City Beach, ideal for “Mano” or “Corner Lot” development as proposed in Amendment 31.

- The argument against it at the time, was on basis it destroys “Garden Suburb” which is flawed since many of the recent developments like the one adjacent to the corner block have basically no green space. A suburb full of that type of developments could easily be referred to as “Concrete Paved Suburb”.
- After a quick aerial image scan of the corner blocks in City Beach in between The Boulevard and Empire Ave, about 30% maybe ready for redevelopment in the next 5 – 10 years, of which only a portion will use higher density option.
- The opposition of the scheme did as if the whole suburb would be bought up by developers, demolished and replaced with higher density dwellings. That is not going to happen, unless what they are saying that all the current dwellings are of such a poor quality that they need replacing within 5 years. And by the way, it also is not compulsory to redevelop in higher density, just an option.
- The are in City Beach about 1060 and in Floreat 770 corner blocks larger 900m². A good resource for increased density.





Corner Lot development

- The example Fig-2) in Amendment 31 has too much driveway (“Paved Space”). This is basically a design as per R-codes.
- Let design it more sustainable with more **Green Space** and Carports near the secondary road, so no valuable Green Space wasted with paved driveways.

Redevelopment

In Floreat and Wembley there are Art Deco style houses along the main roads which are identified as potential for higher density redevelopment.

- The developer should be encouraged to keep the original house (at least the facade), but could make two properties of one. Lets say split it in to a 2*1 and 3*2.
- The original house is in need of renovation, so major structural changes are probably needed anyway, so to make them semi-detached is not too hard.
- What is needed from the Town of Cambridge is a more flexible development regime compared to the rigid R-codes.
- So instead of a ‘battle-axe’ development have a side-by-side development.
- If allowed the result will be increased density while keeping some “heritage” buildings.

Walkability in the Town

- At a community workshop (?2 years ago) about redevelopment options around the Floreat Forum many attendees wanted better shaded footpaths so it would be more pleasant and easier to walk to the Forum. Especially for parents with prams or walking their kids to school. And not to forget the elderly who could be walking or using a powered scooter. To extrapolate this to other areas, good shaded footpaths on both sides of the street would encourage people to walk to their shops etc.gopher

- Walking in the shade is very important, because it is cooler and the pedestrians are out of the sun. Since the prediction is that the climate becomes hotter more shade is even more important. In addition it is visually more pleasing to the eye.
- Street trees also increase the value of nearby properties.
- Create community “squares” where people can meet, play and relax.
- Increasing and maintaining shady side walks has a cooling effect for their surroundings, it helps avoid to heat islands. It is important to decide which trees have the best shading and cooling properties, and which types are best for absorbing pollutants from the air.

Traffic and Transport

The traffic and transport scenario seems to be based on current levels of vehicle use and linear increasing projections in to the future as has been the practice in the past. Throw the current thinking about traffic and transport out of the window.

- The Stephenson Highway plan is a concept of the 1950s and 1960s and is obsolete. Transport and Parking requirements will drastically change because self driving cars.
- The first reaction of many will be that it is all ‘pie in the sky’, but lets not forget the the smartphone is not yet 10 years old, and Uber was founded 8 years ago. The CSP is a strategy for the next 30+ years, so it has to look into the future.
- I recommend watching Tony Seba’s address at the Nordic Energy Summit, Oslo (2016, in the 1st minute and at around 35 min into video is about transport changes and self driving cars) then it will be clear that we cannot continue with current way of thinking in planning.

Notes for Scenario-HB :

- Just north of the 9 storey apartment building in Cambridge St, Wembley, create a zone with up to 4 stories
- On Grantham St, Ken more Crs, Kirkdale Ave and Peebles St opposite school and church can have higher density up to 3 stories.

Bibliography

Annie Matan & Peter Newman (2017) : ***People Cities : The Life and Legacy of Jan Gehl*** ; Island Press, London.

Berlin, Germany, has some interesting and innovative architectural & planning ideas shown in ***Self-Made City*** in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INdFrd3eVSQ>.

David Gordon, Professor at Queens University, Ontario, Canada:

- ***Patrec perspectives : Estimating the size of Australia's Suburban Population (2015).***
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Helen Brown, et al (2013) : ***Cool Communities : Urban trees, climate and health*** ; Curtin University.

Jeff Speck (2013) : ***Walkable City How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time*** ; North Point Press, New York.

K2 Apartments in Melbourne <http://www.designinc.com.au/projects/k2-apartments>

Peter Newman (2017) : ***Resilient Cities – Reflections on Trump’s America***
<https://vimeo.com/209696584>

Tony Seba (2016) : ***Clean Disruption - Why Energy & Transportation will be Obsolete by 2030*** ; Nordic Energy Summit, Oslo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kxryv2XrnqM>

