

MINUTES

for the Ordinary Meeting of Council held in the Council Chambers on 17 November 2008 commencing at 6:00pm.

The Acting Mayor opened the meeting with the Statement of Acknowledgement of the traditional land owners.

Present

Cr B Wicks (Acting Mayor)

Cr J De Kruiff

Cr J Hanuska

Cr J Mahony *

Cr L Mahood

Cr A Speedie

Apologies

Cr Wangman (Mayor)

In Attendance

Mr G Cator Chief Executive Officer

Mr T Ierino Director Business Services

Mr R Henderson Director City Infrastructure

Ms P Harrington Director Community Development

Mr R Gliddon Acting Director Investment Attraction

Mr J Louw Director Sustainable Development

* Cr Mahony arrived at the meeting at 6.21 PM.



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Street program

1. Documents to be Tabled

1.1 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday, 20 October 2008.

1.2 Minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held on Monday, 27 October 2008.

1.3 Section 173 Agreement – 11 Stead Street, West Wodonga (Lot 3 PS526298) (Property No.: 317891)

2. Declarations of Interest or Conflict of Interest

Cr Hanuska declared an Interest in relation to item 8.1, *Community Engagement and Feedback Report – High Street Landscape Design Manual*, as her business is within the CBD and she has participated in one of the surveys mentioned in the report.

Cr Speedie declared a Conflict of Interest in relation to item 10.1 *Planning Report – Delegated Planning Permits* as her domestic partner has a holding in the company awarded the permit (permit no: 2007/229).

3. Confirmation of Minutes

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Minutes of the ordinary meeting of council held on Monday, 20 October 2008, copies of which were circulated to all councillors, be taken as read and confirmed.
2. That the Minutes of the special meeting of council held on Monday, 27 October 2008, copies of which were circulated to all councillors, be taken as read and confirmed.

Councillors De Kruiff/Hanuska

That the Minutes of the ordinary meeting of council held on Monday, 20 October 2008, copies of which were circulated to all councillors, be taken as read and confirmed.

CARRIED 2008-172

Councillors Speedie/De Kruiff

That the Minutes of the special meeting of council held on Monday, 27 October 2008, copies of which were circulated to all councillors, be taken as read and confirmed.

CARRIED 2008-173

4. Petitions

Nil.

5. Chief Executive Officer's Report

5.1 *Appointment of Director to NevRwaste*

NevRwaste has written to Council requesting that council nominate a "skills based" director for the period from 29 November to 11 February 2009. The request reads:

I am writing to request your assistance with a governance matter that needs to be addressed prior to the local government elections.

The Constitution of the North East Victorian Regional Waste Management Group (NevRwaste), states that "*A Director shall hold office until they cease to be a Councillor*".

As I am sure you are aware, due to local government elections all of our local government Directors will stand down from local government office on the 29th of November 2008. This will result in them also standing down from their positions with NevRwaste.

Our constitution allows for members to nominate 'skills based' directors, who are not local government councillors. We would like to call on this clause to allow your organisation re-nominate your current Director or an alternative representative to NevRwaste for the period between the 29th November 2008 and the 11th February 2009.

This process will allow us to receive new nominations for Directors from your organisation for election at the NevRwaste AGM on February 12th 2009. It will also allow us to maintain operations and address any issues that may arise during the two month interim period.

Currently Cr Mahony is the council nominee to the NevRwaste Board.

The first meeting of the new council will consider appointments to all council committees and external bodies, of which NevRwaste will be one. However this appointment will not take effect until the AGM of NevRwaste to be held on 12 February 2009.

RECOMMENDATION

That Cr John Mahony's directorship of NevRwaste be transferred from councillor director to "skills based" director to the Board of NevRwaste for the period from 29 November 2008 to the Annual General meeting of NevRwaste.

Councillors Mahood/De Kruiff

That Cr John Mahony's directorship of NevRwaste be transferred from councillor director to "skills based" director to the Board of NevRwaste for the period from 29 November 2008 to the Annual General meeting of NevRwaste.

CARRIED 2008-174

5.2 Infrastructure Australia

Background

Council, prior to October 15, 2008, made two submissions to Infrastructure Australia seeking funding from the federal government towards:

- ⇒ Intermodal terminal at Logic
- ⇒ The infrastructure requirements for the revitalisation of the Wodonga CBD following removal of the rail line.

A copy of the submissions is attached as Appendix A.

Report

Infrastructure Australia was formed by the federal government to develop a strategic blueprint for Australia's future infrastructure needs.

This blueprint, when completed, is to be implemented in partnership with the states, territories, local government and the private sector.

Infrastructure Australia will also provide advice to the federal government on investment priorities to ensure that economic growth is maximised.

Allocations from the Building Australia Fund will be provided by the federal government on advice from Infrastructure Australia.

The following is provided from the Infrastructure Australia website that indicates that its primary function is *to provide advice to governments, investors and owners of infrastructure on the following:*

- *Australia's current and future needs and priorities relating to nationally significant infrastructure.*

- *Policy, pricing and regulatory issues that may impact on the utilisation of infrastructure.*
- *Impediments to the efficient utilisation of national infrastructure networks.*
- *Options and reforms, including regulatory reforms, to make the utilisation of national infrastructure networks more efficient.*
- *The needs of users of infrastructure.*
- *Mechanisms for financing investment in infrastructure.*

Infrastructure Australia's immediate tasks are to:

- *Conduct an audit to determine the adequacy, capacity and condition of nationally significant water, transport, energy, and communications infrastructure.*
- *Produce an Infrastructure Priority List.*
- *Produce best practice, nationally consistent guidelines for Public Private Partnerships.*

*Infrastructure Australia is also in a position to provide advice on the harmonisation of policies, and laws, relating to development of, utilisation of, and investment in, infrastructure. Infrastructure Australia will also guide the allocation of the Federal Government's Building Australia Fund. Infrastructure Australia's focus is on infrastructure issues of significance to **national** productivity.*

To enable the above to be provided, Infrastructure Australia has sought evidence based submissions from members of the community, including private industry and the various levels of government, to assist it in gathering the information necessary for it to gain an understanding of the infrastructure requirements across Australia.

With the above in mind, council has made two submissions, being:

- (1) Intermodal terminal at Logic; and
- (2) Wodonga CBD redevelopment

A brief description of each project is detailed below.

Intermodal terminal at Logic

Logic Wodonga is a Wodonga City Council initiative aimed at developing an inland intermodal distribution hub for south eastern Australia. Logic represents an industrial park that is over 610 hectares in size. The land is zoned Industrial 1 and is purpose designed and

built to attract major businesses involved in distribution, warehousing, transport, logistics and manufacturing. All land is owned by Council except that land already sold to tenants at Logic.

Wodonga City Council has secured major tenants at Logic. The tenants include Woolworths \$100M regional distribution facility, while other land has been sold.

The project is to build an efficient intermodal rail container terminal with connecting infrastructure all linked to a purpose designed, strategically located transport and logistics hub (Logic).

This will provide the regions numerous exporters, importers, manufacturers, growers of primary produce, transport companies and distributors of goods, access to the national rail network and direct access to the Port of Melbourne and Port Botany.

The benefit of access to rail via a dedicated intermodal transport hub include more efficient transport and logistic practices as a result of improved connectivity to regional, national and international markets.

Importantly the project provides a necessary intermodal facility for the regions businesses while at the same time attracting further businesses interested in relocating to a strategic location to distribute goods from.

The provision of funding through Auslink will enable Logic to become a fully intermodal freight hub with the potential to create thousands of jobs in for the region.

The project is NPV positive with a BCR in excess of 1.88.

Wodonga CBD redevelopment

Wodonga City Council has been presented with a unique opportunity, one which council believes has not been available to many cities in Australia, or the world, to redevelop its central business district with the relocation of the rail line from central Wodonga to a location that bypasses the city.

Redevelopment and revitalisation of the Wodonga CBD is therefore a major initiative for the council and a focus within the council's Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS). The catalyst for the revitalisation of the CBD is the removal of the main Sydney-Melbourne railway line from the centre of Wodonga. The relocation of the railway line allows 19 hectares of land in the centre of the city to become available for future development. This will open up major investment opportunities in Wodonga for new retail, commercial office, community and residential development.

To capture the most from this once in a century opportunity Wodonga City Council has completed a master plan for the proposed redevelopment of the CBD as well as a market analysis of the retail catchment. To ensure that the relocation of the railway line and redevelopment of the CBD is a success, a joint approach to the implementation of the CBD master plan is required from the council, federal and state governments, and private developers. The master plan is embedded in the council's new MSS which was submitted to the state government on September 2, 2008 for approval. The MSS also refers to urban design guidelines and references supporting reports which justify the plan in both a strategic and economic sense.

The removal of the railway line and a planned approach to the eventual redevelopment that provides an emphasis on quality urban design will place Wodonga City Council in a good position to address this situation.

Council has carried out the strategic planning on the project and has state government support.

In addition the council has carried out masterplanning for the civil infrastructure works to enable the roads drainage etc to be costed.

Council estimates that the cost of these works will be \$30M while some of these works will be developer and state government funded, it would be an expectation that these works would be completed prior to the release of the land.

This will place considerable cash flow issues for Wodonga City Council and will require careful financial management.

Meetings held to discuss these projects

Council has had discussions with Minister for Planning The Hon. Justin Madden MLC, Minister for Regional Development The Hon. Jacinta Allan MLA, Minister for Transport the Hon. Lynne Kosky MLA, Minister for Roads and Ports Mr Tim Pallas MP as well as VicTrack representatives and representatives of Regional Development Victoria, Department of Infrastructure, Department of Transport, and Department of Planning and Community Development to ensure that they are aware of the importance of both these projects to Wodonga City.

In these discussions Wodonga City has requested that a strategic approach to the release of and development of the key parcels of land in the Wodonga CBD take place.

Discussions have also been held with the Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, The Hon. Gary Gray, to ensure that the federal government is aware of the importance of both these projects to Wodonga City.

Wodonga's Mayor, Cr Wangman, will also be raising these issues at the Inaugural Meeting of Australian Council of Local Government which is currently being held in Canberra.

He will be attending the break out sessions that relate to:

- Investing in local, regional and national infrastructure; and
- Facilitating social inclusion in our communities.

It is his intention to raise both these projects as matters that should be considered for federal government funding.

RECOMMENDATION

That council note the two submissions to Infrastructure Australia.

Councillors Mahood/De Kruiff

That council note the two submissions to Infrastructure Australia.

CARRIED 2008-175

Late Item – Urgent Business

The Acting Mayor advised that Council was asked to consider an item of urgent business. The late item, *Festival & Event Contribution Program Round: October 2008*, was a matter which had arisen since the distribution of the agenda and Council was asked to accept it as a late item.

Councillors Speedie/De Kruiff

That the item of urgent business *Festival & Event Contribution Program Round: October 2008*, be accepted as item number 9.1 on the agenda.

CARRIED 2007-176

6. Business Services Director's Report

6.1 Finance Report

The Finance Report is submitted for council's information (attached as Appendix B).

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

During discussion of this item the Chief Executive Officer, in response to a question from Cr Speedie, advised that the new council would be fully briefed on the budget, and the issues surrounding the sale or non sale of Logic. These briefings would address any implications for the budget and capital works, both in 2008/2009 and future years.

6.2 Rate Payment Dates and Payment Options

A review of Council's rate payment dates and payment options has been conducted. It was considered that existing payment options and internal processes were limited and improved flexibility regarding payment options was needed.

Currently rate notices are delivered in August of the rateable year with customers making their choice as to payment options. Difficulties arise for those choosing the full payment option as there is a six month gap between receiving the rate notice and the due date. If the full amount is not paid by this date, interest is charged from 1st July in the previous year – or approximately 230 days.

It is proposed that rate payment dates from the 2009/10 rating year forward be modified to the following:-

- The full payment date for rate payments be aligned with first instalment date, that is 30 September, and
- The quarterly instalment dates be set at (or the next working day if that date falls on a weekend or public holiday)
 - 30 September,
 - 30 November,
 - 28 February, or 29 February in a leap year, and
 - 31 May.

Customers may choose to pay in full, or by instalments by 30 September each year. Customers who have made no payment by this date will be assumed to be on the quarterly instalment basis.

The benefits of this change includes:-

- The gap between the rate notice being sent out and the due date for payment from six months to two months,
- Customers less likely to incur the interest charge for late payment; if they do not make payment the interest charged will be for a greatly reduced amount of time, and on a smaller amount. For example currently if a customer paying in full misses the 15 February due date they incur penalty interest on the entire amount back dated to 1 July the previous year (ie. 7.5 months). Under this proposal a customer can only ever miss an instalment payment, never an “in full” payment, and any penalty interest payable will apply for a shorter period; and,
- Less confusion on payment dates – only one date to remember – that is, 30 September.

It is also proposed that further payment options be introduced. These include:

1. A direct debit facility. Upon application customers can choose to have their rates direct debited to their nominated accounts in full, in quarterly instalments as per the due dates above, or by 9 equal instalments from September to May each year to occur on the 20th calendar day of those months.
2. Other miscellaneous invoices issued by Council (that is not related to rates) will now include bar coding which will allow these to be paid by the various electronic options currently available (eg. BPay, POSTBillpay, Mail, In Person, Phone)

Work will continue on developing more flexible payment options in the future. Options being pursued include the development of a Council eServices webpage which will allow payment of rates, parking infringements, and so on, as well the feasibility of rolling out direct debit options for accounts other than rates.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the rate payment dates from the 2009/10 rating year forward be modified as follows:
 - The full payment date be set at 30 September, and

- the quarterly instalment dates be set at 30 September, 30 November, 28 February (or 29 February in a leap year) and 31 May,

or the next working day if that date falls on a weekend or public holiday.
- 2. That customers may choose to pay their rates in full, or by instalments by 30 September each year. Customers who have made no payment by this date will be placed on the quarterly instalment system.

During discussion of this item and prior to the motion being put, Cr Mahony arrived at the meeting, the time being 6.21 PM.

Councillors Mahood/De Kruiff

1. That the rate payment dates from the 2009/10 rating year forward be modified as follows:
 - The full payment date be set at 30 September, and
 - the quarterly instalment dates be set at 30 September, 30 November, 28 February (or 29 February in a leap year) and 31 May,

or the next working day if that date falls on a weekend or public holiday.
2. That customers may choose to pay their rates in full, or by instalments by 30 September each year. Customers who have made no payment by this date will be placed on the quarterly instalment system.

CARRIED 2008-177

7. City Infrastructure Director's Report

Nil to report

8. Community Development Director's Report

At this point Cr Hanuska declared an Interest in relation to item 8.1, *Community Engagement and Feedback Report – High Street Landscape Design Manual*, as her business is within the CBD and she has participated in one of the surveys mentioned in the report.

8.1 Community Engagement and Feedback Report – High Street Landscape Design Manual

A) Executive Summary

In January 2007, Council designed and implemented an extensive community consultation and engagement process to involve community, business and services in the proposed redevelopment of High street.

There have been a number of key stages in this process:

- i. High Street Consultation Workshops – January 16 and 17, 2007**
- ii. High Street Revitalisation Workshops – April 22 and 23, 2007**
- iii. High Street Workshop – Program and Design Elements August 10, 2007**
- iv. Landscape Design Chaurette – July 21, 2008**

Throughout this period, there have been other opportunities for continued engagement, consultation and information provision for community and business ranging from Seats in the Street and to Merchants Mingles. The Lounging on High weekly event was also used as an opportunity for community feedback (refer Appendix C)

Responses from these workshops and from the range of community consultations were formally endorsed at public council meetings in January, May, June and December 2007.

Key documents published and circulated during this period have been:

- i. High Street Program and Design Manual**
- ii. Program and Design Manual Brochure (summary of manual for extensive community distribution)**
- iii. High Street Landscape Design Manual**
- iv. High Street Landscape Design Brochure**

This process to date has formed the High Street Landscape Design manual which was released for community feedback on September 4 2008.

In response to the High Street Landscape Design Manual - there have been a total of 96 written individual responses, 32 individual responses from

businesses, a petition with 214 signatures, a submission from the Chamber of Commerce and one letter from a community member.

The submissions and responses from the merchants, community, and Chamber of Commerce have been positive. However, the concerns and objections that have been raised do provide opportunities for improvement to the design.

This report recommends four changes that could be made to the landscape design and 11 other actions that could be taken which may result in further changes to the design.

Following is a summary of the response feedback.

High Street Landscape Design Manual – Response from Community Summary

Engagement activity	Numbers	Response
Merchants' Breakfast Sept 4 2008	30 merchants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generally supportive ▪ No opposition expressed
Meet the design team - Sept 4 2008	12 merchants and residents	Mixed response, some neutral, some opposed, some supportive
Displays in 11 shops and council reception with feedback forms. Three Saturday morning displays in street staffed by design team and councillors Sept 4 to October 1 2008	78 written responses Approx 1200 brochures distributed Approx 140 people spoken to	78 written responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 38 supportive ▪ 17 opposed ▪ 23 made suggestions without expressing opinion
Ratepayers Association Sept 11 2008	40 people	Mixed response , some neutral, some opposed, some supportive
Merchant survey Sept 24 2008	32 merchants surveyed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 14 supportive ▪ 8 supportive but with some concerns ▪ 6 neutral ▪ 4 opposed
Landscape Design Manual placed on council website Sept 6, 2008		
Community planning process April 16, 2008 - 23 Sept,	365 leaders attended community plan	CBD heart identified as one of nine priority areas. Priorities

2008	sessions	fit current landscape design.
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B) Feedback Discussion

Feedback from General Community – Common Themes

At the 12 locations throughout the community where the plans were on display, the public had an opportunity to fill out a response sheet to inform council what they liked, what they didn't like and what they thought had been missed in the design.

There were a total of 78 written responses:

- 38 were supportive of the designs;
- 17 opposed; and
- 23 asked questions or made suggestions without expressing their opinion one way or the other.

The feedback from the community identifies ongoing support for redevelopment of High Street that includes more spaces for social interaction, areas that provide and encourage markets and a streetscape that is safe and welcoming to pedestrians and children in particular.

A key concern, at this stage of the consultation, was the need to ensure the safety of pedestrians as a result of the changed traffic conditions along with numerous suggestions around improvements to the use of space through lighting, shrubs and trees and ensuring access to the street and shops.

The table below shows a summary of the comments received from the feedback sheets.

What People Liked	What People Disliked	Suggestions and requests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ River theme ▪ Organic feel ▪ Increased greenery ▪ Coles wall ▪ Natural features to slow traffic ▪ Play areas and child/family friendly focus ▪ Village feel ▪ Provision for markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Too many arbours ▪ Bridge will not work ▪ Too expensive ▪ Ducks are a childish concept ▪ Removing signs will impact negatively on sign companies ▪ Play areas are too close to traffic ▪ Not enough trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please ensure design is not too cluttered ▪ Need to attract vibrant new retailers ▪ Expand design up South St and Elgin Blvd. ▪ Native trees and shrubs/dry landscape elements ▪ Close Stanley St to cars. Remove cars and make it a mall. ▪ Have a parent feeding room. Create a playground for kids. ▪ Bud lights in the trees ▪ Road needs to be clearly defined. No left turn into Stanley Street. ▪ Get rid of Tooles

What People Liked	What People Disliked	Suggestions and requests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Socialising spaces ▪ Increased parking ▪ Right turn into Stanley 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Speakers corner ▪ Encourage eateries ▪ Dog-friendly areas. Put tables and chairs in Stanley Street. No car parking at all. ▪ Use Coles wall to depict heritage as a cattle sales centre ▪ Grow bougainvillea on the arches ▪ Have safe crossing points. Create bike spaces. ▪ Need access to taxis. Get rid of taxi rank. ▪ More parking/disabled spaces ▪ Meeting room ▪ Don't build until the railway line is removed ▪ Bring tree house to ground level to give disabled access ▪ Paint water tower. Decorate Telstra and power boxes. ▪ Paint the poles competition

Merchants' breakfast – September 4

All merchants in the High Street precinct were invited to a merchant's breakfast on September 4. The plans were discussed with the merchants who attended and they were invited to ask questions. Each merchant was given a response form and given the opportunity to tell council what they liked, didn't like or thought we had missed. The council received no negative feedback about the plans from this meeting either in the question time or on the four response forms lodged.

Merchant survey - September 24

Council officers visited every business establishment on High Street between Lawrence and Elgin Streets and asked to speak to the business owner or manager.

A total of 32 merchants were surveyed with a wide range of questions which included how much they knew about what was proposed, their level of support for the designs, what their major fears were, and what they thought may happen if nothing were done to improve High Street. Of the 32 merchants, 22 were supportive of the landscape design as presented in the manual (eight of these were supportive with some concerns), six were neutral and four were opposed.

Significantly, in answer to the question, ‘How would you see the future for your business if High Street were left unchanged over the next 10 years’, two saw their business growing, 18 saw it remaining the same, seven saw it declining and without prompting, four merchants volunteered that they would sell or relocate.

What is your greatest or concern about the design or the future of high Street?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parking ▪ Design too busy/accessibility ▪ Needs to be free flowing/traffic flow ▪ Don't like the children's play area near the traffic ▪ People being negative and not having a vision ▪ Not happy with Stanley Street ▪ It will not be practical/too much money ▪ Upgrade won't make people come to shop ▪ Lack of parking out the front of my shop ▪ Will look nice but will not benefit my business ▪ Kids mucking up at night ▪ Skateboards ▪ Want to know what is happening in Sesame Street ▪ If nothing is done, High Street will go further backwards ▪ Safety of tree house ▪ Level street surface 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Like to see railway line done first, too early for landscaping ▪ If it is not done properly now, will be detrimental to traders ▪ Needs direction and uniformity ▪ No real structure or “precincts” at present ▪ Need parking close by. What's it doing for the business? ▪ Kiosks might take from my business/ Concerned the markets stalls will be in opposition to my business ▪ Will not fulfil its intentions ▪ Structure blocking shop fronts ▪ How busy will it be with landscape and design ▪ Trade interruption during make-over ▪ Afraid of no change in mentality, staying with status quo ▪ Will fail in short term/ Waste of money ▪ There is not enough business activity at the moment to sustain the change; we need more numbers before we start.
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What do you believe would minimise your concerns?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultation ▪ Make sure of parking availability and passing trade ▪ Change ▪ Don't go ahead ▪ Be able to man one of the stalls, utilise the business already here ▪ More consultation with traders and community ▪ Change the design ▪ Do make-over as soon as possible, get it over and done with
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What three things do you think could make High Street the premier main street in regional Australia?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attract people, attract new business, attract new clients ▪ More seating. More parking. ▪ Barbecue in park (suggested by the butcher) ▪ Population growth/investment ▪ Types of business in main street needs more thought ▪ Changing the landscape ▪ Getting more clients into the CBD ▪ Parking signage/more foot traffic ▪ Engagement of a sense of place ▪ Love the river concept ▪ Making Wodonga individual ▪ Need to be positive in outlook/passionate people ▪ Proactive council ▪ Updating appearance ▪ More metropolitan ▪ More outdoor dining areas. Great atmosphere. Good retail mix. Lots of eateries. ▪ Good traffic flow. Good streetscape. ▪ Develop a centre/more social environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Back up from council for business owners ▪ Make-over will attract more family clientele ▪ Railway line development ▪ Bigger retailers, more cafes, more retail shops, clothes/shoes etc. ▪ Keep up the High Street events. LOVE Lounging On High. ▪ Attractions such as cinema ▪ Uniformity of style of businesses ▪ You are DREAMING! ▪ Council not wasting money ▪ Encourage people to have a look at the new CBD. Encouraging people to stay and come back. ▪ Uplifting the look of the street ▪ Pull down the whole CBD and start again, we need new shop fronts ▪ Remove rail and replace with shops ▪ Trees and garden areas ▪ Consistency of style of shops ▪ Less traffic, more access ▪ Playground that is safe for families in the park ▪ Alfresco areas frequently along the street ▪ Good night vibrancy
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Other comments:

- Do it quick!
- Looks like a ton of sheds with shop fronts
- Need parking signage
- Just do it
- How long until make-over is complete?
- Is it on website
- Thought the river was real water
- Don't like Safeway car park, put in shops instead
- Bus stop location needs to be considered

Wodonga Chamber of Commerce Submission

On September 23, Wodonga Chamber of Commerce conducted a consultation with 25 members and non-members. A summary of the comments from this meeting are included below, along with the Wodonga Chamber of Commerce's official position. While no indication was provided about the degree of support or opposition to the plans from this meeting, the Wodonga Chamber of Commerce supports many of the elements of the design but has expressed concerns about others.

The following is taken from the Wodonga Chamber of Commerce's submission.

Chamber of Commerce comments on the proposed concept design.

Wodonga Chamber of Commerce has taken all comments and feedback from members and non members into consideration in forming our position. The chamber is positive about making changes to High Street; however we want to have a clear commerce strip with street scaping that does not have a confusing message between about social activity and commerce.

Chamber of Commerce supports the following concept plan designs elements:

1. Angle Parking

The chamber supports the changes planned to angle parking. However, we believe there can be more places generated by changing some of the other design elements.

2. Two lanes of traffic in High Street

The chamber supports the proposed changes in traffic lanes, subject to clearer lane markings for vehicles to travel in. Also, we agree with the capacity to turn right into Stanley Street from High Street, subject to

developing ways in which it would be safe.

3. Cole's wall redesign

The chamber supports the current design as proposed.

4. Curbs and seating

The chamber supports the proposed concept design to have the curbs blur the line between the footpath and the street. We also agree that there is a need for further seating in the street.

5. Movable market stalls

The chamber agrees that having moveable market stalls will provide an opportunity to maximise the use of the street should it be closed off for events.

6. More greenery

The chamber agrees that having more greenery is appealing, subject to the type of tree which we would like to be consulted on.

Chamber of Commerce does not support the following concept plan designs elements:

1. Ribs and River

The Chamber does not believe the ribs add any value to making the strip better for commerce. We are also unsure as whether the river paving adds any value as well.

2. Playground in High Street

The chamber does not support having a playground in High Street. We believe it would be better placed in Woodland Grove adjacent to High Street or someplace similar. With this design element removed there can be more parking made available for customers.

3. Kiosks

The chamber does not support the kiosks being permanently in the street, except for one to be used for events, public and tourism information. We would have no concerns with portable kiosks that are professionally constructed being put into place for street parties or events such as Carnivale.

4. Bridges

The chamber does not believe there is a need for the bridges. A clear alternative is to have speed bumps as walkways as per designs in other regional centres.

5. Permanent Stage

The chamber does not agree to a permanent stage in the street. We do however agree there should be an area for temporary staging for events.

6. Signage

There appears to be very little consideration to signage to inform the public of businesses in High Street and to where the back street parking is available. This need's to be addressed.

7. Access for disabled customers

The chamber believes the current design may make it difficult for disabled customers particularly sight impaired or those in wheelchairs to move around the street.

The chamber also considers the following matters associated with High Street need further discussion with council:

- 1. There are doubts the present design will increase business at all and there is potential for it to date quickly;*
- 2. There needs to be a strategy that addresses the mix of business in High Street;*
- 3. The benefits of the changes have not been properly explained or discussed in depth with businesses. Where is the cost benefit analysis?;*
- 4. High Street is dirty and needs to be properly cleaned all the time. Is this design going to make the street look cleaner?;*
- 5. The GORF program has not been a financial success from a business perspective it has not translated into more spending in the street;*
- 6. Public safety needs to be considered in the design, particularly with issues associated with inappropriate behaviour;*
- 7. Just building a new streetscape will not change the buying behaviours of Wodonga residents there needs to be joint chamber/council plan for the city; and*
- 8. We are concerned about disruption to businesses in the construction phase and believe there is a need for the chamber to be consulted on construction plans as early as possible.*

In conclusion, the Wodonga Chamber of Commerce stated that they are positive about changes in High Street and that further, “we welcome the opportunity to provide the views of our members on this important development for our city. We would welcome further discussion and consultations with Wodonga Council.”

Petition

A number of merchants organised a petition which they promoted in their shops. The petition had 214 signatures and read:

“Stop!! The High Street Dig project. The so called “makeover” in its proposed form is unacceptable. We would like a say in how our main street is to be changed.”

All concerns were noted and have been addressed in this report.

C) Comments for consideration as the result of the Community Feedback

It would be useful to consider the fundamental goals of the project when considering all the information that has been gathered from the community throughout a number of major strategic projects.

The Function of High Street

It has been an understanding from the beginning of this process that High Street does not just serve a commerce function. The design and social functions are intended to build High Street as the civic heart of the city, performing a range of very important civic, social and cultural functions.

Indeed, it was highlighted by the community leaders who participated in the community planning process that the CBD Heart was a priority not just in a commercial sense but also for a variety of social, cultural and identity purposes. This was demonstrated at the final leadership breakfast where the following three priorities were identified under the heading of CBD Heart (one of nine areas prioritised by the community):

- Meeting place – used on a daily basis and events
- City square with stage – commercial and community hub
- Pride in our vibrant and revitalised heart – a mix of retail that is different and innovative – let’s look at spaces differently to encourage social interaction.

These functions are intended to build the economic vibrancy of High Street, not distract from them. The comments from the Wodonga Chamber of Commerce in their official submission further demonstrate the challenge council has had in communicating this message, and steps need to be taken to bridge this understanding gap.

A report endorsed by Council in May 2007 indicates:

“The Community Feedback from surveys and focus groups has informed us of the importance that our community places on the central business district and the need for business mix and activity options to increase.”

In a further report presented to Council on the June 7, 2007 it was indicated that:

“A concept plan was developed that laid out the principles and core concepts for how the social/cultural programs, economic development programs and design elements will work together to deliver the vision of High street as a “vibrant place which provides a rich mix of social, cultural, civic and economic experience.”

(refer Appendix D).

The Safety Paradox

The design of High Street is based on the latest approaches to street design being applied in Europe, an approach that has become known as the ‘shared space’ approach. This concept is relatively new in Australia with some early examples in Mooloolaba in Queensland, Geraldton in Western Australia with Bendigo in Victoria are about to embark on creating a large shared space in their Central Business District.

Because this approach is relatively new, it is important that the underlying principles be explained to the community so they are aware that this approach is based on significant research.

Until recently, the approach to making streets safer, in an urban context, was to make them more predictable. Recent experience in Europe, for example, the Shared Space projects, suggests that while this strategy works well on freeways and highways, the exact opposite is true for the streets that are the social spaces of a city. To make these kind of spaces safer, authorities are:

1. Minimising traffic control devices such as signs, white lines, and traffic lights; and
2. Blurring the boundaries between the functions of the street – for example, removing kerbs and bike lanes to create a ‘shared space’.

The difference in the way these authorities are dealing with highways as opposed to streets that are social spaces underlines a safety paradox. The highway is made safer by making it more predictable. However, making social spaces more predictable can make them less safe.

The key to unravelling the safety paradox is the concept of ‘false sense of security’. False sense of security is when something appears safer than it is in reality and the user is ‘tricked’ into taking a risk that they would not have taken if they had known the true state of affairs.

The design of any space conveys a subconscious message to those using the space about the 'normative state' of that environment – what can be reasonably expected. When motorists are on a freeway, the design makes a covert promise that they can expect high levels of predictability and are highly unlikely to encounter the unpredictable. The motorists, therefore, drive according to these perceptions. On a whole, removing the unpredictable from this environment does make it safer.

However, if the motorists are suddenly confronted with the unpredictable or an element of intrigue (such as an accident, or a stray animal), they are in the wrong mental state to deal with this. Their senses are not on high alert and they are travelling too fast to deal with this unexpected distraction.

But the situation is reversed in a neighbourhood street or the main shopping street of a town. If a motorist is driving down a residential street and sees children's toys on the side of the street, or kids playing in the street, the visual clues send a covert message that: 'this is a space in which the unexpected should be expected'. The motorist immediately slows down to accommodate the possibility of the unexpected happening.

So the key to solving the seeming contradiction in the safety paradox is to understand that safety is maximised when false sense of security is minimised. On a freeway, false sense of security is minimised by removing unpredictable events (make reality more closely fit the perceptions). But in people spaces, such as High Street, false sense of security is minimised by removing elements that imply a promise of predictability to the motorists (make the perceptions more closely match the reality).

In establishing clear signals about the normative state of a street, what is not included is often more important than what is. If the normative state is that the unexpected should be expected, then traffic control devices such as line markings, official signage, concrete islands and even first-generation traffic calming devices create a mixed message. They covertly promise motorists a certain level of predictability. Ambiguity and lack of clear direction can be incredibly important visual clues as to the 'normative state' of a space.

However, there is a very important question that remains unanswered: why shouldn't authorities use the same strategy they use to make freeways safer on streets such as High Street – that is, make them more predictable by controlling the amount of intrigue and uncertainty that the motorist is exposed too?

Writers, such as Jane Jacobs¹ and Donald Appleyard², have shown that a large portion of life in public spaces revolves around the spontaneous or unplanned exchange. In fact, the quality of public-space life can be measured by the health of the spontaneous exchange realm.

These writers, along with many others, have argued that the spontaneous exchange realm of cities is fundamental to the personal development of

children, the democratic process, social equity, and the ability of the elderly to share their wisdom with others. By very definition, spontaneous exchanges are unpredictable and contain high levels of intrigue and uncertainty.

So the reason it is inappropriate to try to make streets and public places, such as High Street, safer by making them more predictable is because unless authorities also make the social life of the street more controlled and predictable they will simply create a false sense of security by implying a level of predictability that is not delivered in reality.

Design of a street can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Traffic oriented devices send motorists a covert message – this space is predictable and primarily for traffic. Speeds tend to automatically rise. Community life will retreat from this space, which further increases predictability, which further increases speed. On the other hand, create a street environment with high levels of ambiguity and traffic speeds will drop and community life will blossom in this space.

So the amount of intrigue and uncertainty signalled by the design of a traffic environment must be determined by the vision of the vibrancy of community and economic life desired for a space, not by current levels of intrigue and uncertainty. The current levels may well be the result of previous design decisions.

Introducing more intrigue and uncertainty into a street does not mean that motorists will adjust their speed to a level that eliminates all risk (the same people who take unacceptable risks on the freeway will take unacceptable risks in a residential street full of children). According to the researcher and author John Adams, we all add a certain ‘risk factor’ to what we perceive to be ‘safe’. Make our vehicle or travel environment ‘safer’ and we will travel faster (we add the same amount of risk to the new safety level). But the opposite is also true. Make our travel environment feel less predictable and we will travel slower.

(See recommendations table for further information and references.)

References

¹ Jacobs, Jane " The Death and Life of American Cities" Random House NY. 1993

² Appleyard, Donald "Liveable Streets". Berkeley, CA. University of California Press 1981

D) Comments and Recommended Changes from the Community Feedback

Following the submissions received, the concerns and ideas raised by the feedback have been grouped into recommendations for proposed action. The three types of recommendations to council:

- Recommended changes to the design as a result of community input.
- Recommended actions that may result in changes to the design; and
- Recommended non-actions.

Information is provided which demonstrates how these changes result could result in improvements in design, safety and aesthetics.

Idea or Concern	Recommendations	Reasoning
1.1 Risk caused by the lack of distinction between area for cars and area for pedestrians.	1.1.1 That the trafficable area through the central room be changed to make it easier for pedestrians to discern where they may encounter traffic while maintaining the integrity of the shared-space principles spelt out in the Program and Design Manual. 1.1.2 That a safety audit and disability audit, which is currently in progress, be used to further refine the design to ensure that safety is maximised while preserving a healthy balance between the need for safety and the need for a vibrant space that delivers a rich experience.	The clearer definition of the trafficable area will aid pedestrians, including children and those with visual impairments, to know when they are stepping into the trafficable area used by cars. However, it is fundamentally important for keeping traffic speed down that we do not make the differentiation too strong. The more the trafficable areas are made to look like they are owned exclusively by the car driver, the faster the traffic will go, and the greater the danger to pedestrians. The greater the feeling that a space is being shared and that the unpredictable may happen at any moment, the slower the driver will go and the safer the environment becomes.
1.2 Risk created by the river crossing the road and children following the river.	1.2.1 That the design be changed to remove the river from meandering across the trafficable area and instead that it meander through the pedestrian area on both sides of the trafficable area. 1.2.2 That the trafficable area be broken into smaller visual units with paving strips.	We accept that children may have a tendency to follow the river so have made it so a child can follow the river around the ribs and trees without having to worry about traffic. The original reason why it meandered across the road was to break up the road space and help keep speeds down. This can be accomplished by putting paving strips across the trafficable lanes.
1.3 Concern: Risk caused by the location of the tree house near the road or by the height of the tree house from the ground.	1.3.1 That concepts for the tree house be modified so that they keep children relatively close to the ground. 1.3.2 That the modified tree house be located between the Tooles Disposals entry and the fountain, removing it even further from any traffic. 1.3.3 That seating and landscaping be used to separate the fountain area from traffic.	The trafficable lanes have already been bent towards the Coles wall to provide a significant buffer zone between the tree house and traffic. We believe that with all the recommendations taken as a total package, that child safety in the fountain area (tree house integrated) has been addressed. However, this will be fully investigated as part of the ongoing risk and access audits.
1.4 The design looks too cluttered	1.4.1 That the river be removed from trafficable area. 1.4.2 That the number of trees and ribs be rationalised.	The drawing on the front of the brochures was taken from a computer generated image that had a large number of immature trees in the design. In addition, it was a perspective looking down the trafficable area where elements are placed close to the edge in order to define the space. The edge of the trafficable area is 'busy' on purpose. However, we have since checked computer generated images from within the room itself and this does not look as busy as the view that motorists get from the bridges.
Concern or idea	Recommendations	Reasoning
2.1 We want to have a clear commerce strip that does not confuse social activity and commerce.	2.1.1 That the council form a High Street Revitalisation Merchants' Reference Group charged with giving council detailed guidance on all aspects of the High St revitalisation including social programs, economic development and physical design. 2.1.2 That Chamber of Commerce be invited to nominate one	This concern, (about confusing commerce and social activity) raised in the Wodonga Chamber of Commerce submission, suggests that many merchants currently don't understand that there is an underlying economic strategy in combining the social, cultural and civic functions of High St with the commercial functions and that this strategy is built on well researched experience from around the world and not on the whim of council. The council must therefore find ways of conveying that this approach is based on a vast amount of empirical evidence, that is, that combining the two functions produces economic vitality. For example, in an article The Role of Pedestrian Precincts in the Evolution

	<p>member of this reference group and that merchants in the High St precinct, along with interested members of the community, be invited to nominate themselves with council selecting the makeup from those who nominate.</p> <p>2.1.3 That the reference group be chaired by a councillor who does not have voting rights.</p> <p>2.1.4 That among the first tasks of the reference group be the evolution of the document Economic development blueprint for High St... a holistic approach.</p>	<p>of German City Centres from Shopping to Urban Entertainment Centres, Rolf Monheim, now retired professor of Applied Urban Geography at the University of Bayreuth, Germany, shows how pedestrianisation and traffic calming in German cities has led to a rapid growth in the leisure shopper, with half the shoppers in Munic being their for leisure, one quarter to one fifth for 'duty' and the rest combining both.</p> <p>On January 31, 2008, council organised a Business Vitality Workshop to begin work on a Business Vitality Plan for High St. Subsequently, the Wodonga Chamber of Commerce accepted responsibility for developing this plan, but to council's knowledge, no action has been taken. It should be noted that around half the merchants on High St do not belong to the Wodonga Chamber of Commerce.</p> <p>Council therefore believes that a better outcome will be achieved if this economic development plan, along with the landscape design, is driven and owned by a range of High St merchants.</p>
<p>2.2 The use of animals and animal footprints to define parking bays may encourage children to follow footprints and this may create a safety issue with traffic.</p>	<p>2.2.1 That the safety concerns about the parking markers be reviewed as part of the safety audit.</p> <p>2.2.2 That the design of the parking markers be referred to the High Street Revitalisation Merchants' Reference Group and that recommendations be made to council as a separate report.</p>	<p>Part of keeping traffic speeds down is to create an environment in which the car clearly sees itself as playing a subordinate and secondary role. Reducing traffic artefacts, such as white line markings, is an important part of this strategy. However, we accept that replacing them with animal footprints may encourage children to follow them which may create a dangerous situation. We will therefore look at how we may either reduce that risk, or find some other way of replacing the white lines.</p>
<p>2.3 Concern: Lack of bike parking.</p>	<p>2.3.1 That the options for creating designated bike parking spaces be investigated and that these be built into the final plans recommended to council.</p>	
<p>2.4 Loss of parking.</p>	<p>2.4.1 That merchants and the general public be informed that under the current plan there is a net gain of 11 parking spaces in High St, not a net loss.</p> <p>2.4.2 That in refining the design, council officers investigate how number of car parks can be optimised without jeopardising the basis design principles upon which the design is built.</p> <p>2.4.3 That council produce a CBD Parking Education Strategy document that has as it's goal encouraging people to use the plentiful carparks in the streets either side of High St. Issues to be covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - educating people as to the location of car parks - a signage system that makes it easy for people to find these parks. - welcoming motorists to these car parks by having entryways that echo the quality of the High St experience, for example, the ribs may be used to create a special entry to the car parks. - through the funky laneways project, make the walk from car parks to High St more attractive and part of the overall High St experience. 	<p>Reasoning:</p> <p>There are currently 45 car parks in High St in the area to be rebuilt. There will be 56 when the road is rebuilt, a net gain of 11 (possibly more under changes being considered). However, there is currently more than 1,000 car parks in the two blocks either side of High St and another 200 have been approved.</p> <p>The challenge is to educate people who are looking for a car park to go where there is a much more plentiful supply of car parks, and to make this choice more attractive.</p> <p>If we can encourage people to park and walk, all shops benefit through an overall increase in impulse sales. The shorter the distance a person has to walk from their car to an intended destination, the smaller the chances of an impulse sale from the shops they walk past.</p>
<p>2.5 Where will the traffic go? Keep it four lanes.</p>	<p>2.5.1 That the traffic studies, which show that two lanes on High St are adequate, be made public as soon as they are finalised.</p>	<p>Havelock and Hovell street have adequate capacity for traffic that bypasses High Street.</p>

<p>2.6 I can't see how these designs will help build business.</p>	<p>2.6.1 That the first draft of a detailed report Economic development blueprint for High St... a holistic approach, to explain how the High St rebuild fits within a total business-building strategy, be developed in consultation with the High Street Revitalisation Merchants' Reference Group.</p> <p>2.6.2 That the business mentoring program, in partnership with the Wodonga Chamber of Commerce, be continued, and if possible, strengthened.</p>	<p>Some businesses believe that the only way to build business is to increase parking in front of their shop or in very close proximity. However, this strategy is aimed only at building the intentional shoppers segment of the market. The economic blueprint for High St aims to build all four segments of the market simultaneously: intentional shoppers, leisure shoppers, social and cultural visitors and tourists. Leisure shoppers, social and cultural visitors and tourists are looking primarily for ambience and a quality experience, with shopping being an integral part of that experience (see for example <i>The Geography of Tourism and Recreation</i> by Colin Mitchel Hall, Colin Hall, and Stephen Page.) These three market segments are prepared to walk further from their car parking space, especially if this walk is woven seamlessly into their quality experience. The High St design is aimed at increasing the quality of the experience that people have while in the space.</p>
<p>2.7 Wodonga is a conservative town and is not ready for a cosmopolitan design like the one proposed.</p>	<p>2.7.1 That council continue to engage the Wodonga community in a dialogue about its identity – and the contradictory elements of that identity – and how this is represented in the design elements of High St.</p>	<p>This concern is not backed by community feedback to date. Approximately seven out of ten residents who expressed an opinion on the feedback forms, and seven out of ten merchants were in favour of the design. This is considered a high level of support for the overall design.</p> <p>However, the community conversation can certainly influence the way the spaces along High St are dressed. The design has been left largely as a 'blank canvass' so that it can be 'ever-changing', representing the multifaceted nature of Wodonga. A device is being developed that allows furniture and other items to be easily moved so the street can be dressed in many different ways.</p> <p>The landscape design for High St has striven to strike a balance between maintaining links to the past and the natural setting and looking to a new future and an evolving image (quirky design elements that stamp Wodonga as a unique, progressive regional city.)</p> <p>Charles Landry and Franco Bianchini in their book <i>The Creative City</i> quote a report by Ken Young that concludes:</p> <p><i>Experience from both Britain and Europe and America suggests that strong leadership is an essential element in both the social and economic regeneration of cities; conversely weak leadership is a significant contributor to urban decline...</i></p> <p><i>Sometimes faith is a necessary precursor to investment, both in the sense of financial resources and of investing in a vision of the city... this requires an active leadership to promote and bolster an image of the city, which initially may bear only a limited resemblance to reality to the majority of citizens. (p27)</i></p>
<p>2.8 The design will date</p>	<p>2.8.1 That council continue to use the public art guidelines spelt out in the High Street Landscape Concept Design manual (page 20) to ensure that the chances of the design dating are reduced to a minimum.</p>	<p>Design fashions date. Iconic designs are timeless and become more relevant with time. Iconic designs, such as the Sydney Opera House or Gaudi's buildings in Barcelona, are controversial when first built and appear to run the risk of dating easily. But because they are unique and not tied to an existing fashion, they carve out for themselves their own timeless space that is untouched by changing fashions.</p> <p>In the public art guidelines (cited above) one of the guiding principles is to "create a unique 'Wodonga Style' and culture" that others will seek to copy. The design is intended to be cutting edge and iconic.</p>
<p>2.9 We need some dog friendly areas</p>	<p>2.9.1 That council investigate placing dog drinking bowls as part of drinking fountains.</p> <p>2.9.2 That council investigate dog hitching points.</p>	
<p>2.10 There should be no right turn into Stanley St</p>	<p>2.10.1 That council monitor this to see if it causes any problems, and if so, the right turn be blocked by extending the garden in the centre of the road.</p>	<p>The concern is that a right turn into Stanley will cause traffic delays. However, these delays are likely to be no longer than for people waiting for someone to angle park. Because motorists will expect a journey down High St to be slow, they are more likely to tolerate these delays. If they are in a hurry they will soon learn to use a parallel route.</p>
<p>2.11 The boundary between playground and commerce strip has been too blurred.</p>	<p>2.11.1 That the Public Art Guidelines (page 20 of High Street Landscape Concept Design 27/8/08) be applied to the tree house to ensure that it looks like a quality piece of public art which at the same time playfully engages children of all</p>	<p>Enriching the total experience while people are in High Street is part of building the economic vitality of High Street as a commercial strip. Part of the strategy for enriching the quality of this experience is to build a child-friendly space which encourages playfulness for both children and adults. Playfulness will be encouraged by the playful nature of sculptures, seating and other functional items – not by the</p>

	<p>abilities as well as adults.</p> <p>2.11.2 That the same guidelines be applied to all elements in the street that are intended to make the street child-friendly.</p>	<p>installation of specialised play equipment. In fact, the guidelines spelt out in the High Street Landscape Concept Design (27/8/08) precludes the space been turned into a specialised playground.</p>
<p>2.12 That council is not responsive when submissions are made as part of a community engagement process.</p>	<p>2.12.1 That the report Community Engagement Report Landscape Design V5 – updated with the council decisions on these recommendations - be released to the community, particularly those people or groups who made submissions so they can be informed about council's response to community feedback on the landscape design for High St.</p> <p>2.12.2 That there be a media release to inform the general public that the report is on display at council, selected businesses and community centres.</p>	
Concern or suggestion	Recommendations	Reasoning
<p>3.1 Remove cars and make it a mall</p>	<p>No action</p>	<p>The secret of great public spaces is density of human activity. Spread the activity too thin and the public space begins to die. Perceptions of crime begin to rise and surveillance is increased, making the space less hospitable. The space becomes locked into a downward spiral. If the entire High St were turned into a mall there would not be enough human activity to keep it alive. Cars in the space, providing their speed is slow, can actually help create a sense of activity and movement and keep the space feeling full.</p>
<p>3.2 Remove the bridges and replace with speed bumps like they have in other regional centres.</p>	<p>No action</p>	<p>As spelt out in the Program and Design Manual V2 (26/9/07) the current design is built on reducing traffic control devices to a minimum in order to keep traffic speeds down. It is also built on the idea of breaking the street into distinct rooms which have a strong entry statement. The bridges are an elegant way to meet both these objectives, while adding a little character to the street. Speed bumps would accomplish neither.</p>
<p>3.3 Remove the ribs and river as they do not assist with commerce.</p>	<p>No action</p>	<p>The ribs and river are core elements of making an iconic space, and as such, are part of the overall blueprint for building economic vitality.</p>
<p>3.4 Do not have a permanent stage but rather a temporary stage that is put up and down.</p>	<p>No action</p>	<p>The stage is intended to serve many functions, including: an elevated platform for people to eat their lunch or dinner (supports local cafes); a place for fashion parades and promotions that will showcase local business; a gathering point for watching large sporting events on the big screen; social events like Lounging On High which promotes late night shopping; professional buskers; and showcasing local talent. The council therefore believes the stage is an important part of the overall economic development strategy for High St. The cost of putting a temporary stage up and down for all these activities is expensive and not logistically feasible.</p>
<p>3.5 Do not put permanent kiosks in the street as this will impact negatively on existing businesses.</p>	<p>No action</p>	<p>Co-location of similar businesses stimulates the local economy, not distracts from it. For example, Lygon Street would not be half as attractive if it only had one Italian restaurant. It is the diversity of offering that makes Lygon Street famous and attractive. Rather than detract from local businesses, the kiosks are intended to help kick-start the revitalisation of High St by bringing a greater diversity of business offering.</p> <p>Some merchants now understand the colocation principle and are forming a circuit of similar shops (e.g. High Fashion) which they cooperatively promote.</p>

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the recommendations 1.1 to 2.12.2 and that no action be taken on issues 3.1 – 3.5

Councillors De Kruiff/Speedie

That Council adopt the recommendations 1.1 to 2.12.2 and that no action be taken on issues 3.1 – 3.5, but with recommendation 1.2.1 and 1.4.1 read as follows and a new recommendation 2.1.5 to be included as follows:

1.2.1 That the design be changed to remove the river from meandering across the trafficable area and instead that it meander through the pedestrian area on both sides of the trafficable area and under the bridges.

1.4.1–That the river be removed from the trafficable area, except under the bridges.

2.1.5 That the reference group consider also be asked to consider the artistic components of High Street such as the ribs, trees, and so on.

A division was called for.

Councillors Wicks, De Kruiff, Speedie and Hanuska voted for the motion.

Councillors Mahony and Mahood voted against the motion

CARRIED 2008-178

9. Investment Attraction Director's Report

9.1 Late Item: Festival & Event Contribution Program Round: October 2008

The City of Wodonga values Festivals & Events, recognizing the contribution they make to a dynamic, diverse and holistic community. The Festival & Event Contribution Program is a key way Council seeks to support a range of public entertainment & engagement opportunities. Through this program, funding is available to community organisations towards their event costs.

Funding Category	Agreement Type	Amount
Major Events	Funding Agreement	\$0 - \$20,000
Minor Events	Funding Agreement	\$0 - \$5,000
New & One Off Events	Funding Agreement	\$0 - \$2,000

The Festival & Event Contribution Program is part of the Cultural Services Plan 2007 – 2012 (see below):

Key Direction	Event Program
Strategy 2	Foster the development and delivery of community initiated events hosted in the city
Key Action	Develop and implement an Event Contribution Scheme to support community events

Organisations and projects funded through the Festival and Events Contributions Program must meet the Main Objective and at least three of the following objectives.

Main Objective

Organisations seeking funds through this program must clearly demonstrate they can provide opportunities for a maximum number of Wodonga residents to engage and tap into events and festivals within the municipal boundary of Wodonga where they live, work and play.

Key Objectives

- Provide opportunities for engagement in cultural, leisure, arts or physical activity
- Offer innovative elements within their event and cater for diverse audience sectors of the community
- Showcase local talent and celebrate the diversity within the city
- Nurture a sense of community identity & civic pride
- Promote cultural, economic and social vitality for the community
- Contribute positively to the profile of the city

- Promote and develop the skills and activities of community groups, individuals and audiences
- Foster volunteer participation and skill development opportunities
- Attract and secure funds from other regional, state & federal partners
- Attract visitors from outside of the region to the city
- Contribute to economic growth of the city

By supporting the community to devise and direct their own initiatives, the Festival and Events Contribution Program assists in fostering self determination and capacity building amongst community members.

Events are an extremely popular and traditional way for the community to celebrate, engage, participate and give back to the community; and often offer meaningful avenues for volunteers to expand and build upon their skills bases in event management, project planning, marketing, risk management and communication.

It is anticipated that the program will increase opportunities for audience engagement, community vitality, visitor attraction and associated spending. The proposed events in the October 2008 round anticipate attracting total audiences of 19,000 people with nearly 8,000 of these attendees being visitors to Wodonga (approx 42%). The estimated expenditure of both overnight and day visitors will be in excess of \$1.75 million dollars; a vital injection for the local economy.

Applicants for the October '08 round and event details are included below:

Organisation	Event	Event Description	Amount Recommended
Border BMX Club	BMX Victoria Interclub Races BMX Victoria State Titles	Two day BMX race event. 3500 expected to attend over 2 days.	\$4,000
Australian Junior Basketball Cup	Australian Country Junior Basketball Cup	National tournament for male and female state country teams up to under 18 years. 800 participants & 1500 spectators over 8 days	\$5,000
Wodonga Tennis Centre	VCTA Country Week	World's largest tennis teams event on grass. 1500 people over 4 days (held in Feb09)	\$10,000
Wodonga Citizens Band	Carols by Candlelight	A family Christmas tradition for many Wodonga residents. 10,000 expected to attend.	\$17,000
Apex Club	Moonlight Cinema	Affordable family cinema night (2 per year). 1200 - 1500 expected.	\$4,000
Wheelchair Sports VIC	Albury-Wodonga Basketball Challenge	Wheelchair b'ball tournament. 150 attendees over 2 days.	\$2,000
		TOTAL	\$42,000

NB. In-kind support previously provided by CoW is now encouraged to be paid by event organiser through grant funds awarded

RECOMMENDATION

That the recommended funding amounts for each applicant organisation be approved through the Festival and Event Contribution Program.

Councillors Mahony/Mahood

That the recommended funding amounts for each applicant organisation be approved through the Festival and Event Contribution Program.

CARRIED 2008-179

10. Sustainable Development Director's Report

At this time, the time being 7.06pm, Cr Speedie declared a conflict of interest in relation to item 10.1 as her as her domestic partner has a holding in the company awarded the permit (permit no: 2007/229). Cr Speedie left the room prior to the consideration of item 10.1.

10.1 Planning Report - Delegated Planning Permits (PPA.001)

The Manager Statutory Planning has approved 22 permits including four permit amendments by delegation from 1st October to 31st October 2008. Significant applications considered in the last month include:

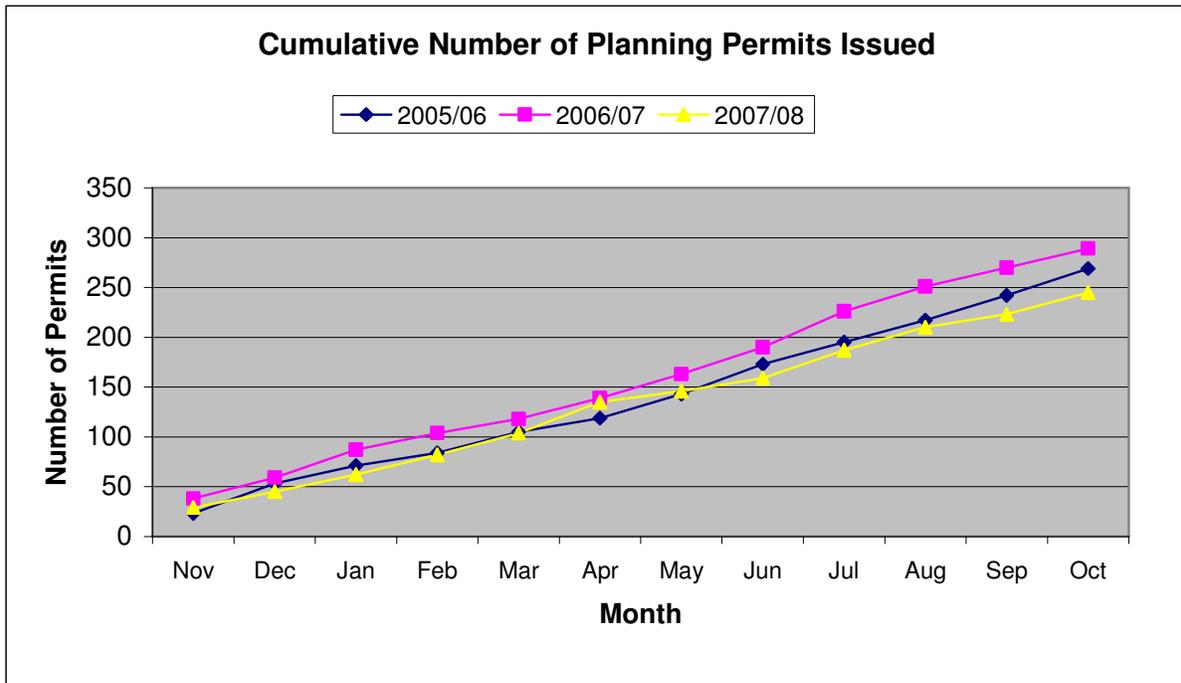
Permits approved in October 2008

Permit No	Use/Development	Applicant	Site Address
2007/229	38 lot residential subdivision (Baranduda Park Stages 3 & 4)	Esler & Associates Consulting Surveyors	John Boyes Drive, Baranduda
2008/108	Change of use to place of assembly (self brewing and functions only) liquor licence and construction of first floor external balcony	Mr S T Marshall	Unit 1, 67 Wigg Street, Wodonga
2008/132	Upgrade existing fuel depot facility with new fuel bowsers, canopy, office and retail building	Caltex Australia Petroleum Pty Ltd	Bradford Street, Wodonga

Permits refused in October 2008

None

Comparison of monthly permits/amendments issued for previous years



RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

At this time, the time being 7.09 PM Cr Speedie returned to the room after the discussion of the above item was concluded.

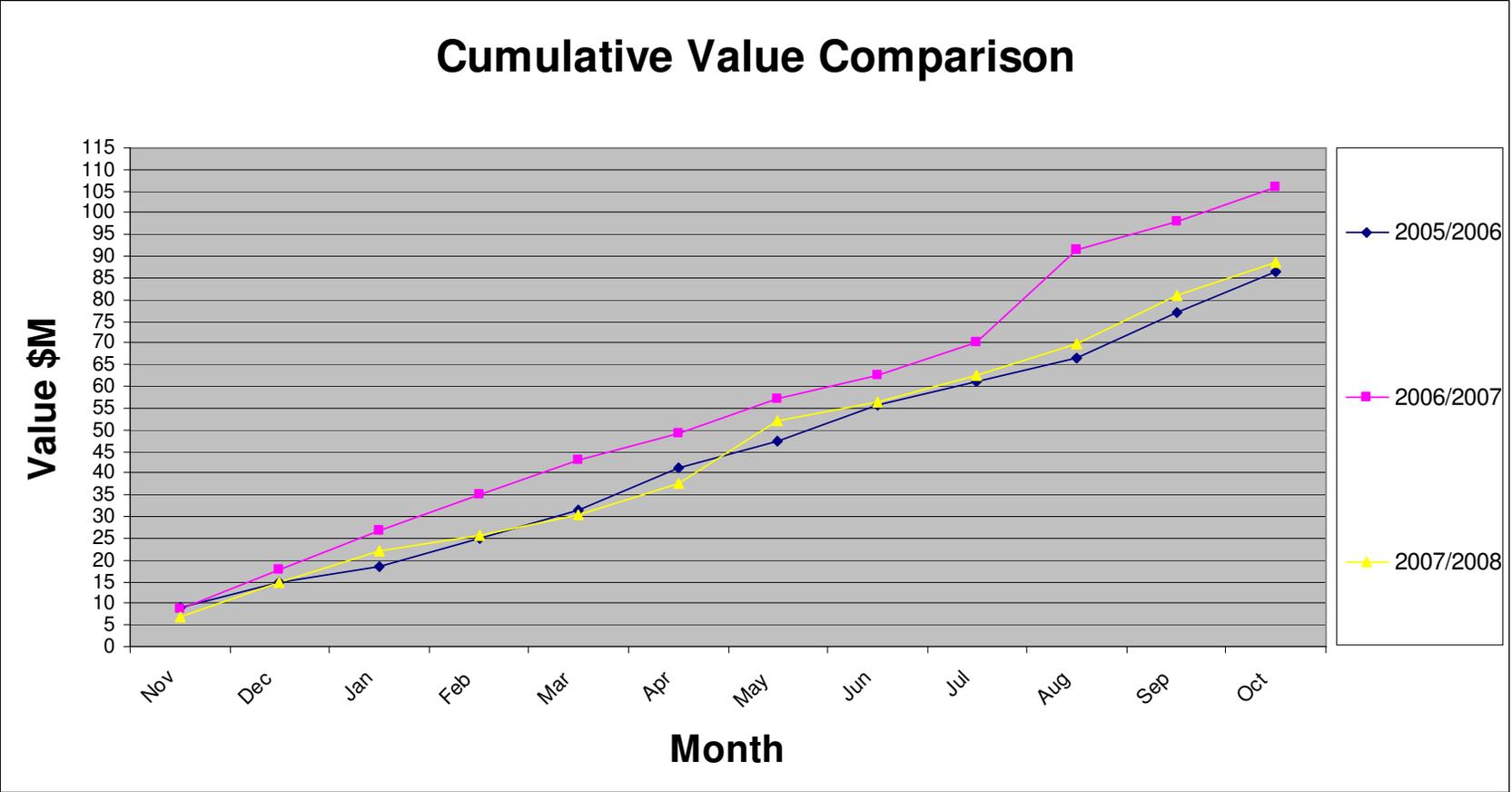
10.2 Building Report for October 2008

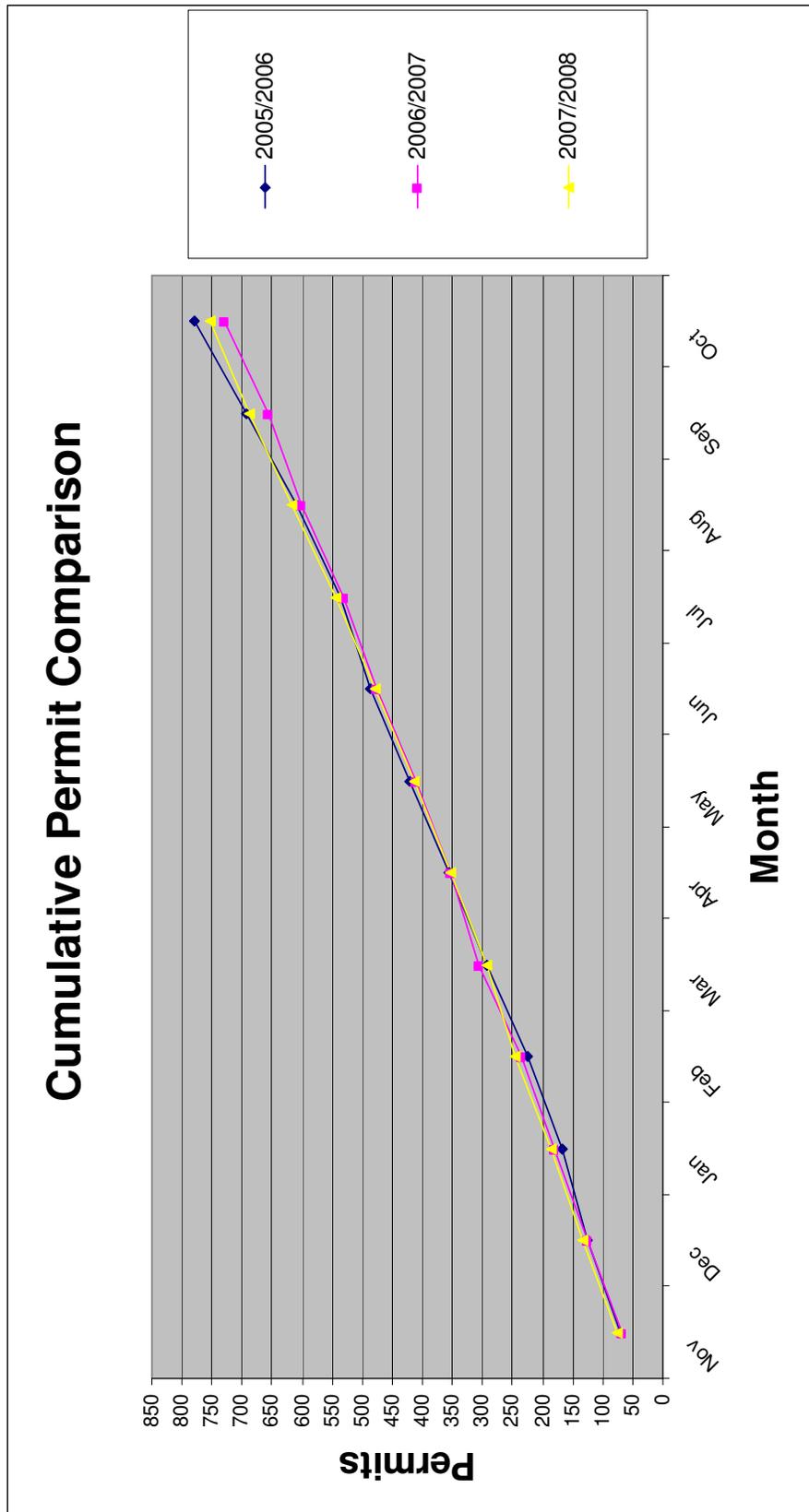
The value of building permits issued in Wodonga from 1st October 2008 to the 31st October 2008 is \$7,586,581. Details of the building approvals in excess of \$100,000 are as follows

Permit No	Value	Construction	Address
2008/302/COA	\$580,000	MEDICAL CENTRE ADDITIONS	291 BEECHWORTH ROAD WODONGA
2008/306/DWELL	\$291,317	DWELLING	20 BLUE BONNET WAY WODONGA
2008/333/DWELL	\$200,000	DWELLING	16 CONDAMINE STREET WEST WODONGA
2008/339/DWELL	\$654,000	2 STOREY DWELLING	4 KINGSWOOD WAY WEST WODONGA
2008/358/DWELL	\$260,684	DWELLING	7 PEREGRINE PLACE WODONGA
2008/345/IND	\$100,000	AUTO ELECTRICAL REPAIRS WORKSHOP	8 QUEEN STREET WODONGA
2008/273/MUTS/1	\$489,513	3 UNITS OF 6 DWELLING UNIT DEVELOPMENT	31 AWBURN STREET WODONGA
2008/177/PBSALT/1	\$140,000	ALTERATIONS & NEW CARPORTS TO 4 EXISTING UNITS	7,11,13 &15 WEEKS CRESCENT WEST WODONGA
2008/257/PBSCOA	\$679,092	EXTENSION TO STUDENT AMENITIES	87 MCKOY STREET WEST WODONGA
2008/237/PBSCOM	\$850,000	MOTOR VEHICLE SHOWROOM / WORKSHOP	2A TRAFALGAR STREET WODONGA
2008/215/PBSDWL	\$228,000	DWELLING	6 TEE COURT WEST WODONGA
2008/221/PBSDWL	\$160,000	DWELLING	46 FIRESTONE WAY WEST WODONGA
2008/236/PBSDWL	\$241,890	DWELLING	21 MONTCLAIR AVENUE WEST WODONGA
2008/243/PBSDWL	\$160,000	DWELLING	9 GRANGE CLOSE WODONGA
2008/244/PBSDWL	\$160,000	DWELLING	8 GRANGE CLOSE WODONGA
2008/245/PBSDWL	\$160,000	DWELLING	7 GRANGE CLOSE WODONGA
2008/248/PBSDWL	\$257,400	DWELLING	2 GRACE COURT WEST WODONGA
2008/254/PBSDWL	\$354,845	DWELLING	41 GOLFLINKS AVENUE WEST WODONGA
2008/261/PBSDWL	\$183,388	DWELLING	7 GALAXIAS TERRACE BANDIANA
2008/265/PBSDWL	\$235,424	DWELLING	21 CRAIG CIRCUIT LENEVA
2008/258/PBSUTS/1	\$360,000	3 DWELLING UNITS	144 LAWRENCE STREET WODONGA

Building activity in the City of Wodonga – October 2008 (Sep 08)

• Total number of building permits issued in Wodonga	68	(70)
• Total number of dwellings approved in Wodonga (Dwellings & Units)	15/6	(25/2)
• Total number of permits relating to commercial & industrial works in Wodonga	4	(10)
• Percentage of work approved by Council	60.29%	(51.43%)
• Number of permits approved outside Wodonga - Victoria	1	(1)
• Number of permits approved outside Wodonga - NSW	0	(0)





RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

10.3 School Crossing Supervisor Scheme – B70.0044

Background

A VicRoads and Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) working party has prepared two reports relating to the school crossing supervisor program.

1. The first report details the history and current activity of the program. It recognises the changed funding over time resulting in an increased council contribution from 50/50 to 75/25. The report covers matters such as the introduction of 40km/h zones, the changing trends in pedestrian and commuter travel to schools, the number of accidents/deaths and interstate models of operation.
2. The second report includes VicRoads recommendations that propose some major changes which will impact on all councils across the State such as:
 - restriction on funding,
 - possible closure of school crossings that do not meet the warrants, and
 - removal of Crossing Supervisors from crossings controlled by traffic lights that are essentially used by secondary school pedestrians.

In Wodonga, this may result in a reduction of crossing supervisors from 19 to 15 and discontinuation of four school crossings.

The eight VicRoads recommendations are listed with a response to each.

Recommendation	Response
The children’s crossing supervisor service should be retained	Support
The current method of operation and division of responsibilities to be retained	Support but request a designated officer of VicRoads be accountable for the program
The eligibility requirements be amended to exclude supervision of crossings controlled by traffic signals essentially used by secondary school pedestrians	Support
The guidelines be amended to exclude the supervision of crossings when child pedestrian numbers drop to less than ten per hour, except in exceptional circumstances as determined by Councils	Support
Future State Government subsidy payments should represent an agreed proportion of total program costs	Support but re-affirm a 50/50 share
No additional safety measures are recommended	Generally support but believe innovation should be encouraged
Supervision of crossings be limited to within the posted School Speed Zones times. A mechanism for improved co-ordination between schools and Councils be developed at a state wide and local level to address school closing times.	Support, the early closure of schools impacts on the availability of staff and places them at greater risk
A Memorandum of Understanding between Vicroads and individual councils to be developed by Vicroads and MAV to define roles and responsibilities	Support

Discussion

The Council Plan details community safety as a major focus. Supervised school crossings provides safety benefits on several fronts such as the walking school bus that utilizes supervised school crossings and bike paths and walking trails are generally designed to utilize existing crossings wherever possible.

Current Council policy states that only school crossings that meet the warrants i.e. attract state government funding, will be supervised by council staff. Council policy also dictates that cost shifting from the state government to local government should be resisted.

Discontinuation of some supervised school crossings may result in parents becoming more concerned with child safety. Parents may choose to drive their young school children to school and as a result may impact on traffic movement in the vicinity of schools. Walking to school also provides health benefits to young children which can be compromised as result of them being driven to school. Conversely, some children may increase their traffic and safety awareness.

It is important that young school children be assisted (in the first instance) and then educated to cross roads safely. Funding for this scheme should be fairly distributed with a 50/50 ratio. It is unfortunate that VicRoads only utilise a single criterion for funding of supervised school crossings i.e. where 20 children or more use a crossing. This may affect up to three supervised school crossings in Wodonga.

Budget

It is likely that funding will continue to decrease and pending no closure of local crossings, a gradual increase in costs in the order of \$40,000 per year can be expected.

A 50/50 share of funding of supervised school crossings will reduce Council's current contribution by approximately the same \$40,000 per year.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. respond to VicRoads advising of its position in relation to the main findings and listed recommendations,
2. support the MAV in obtaining at least a 50/50 cost sharing arrangement; and
3. request support from the North East CEO's Group and Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) in regard to recommendations 1 and 2.

Councillors Speedie/Hanuska

That Council

1. respond to VicRoads advising of its position in relation to the main findings and listed recommendations,
2. support the MAV in obtaining at least a 50/50 cost sharing arrangement; and
3. request support from the North East CEO's Group and Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) in regard to recommendations 1 and 2.

CARRIED 2008-180

10.4 Tobacco Reforms B70.0110

Local Government, through the employment of Environmental Health Officers (EHO's) is required to enforce the provisions of the Tobacco Act. State funding is provided for this activity with a continued increase in standards and requirements to drive down smoking rates and thereby reduce rates of smoking related illness and deaths.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) recently released the draft Victorian Tobacco Control Strategy 2008 - 2013 and has requested submissions and responses from Council.

Background

Despite past legislative efforts, including the ban of smoking in all licensed premises as of the 1 July 2007, tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of illness in Victoria.

It has been reported that:

- smoking claims the lives of almost three North East residents a week,
- there are 23 smoking related deaths each year from 181 fatalities in Wodonga,
- regional councils attribute for eight out of the top ten Victorian government areas where smoking is the leading cause of death, and
- there are higher rates of smoking in Aboriginal groups and those with low socio-economic status or levels of education

The proposed strategy aims to reduce the prevalence of smoking in Victoria, with the main aims by 2013 to:

- reduce smoking among the adult population by 20% (from 17.3% to 13.8%),
- reduce current smoking among pregnant women by 50% (from 9% to 5%), and
- reduce smoking among adult Aboriginal people and other high prevalence groups by at least 20% (from 29% to 23% in Aboriginal Victorians and from 20% to 16% in socio-economically disadvantaged groups).

It is proposed that the strategy also include a range of legislative and other actions that will help the rates of smoking in Victoria. Some primary actions noted include:

1. reform of tobacco point of sale displays in retail outlets i.e. reducing the number of young people who start smoking and making it easier for quitters to remain non-smokers,
2. review of the penalties prescribed in the Tobacco Act 1987 and tougher enforcement of the Tobacco Act i.e. enabling better control of the supply and use of tobacco, particularly cigarette sales to minors, and
3. help families to adopt non-smoking attitudes and behaviours, reducing harm to smokers and those who live with smokers by:
 - banning smoking in cars carrying children in 2009,
 - helping pregnant smokers to quit,

- banning the sale of tobacco at temporary outlets and providing a ministerial power to ban youth-oriented tobacco products and packages, such as fruit flavoured cigarettes,
- ensuring government school grounds are smoke free, and
- improving access to smoking cessation services for Aboriginal and other high prevalence groups.

Comment

There are major health, economic and social implications associated with the use of tobacco and tobacco products. Supporting and implementing the proposed strategy to reduce the number of smokers and smoking related harms is considered most worthwhile. Council's EHO's believe further reforms should be investigated by DHS including amendments to the current test purchasing program and further, that the licensing of tobacco retailers be introduced.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. support the draft Victorian Tobacco Control Strategy 2008 – 2013, and
2. request DHS to investigate the feasibility and merits of introducing licensing of tobacco retailers.

Councillors Wicks/De Kruiff

That Council

1. support the draft Victorian Tobacco Control Strategy 2008 – 2013, and
2. request DHS to investigate the feasibility and merits of introducing licensing of tobacco retailers.

CARRIED 2008-181

11. Documents to be Signed and Sealed

11.1 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday, 20 October 2008

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday, 20 October 2008 be signed and sealed.

Councillors Speedie/Hanuska

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday, 20 October 2008 be signed and sealed.

CARRIED 2008-182

11.2 Minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held on Monday, 27 October 2008

RECOMMENDATION

That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held on Monday, 27 October 2008 be signed and sealed.

Councillors Mahony/De Kruiff

That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held on Monday, 27 October 2008 be signed and sealed.

CARRIED 2008-183

11.3 Section 173 Agreement – 11 Stead Street, West Wodonga (Lot 3 PS526298) (Property No.: 317891)

Two planning permits (2007/31 and 2007/184) have been approved for the development of four factory/showroom buildings and the four lot subdivision with common property on 24 April 2007 and 18 October 2007 respectively. The overall development when complete will realise four individual occupancy buildings for commercial/industrial use within the Albury-Wodonga Enterprise Park along McKoy Street in West Wodonga with each building on separate land titles.

Condition 3 of planning permit 2007/184 for the four lot subdivision with common property required that the land owner enter into an Agreement pursuant to Section 173 of the Planning & Environment Act 1987 to ensure that development of each subdivided lot accords with the approved development plans for the previous planning permit 2007/31 for development of the land where the subdivision and the issuing of titles for each new lot is required prior to the completion of the approved development works. The Agreement must be entered into prior to the issuing of a Statement of Compliance for the subdivision.

The owner/developer requires the issuing of a Statement of Compliance for the subdivision and therefore the Section 173 Agreement has been prepared by the owner's solicitor, signed by the owner and submitted for execution by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Section 173 Agreement relating to land known as 11 Stead Street, West Wodonga (Lot 3 PS526298) be signed and sealed, in accordance with the requirements of Condition 3 on planning permit 2007/184.

Councillors De Kruiff/Hanuska

That the Section 173 Agreement relating to land known as 11 Stead Street, West Wodonga (Lot 3 PS526298) be signed and sealed, in accordance with the requirements of Condition 3 on planning permit 2007/184.

CARRIED 2008-184

12. Competitive Tendering Report

Key Competitive Tendering activities for October 2008 were:

Tenders advertised / quotations issued

081138 – Leneva Valley Drainage Strategy

081142 - Building Asbestos Survey

081143 – Provision of Sanitary Nappy Disposal Units

Transport & Distribution Employment Projects

Tenders / Quotations Under Evaluation

081096 – Construction of Fishing Jetties – Streets Road & Brockley Street

081142 - Building Asbestos Survey

EOI – Wodonga Livestock Exchange

Contracts Awarded (by Delegate)

Council

081123 - Management & Operation of Wodonga Sports & Leisure Centre & the new Aquatics & Leisure Centre, Wodonga

081124 - Construction of service road and turning lanes on the Murray Valley Highway at Bonegilla

081130 - Belgrade Avenue Pre-School & Community Centre Redevelopment

081139 - Supply & Installation of Irrigation System at Wodonga Racecourse

081140 - 2008-2009 Annual Spray Seal Program

CEO

081102 – Installation of Pipe for use of Recycled Water in Lawrence Street

Manager Financial Services

081127 – Hume Corridor Transport Strategy Consultancy Services

081133 - Athletics club carpark upgrade, Pearce St

081135 - City of Wodonga Regional Towns Development Program - North Leneva Development Guidelines

081136 - City of Wodonga Regional Towns Development Program -
Wodonga Development Contributions Plan

Tenders / Quotations Cancelled or Not Awarded

081093 - Wodonga Aquatic Centre – Construction

081098 – Wodonga Aquatic Centre – Site Works & Drainage

081106 – Design & Construction of Sandy Creek Pedestrian/Cyclepath
Bridge

081126 - Logic Centre Landscaping Works 2008

081131 – Construction of Right Turning Lane Intersection Upgrade Murray
Valley Hwy & Military St Killara

081137 - Supply & Delivery Truck Cab Chassis 8.5 to 9T GVM

Variations / Extensions

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

Councillors Mahood/Hanuska

That standing orders be suspended for the purpose of question time, the
time being 7.20 PM.

CARRIED 2008-185

13. Question Time

1. One question was received from Jean Whitla regarding
 - ◇ The amount and the interest rates on Council’s investments and borrowings and the repayment of debt.

This question was received on the night of the meeting and the Acting Mayor provided a verbal response and indicated that a written response would follow.

Presentation to Young Achiever

At this point the Mayor made a presentation to Dyllan Harmer and Ashlea Bennett as the winners of the Young Achiever Support Scheme for November 2008.

Presentation of Eagle Award

At this point the Mayor made a presentation to Terry Maher being the Eagle Award winner for November 2008.

Councillors Speedie/Mahood

That standing orders be resumed, the time being 7.30 PM.

CARRIED 2008-186

Meeting Closed at 7.30 PM.

Chairperson

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Date

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