

Preston Market Precinct

Questions & Answers

April 2023

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that Preston Market remains an important focal point for the community of Melbourne's north.

The market precinct covers more than five hectares in the heart of Preston. The precinct is generally bound by Murray Road in the north, Cramer Street to the south, the rear of the High Street shops to the east and St Georges Road to the west. The precinct includes the Preston Market and is next to the new Preston Station.

How did we get here?

The Preston Market precinct has been designated a strategic development site due to its proximity to public transport, shops, services, employment opportunities and open space, including Preston City Oval. The precinct is located within the Preston-High Street Major Activity Centre identified in *Plan Melbourne 2017–2050*.

In 2017, the Minister for Planning directed the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) to review planning controls in the precinct.

In response to the findings of that review, in 2018 the Minister asked the VPA to prepare a structure plan and planning scheme amendment to guide future development in the precinct.

What was proposed for the Preston Market precinct?

After several years of consultation and technical studies, the VPA prepared a draft Preston Market Precinct Structure Plan in 2021. The draft structure plan set out a long-term vision for how the market precinct could be developed in the future.

The draft structure plan provided for:

- A 12,700-square metre market to the east of the current market, including the retention of about 20 per cent of the existing market structure.
- Approximately 1,200 new dwellings.
- Building heights varying between three storeys and 14 storeys across the site.
- Over 3,800 square metres of public open space.

Draft Planning Scheme Amendment C182dare to the Darebin Planning Scheme was also publicly released in

2021 as part of the consultation for the draft structure plan.

The draft amendment included an Activity Centre Zone, Heritage Overlay, Environmental Audit Overlay and a development contributions plan to implement the structure plan.

What consultation was undertaken for the draft Preston Market Precinct Plan?

The VPA undertook several rounds of community consultation on the Preston Market Precinct planning project. The VPA consulted with the landowner, Darebin City Council, traders and the community.

Final public consultation on the draft structure plan and draft planning scheme amendment occurred in 2021. There were 386 submissions received and in response the VPA amended the draft structure plan.

What did the Standing Advisory Committee say?

In March 2022, the Minister for Planning referred the draft structure plan and all 386 submissions to the VPA Projects Standing Advisory Committee.


The SAC found that there is strong strategic justification for the draft amendment consistent with the precinct's location within the Preston Major Activity Centre, proximity to the Preston Station, and other supporting infrastructure. The advisory committee said the future redevelopment of the precinct is supported by state and local planning policies.

However, the advisory committee also found that the proposed removal of a substantial portion of the existing market's fabric had not struck the right balance in the context of the Preston Market's historical, aesthetic, technical and social significance.

A key recommendation of the advisory committee is that more of the market should be retained in any redevelopment of the precinct.

What has the Minister for Planning determined?

The Minister has instructed the Department of Transport and Planning to prepare a planning scheme amendment to respond to the recommendations of the SAC.



The proposed planning scheme amendment will include new zones and overlays, including a Development Plan Overlay and Heritage Overlay, to guide the future development of the precinct and provide for the substantial retention of Preston Market.

It is expected that conditions on any redevelopment will include requirements to maintain the market into the future.

How have the community's views been considered?

The VPA undertook several rounds of community consultation on the Preston Market Precinct planning project, including with the landowner, Darebin City Council, traders and the community.

Final public consultation on the draft structure plan and draft planning scheme amendment occurred in 2021. The issues raised during consultation and through the independent SAC process have informed the Minister's decision.

The SAC did not recommend a Development Plan Overlay. Why is this being included now?

The SAC's key recommendation for greater retention of the market requires the structure plan to be revised. The Development Plan Overlay will enable the Minister for Planning to set out the requirements that need to be met for any new development and allow the proponent to submit a proposal that complies with these requirements.

By requiring a development plan to be prepared before any planning permits can be issued, the Development Plan Overlay will allow the orderly development of the site in a reasonable timeframe, providing certainty to all stakeholders and the community. It will also allow the Minister for Planning to clearly set out the features of the market that must be preserved if any development is to occur.

What are the next steps?

The Department of Transport and Planning will prepare a planning scheme amendment for the Minister for Planning's consideration. The proposed amendment will implement the Minister's direction to revise the proposed planning controls for the site to respond to the independent SAC's recommendations.

The key recommendations are to plan a vibrant, mixed use future for the site while ensuring:

- the retention of a fresh food market and protection of the heritage significance of the market
- that open space complements the market experience for all visitors to the site

- that the street and pedestrian networks connect the precinct to the new station and High Street.

Will all the existing market be saved?

Proposed planning controls will be prepared to respond to the SAC's recommendations. The controls will require retention of a significant proportion of the existing market. It is likely that some parts of the market might need to be altered or modernised to ensure the market is able to operate into the future and to improve interface treatment and activation.

What is a development plan?

A development plan is a master plan for the site that sets out what will happen on each part of the site. It will include uses and built form, as well as open space, roads and accessways, the location of car parking, and the like.

A development plan is prepared by a proponent and must meet the requirements set out in the relevant Development Plan Overlay. It must be prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority which will be the Minister for Planning.

When will the proponent submit the development plan?

Following application of a Development Plan Overlay, it is up to a proponent to decide when to submit a development plan, however, the proponent will not be able to obtain planning permits to develop the site until a development plan has been approved.

Who will approve the development on the site once the new controls are in place?

The Minister for Planning will determine the new controls for the site and will be the responsible authority for approving a development plan and all future planning permits for the site.

How will the market be protected while plans are prepared?

The proposed planning scheme amendment will not allow any development to occur until a development plan is prepared to the satisfaction of the Minister and any necessary planning permits are granted. This includes demolition or alteration of buildings or parts of buildings where the Heritage Overlay is proposed to apply.

Where can I find the advisory committee report?

You can view the report at:

planningpanels.vic.gov.au