

REPORT



# Heidelberg West Urban Design Framework

*Draft Engagement Report*

Prepared for Banyule City Council, May 2017

**capire**

## **Privacy**

Capire Consulting Group and any person(s) acting on our behalf is committed to protecting privacy and personally identifiable information by meeting our responsibilities under the Victorian Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles 2014 as well as relevant industry codes of ethics and conduct.

For the purpose of program delivery, and on behalf of our clients, we collect personal information from individuals, such as e-mail addresses, contact details, demographic data and program feedback to enable us to facilitate participation in consultation activities. We follow a strict procedure for the collection, use, disclosure, storage and destruction of personal information. Any information we collect is stored securely on our server for the duration of the program and only disclosed to our client or the program team. Written notes from consultation activities are manually transferred to our server and disposed of securely.

Comments recorded during any consultation activities are faithfully transcribed however not attributed to individuals. Diligence is taken to ensure that any comments or sensitive information does not become personally identifiable in our reporting, or at any stage of the program.

Capire operates an in-office server with security measures that include, but are not limited to, password protected access, restrictions to sensitive data and the encrypted transfer of data.

For more information about the way we collect information, how we use, store and disclose information as well as our complaints procedure, please see [www.capire.com.au](http://www.capire.com.au) or telephone (03) 9285 9000.

## **Consultation**

Unless otherwise stated, all feedback documented by Capire Consulting Group and any person(s) acting on our behalf is written and/or recorded during our program/consultation activities.

Capire staff and associates take great care while transcribing participant feedback but unfortunately cannot guarantee the accuracy of all notes. We are however confident that we capture the full range of ideas, concerns and views expressed during our consultation activities.

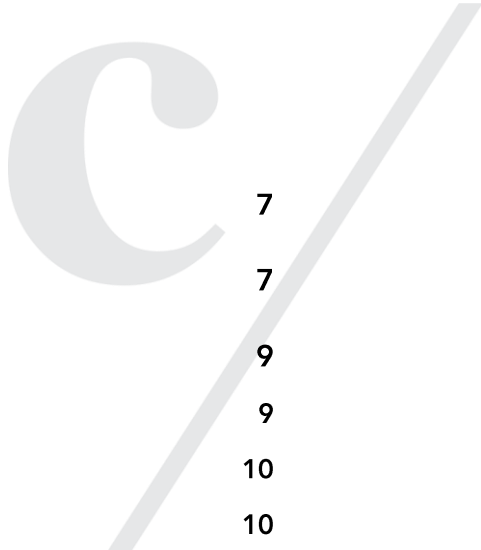
Unless otherwise noted, the views expressed in our work represent those of the participants and not necessarily those of our consultants or our clients.

© Capire Consulting Group Pty Ltd.

This document belongs to and will remain the property of Capire Consulting Group Pty Ltd.

All content is subject to copyright and may not be reproduced in any form without express written consent of Capire Consulting Group Pty Ltd.

Authorisation can be obtained via email to [info@capire.com.au](mailto:info@capire.com.au) or in writing to: Capire Consulting Group, 96 Pelham Street Carlton VIC Australia 3053.



<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2 Engagement approach</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Engagement objectives	9
2.2 Negotiables and non-negotiables	10
2.3 Limitations of engagement	10
<b>3 Engagement activities</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1 Shaping Banyule project page	12
3.2 Pop-ups	13
3.3 Drop-in session	13
<b>4 Engagement findings</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Positive and negative aspects of Heidelberg West	15
4.2 Directions for future change in Heidelberg West	18
4.2.1 New residential development	18
4.2.2 Services, facilities and community spaces	19
4.2.3 Parks and public spaces	20
4.2.4 Transport and parking	21
4.3 Key points for the project team	22
<b>5 Next Steps</b>	<b>22</b>



# Executive summary

David Lock Associates (DLA) engaged Capire Consulting Group (Capire) to assist them in developing and delivering stakeholder engagement for the Banyule City Council Heidelberg West Urban Design Framework.

The objective of the Heidelberg West Urban Design Framework (UDF) is to create a set of principles that will guide urban development in Heidelberg West for the next 20 years. The UDF will define a new future neighbourhood character for the area based on aspects of the existing character, including heritage and street trees, and the community's vision.

Capire designed a four-stage approach for engagement delivery. This report summaries the engagement activities of Stage Three. These activities took place in April and May 2017 and provided online, pop-up and drop-in engagement opportunities.

Key community feedback from the engagement activities is:

- to ensure Heidelberg West is a safe place
- to increase the number of trees and green spaces in Heidelberg West
- that future building heights must be in line with the existing Heidelberg West character
- to create guidelines to ensure future residential development enhances community spirit
- to consider the traffic and parking impacts of new residential development.

The findings outlined in this report will be used by DLA to inform the development of the draft UDF. Once the draft UDF is approved by Council, it will be placed on public exhibition. This will provide further opportunity for community members to give feedback on the draft plan before a final version is formally adopted by Council in the form of a planning amendment.

## 1 Introduction

David Lock Associates (DLA) engaged Capire Consulting Group (Capire) to assist them in developing and delivering stakeholder engagement for the Banyule City Council Heidelberg West Urban Design Framework.

The objective of the Heidelberg West Urban Design Framework (UDF) is to create a set of principles that will guide urban development in Heidelberg West for the next 20 years. These principles will help Council make planning decisions, create certainty for developers, and

ensure that community values about the built environment are upheld. Implementation of the UDF will encourage varying housing densities and spark urban regeneration and revitalisation in Heidelberg West in specific areas that have been identified for change.

The UDF will define a new future neighbourhood character that will take cues from the current character, including heritage and street trees. Banyule City Council requires that development of the plan also includes the community's vision for the area.

Capire designed a four-stage approach for engagement delivery. This report summaries the engagement activities of stage Three which took place in April and May 2017.

The findings outlined in this report will inform the development of the draft UDF. Following approval from Council, the draft plan will be placed on public exhibition. The community will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft plan prior to a final version being formally adopted by Council in the form of a planning amendment.

## 2 Engagement approach

Engagement to inform the development of the Heidelberg West UDF was delivered through four project stages.

The approach delivered on the engagement objectives through building the capacity of the community and stakeholders to understand the role of the UDF, providing multiple opportunities to participate in the engagement process, and demonstrating how feedback will inform the final UDF.

The engagement approach is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Engagement approach

PROJECT STAGE	ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVE	ENGAGEMENT APPROACH
1. Background and Analysis	<i>Understand</i>	Prepare draft engagement strategy Review relevant consultation findings
2. Creating the Draft UDF	<i>Inform and educate</i>	Prepare communication collateral Prepare and launch online engagement
3. Preparing Final Draft UDF	<i>Understand</i> <i>Seek feedback</i>	Online engagement Community pop-up sessions Community drop-in session Stakeholder Workshop Prepare Engagement Findings Report
4. Planning Scheme Amendment	<i>Ownership</i>	Public exhibition of UDF Online engagement Face to face opportunities Submission process

### 2.1 Engagement objectives

The objectives of the engagement program are:

1. to **understand** the community's views regarding liveability and their aspirations for the future of Heidelberg West to inform the UDF development
2. to **inform** the community about the Heidelberg West UDF project and **opportunities for their participation**
3. to **educate** the community about the purpose of the UDF, and the role that Council and the community play in creating sustainable development in Heidelberg West
4. **seek feedback** on the Draft UDF to inform its finalisation
5. **create ownership** of the UDF whereby community involvement informs its development.

## 2.2 Negotiables and non-negotiables

Negotiables and non-negotiables of the project were identified, agreed and clearly communicated to the stakeholders at the earliest possible stage to ensure they understood how their contributions could influence decisions. Described below are the negotiables and non-negotiables relating to the Heidelberg West UDF project.

### **Negotiable:**

- identifying new areas for urban renewal within Heidelberg West
- providing feedback on Council identified areas of urban renewal within Heidelberg West

### **Non-negotiable:**

- local government legislative responsibilities
- state government policy, mandates and influence.

## 2.3 Limitations of engagement

There were limitations associated with the delivery and reporting of the engagement, as acknowledged below:

- Some people may have participated in multiple engagement activities or participated multiple times.
- The information in this report does not necessarily reflect the views of a representative sample of the community. People who completed the online activity and visited the drop-in session self-selected to participate.
- Participation in the pop-up sessions may have been impacted by the cold/wet weather, as well as the number of closed shops in each location during the pop-up times.



- Attendance at the drop-in session may have been impacted by the cold/wet weather, or because people chose to attend community events on the same day.
- It was often hard for participants to imagine any future change, despite images being provided to inspire their thinking.
- Some participants raised points that were not related to the negotiable elements of the engagement. These have been recorded, however may be out of scope for consideration by Council.
- The report presents the key points of discussion and includes a broad range of feedback, concerns and ideas expressed by participants. It provides an overview of participant sentiment but does not report on the sentiment of individual participants.
- The report has been written to acknowledge participant perceptions, concerns and ideas. In some cases, comments have been paraphrased and quotes have been used to illustrate general community sentiment.
- The report presents findings from stages one to three of engagement. There will be further opportunities for community members and key stakeholders to provide feedback on the Heidelberg West UDF before it is adopted by Council.

## 3 Engagement activities

A range of engagement activities were undertaken to inform development of the draft Heidelberg West UDF. These included online, pop-up and drop-in engagement opportunities. Details of these activities are outlined in the following section.

### 3.1 Shaping Banyule project page

Capire worked with Council to design a project page to support online engagement for the Heidelberg West UDF project. The project page was included in the *Shaping Banyule* online engagement hub.

The key features of the page were:

- project description and background information
- project timeline and key dates
- document library
- opportunity to engage via digital mapping tool.

Community members were asked to drop a marker on the map to tell the project team:

- where they thought more housing could go
- what areas should be protected from more residential development
- where higher residential buildings could be located.

The project page was visited by 256 people and 20 people left markers on the map.

## 3.2 Pop-ups

Pop-up sessions were held in three key Heidelberg West locations, as shown in Table 1. During these sessions, three project team members (one Council, one DLA, one Capire) conducted short interviews with community members on the street. The objectives of the pop-up sessions were to increase understanding of local values and aspirations for the area, promote the opportunity to engage in greater depth online and at the drop-in session, and to create community awareness of the UDF project.

Interviewers used iPads that contained a short online survey and an online mapping tool to record feedback from community members. The questions asked in the online survey were:

- What do you like about the residential areas of Heidelberg West?
- What don't you like about the residential areas of Heidelberg West?
- How could the residential areas of Heidelberg West be improved?
- What type of residential development would you like to see in Heidelberg West 20 years from now?

*Table 1: Details of pop-up sessions*

Pop-up session	Details	Participants
Pop-up session one	The Mall Friday 21 April 2017 1-3pm	25
Pop-up session two	Olympic Village & Malahang Reserve Saturday 29 April 2017 9.30 – 12.30pm	16

## 3.3 Drop-in session

A four-hour drop in session was held in the Mall on Saturday 6 May 2017. The session provided an opportunity for participants to learn about the project and the areas identified as possible locations for change. It also provided a chance for participants to talk to the project team about development of the UDF, ask questions and provide feedback.

The drop-in session was promoted online, in Banyule Council offices and through an email sent by Council to Heidelberg West stakeholder groups. Details of the location and number of participants at the drop-in session is provided in Table 2.

*Table 2: Details of drop-in session*

	Details	Participants
Drop-in session	Shop 48, The Mall Saturday 6 May 2017 10am – 2pm	30

## 4 Engagement findings

This section provides a summary of community feedback and ideas from all engagement activities.

Community members were asked what they like and dislike about Heidelberg West to gain an understanding of their overall opinion about the character of the neighbourhood.

Community members were then asked to provide ideas about future improvements and future change in Heidelberg West over the next 20 years.

### 4.1 Positive and negative aspects of Heidelberg West

#### **Community**

##### *Positive*

Community members consistently said that the people living in Heidelberg West were the reason that they loved living in the area.

Many people mentioned the words 'community hub,' 'community feel' and 'community spirit,' and felt a real connection to their neighbours and the people they meet in public spaces. The positive atmosphere of the neighbourhood was also mentioned many times, as were the 'diversity' and 'friendliness'.

Some people felt that safety was something that had improved greatly over the last 20 years. Others said that they always felt safe and that they enjoyed the quiet and peacefulness of the area.

##### *Negative*

Some community members felt differently about safety and stated that crime and anti-social behaviour in the area makes them feel unsafe at night time. Several people specifically mentioned the lack of lighting on residential streets as a key issue.

#### **Parks, green spaces and trees**

##### *Positive*

The parks and green spaces of Heidelberg West were frequently cited as key positive aspects of the neighbourhood. Malahang Reserve was considered by several community members as a great meeting place for families and young people. The play equipment, skate park and fitness equipment were highly valued.

Several community members also liked the park at Olympic Village, noting that the recently installed fence has made it a much safer place for children. There were also several mentions

of the green spaces along the creek, the 'beautiful native trees' and indigenous flora and fauna.

#### *Negative*

Although existing trees were viewed as a positive, some community members felt that these trees were old and presented a danger of falling branches. Several people felt that there weren't enough trees in Heidelberg West and suggested that more be planted to make the area more like nearby suburbs such as Macleod and Ivanhoe. It was also suggested that there wasn't enough colourful flowering vegetation in Heidelberg West.

Several community members felt that the safety of parks at night time needs to be improved.

### **Shops and facilities**

#### *Positive*

Most community members felt that the shops and facilities in and around Heidelberg West were a large drawcard for the area. Many people cherished the Mall as a great community meeting place with great local shops and food stores. Several people specifically mentioned the uniqueness of the Mall and its 'kitsch vibes'.

Other community members discussed the value of being located nearby facilities including the hospital and shopping centres such as Northland. Some people also thought that sporting facilities, such as the soccer fields, were a great asset in Heidelberg West.

Non-residents of Heidelberg West stated that the shops and facilities were the main reason they visited the area.

#### *Negative*

Several people felt that the shops in Heidelberg West need to be upgraded so that they are more 'modern' and less 'run-down'. Community members also cited the numerous empty shops in both Olympic Village and the Mall as a large concern.

### **Connectivity**

#### *Positive*

Several community members felt that connectivity was a great aspect of Heidelberg West. People mentioned the well-connected bus routes, the bicycle trails along the creek as well as the walkability of the area. Several people also said that the availability of parking in Heidelberg West was good.

#### *Negative*

Many community members said that traffic congestion, parking issues and road safety were large negatives in Heidelberg West. Parking was a large concern, with several community members mentioning that cars are parking in inappropriate areas including road verges and empty lots (e.g. Elliot St and Waterdale Rd). There was a belief that new apartment developments in the area had inadequate parking spaces and were adding to the issue.

There were several mentions of unsafe driving on residential streets, including on Davidson St, Harrison St, and Oriel Rd.

### **Existing buildings**

#### *Positive*

Many community members appreciated that existing residential development in Heidelberg West was predominantly one and two storeys. They felt that development of this height was well suited to the character of the area. Many people also liked the private outdoor space that this type of development provides.

#### *Negative*

There were many comments from community members about the poor quality of housing and other buildings in Heidelberg West. Most of the community members felt that the many run-down buildings should be upgraded to improve the overall image of the area. There was also concern that new multi-storey developments were of poor design quality, and were not in keeping with the character and aesthetic of the area.

## 4.2 Directions for future change in Heidelberg West

Community members suggested many ideas to improve Heidelberg West and contributed comments on the direction that residential development in the area should take over the next 20 years. Ideas, comments and feedback have been summarised below under the key themes of:

- new residential development
- services, facilities and community spaces
- parks and public spaces
- transport and parking.

### 4.2.1 New residential development

#### **Height and density**

Community members provided mixed opinions on the levels and type of future development in Heidelberg West.

Some people thought that increased development would be beneficial, particularly the redevelopment of areas where there is older, run down housing. Many people thought that it made sense for growth and change to occur alongside major roads such as Bell Street. For example, several people mentioned that there was wasted space located near the Bardia Street flats that could be used for more housing.

Although supportive of the overall change, some people expressed concern about the process of change i.e. the visual impact of tall buildings next to one storey buildings yet to be redeveloped. Others suggested that measures be put in place so that vacant sites are not subject to vandalism.

Many community members had concerns about encouraging higher development. Some people felt that there were already too many apartments and town houses in the area, and that they were changing the character of the neighbourhood. The main concerns about higher and denser buildings were; overlooking, overshadowing and the adverse impacts of increased numbers of residents.

There was also concern that the changing aesthetic of the streetscape would change the 'sense of place' of the area. For example, one resident noted that 'increasing heights around Liberty Street would change the feel of the street dramatically'.

Several community members didn't support higher density housing because of concern it may inflate the price of properties in Heidelberg West. Others suggested that density rather than height be increase by allowing for subdivision and smaller backyards.



**Design and building regulations**

Many community members advocated for increased design and building regulations for new residential development. Environmental regulations such as the requirement that new housing follows solar passive design principles, has high energy performance ratings and low water usage were suggested several times. It was also suggested that developers are held accountable for offsite elements including stormwater and waste management.

Other community members mentioned that it was important to carefully consider how new developments will 'give back' to future residents and the existing community. It was suggested that developers should have to contribute either physically or financially to new community or outdoor spaces. Some people suggested that regulations should stipulate increased amounts of shared spaces, community spaces, vegetable gardens and other socially responsible elements in new developments.

Several people also suggested that development overlays be put in place to ensure that Heidelberg West is not 'covered in badly designed apartments' and that a consistent street character is maintained.

**Diversity of housing types**

Most community members felt that Heidelberg West should be able to offer residents diverse housing options in the future. There were many varied suggestions on how this could be achieved including:

- explore land trust options for housing
- increase public housing so that existing residents can remain in the area
- enable social/co-housing (which helps create sustainable and friendly neighbourhoods e.g. Murundaka and Port Phillip)
- consider using 'airspace' by building above existing council car parks
- provide aged friendly housing (e.g. without backyards to maintain)
- provide family friendly housing
- diversity of building type.

**4.2.2 Services, facilities and community spaces****Services and facilities**

A concern of many people was that higher density residential development will put increased pressure on existing services. Many community members expressed that they wanted more shops, cafes and schools. There was acknowledgement that there are already great sporting facilities in the area, however it was felt that these need upgrades, especially as more people move into the area.

Community members wanted to know the potential yield of future development and whether services would be increased. They felt that the liveability of the suburb for new and existing residents should be enhanced. Echoing the sentiment of many, one community member stated, "I also feel that developers have a responsibility to the community when they put more residents onto a smaller block, as they are putting greater pressure on community resources like parks, libraries, public transport".

### **Community spaces**

Many people expressed the need for more community events, family activities and increased community spaces. Several community members expressed the need to consider the community development aspect of adding more people, particularly in terms of community connections. It was suggested that well connected communities are safer communities.

Many community members wanted to ensure that new residential development would not destroy the current friendliness of the area. A few people specifically mentioned the appreciation they have for close relationships within their neighbourhoods, the ability to chat with people in the street and for kids to play in each other's backyards. Many people want to ensure that the future built environment will enable these sorts of relationships to continue. Numerous community members suggested that communal spaces in apartment buildings could be one way of increasing community connections in future higher density living environments.

Some community members felt that more programs and activities to bring people from different cultures together would help build connections.

## **4.2.3 Parks and public spaces**

### **Parks and public spaces**

There were numerous suggestions and comments made by community members in regards to parks and public spaces. Many community members wanted more parks, more trees and green zones around houses and in the public realm. People felt that currently there is not enough green space, and advocated for more large trees. Some suggested that abundant and well maintained trees would provide cool areas in the street and help mitigate against climate change impacts.

Some community members expressed concern about kids growing up without backyards and space to run around if high density development goes ahead. They suggested more play spaces for children and that more open space within future developments to take the pressure off local parks.

Other community members felt that there should be a focus on improving street character. Some people suggested more lighting in residential streets and parks to increase passive surveillance at night time. Others felt that future developments along the creek should 'face

the creek' and not have back fencing. There were also several suggestions that streets and other public spaces should have covered places to sit and gather, especially for older people.

## 4.2.4 Transport and parking

### **Traffic management, parking and road safety**

Community members expressed numerous concerns about traffic management and road safety, and were worried that increased development would worsen these issues.

Some people suggested that specific areas should be addressed in the future, including:

- regulate the use of monkey/electric bikes in parks
- address congestion on Tarakan, Bell and Tobruk streets
- make some streets one way e.g. Altona Street to allow for drop off and pick up and streets around the Olympic Village shops
- provide more parking around medical services.

Many community members felt that the existing streets are too narrow to accommodate the increased traffic from higher density residential development. Some suggested that parking for new developments must be provided on site. Others felt that new developments should have reduced car parking obligations and that the use of public transport should be encouraged.

### **Public and active transport**

Community members acknowledged that public transport would be important for future and existing residents in the area. They suggested the provision of more bus stops and increased bus services to cater for the growing number of people.

Many community members felt it was important to link medium density housing to facilities. Some suggested that walkability and cyclability are considered in all new development applications. Other people proposed that all new residential developments should include space for bicycle parking, and that more bicycle racks should be available in public spaces.

## 4.3 Key points for the project team

The following key points should be considered by the project team when they develop the draft Heidelberg West UDF:

- **Ensure Heidelberg West is a safe place.**  
Safety was an important issue for community members. Most people want to see improvements in the safety of parks and streets, especially at night time.
- **Increase the number of trees and green spaces in Heidelberg West.**  
Community members love their street trees and green spaces and want to see more of these in the future.
- **Future building heights must be in line with the existing Heidelberg West character.**  
Many community members are concerned about the idea of allowing increased building heights in Heidelberg West. Although some people felt that the proposed areas for high levels of change were appropriate, they emphasised the need to consider the sunlight, overlooking and aesthetic impacts of new development.
- **Create guidelines to ensure future residential development enhances community spirit.**  
Many community members value the existing sense of community in Heidelberg West. They want to ensure that this spirit is enhanced by any future residential development in the area.
- **Consider the traffic and parking impacts of new residential development.**  
Most community members felt that future residential development will worsen traffic congestion and add to the parking issues in Heidelberg West. Community members asked that these issues be addressed by the UDF.

## 5 Next Steps

- The project team will use the information provided in this report to inform the development of the draft Heidelberg West UDF.
- Council will consider the draft UDF before public exhibition of the framework in July 2017.
- There will be further opportunities for community members to provide feedback on the Heidelberg West UDF during the public exhibition period.