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## **MEG Submission re Reformed Zones**

### **Introduction**

This is a preliminary submission as MEG will not be available in October and so we are unable to attend the Information Sessions which, perhaps, would give us much more information than we have at the moment.

MEG has supported the essence of State Government's proposal for the Reformed Residential Zones. In particular we support the Minister's statements that there will be

... **no population targets...no housing targets....no density targets.**

(The figures Council have at the moment are predictions not targets.)

As a consequence municipalities are not obliged to hand over large slabs of areas to allow 'willy nilly' development. Stonnington has done this already with Chapel Vision and the Forrest Hill Precinct and we are rapidly becoming known as a "developer's picnic ground." We don't believe that there will be much change in this perception after viewing the map of the proposed zones. We are devastated to note that Stonnington has not included more areas in the Neighbourhood Zone and we will discuss that in more detail in this submission.

We would have liked to have seen the Neighbourhood Precinct Statements used as reference documents when deciding on areas for the zones. When we compare the Precincts Map with the Zones Map we feel 'deprived.' The Precincts Map gives us a warm, cosy feeling and the Zones Map makes us feel very wary. We believe that the statements re the Precincts provide strategic justification for the application of the new zones but these statements do not seem to have been applied when deciding on the zones. The precinct statements **explain** the Neighbourhood Character that we seek to protect and improve and MEG proposes that the Neighbourhood Character Policy should be more closely linked with the Zones and that Council takes this statement into account when it makes revisions of the 'zones' mapping.

### **Neighbourhood Zone**

As far as groups like MEG are concerned this is the most desirable zone. (Developers tend not to join groups such as ours!)

It's the area where the intention is to allow for **limited growth** with a mandatory height limit of 8m.

It concerns us that some areas with Heritage Overlays are not in the Neighbourhood Zone. We believe that if, as we have heard, a street (or more than one street) in the overlay has one or two '60s blocks of flats then the entire overlay has been placed in a General Residential Zone. It is our view that the streets that do not fit the criteria for the overlay

either shouldn't be in the overlay at all or they should be in a General Residential Zone with the rest of the H.O. in the Neighbourhood Zone.

We understand that the Heritage Overlays are protected to some extent by Local Policy (particularly with regard to the façade) but to be in the Neighbourhood Zone would give greater protection to the valued heritage areas **and** to areas that are deemed to have a high significance of Neighbourhood Character. The Heritage Policy does not prevent the ubiquitous "box on the back" which is slowly but surely changing the whole character of some Heritage areas. The Neighbourhood Zone could do that with ResCode variations.

Some of our members have told us (at this early stage of the process) that they are not sure of the location of all the Heritage Overlays and they felt that it would have assisted residents if the H.O.s had been indicated on the "zones" map. We suggest that Council provide these details at the Information sessions.

It would be useful also to provide the information about the NCOs...

those that are completed,  
those that are in the process of being implemented .....and  
those that are flagged.

These areas too should be in the Neighbourhood Zone.....and **may** be..... but we do not know where they all are.

We have heard several comments about the apparently small percentage of Stonnington being in the desirable Neighbourhood Zone and Stonnington has been compared unfavourably with Glen Eira and Borondarra. As Council is aware both those municipalities have approximately 80% in the Neighbourhood Zone. We have explained to residents about the "Inner Melbourne" component of Stonnington and that we are in the only municipality in Melbourne with both "inner Melbourne" and "middle suburbs" and as such we cannot hope to reach the 80% Neighbourhood Zone that they have but we can certainly improve on the percentage that we have at the moment.

The map indicates that about 36% of Stonnington is in the Neighbourhood Zone. MEG believes that we should "go for the maximum" and be prepared to modify it to some extent if the Minister refuses to tick it off.

Within the all-important Neighbourhood Zone we think we could have some Rescode variations.

For example Each dwelling to be required to have:-

At least one canopy tree.  
Site coverage of 50%.  
Permeability....65 % of impermeable surface  
Private Open Space....50sq.m.

It is not clear to us exactly why certain areas have a different designation within the Neighbourhood Residential Zone...i.e. those coloured blue with diagonal white stripes. We're aware that there will be a proposed height variation in those areas but we are not aware of the reason (nor the need) for this nor do we know what height variation is proposed.

### **General Residential Zone**

These are the areas that are of greatest risk to the retention of the prescribed Neighbourhood Character as set out in the Precinct Statements. With a mandatory height

of 9m we foresee a proliferation of the multi-dwelling developments that have already there cut a swathe through the 'Garden Precincts' listed in the Neighbourhood Character Policy (C175).....and far too much of the municipality is given over to this Zone. Council could limit this by mandating "hip roofs" as a ResCode variation and the other variations we have listed above.

We believe that Council must move some of these areas into the Neighbourhood Residential Zone...such as all Heritage Overlays, all NCOs and the other streets that have not yet been the target of developers. We recognize that some areas must be in this zone because there is a legislative expectation for this BUT there is too great an area given to potential 'destruction.'

Some say<"there's not much difference between the Neighbourhood Zone and the General Residential Zone. MEG submits that there is sufficient difference to justify certain areas being taken out of GRZ and placed in NRZ.

The elements that residents see as the greatest threats are:-

- Boundary to boundary development
- High front fences
- McMansions
- Replacement of backyards (See MEG's submission re C175)
- Removal of mature trees.
- Replacement of soft landscaping with hard surfaces.
- Bulky buildings that dominate the street and have no softening features.
- Box-like contemporary designs that don't "fit in."
- Basements that cover a larger area than the on-ground building thus preventing the planting of canopy trees.

Variations to ResCode could deal with most of these. We understand that we may not be permitted to have these variations but we'll never know if we don't try. We urge Council to 'give it a go.'

### **Residential Growth Zone**

We are aware that we are required to include a percentage of the municipality in this zone and the 8% that Council proposes sounds reasonable. However, as Chapel Vision and the Forrest Hill Precinct are in a Commercial Zone, we consider that the horrendous amount of growth (residential) allowed in that area as well as in the other areas dubbed Commercial should be included in the percentage given over to **growth**.

Re Cabrini Hospital and the RGZ to the west of Cabrini in Wattletree Rd. we point out that 3 sites at 185-189 Wattletree Rd. are already a carpark and a similar ground level carpark is proposed for 191-193 Wattletree. One could hardly call this '**growth**.' With this unfortunate precedent established having all the residential area from Isabella St. to Jordan St. designated RGZ there is the potential for this residential area to be systematically destroyed by commercial activities. We believe this area should be re-zoned GRZ.

Ann Reid (MEG Convenor)