

CITY OF PERTH LOCAL PLANNING STRATEGY



City of Perth

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Western Australian Chapter



Australian
Institute of
Architects

SUBMISSION BY

This submission is made by the Australian Institute of Architects, WA Chapter.

The Australian Institute of Architects (Institute) is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia. It is an independent, national member organisation with around 13,000 members across Australia and overseas.

The Institute exists to advance the interests of members, their professional standards and contemporary practice, and expand and advocate for the value of architects and architecture to the sustainable growth of our communities, economy and culture. The Institute actively works to maintain and improve the quality of our built environment by promoting better, responsible and environmental design.

PURPOSE

- This submission is made by the Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) and in response to *Local Planning Strategy* published by the City of Perth (CoP).
- At the time of this submission the Institute National President is Tony Giannone FRAIA, the WA Chapter President is Sandy Anghie RAI and the WA Chapter Immediate Past President is Peter Hobbs FRAIA. The A/Chief Executive Officer is Barry Whitmore.

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COVER PHOTO

The Australian Institute of Architects' recipient of 2021 George Temple Poole Award, the John Septimus Rose Award for Urban Design and the Jeffrey Howlett Award for Public Architecture. WA Museum Boola Bardip. Hassell + OMA.

Photographer: Peter Bennetts.

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CONDITIONAL SUPPORT

The Institute conditionally supports the Draft Local Planning Strategy with some suggested improvements around themes of visionary long-term concept/s, city transit system, connectivity and collaboration.

The general intent and format of the document is legible, well detailed and well diagrammed. The successful implementation and translation of the document into a Planning Scheme, will be in ensuring a well-articulated long-term vision for the City of Perth, clear value proposition for current and future residents and collaboration across jurisdictional lines to ensure broader application of concepts.

DETAILED RESPONSE

Visionary long-term concept

The aim of strengthening the City of Perth as the Capital of Western Australia is supported. There is an opportunity for the Local Planning Strategy to explore transformative visionary long-term concepts that challenge the status quo, to refocus the City's identity, transport and connectivity. Precinct plans should demonstrate bold initiatives for the future and highlight new links and identify proposed location of key civic buildings and land exchanges to demonstrate future connection and planning opportunities. Planning for future civic building typologies such as an Indigenous Centre and schools is positive and offers opportunities for associated precinct master plans and review of adjoining land uses, connections and penetrability concepts need to be considered.

The key to successful transformative concepts will be collaboration with State agencies and adjoining councils to minimize jurisdictional barriers and create financial opportunities.

City transit system and connectivity

The walkable transit precincts identified in Figure 5, demonstrate an opportunity in establishing better connectivity. There are substantial gaps in connecting 'neighborhoods' evidenced in the mapping diagram. There is potential for big picture concepts of an underground transit system or tram system, perhaps co-funded by the State and Federal Governments through a future City Deal or Infrastructure WA Strategy¹.

Principles of walkability need to be assessed from beyond the transit system. Medium to higher density residential developments and diverse land use zoning within every neighbourhood will promote the sustainable establishment of shops and recreational areas, thus promoting walkability. Uses such as cafes, alfresco dining, shops and parklets provide pauses along pedestrian journeys and activate streetscapes. It is important to consider whole journey planning when addressing walkability.

¹ The Institute has made a submission in response to the *Foundations for a stronger tomorrow: State Infrastructure Strategy*: https://www.architecture.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Aust_Inst_Architects_Submission_to_IWA_Draft_Infrastructure_Strategy_FINAL.pdf

The City has an opportunity to consider walkability concurrently with accessible and connected environmental corridors² that enable not only people, but flora and fauna to have legible connection via continuous pathways through the city scape. The promotion of connection with nature has documented wellness benefits³ and has transformative potential into the ‘Healthy City’.

Cities such as Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Zurich, Hamburg and Vancouver have introduced urban design and integrated planning strategies to minimise urban car use and create exclusive pedestrian areas⁴. Cities such as Hong Kong have created safe, highly activated underground walkways for pedestrians safe from traffic and weather⁵.

A broader planning and urban design vision is necessary, considering pedestrian prioritisation and potentially pedestrian exclusive areas, beyond the currently considered framework, to ensure activated, comfortable and safe streetscapes.

Issues of connectivity to other localities, specifically, Oxford Street, Beaufort Street and Rokeby Road need to be addressed. Encouraging better connectivity will, in turn, encourage better attendance and activation within the City. For example, an overpass or underpass across Loftus Street along Bagot Road / Kings Park Road, would greatly improve walkability between Subiaco, a densely residential suburb, West Perth, a commercial office district, and the leisure and biodiversity area of Kings Park.

Neighbourhoods

The identification of neighborhoods with specific ‘identities’ presents both opportunities and issues that need to be clearly addressed to ensure diverse, activated and thriving neighborhoods.

We identify that all neighborhoods require:

- Amenity
- Accessibility (walkability and penetrability)
- Attendance and Activation
- Connectivity
- Diversity and Inclusion (in terms of diversity of demographic and building typology / land use)

² Some successful precedents include Vancouver <https://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/greenest-city-action-plan.aspx#redirect>, Nantes https://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/bilan_nantes_green_capital_EN.pdf, Melbourne Moonee Ponds Creek project <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/moonee-ponds-creek>.

³ Refer <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24933270-800-green-spaces-arent-just-for-nature-they-boost-our-mental-health-too/>, <https://sheffsocscience.medium.com/connecting-with-nature-in-the-city-is-more-than-visiting-green-space-9457877693e0>, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/frsc.2020.00018/full> and https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/Outside_Our_Doors_report.pdf

⁴ Refer examples: <https://thecityfix.com/blog/five-cities-show-future-walkability-active-transport-priscila-pacheco/> and <https://www.narcity.com/vancouver/most-walkable-places-in-canada-has-metro-vancouver-cities-in-the-top-5>

⁵ Refer <https://weburbanist.com/2014/05/13/groundless-city-a-guidebook-to-underground-hong-hong/>

- Flexibility within the Town Planning Scheme to allow for innovation / alternate land use

Based on walkability distance, we suggest the definition of an additional neighborhood between 'Central Perth' and 'East Perth'.

Innovation of building typology, amenity and land use needs to be accommodated within the Planning Strategy. For example, vertical schools with co-share facilities with adjoining amenities, integrated high rise development over railway, and flexibility within town planning scheme for gallery spaces and studios to emerge within all neighbourhoods.

Under-utilised zones

The Planning Strategy has an opportunity to activate and consider innovative land use in underutilized zones within the City.

Specific areas for consideration include:

- Mount Hospital surrounding area: considering connection to riverfront, divisional impact of freeway, potential site for connection to Country and ecological rejuvenation.
- Riverfront:
 - o Between Freeway and Crawley – consider connection, activation, and journey planning.
 - o Langley Park area – consider the carbon footprint and social cost of open, underutilized grasslands compared to environmental and cultural rejuvenation site with strategic activation uses.
 - o Design idea competition – since 1991, multiple design competitions for the Perth riverfront have been held⁶, generating ideas ranging from beachfronts, naturalistic landscapes and extended urbanities. There is a broad database available for assessing frameworks for innovative strategies, based upon the City's priorities.
- Freeway interface – there is an opportunity of reprioritizing the traditionally infrastructure led City towards livability, culture and environmental sustainability.

Collaboration opportunity

As noted above, connectivity is key theme to the success of the City's Planning Strategy. We recommend the establishment of an Inner-City Working Group to better collaborate across jurisdictional boundaries and ensure consistent, coherent and connected approach. Proposed membership could consist of:

- City of Perth Planner and Architect
- Representatives from adjoining councils: Vincent, Cambridge and Subiaco

⁶ Bolleter, J. October 2014 "Charting a Changing Waterfront: A Review of Key Schemes for Peth's Foreshore", *Journal of Urban Design* 19(5). Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266207181_Charting_a_Changing_Waterfront_A_Review_of_Key_Schemes_for_Perth's_Foreshore

- Representatives from relevant State agencies: Development WA, Department of Communities, Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Department of Transport, Mainroads
- Government Architect

The Planning Strategy document is silent on potential future City Deal projects, Infrastructure WA projects and Tourism WA projects. We recommend early engagement and planning through broader co-funded programs to seek broader vision opportunities for the City of Perth.

Specific Issues and Opportunity Clause comments

Demographics and Housing

The has identified clear residential population growth targets with proposed increased plot ratio bonus to secure broader housing diversity and affordability. Plot ratio bonuses are generally supported when used for strategic targeted developments. We would suggest broadening use of plot ratio bonuses to target:

- Housing diversity and affordability
- Sustainable / low carbon developments
- Adaptive reuse developments

Issues of livability need to be addressed within the Planning Strategy to ensure that the plot ratio bonuses are effective in delivering demographic targets, as are already utilized in existing Town Planning Scheme with minimal residential growth, avoid single mega-developments (as opposed to adaptive reuse and medium density developments) and extensive above-ground car parking.

Key livability issues that need to be addressed to attract identified demographic trends include:

- Access to diverse amenity
- Environmental comfort – noise, wind tunnel effect, overshadowing, heat island effect, etc.
- Safety
- Connectivity
- The “unique offering” that will compete with surrounding suburbs

We encourage partnership with State agencies such as Development WA and Department of Communities to deliver appropriate social and affordable housing stock, beyond incentivization within private developments to provide successful precedent and be the catalyst for change.

Building design

The adoption of the design principles outlined in SPP 7.0 Design and Built Environment and SPP 3.5 Historic Heritage Conservation, in addition to ten additional principles is supported. The Institute supports the intent of SPP 7.0 in defining ‘good design’ and advocates for improved design quality of the built environment.

Sustainable Buildings

The Institute, alongside its Climate Action and Sustainability Taskforce (CAST), advocates for a zero-carbon construction industry by 2030, as our built environment accounts for 39% of all carbon emissions globally, with operational emissions accounting for 28%⁷. Members are actively committing to Carbon Neutral practices⁸ and the Institute has also embarked on its own “Carbon Neutral” journey. The Institute has called on the Australian Government to establish a national plan towards zero carbon buildings by 2030 that can be supported and led where appropriate by state and local government.

It is admirable that the City has taken positive steps toward creating frameworks for incentives to encourage sustainable development in its respective local community via the proposed initiatives of:

- Mandating 4-5 Star Greenstar buildings
- Incentives for 6 Star Greenstar buildings and
- Encouraged adaptable building design

We would recommend providing flexibility for use of multiple rating tools comparable with Greenstar.

The 2022 National Construction Code (NCC) will be lifting the minimum NatHERS rating to 7 Stars, implementation of which is due to commence 1 September 2022 nationally. There is potential to create additional planning strategies for developments to implement this minimum measurement threshold sooner and incentivise further energy efficiency in developments.

The Planning Strategy is silent on carbon / sustainability targets and does not cross-reference to an active State or local policy. There is further opportunity for the City to lead by example by:

- Incentivisation of adaptive reuse of existing underutilised building stock within the City;
- Requirement for life cycle assessments all new buildings at Planning Approval;
- Incentivise zero carbon (or low carbon) construction methodology (including waste) and materials (which connects to other incentivisation of new material industry e.g. green concrete, cross-laminated timber, and others);
- Urban design and master planning focussed on higher density urban and suburban development to reduce urban sprawl, manage the heat island effect, respond to stormwater, address transport and improve connectivity.⁹
- Reduction of car parking ratios and minimums for new developments.

⁷ WorldGBC (2019). New report: the building and construction sector can reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Source: <https://www.worldgbc.org/news-media/WorldGBC-embodied-carbon-report-published>

⁸ <https://www.architecture.com.au/about/carbonneutral>

⁹ Sourced from the Institute’s response to the State’s recently commenced process of developing sectoral emissions reduction strategies to transition the economy to net zero (SERS). Available: https://www.architecture.com.au/wp-content/uploads/211217-Aust_Inst_Architects_SERS-response-letter.pdf?_zs=Hh1Jm&_zl=3Je52



Image: Sourced from RAlA supported Industry led 'City Charette' 1999. Image provided by Brett Wood-Gush.