21.07  ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Overview of Key Issues - Economic Development

The Key Economic Development Issues for Moonee Valley are:

Employment

The Western Region Employment and Industrial Development Strategy (WREIDS) outlines a strategy for the sustainable economic development and employment growth in Melbourne’s Western Region. The study was commissioned by the Cities of Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham and the (then) Department of Sustainability and Environment. The purpose of the Strategy was to provide an overall economic framework for investment and industry development in the Western Region, and a coordinated approach for future development within the wider context of metropolitan and state policy.

The establishment of a strong local employment sector is vital if Moonee Valley is to encourage a more sustainable local economy. Analysis shows that the municipality currently under-performs in this regard, with a high proportion of its residents working outside Moonee Valley, thereby adding to traffic congestion and emissions levels. If Moonee Valley is to achieve local employment sustainability, it will need to attract significant investment in employment-creating sectors ranging from offices to industrial facilities, retailing, education and health institutions and the community and government sectors.

That said, it is important to recognise the predominance of small business (including home-based business) and the service sector within the municipality. Of the estimated 10,000 businesses registered in Moonee Valley (ABS Business Counts) two-thirds have an annual turnover of less than $200,000.

Key Strategic Sites

In Moonee Valley, where there is a lack of major Greenfield development sites, it is critical that land with major development or redevelopment potential is effectively utilised in order to promote investment and job creation. Council is in the process of finalising a number of activity centre structure plans for key local business and community centres.

At the regional level the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre presents significant opportunity for transformation into a north-western central business centre. Building on existing drivers such as excellent transport linkages, the Australian Taxation Office, key corporate enterprises such as Foxtel and Moonee Valley Racing Club, significant investments by Mirvac and Readings, and the location of core civic infrastructure (library, civic centre & recreation spaces), the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre presents an unique opportunity for the municipality. The centre is well positioned to accommodate regional office developments, retail, community and residential development on sites targeted for urban renewal.

Other activity centres have the potential to be developed into ‘creative’ precincts which add to the cultural, social and economic vibrancy of Moonee Valley. Smaller activity centres located within vibrant retail shopping precincts have potential to develop into economic centres for small or home based businesses. The Airport West Business Centre is an area where underutilized land can be made more productive by attracting new investment.

The economic advantages of the redevelopment of the Essendon Airport site into a large scale business/retail park is a unique economic development opportunity for Moonee Valley. Essendon Fields has the potential to develop up to 500,000m2 of commercial, industrial and retail floorspace and as such presents a major employment generation and investment opportunity for both Moonee Valley and the broader region. Council needs to
work closely and co-operatively with developers to facilitate investment outcomes which are beneficial to the Moonee Valley community.

**Airports**

The City is affected by two major airports – Essendon; and Melbourne International. Melbourne International Airport is acknowledged for its importance including the need to protect its on-going operation. The Melbourne Airport Environments Overlay (MAEO) affects a large part of Avondale Heights and a smaller section of East Keilor. The airport desires a ‘Prescribed Airspace Overlay’ to protect airspace from structures and discharges as well as land uses.

The continued operation of Essendon airport should ensure that the existing amenity and safety of residents and their property is maintained. If Essendon Airport is to be closed, the site should be redeveloped for a range of uses that capitalise on the strategic location of the site. This may include a high quality industrial park, and a major cultural/entertainment facility located adjacent to the Tullamarine Freeway on the western part of the airport with the balance of the site developed to provide a diversity of housing types and public open space.

**Major Institutional Uses**

The city hosts a number of large public and private schools and two of these (Penleigh and Essendon Grammar and Lowther Hall) have prepared Master Plans for long term growth and development. Redevelopment of institutional sites should retain significant environmental or historical features.

Council acknowledges that modern community institutions contribute to the well being of the community as many have a long-term association with the local area and their expansion is generally in response to community needs. The orderly planning of institutional uses will help minimise off site impacts and ensure the safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians, and provide certainty for the institution and the residential area.

Institutional uses also have significant economic benefits of attracting links with many major employers and providing recreational and cultural links with the community. Institutions must be responsive to the local community to attract and retain business, provide employment opportunities and investment.

**21.07-2 Objectives & Strategies – Employment**

**Objective**

- To create a City that is a leading destination for people to live, work, invest and prosper.

**Strategies**

- Attract high value-adding businesses to the main employment nodes such as Airport West Business Precinct, Essendon Fields, Moonee Ponds Activity Centre, Mt Alexander Rd, city fringe locations and local activity centre locations.
- Facilitate the creation of mixed use corridors comprising office, industry, and other uses.

**Objective**
To ensure that commercial development is compatible with the commercial precinct within which it is located, and is sensitive to nearby residential areas.

**Strategies**

- Accommodate office and other commercial development in commercial centres which no longer have a strong retail role.
- Have regard to the impact of commercial uses on adjoining residential areas when considering an application.

### 21.07-3 Objectives & Strategies – Key Strategic Sites

**Objective**

- To facilitate the development of strategic sites across Moonee Valley in a manner which maximises investment and employment opportunities and generates appropriate development outcomes.

**Strategies**

- Promote the Mt Alexander Road corridor as a “spine” of economic activity, and encourage linkages with the CBD fringe.
- Plan for the future development of the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre in conjunction with key stakeholders and landowners.
- Implement Activity Centre Structure plans to ensure development opportunities within these centres are realised.

### 21.07-4 Objectives & Strategies - Airports

**Objective**

- To protect the operations of the existing airports.

**Strategies**

- Protect Melbourne Airport from development that is sensitive to noise.
- Investigate mechanisms to control development within the ‘Prescribed Airspace’ of Melbourne Airport.
- Ensure that Council is involved in all discussions with the State and Federal governments regarding the future of the Essendon Airport site.
- Protect the amenity of people near Essendon Airport by providing appropriate buffers between industrial or residential development.

### 21.07-5 Objectives & Strategies – Institutional Uses

**Objective**
To encourage institutional uses to be compatible with the character of the residential areas in which they are located and to not unreasonably impact on the amenity of the surrounding area.

**Strategies**

- Encourage each school to prepare a masterplan prior to undertaking any major redevelopment or expansion of the school.
- Ensure that the institutions do not significantly impact on the amenity of the local residential area;
- Prevent unnecessary intrusion into adjoining residential areas;
- Maintain student numbers at levels that are compatible with the amenity of the residential area;
- Ensure that any new development has regard to the heritage significance of existing buildings and the existing character of the built form in the area;
- Ensure that any new development provides adequate on-site parking and allows for the safe, secure and easy movement of pedestrians and vehicles and addresses any existing carparking and traffic deficiencies;
- Ensure that plans for redevelopment of the schools address the needs of the schools as well as mitigating any potential detrimental effects on the amenity of the local residential area.

**21.07-6 Implementation – Economic Development**

- Apply *Mixed Use Zone* to areas close to activity centres with potential for complementary residential, commercial and industrial activities.
- Apply *Industrial 1 Zone* to main industrial estates.
- Apply *Business 1 Zone* to principal shopping areas.
- Apply *Business 2 Zone* to commercial areas on the fringes of activity centres.
- Apply *Business 3 Zone* to the service commercial area adjoining Airport West.
- Apply *Business 4 Zone* to peripheral sales areas.
- Apply the *Melbourne Airport Environ Overlay Schedule 2* to Melbourne Airport.

**21.07-7 Further Strategic Work**

- Undertake Retail Strategy Review
- Investigate land between MV Racecourse and Mount Alexander Road

**21.07-8 Reference Documents**

- Economic Development Strategy 2008
- Essendon Airport Master Plan
- Melbourne Airport Master Plan
- Western Region Employment and Industrial Development Strategy
Economic Development Plan