

WANGARATTA RURAL CITY COUNCIL



BUSINESS PAPER FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE WANGARATTA RURAL CITY COUNCIL, TO BE HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, MUNICIPAL OFFICES,
62-68 OVENS STREET, WANGARATTA
ON **THURSDAY, 3 MAY 2012** COMMENCING AT 10.00AM

Doug Sharp
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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1. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS**

2. **OPENING PRAYER**

3. **PRESENT**

4. **ABSENT**

Councillor R Webb having previously been granted leave of absence for the period Friday 20 April 2012 to Friday 4 May 2012.

5. **ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES & GRANTING OF LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

6. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE**

7. **BUSINESS**

7.1 **SOUTH WANGARATTA URBAN RENEWAL STRATEGY**

South Wangaratta Urban Renewal

25.010.051

Introduction

The draft South Wangaratta Urban Renewal Strategy aims to re-invigorate this prominent inner urban area and maximise its' potential by planning for future patterns of use that are efficient, sustainable and maximise broader community benefit.

The study area consisted of the land generally bound by Handley Street to the north, Greta Road to the east, Newman Street to the south and Tone Road to the west. Four redundant and/or underutilised key sites formed the basis of detailed assessment including Avian Park Raceway, the former Ovens College campus, the former Council owned landfill site at Vincent Road and the redundant industrial site adjoining the Bunnings development in Newman Street.

Background

The Rural City of Wangaratta's 2030 Community Vision states:

"To ensure sustainable and appropriate development, the Rural City of Wangaratta will adopt carefully considered long term planning for commercial, industrial and residential areas. Urban sprawl will be contained through focussing new developments within existing area".

This is further reinforced in both the Hume Strategy for Sustainable Communities and the Rural City of Wangaratta's Council Plan objective:

"To reinvigorate the inner urban areas of Wangaratta to maximise their potential."

Following formal advice from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development of their intent to dispose of the former Ovens College site in Greta Road, the Rural City of Wangaratta determined to undertake a master plan to guide the future of the South Wangaratta Precinct.

A comprehensive study brief was prepared, with funding support from Regional Development Victoria's "Planning for Tomorrow" initiative. Highly credentialled urban designers Aurecon, together with economic analysis Matters More, were appointed to prepare a strategy and master plan.

The study brief required the consultants to:

- develop a strong vision, objectives and urban design principles for the study area;
- identify the opportunities and constraints within which to develop a master plan;
- undertake a market demand assessment to support further development within the study area in the context of the regional economy;
- consult with identified stakeholders within the study area;

- develop a master plan that provides a cohesive approach to the future development of the precinct and acknowledges the four key sites;
- undertake site feasibilities for the future use and development of the four key sites, including development assessments and 7-10 year financial assessments; and
- prepare a detailed implementation plan setting out actions to achieve the project recommendations.

Issues

As previously mentioned in the consultant's brief, there are four key sites for which feasibilities for the greatest community benefit needed to be undertaken but those recommendations needed to be considered in a precinct wide approach.

This was further emphasised through the consultation process and has been reflected in the draft master plan now prepared for exhibition.

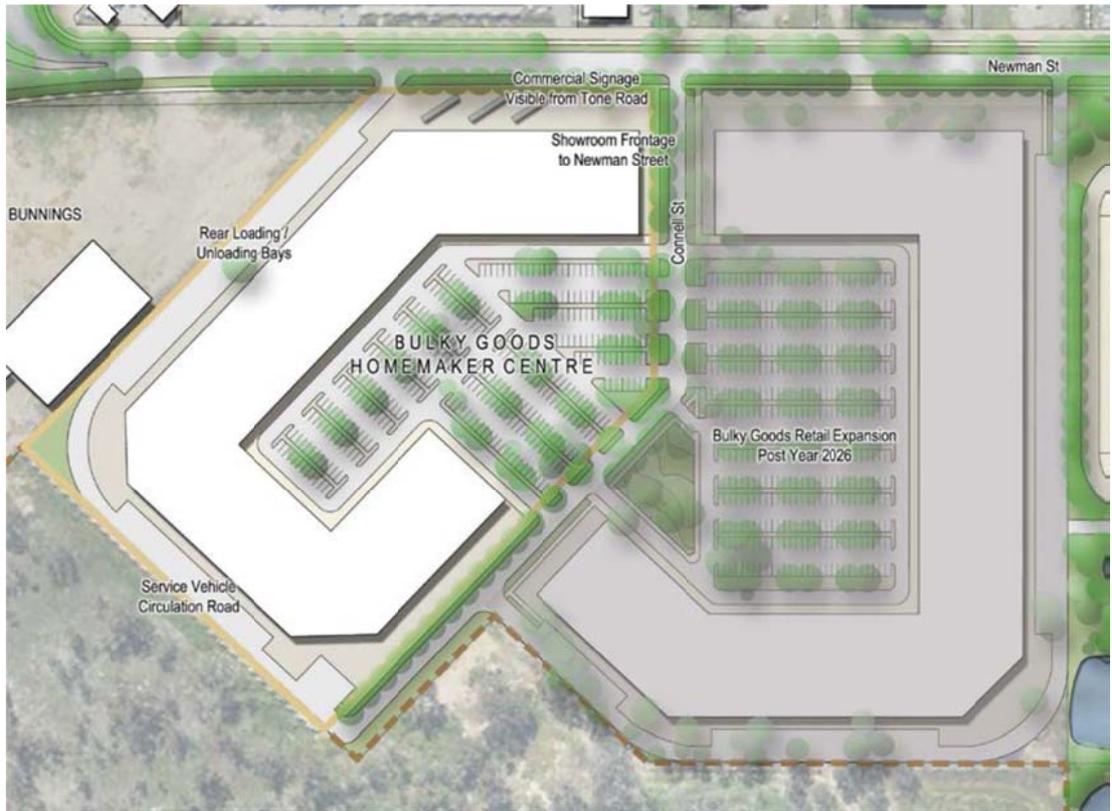
The consultation process included extensive one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders within the nominated precinct and two well attended public workshops. One workshop focussed on business sector issues whilst the second workshop focussed more generally on the residential issues.

A number of key issues have occurred during the development of the strategy and master plan, which have influenced the recommendations and focus of specific key sites. The successful re-introduction of harness racing at Avian Park, with the likelihood of increasing to three additional meetings per year, and the commitment from Charles Sturt University to establishing a campus in Wangaratta and the subsequent demand for substantially increased student accommodation capacity are key issues which have influenced the outcomes of the draft master plan.

The four key sites, whilst currently redundant from previous use or significantly under-utilised, afford substantial opportunities and specific issues.

Key Site One (Redundant Manufacturing Site), alongside the existing Bunnings outlet in Newman Street, has the ability to act as a bulky goods homemaker destination for Wangaratta, which in itself will stimulate additional floorspace and allow for local comparison shopping. It should be noted that the site is in private ownership and any development will be progressed at the owners discretion.

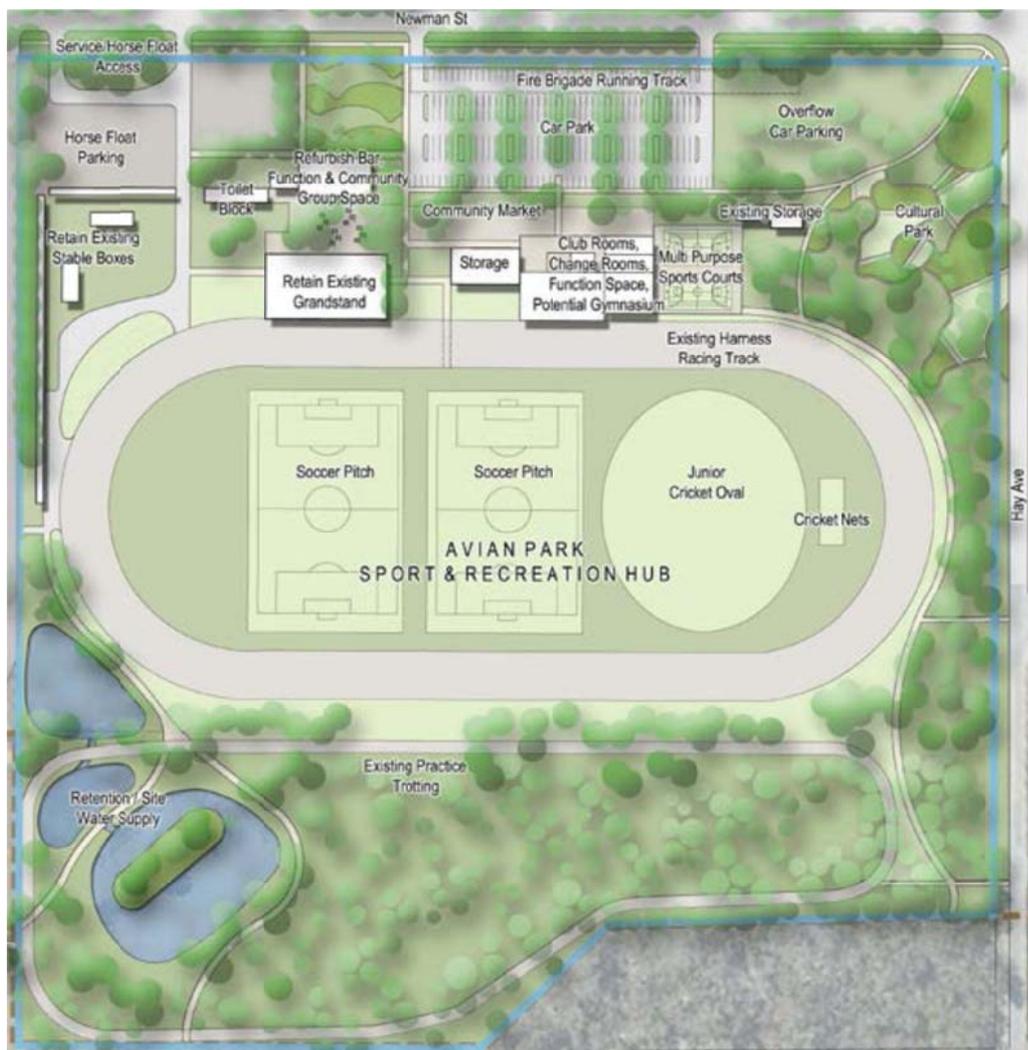
The market demand assessment found that Key Site 1 has the ability to accommodate bulky goods retail floor-space demand until at least 2026, after which an area for future expansion is likely to be required. It is recommended that the adjoining Council Depot site and RSPCA depot be investigated for future bulky goods retail development at such time as demand permits.



Key Site 1 Concept Plan

Key Site Two (Avian Park) is a crown land reserve with an appointed Committee of Management. The recommendations have identified substantial capacity within the site to undertake a broad range of sporting activities. The master plan recommends that the future use of Avian Park focus around rejuvenated harness racing facilities together with complementary sport, recreation and community infrastructure.

It should be noted that the indicative infrastructure development costs and track configurations required to meet the minimum standards for operation of a sanctioned greyhound racing track in Victoria render the return of greyhound racing to the Avian Park site unviable.



Key Site 2 Concept Plan

Key Site Three (Vincent Green - Former Landfill Site) this site presents a number of challenges in considering future use and development options. Notably, Council's environmental assessment has just commenced, therefore future use and development options are dependent on the outcome of this assessment. In particular these include the extent of site contamination and the uncompacted nature of the fill and possible methane gas emission.

In considering these challenges and the urban renewal goals for the precinct, it is submitted that the most appropriate future use of the land is as a local park. A local park offers the ability to create a focus for the residential neighbourhood at the northern end of the study area, increasing the provision of public open space, providing for north-south pedestrian and cycling links and buffering the residential neighbourhood from any future industrial development to the west along Vincent Road.

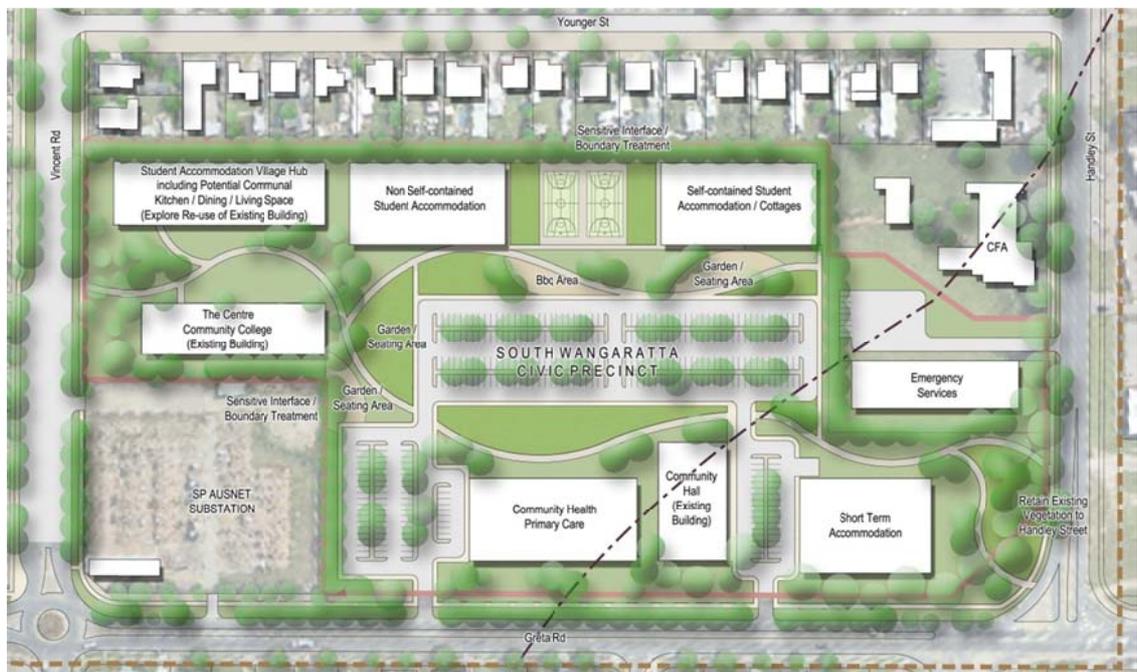


Key Site 3 Concept Plan

Key Site Four (former Ovens College campus) generated significant interest from a range of stakeholders throughout the consultation process including: health, education, emergency services, and community groups.

A market demand assessment for housing and student accommodation undertaken as part of the master planning process identified a demand for short term accommodation within Wangaratta for students and other users such as business travellers or sports competitors. The demand for student accommodation in Wangaratta will grow over time as education providers such as GOTAFE and Charles Sturt University increase their education offer. Key Site 4 offers the ability to locate a dedicated student accommodation village within close proximity to services and infrastructure within Wangaratta.

The master plan recommends that Key Site 4 be used to accommodate a range of civic/community uses, together with private short term accommodation facilities and student accommodation.



Key Site 4 Concept Plan

Implications

As previously stated within the background of this report, invigorating the inner urban areas of Wangaratta and maximising their potential is an action identified in the Rural City of Wangaratta's Council Plan.

The four key sites as nominated are either redundant from their previous use or underutilised and offer substantial opportunities for enhanced community and economic benefit.

Key site four (former Ovens College campus) has stimulated a high level of interest from a broad range of stakeholders throughout the consultation process including emerging opportunities which strongly support the sites revitalisation as a civic precinct.

To achieve this goal a delivery agent will be required to facilitate the project. The delivery agent would be responsible for purchasing the land from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, or working with the Department to prepare the site for redevelopment. The agent could be the Rural City of Wangaratta or an alternative suitable organisation.

Council Plan Outcomes

The draft South Wangaratta Urban Renewal Strategy will help to achieve the Rural City of Wangaratta's Council Plan objective: *"To reinvigorate the inner urban areas of Wangaratta to maximise their potential."*

Sustainability

The draft South Wangaratta Urban Renewal Strategy aims to re-invigorate this prominent inner urban area and maximise its' potential by planning for future patterns of use that are efficient, sustainable and maximise broader community benefit.

Community Engagement

The consultation process included extensive one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders within the nominated precinct and two well attended public workshops. One workshop focussed on business sector issues whilst the second workshop focussed more generally on the residential issues.

Conclusion

In essence, the draft South Wangaratta Urban Renewal Strategy provides guidance for the future land use, development of the four key sites as previously nominated and the study area as a whole, concentrating on the following key issues:

- the established of preferred land uses;
- urban design and landscaping throughout the precinct;
- access and movement;
- economic development; and
- infrastructure servicing.

Recommendation:

- 1. That the Draft South Wangaratta Urban Renewal Strategy, as prepared for exhibition, be received by Council; and**
- 2. Council determines to place the Draft Study on public exhibition and to receive public submissions up to Friday 25 May 2012.**

Communication

The draft South Wangaratta Urban Renewal Strategy will be available for viewing at the Wangaratta Government Centre, Corner of Ford and Ovens Streets, and will be available electronically on Council's website www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au.

7.2 FORMER OVENS COLLEGE SITE

2-64 Greta Road (Former Ovens College Site)

12798

Introduction

With the Draft South Wangaratta Urban Renewal Strategy completed to exhibition stage, a critical element in pursuing the recommendation of the Strategy rests with the future ownership of the former Ovens College site. Negotiations have occurred with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development about Council securing the site for this purpose.

Background

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development approached Council indicating that the former Ovens College site was surplus to its needs and that the Department intended to dispose of it.

Council submitted that before such a process was undertaken the site should be assessed for its best long-term strategic use along with other under-utilised sites in the vicinity. The Department agreed to this approach.

State Government funding of \$50,000 was secured, matched by Council, to develop a strategy on this basis, now known as the Draft South Wangaratta Urban Renewal Strategy.

Issues

The Draft South Wangaratta Urban Renewal Strategy has identified that the best use for the former Ovens College site is as a civic precinct, including health, education, emergency services, community use including retaining the community hall, short-term accommodation and student accommodation.

The need for student accommodation in its various forms is further underlined by the following:

- Outcomes association with the Medical Centre of Excellence project which focus on the need for student accommodation as a priority to support progress already being realised with this concept (subject to a report to the May 2012 Council Meeting);
- Continuing needs of GOTAFE;
- Anticipated demand associated with the Charles Sturt University announcement about the establishment of a campus in Wangaratta.

The Draft Strategy recommends that a delivery agent be established to facilitate the redevelopment of the site to a civic precinct. The delivery agent would be responsible for purchasing the land from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development or working with the Department to prepare the site for redevelopment. The Draft Strategy further suggests that the agent could be the Rural City of Wangaratta or an alternative organisation.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is keen to dispose of the site. It is logical that Council secures the site given the range of civic uses proposed by the Draft Strategy.

Negotiations have occurred with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for Council to acquire the site and have reached the point where Council should formally submit an Expression of Interest to purchase on terms as given in the confidential attachment.

Implications

By acquiring the former Ovens College site, Council is securing the land to facilitate the development of a civic precinct. Details about how the land is developed, the business model that would be utilised, and future management would be subject to further investigation.

The Expression of Interest being made to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to purchase the site would be subject to a valuation being obtained as the basis of a price acceptable to both parties.

Recommendation:

That in order to secure the former Ovens College site for development as a civic precinct as recommended in the Draft South Wangaratta Urban Renewal Strategy:

- 1. Council submit an Expression of Interest to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to acquire the former Ovens College site in Greta Road, Wangaratta on terms as contained in the confidential attachment;***
- 2. Subject to those terms being formally accepted by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and an agreement on price being reached by both parties, the terms of sale be made public;***
- 3. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to conclude negotiations with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for further report and determination by Council.***

8. CLOSURE OF MEETING