

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

18 SEPTEMBER 2017

12.15 AMENDMENT C188 TO THE MELTON PLANNING SCHEME - ADVERTISING SIGNAGE GUIDELINES

Author: Kate Barclay - Senior Strategic Planner

Presenter: Laura-Jo Mellan - Manager City Design, Strategy & Environment

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the Advertising Signage Design Guidelines and the preparation and exhibition of Amendment C188 to the Melton Planning Scheme to implement the Advertising Signage Design Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. Adopt the Advertising Signage Design Guidelines at **Appendix 1**.
2. Seek Authorisation to prepare Planning Scheme Amendment C188 to the Melton Planning Scheme from the Minister for Planning to implement the Advertising Signage Design Guidelines.
3. Upon receiving Authorisation, prepare and exhibit Planning Scheme Amendment C188 to the Melton Planning Scheme in accordance with Section 19 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.
4. Authorise the General Manager Planning and Development and the Manager City Design, Strategy and Environment to negotiate and resolve any issues that are raised by submitters during the exhibition process prior to the amendment being reported back to Council for referral to a Planning Panel or Adoption of the amendment.

Crs Majdlik/Abboushi.

That the recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

REPORT**1. Executive Summary**

The Advertising Signage Design Guidelines (The Guidelines) (**Appendix 1**) update the Shire of Melton's *Outdoor Advertising Policy and Guidelines (prepared in 2005 and revised in 2010)* and incorporate the *City of Melton Highway Advertising Signage Policy for Residential Subdivisions September 2014*.

The Guidelines apply to all planning permit applications for signage in the municipality.

The draft Guidelines were on consultation for a period of 4 weeks from 10 July to 4 August 2017. The comments received has been collated and informed finalisation of the Guidelines and Application Checklist, and preparation of a Local Policy.

It is proposed to implement the Guidelines through Amendment C188 to the Melton Planning Scheme. The amendment will comprise the following:

- A new objective in the Municipal Strategic Statement at Clause 21.03 Planning Visions and Objectives for Melton;

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- Introduction of a new Local Policy – Advertising Signage at Clause 22.16 of the Melton Planning Scheme; and
- Include the Advertising Signage Design Guidelines as a Reference Document in the Melton Planning Scheme.

This will give the Guidelines statutory weight through a Local Policy and as a Reference Document will ensure Council has a decision making tool to guide planning permit applications for signage. The Local Policy is consistent with State policy and Council's Municipal Strategic Statement to create a strong planning framework to guide advertising signage and improve the image of the municipality. In addition, an Application Checklist will inform and guide applicants about the information required to be submitted with a planning application for a sign.

It is recommended that Council adopt the Guidelines and seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit Planning Scheme Amendment C188 to the Melton Planning Scheme.

2. Background/Issues

The Advertising Signage Design Guidelines (The Guidelines) update the Shire of Melton's *Outdoor Advertising Policy and Guidelines prepared in 2005 and revised in 2010* and incorporate the *City of Melton Highway Advertising Signage Policy for Residential Subdivisions September 2014*.

Advertising signs are important to identify, communicate and market businesses, institutions and buildings across the municipality.

Advertising signs have a significant impact on the public realm and the quality of the streetscape and the building with which they are visually associated. Well integrated signage in appropriate locations can add colour, vibrancy and interest to an area. A proliferation of signs and poorly designed and located signs can significantly detract from the attractiveness and amenity of the City's urban and rural environments and gateways, and reduce the effectiveness of signs.

It is considered necessary to plan for the management (design, size and location) of advertising signage in the built environment to balance the expectations of business and economic development with that of the broader community.

The current policy was adopted in 2005 however, was not implemented in the Melton Planning Scheme. As such, it is a guideline only and bears no statutory weight in matters considered by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). Further, due to the rapid growth and associated evolving character and context of newly developing areas of the municipality, directions for developing urban contexts are not adequately addressed in the current Policy.

Updating the policy and implementing through an Amendment to the Melton Planning Scheme will:

- Deliver Design Guidelines and a Local Policy to guide decision making with regard to advertising signage across the municipality.
- Achieve a strategic action identified in the proposed Council Municipal Strategy Statement (Municipal Strategic Statement) Review 2017 therefore aligning the Municipal Strategic Statement with the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021.

The Guidelines also provide an Application Checklist to guide applicants about the information required to be submitted with a planning application for a sign. This will improve the standard of applications being received by Council and reduce the need to request further information from an applicant helping to streamline the process.

Amendment C188

The Amendment proposes to introduce a new Local Policy – Advertising Signage Policy - at Clause 22.16 of the Melton Planning Scheme, include the *City of Melton Advertising Signage Design Guidelines* as a Reference Document, and add a new objective in the Municipal Strategic Statement at Clause 21.03 Planning Visions and Objectives for Melton.

- The Advertising Signage Design Guidelines are included at **Appendix 1** to this report.
- The revised draft Municipal Strategic Statement Clause 21.03 is included at **Appendix 2** to this report.
- The draft Advertising Signage Local Policy is included at **Appendix 3** to this report.

These policy documents are subject to change during the planning scheme amendment process but will still implement the intent and requirements of the Guidelines.

Strategic Assessment

Ministerial Direction No 11 requires amendments to be assessed against a number of criteria. This strategic assessment has been undertaken and it is considered that the amendment adequately addresses the guidelines for the reasons outlined below.

The Amendment will provide the Melton City Council and the community with an up to date Local Policy and Design Guidelines so they are consistent with the State Planning Policy Framework. The amendment implements the following objectives as set out in Section 4(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the *Transport Integration Act 2010* by introducing an up to date planning scheme that is consistent with state policy and provides clear strategic directions for development ('signage') within the municipality.

The Amendment will deliver positive environmental, social and economic outcomes by addressing a gap in the current Melton Planning Scheme relating to advertising signage and integrating the key objectives and design guidelines developed as part of on-going strategic work undertaken by Council.

The project is one of numerous recent strategic planning projects, including the Municipal Strategic Statement Review and Industrial Design Guidelines that Council has undertaken to improve the quality of built form outcomes and overall image of the municipality by strengthening Council's planning policy framework.

The proposed revised Melton Municipal Strategic Statement has identified and includes direction and key actions relating to the Outdoor Advertising Signage Policy, including:

Clause 21.06-1 Local Character and Sense of Place / Further Strategic Work:

Update the Shire of Melton Outdoor Advertising Policy and Guidelines prepared in 2005 and revised in 2010 and undertake a planning scheme amendment to introduce an Advertising Signage Policy in to the Melton Planning Scheme.

Overall, the Amendment will ensure that the Melton Planning Scheme provides the framework to achieve positive environmental social and economic development outcomes within the municipality. The Amendment strengthens local planning policy in respect to advertising signage by ensuring signage is appropriately designed, sited and of a scale that complements and enhances the differing environment and land use contexts across the municipality.

3. Council and Wellbeing Plan Reference and Policy Reference

The Melton City Council 2017-2021 Council and Wellbeing Plan references:

3. A well planned and built City: A City with a clear vision to manage growth in a sustainable and accessible way
 - 3.1 *A City that strategically plans for growth and development.*

4. Financial Considerations

Council officer time and resources will be involved in the preparation, exhibition, and adoption of the amendment which may include a Panel Hearing and statutory costs associated with the planning scheme amendment will be funded within Councils recurrent budget. The Advertising Signage Design Guidelines were prepared in-house and only involved officer time.

5. Consultation/Public Submissions

The draft Advertising Signage Design Guidelines were on public consultation for a period of 4 weeks from Monday 10 July 2017 to Friday, 4 August 2017. A total of six (6) submissions were received by way of an online survey. No further written submissions were received by Council.

A summary of feedback is provided below:

- There needs to be guidance on 'pad' sites that generally seek approval for a suite of signage on a site not just for one sign. Pad sites include such things as freestanding service station, retail premises and medical centres that are located on prominent corner sites and/or main roads.
- Of the six survey respondents, five were female and one male. All were between the ages of 19 and 49. Only one survey respondent had used the *Shire of Melton Outdoor Advertising Policy and Guidelines 2005 (revised in 2010)* and none had used *Council's Highway Advertising Signage Policy for Residential Subdivisions 2014*.
- There was general agreement (5 of 6 survey respondents) that business signage should be limited for each site and that advertising signage guidelines are required to avoid a proliferation of signage throughout the municipality.
- Signage listed as a good example (location, size, design) in the municipality includes Woodgrove, IGA and some Display Homes.
- Signage considered as a poor example (location, size, design) include:
 - High Street, Melton (too cluttered);
 - Lack of signage at key entry points to Melton;
 - Coburns Road and a lack of signage to identify shopping centre name;
 - Entrance to Kurunjang off Melton/Gisborne Road.
 - Van parked at Leakes and Beattys Roads.
 - More signs needed to identify residential areas including Melton West, Kurunjang, Brookfield, Westlake, Melton South & Melton Central District Needs New & Attractive Ones (with the words: 'Melton City Council') in brackets
 - None.
- Other comments included:
 - The guidelines need to incorporate the *Council's Highway Advertising Signage Policy for Residential Subdivisions 2014* as currently there is no statutory weight to the existing policy.
 - Melton City Council needs to update signage.
 - The Guidelines represent needlessly restrictive regulations that encourage NIMBY behaviour in a region that needs to promote economic development.

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As part of the project, consultation with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) occurred prior to consultation and will continue to occur prior to the amendment being formally exhibited and to internal Melton City Council Officers for review and comment. Responses were received from DELWP and Council's Planning Services team.

Amendment C188 will be exhibited as part of the formal planning scheme amendment process. This includes a statutory exhibition period under *the Planning & Environment Act 1987*, which allows any person to make a submission. The amendment will be exhibited for a four week period.

Other forms of notification in addition to the statutory required methods will be undertaken during the exhibition period and will include; website updates and social media posts.

6. Risk Analysis

Should Council continue to operate with an outdated Policy that has adopted status but has not been given statutory weight in the Melton Planning Scheme, applications for advertising signage will be ad hoc and arbitrary and if challenged, dependent on VCAT determination.

In addition, if the amendment to introduce a Local Policy does not proceed, it will result in Council failing to achieve the recommendations of the existing Municipal Strategic Statement. The proposed 2017 Municipal Strategic Statement recently endorsed by Council at ordinary meeting 27 July 2017 that identified/s further strategic work to undertake the Outdoor Advertising Guidelines and Policy review and to implement a local policy.

7. Options

Council can resolve to either:

- a. Adopt the Advertising Signage Guidelines and seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit Planning Scheme Amendment C188 to the Melton Planning Scheme in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and authorise the General Manager of Planning & Development or Manager City Design, Strategy & Environment to negotiate and resolve any objections prior to the amendment being reported back to Council.
- b. Not adopt the Advertising Signage Guidelines or proceed with the amendment.

LIST OF APPENDICES

1. Advertising Signage Design Guidelines - September 2017
2. Draft MSS Clause 21.03 - undated
3. Draft Advertising Signage Local Policy - undated