

STATEMENT FROM THE PROPONENT – RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

There are a number of themes that emulate from the submissions received from Amendment C372.

Two themes that stand out from the rest are traffic conditions on Ghazeeopore Road and the character/density of the proposed development. These two items are discussed below:

Traffic on Ghazeeopore Road

Since the opening of both Baanip Bld and the Waurm Ponds Train Station (WPTS), Ghazeeopore Road usage, particularly between Hams Road and Burgundy Drive, has increased. The increase in usage from before and after the opening of Baanip Bld and the WPTS has almost doubled based on additional traffic counts recently undertaken by the proponent.

This marked increase in usage is evidenced in the vast majority of submissions received by Amendment C372. Local residents have noted substantial increases in usage coupled with increased waiting times at intersections, increased near misses and other safety concerns. These traffic changes and concerns were constantly referred to at the information session held with local residents and again throughout submissions.

While traffic consultant modelling (and even Council's own traffic engineers) will attest that development of the subject site and future growth in the area will not create unreasonable usage levels on Ghazeeopore Road and its intersections (based on daily volumes, queuing times, AM and PM peak projects etc); we note that local residents are not convinced. This seems to be because while Ghazeeopore Road is classified as a 'collector road', it is not operating at its collector status potential.

While Ghazeeopore Road has significant road pavement area, it has bus stops on the road pavement and also the ability for local residents to park either side of the road, narrowing the two-way passing traffic area of the road.

This situation could be dramatically improved by implementation one or a number of the following actions:

- Indented bus parking stops
- Line marketing allowing parking on one side or staggered parking alternating either side of the road
- Formalised car parking spaces on nature strips or staggered indented spaces

It has been made clear to the proponent that there are no current plans, briefs or budgets from Council to make any improvements to Ghazeeopore Road. The proponent is mindful that the proposed development will generate increased usage of Ghazeeopore Road (although that increased usage will not be perceptible in the context of current traffic volumes).

The proponent is eager to create and ensure improvements not only for existing residents but also for its future residents and it is therefore willing to make a contribution towards a traffic study and any rectification works recommended by that study that are necessary to improve the capacity, capability and safety of Ghazeeopore Road for the current and future community.

The proponent suggests that a significant investment of \$500,000 be made available via the development of the subject site to Council. The payment can be facilitated via the Section 173 agreement. While the development of the subject site will likely take some 7 to 8 years to reach completion, it is proposed that a time limit of 2 years is placed on the collection and expenditure of the funding, inclusive of a traffic study and any recommended subsequent capital works so they are completed well in advance of any increased usage of Ghazeepore Road.

Character & Density

A large number of submissions spoke to the local unique character of Waurm Ponds. While the majority of the suburb is characterised by standard residential sized lots between 300 and 600sq.m., there is one estate to the north of the Amendment C372 that has much larger lots of 800sq.m.+ being the Grange Park Estate, from which the vast majority of submissions have originated.

Large lot estates (800sq.m.+) are now extremely rare in Victoria due to environmental pressures and planning policy objectives which encourage maximizing limited urban land resources within township boundaries to minimise urban sprawl into more sensitive environments.

It is appreciated however, that new housing estates should complement and enhance their surrounding circumstances whilst acknowledging environmental pressures and good town planning principles that have been refined after many years of urban planning throughout Victoria.

The creation of a large lot estate (as suggested by many submissions) within the subject site is not good planning and contradicts local and state planning policies. The site is within close proximity to the Waurm Ponds Train Station and as such, urban planning should encourage density to maximise public transport usage, particularly when people can comfortably walk or ride to the station as is the circumstance with the subject site.

The proponent has attempted to acknowledge the neighborhood character and improve the interface with the Grange Park Estate through the provision of large lots on Hams Road of 800sq.m. or larger. The proponent acknowledges the concerns raised in some submissions with reference to the unknown – medium density housing sites and townhouse lots which are perhaps not common in the local area of Waurm Ponds and could be seen as a conflict to character. The proponents therefore propose to amend the plan of subdivision to find a balance between respecting local character and achieving development density objectives. The proposed changes include:

- Removal of the two medium density sites that were capable of producing 40 dwellings.
- Removal of all lots less than 300sq.m. and replace with lots of at least 400sq.m.
- Add an additional minimum of 30 lots that are at least 800sq.m. (primarily in the western end of the development away from the WPTS) through the removal of approximately 50 lots that are primarily in the range from 300 to 400sq.m.

The net result of the above changes is a reduction of 50 dwellings from the subject site and the encouragement of larger lots as opposed to smaller lots. The total number of lots following the changes above is 245. It is noted that restrictions on title will stop these lots from being able to be further subdivided.