21.02 OVERVIEW

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21.02-1 Local and regional context

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The City of Stonnington is approximately 3 kilometres southeast of the Melbourne Central Business District. It covers an area of 25.62 square kilometres, running east from Punt Road to Warrigal Road and from north to south between the Yarra River and Gardiners Creek to Dandenong Road. The City is primarily a residential area, with some commercial, industrial, office and institutional land uses. It is well known for its shopping and lifestyle precincts, its parks and gardens, leafy streets and historical architecture.

Stonnington's well-known and attractive boulevards (including Alexandra Avenue and Dandenong Road) define and edge the City. The northern edge is reinforced by the Yarra River and Gardiners Creek. Other key landmark features (the Shrine of Remembrance and Botanic Gardens) are just outside Stonnington's western boundary.

The well-defined boundaries of the City have meant that the City has evolved with a distinct character and identity. Stonnington developed around a grid of arterial roads with commercial use focused on the main roads and housing located mainly inside the grid. Stonnington's mix of population and its competitive advantages of location, accessibility, retailing and entertainment attract high levels of development investment. In recent years the City has been the focus of intensive redevelopment pressures, including large scale retail and office developments, high rise apartments, units and the ever enlarging footprint of the single dwelling.

There is a comprehensive network of large and small activity centres across the City, all having access to some form of public transport and each with their own identity. Stonnington's activity centres range from clusters of local shops to one of Australia's most famous shopping strips, Chapel Street, and the nation's largest stand alone shopping centre, Chadstone. These major centres serve large regional catchments well beyond the City and are the focus of a large number of entertainment uses. Large centres just outside the City include Caulfield and Carnegie to the south. External abutting local activity centres are Tooronga Village, Holmesglen and Cremorne.

Rising land values have largely driven out manufacturing and other production-based industries. Remaining industrial areas are small, and include the Weir Street and Paran Place areas in Glen Iris. Some isolated service industry uses remain in the Chapel Street Activity Centre.

As part of the Inner Melbourne Region, which collectively draws more than 11 million visitors annually, Stonnington is one of Australia's premier tourism destinations, with shopping, dining, entertainment, arts, culture and events being key attractors, along with its historic places and natural assets such our gardens and riverside.

Stonnington has the second lowest amount of open space at 6.7% (20m2 per person) of any Victorian municipality. The lowest is the neighbouring Glen Eira with only 4.7%. In comparison the average area set aside for open space across Metropolitan Melbourne is 17.9%. There are no 'regional' parks within the municipality. The City does boast several historic and beautifully maintained parks and gardens, including Victoria Gardens, Central Park, Hedgeley Dene Gardens, Glen Iris Wetlands and the Urban Forest. Environmental parks are located in the east, along the waterways. The inner suburbs in the west have fewer and less diverse open spaces than in the east.

Nearly the whole City is within 400 metres of public transport, with six tram routes, three train lines, 15 railway stations and several Smart bus routes. Stonnington is bounded by major roads and crossed by many main and secondary roads carrying significant volumes of traffic.

Community services such as administrative and professional uses, schools, hospitals, libraries, infant welfare and senior citizen centres, open space, sportsgrounds and pools were established to cater for community needs as the City grew. In the last 10 years, community hubs have been established to serve the west (Grattan Gardens), the centre (based around an upgraded Malvern library) and the east (Phoenix Park). The City hosts several large institutions serving regional catchments, including hospitals (Cabrini, Victoria House and The Avenue), educational establishments (including Swinburne University, Holmesglen TAFE and 22 private schools) and recreational facilities (including Kooyong and Royal South Yarra Tennis Clubs). Monash University (Caulfield campus) and the Alfred Hospital are located just outside the municipality.

21.02-2 Municipal profile and projections

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Population

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimated resident population (ERP) of Stonnington in 2011 is 101,102[1], close to Council's estimates of 100,536 people in 2011 and 101,489 in 2012 *(id 2009)* and the *Victoria in Future 2012* (*VIF12*) estimate of 101,192. In the next 15 years (2011-26), State (*VIF12*) projections are that Stonnington will grow by about 13,411 people (13.2%). This compares with Council's (*id 2009*) predictions of an increase of 13,350 people (13.3%) in the same period.

The population in 2026 will continue to be relatively young (25-49 years old steady at 42% of the population), but with growth in older age groups (the number of 70-84 year olds is expected to increase by 38%, and be 10% of the population) and percentage losses in the under 25 year olds.

Households and dwellings

In 2011 the City had 47,022 private dwellings (ABS Census), an increase of 2062 dwellings since 2006. Of these 44.8% were apartments, 17.6% detached or semi-detached and 37.1% separate dwellings. Recent applications have been predominantly for multi-units with more than 10 dwellings.

In the period 2011-26, Council's projections *(id 2009)* are that the number of dwellings is expected to increase by 7610 dwellings, compared with the State *(VIF12)* projections of 8213 dwellings. Household size is expected to decrease from 2.19 to 2.14 persons per dwelling in same period, *(id 2009),* compared with the State *(VIF12)* estimates of 2.19 in 2011 to 2.11 in 2026.Most of the additional growth is expected to be in South Yarra (mainly within the Forrest Hill precinct) (33%), Prahran (22%), Malvern East (14%), Armadale (13%) and Windsor (11%) *(id 2009).*

Household structure is predicted to change with significant growth in couples (+18%) and lone person households (+20%) in the period 2011-26. Households without children will comprise 80% (5850 households) of the total increase of 7324 households in the next 15 years and be 72% of the total households at that time. The majority of the growth of 1 and 2 person households will be in South Yarra and Prahran, which will also see growth in families with children. Malvern East will experience equal growth of families, couples and lone person households. Malvern is expected to suffer a net loss of family households.

The 2011 Census records that the median monthly mortgage repayment in the City of Stonnington was $2,447. For 7.4% of households, their mortgage repayments were more than 30% of their income, compared with 10.1% for Victoria. The median weekly rent was $360. For 14.5% of households, their rent was more than 30% of their income, compared with 9.1% for Victoria.

The *City of Stonnington Housing Strategy 2006* noted that up to 15% of the population in Stonnington has specific housing needs - such as housing stress, aged and disability needs - and this proportion is likely to increase. There is already a shortfall in the supply of appropriate housing for these groups, being people with disabilities (6%), in aged care accommodation (1%), in housing stress (4%) and in public housing (4%).

Employment

Council's *Building Prosperity Economic Development Strategy (2012-2016)* states that the total employment estimate for Stonnington is 43,850 with 65% of the jobs generated by five key industry sectors - retail trade; health care and social assistance; professional, scientific and technical services, accommodation and food services and education and training. These sectors have been identified as the competitive base of Stonnington's economy for the past twenty years. Stonnington is home to 15,680 businesses, including 3500+ home based businesses. Employment in property and business, and education have increased in recent years, in association with the rise in the number of international students, and small and medium sized businesses driving demand for strata office space in the region. New projects such as in the Forrest Hill precinct are expected to add 110,000m^2 of office space to the City.

1 The ABS Quick Stats (21 July 2012) record a population count of 94,160 persons in Stonnington in 2011, based on usual place of residence. The count is always less than the estimated resident population (ERP).

21.02-3 Key influences and challenges

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The key influences and challenges facing Stonnington are:

General

- Ongoing and increasing pressures to accommodate additional development attracted by the City's inner metropolitan location and the availability of services and transport.

Economic development

- Changing patterns of shopping and accessing goods and services, and how to provide for more flexibility and diversity of use in activity centres, while maintaining their separate identities and ensuring a sustainable network of centres serving local neighbourhoods.
- Increasing land values and increasing competition between land uses for key sites, and how to support the City's business, commercial and remaining manufacturing roles - to provide more employment opportunities closer to home and maintain a level of service provision to meet local needs.
- The attraction of entertainment uses, in particular in the Chapel Street precinct, and how to maintain acceptable levels of amenity and land use balance in activity centres and to manage impacts on adjoining residential areas.
- The many educational, medical and institutional uses attracted to the City, and how to manage their location, expansion and increased levels of use to facilitate their integration into the community and established residential areas.

Housing

- The access to public transport and services within 400 metres in almost all the City, and how to achieve a more refined approach to the distribution of future housing densities in the City.
- High land and housing costs, and how to provide a diversity of housing types to meet changing needs, including more affordable housing.

Built environment and heritage

- Upholding and restoring the City's key values (its distinctive built form and landscape character) while encouraging high quality new development and accepting change.
- The impact of increasing higher density development, and how to maximise opportunities for canopy tree landscaping in new developments.
- Protecting the City's assets, its heritage buildings, key landmarks, important vistas and riverside environs.

Environment and open space

- The City's low ratio of open space provision, the cost and availability of land for new open space in an already densely developed City, and how to capitalise on opportunities to improve the public realm, maximise the use of existing open space and add new open space.

Infrastructure

- The impact of intensive new development on the City's ageing infrastructure, and how to maintain an appropriate mix and level of social and physical infrastructure and an integrated approach to infrastructure provision.
- The City's comprehensive public transport system and how to optimise its use and access to it and to encourage sustainable transport options.
- The City's heavily trafficked roads, and how to better manage traffic flows and parking.
- Maintaining and improving the health and wellbeing of the City's population.