

EPPING TOWN PLANNING REVIEW

**Public Meeting – 14 December 2016 (Epping Community Hall, Oxford Street, Epping)
by City of Parramatta (CoP)**

MEETING NOTES SUMMARY

Presenters/Project Team:

- *Lucy Cole-Edelstain (Straight Talk)*
- *Damien Tudehope MP (Member for Epping)*
- *Ed Blakely (West Central District Commissioner, Greater Sydney Commission)*
- *Amanda Chadwick (Administrator, City of Parramatta)*
- *Rob Cologna (Manager, Land Use Planning)*
- *Bruce Mills (Manager, Place Services)*
- *Kevin Kuo (Team Leader, Land Use Planning)*
- *Jacky Wilkes, (Senior Project Officer Land Use Planning)*
- *Lily Wang (Place Manager)*

Damien Tudehope (Member for Epping):

- Purpose: to revisit any areas not dealt with by the Department of Planning and Environment's 'Urban Activation Precinct' (UAP).
- Development needs to be delivered in sustainable and liveable way
- Also need to ensure that what is being delivered meets community expectations.
- Noted that Minister Stokes (Minister for Planning) is concerned with delivering jobs in Epping. Thus, achieving more job opportunities is a key component of Epping for a successful centre.
- Epping Town Centre is also a transport hub with lots of public transport.
- A traffic response needs to address parking.

Amanda Chadwick (Administrator, City of Parramatta) – Background and Context

- Council's new amalgamated boundaries came into effect on 12 May 2016.
- Community consultation will be a critical part of the Epping Planning Review.
- Decision making will be evidence-based decision making and should be the way that local government works.
- Understands that the community are angry that the UAP process fell short in some regards.
- Some of the important representative players in Epping are Epping Civic Trust, Epping Club, Schools, library, West Epping Uniting Church, Dense Park pool group
- Ultimately, this process is about integrating the community needs.
- The purpose of this meeting is the start of the community engagement for the Epping Planning Review.
- Feedback from tonight's meeting and along the way will be incorporated in the Discussion Paper.

Rob Cologna (Manager, Land Use Planning) – Epping Planning Review Project

- Explained that he heads the Land Use Planning Team at CoP which is charged with land use planning matters.
- Study commences with this meeting followed by three technical studies which are being prepared on:
 - Traffic and Land Use
 - Heritage Conservation Areas
 - Community Facilities and Needs

- These are due for completion before the first half of next year.
- The technical studies will inform a Discussion Paper. All four documents will be exhibited next year.
- Referred to the Project Flyer which is being distributed at the meeting.

Question and Answer Session – Broad Summary

Resident No.1:

- Accesses the Admin Library and notes access is difficult twice a week, because of a program at library. It can be hard to find parking as there is insufficient parking.
- CoP Resp: Will be considering this as part of the Epping Planning Review.

Resident No.2:

- Appreciates the unique elements of the Epping environment.
- Notes that the Centre is changing.
- Asks if there is a strategy for social impact/heritage/open space? These are assets. Wants to maintain/protect open space and heritage values.
- New development – bring intensity and diversity.
- CoP Resp: There is no easy answer.

Resident No.3:

- Living on Epping Road, Stanley Rd (Pembroke Rd) – Dence Park swimming room, if coming from Epping side – Essex street turning is closing. Wonders what the alternative solution is to access Dence Park.
- CoP Resp: There are some parts that Admin can deal with now through the Traffic Committee.

Resident No.4:

- Has written to Council.
- Noted there are traffic pinch points at a number of intersections on Epping Rd, Rawson St/Carlingford. Suggests relocating traffic signals.

Resident No.5:

- Raised 3 issues on population growth; its impact on electricity provision; and the fuel crisis.
- States that outlook is for 6.4 million residents for Greater Sydney.
- Says Parramatta population target is to increase by 125% whilst Ryde 48%. Power shortage will have implication for sky scrapers – lifts, air conditioners (concerned about power shortage).
- Resident is concerned at where will electricity power come from particularly during peak use periods.

Resident No.6:

- Noted the change from Hornsby to come under the jurisdiction of the CoP is an improvement.
- Sustainability and liveability are important factors when considering growth.
- Concerns: construction work is creating substantial truck movements and dust impacts.
- High school buildings contain important heritage buildings.
- CoP Resp: staff can monitor truck movements / parking

Resident No.7:

- A resident who lives in North Epping and travels through the town centre to use public transport, do shopping etc.
- What extent will CoP take into account the interest of North Epping residents and their submission?
- CoP Resp:
 - Everyone who lives, works, shops in Epping who put in a submission are considered equal. All views are considered equal because this project is about the future vitality of the Epping Town Centre.
 - The Facilitator noted that all attendees can sign up to receive updates on the project and the forms are at the entrance to the hall.

Resident No.8:

- Recent DA approvals for new development at delivering “rabbit warrens”. This development have no facilities or amenities. The DA process should ensure that new development is building areas for family functions, landscape, BBQ. The poor quality development will be the legacy of the government. The Facilitator noted that harmonisation of the planning controls ensures that those kind of things don't occur.
- JW – delivering more jobs. 50,000sqm commercial space in Epping. 10,000 sqm commercial space.

Resident No.9: (Tony Hackett, Chamber of Commerce)

- As representative of Chamber of Commerce, has seen a lot of change in Epping.
- Noted that before the Department of Planning and Environment's (DP&E's) UAP process, there was 55,000sqm of commercial GFA. Then there was the closure of a nearby business park and the amount of gross floor area (GFA) dropped. Since the DP&E's UAP process has been completed, there is only an available 10,000sqm of commercial GFA. This does not deliver enough jobs.
- Noted the DP&E's Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP) have been “rubber stamped” all of the Hornsby Shire Council initiatives pre-council amalgamations.
- Noted he has walked around the centre with the Administrator and Ed Blakely.
- Noted the site with a planning proposal over the area on the corner of Epping and Blaxland Rds which includes the former bowling club site – and where they have bored area for tunnels – is not a good site for residential development [Note: details of this are accessible via:
<http://pgrtracking.planning.nsw.gov.au/ViewPGR.aspx?Mode=V&pgr=155>
- The UAP process delivers 3,750 dwellings but estimates it will deliver more like 5,000 additional dwellings
- Noted RMS have been consulting with the stakeholders for a widening of the rail bridge. Says there is no funding which is a critical issue at the moment.
- Sees a divided CBD – pedestrian and traffic movements between the east and the west.

Resident No.10:

- (Issue 1 of 2): Sees it is unfair that the Councils between the former two local government areas have different controls, particularly when one council offers greater development opportunity than the other.
- Sees that the former Hornsby side have lots of houses rezoned for higher density, but the Parramatta side maintained the same zoning. Notes this has had an impact on her own ability to redevelop their site.
- The Facilitator noted that there will be a process of harmonisation of the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2011 and the Hornsby LEP and the final outcome will be a single set of controls. This will mean existing zoning could be kept or changed but it's not known at this stage.

- (Issue 2 of 2): Sees that Requests that the heritage controls be amended. Says the Hornsby side's heritage bungalows got pulled down, but Kent Street in Epping did not change. Sees that the redevelopment path of a site in a Heritage Conservation Area causes complexity.
- The Facilitator noted this second comment.

Resident No.11:

- Resident who has grown up in Epping. Works as a nurse.
- Is concerned with the safety of school children and elderly with regards to the construction sites in relation to truck movements. Sees there is "an accident waiting to happen" and if it does, the "various levels of government blame themselves".
- Sees that a North Epping shuttle bus to the Epping Town Centre will aid access for residents.
- Notes that traffic access in and out of the centre is 'appalling'.
- Notes the existing Clearways create less opportunity for parking.
- The suburb is changing and becoming ugly.

Resident No.12:

- Lives in an older unit in Essex Street and notes there has been a lot of new development since 1986.
- Has seen a dramatic loss of water pressure in her unit, increasingly bad with every new development.
- At the same time, sees there has been a rapid loss of trees, especially the mature trees.
- Sees that there should be a halt to new development while the Epping Planning Review process is complete.
- CoP Resp:
 - The Epping Planning Review works within the remit of social infrastructure. Trees can be assessed. Point noted.
 - Can't put a halt to development, particularly DAs when applicants are putting in application consistent with the current controls that apply.
 - Will do her best to fast track the project.

Resident No.13:

- Has an aspiration of 3 storey commercial & retail space development for the centre core.
- Sees the need to lock in ground floor retail/commercial but need to push for more.
- Oxford Street needs more council investment as it experiences pressure du to Langston Place. Suggests quarantining developer contributions for this area.
- The Facilitator explained that the Epping Planning Review will be able to set out what the priorities will be for the developer contributions.

Resident No.14:

- Asks if "the horse has already bolted?"
- Seeks clarity on any planning proposals during the Epping Planning Review process. Asks if they will be assessed and adopted while the EPR is taking place?
- CoP Resp:
 - It is noted that that is an advocacy position
 - The Administrator's role is to keep processing them. That's why she is fast-tracking this EPR process so that it commences ASAP.
 - Everyone will be given every opportunity to input so as to create new planning controls as soon as we can.

Resident No.15:

- Enquired what are the heritage listings for western side? Will they be included in the – what are the heritage listing for the western side?
- CoP Resp: The scope of the Heritage Study is to respond an outstanding Hornsby Council submission and address only the eastern side. But it was noted that a conversation would take place with the Administrator (off grid) to see if the project scope can be expanded to the western side.

Resident No.16:

- Is concerned with saving Epping Pool.
- Sees that outdoor pools should be considered more widely across Sydney in development proposals as many pools are being demolished.
- CoP Resp: the Community Needs Facility will consider the issue.

Resident No.17: David Havyatt (Labour member for Epping)

- Sees UAP as an act of the State Government acting deficiently.
- Transport plan was hanging around since UAP.
- There is no way of knowing that the planning process can occur simultaneous to DAs being approved.
- Sees that development needs to be paused until the planning process have been done.
- The Facilitator noted these comments.

Resident No.18:

- Concerned at the loss of character in Epping. The potential loss of the Uniting Church is demoralising.
- Sees that the area is also losing community space.
- Sees that Sydney lacks culture.
- Sees The Grounds of Alexandria (in Alexandria) as a model for positive new development which is community-oriented.
- Developers need to make spaces more community-oriented.
- CoP Resp: This is not beyond the scope of the Epping Planning Review.

Resident No.19:

- Parking is a major concern.
- Epping Town Centre is becoming a transport hub yet there is nowhere for short- or long-term parking.
- Proposes that the Tuffy Muffler site/planning proposal site be converted to multi-storey car park.
- The Facilitator noted that the site is part of the focus of the Epping Planning Review.

Resident No.20:

- Traffic calming devices should be considered as part of identifying traffic solution as a means for addressing rat-tunning through residential streets.
- Open space should be considered as part of any re-development including mixed use.

Resident No.21:

- Concern that the Epping town Centre is not following the path of liveable cities. Instead, we are following a US path where highways and town centres lose character as a result of mismanaged growth. However, some other cities are focusing on the right issues ahead of developer interests, such as: widening pedestrian paths, emphasis on bike use, lots of public space, etc. Induced demand. Sense of

character. In short: What are we doing to maintain community spirit and freedom of space?

- CoP Resp: the Community Needs Facility will consider some of these issues.

Resident No.22:

- Will Dence Park stay as it is (ie. as a Creative Centre?).
- The loss of the bowling club on Epping Road was a great loss to Epping Town Centre. Will the Creative Centre follow the same model and be “turfed out”?
- The planning proposal site on the corner of Epping/Blaxland Roads, including the former bowling club site, should instead be for open space for the community.

Resident No.23:

- Has lived on the western side of the Epping Town Centre for 38 years.
- Concerned that every home may build a **secondary dwelling** (granny flat).
- Has observed that some homes have 6 cars, most of which are parked in the street.
- Noted that there has been a court case in relation to a boarding house development for 24 people. Has a concern that these will proliferate around the centre.
- The Facilitator - these comments are noted.

Resident No.24:

- Observed that there are not many young people in attendance at the meeting.
- Wonders what the Epping Town Centre will be like 20 years – will it be suitable for younger folk?
- Noted bush care impacts of new development – the level of stormwater run-off increasing as the amount of hard surfaces increase. This all runs into Lane Cove River.
- Noted that Blaxland Road is too dangerous to cycle. There isn’t much evidence of a commitment to cycle infrastructure.
- The Facilitator - these comments are noted.

Resident No.25:

- Sees that garbage bins should be emptied twice a week or shifted to week night.
- The Facilitator – this comment is noted.

Resident No.26: (Alain Brix-Nielsen, Epping Heights Public School, P&C President)

- Significant pressure on schools in terms of student numbers:
 - Younger families, increased development
 - Department of Education involved at Planning stages.
- North Epping:
 - Is not part of the CoP.
- CoP Resp: In terms of integrating North Epping into CoP, it’s not no. one on the Administrators list but some merit in its inclusion, as does Damien Tudehope.

Resident No.27:

- Sees the need for cities to be sustainable and livable. Escaped Hong Kong’s concrete jungle end up in “green, leafy Epping”. Now has 5 storey development adjoining his property.
- See the demolition of old large houses to rezone land for modern development is evidence that there was no “evidence-based decision on those locations”. Sees that liveability is defined by experience a liveable location, then destroying it by creating concrete environments. Sees contradiction in the logic for new growth.
- Notes he is located within a Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) and would prefer not to be in it.

- The Facilitator – this comment is noted.

Resident No.28:

- Asked if consultants who contributed to the DP&E's UAP process be excluded from undertaking any of the technical studies for the Epping Planning Review.
- CoP Resp: Council has a procurement process which includes considering factors of conflict of interest.

Resident No.29:

- This residents likes trees a sees that the number of trees in Epping have at least halved.
- Hornsby Council never “did anything”.
- Dence Park – vacant block next to it – it’s an easement. Too steep for a road. Come and clear it because it’s a bushfire hazard. If Parramatta Council has a better policy wrt bushfire control & the preservation of trees.
- CoP Resp: It was noted that CoP is undertaking a vast tree planning program which has been informed by a heat map program. It was also noted that Council spends a lot of money planting trees.

Resident No.30:

- Is a local resident who wants to raise a development compliance issue. Is concerned with Safety regarding development sites. Had gone through a process of ringing both Council and WorkCover. He described that development work was occurring in an inappropriate and dangerous manner’, e.g footpath hazards, excavators working on footpaths forcing pedestrians to walk on road. He was basically told that because the site had a Private certifier, there was nothing that could be done. He called “So many times he has given up”.
- Heritage - Why is Council undertaking a review of the HCA zone and feels sorry for people at interface. Refers to the Essex St HCA.
- Asks why review the HCAs as he sees that as potentially, providing an opportunity to overdevelop more of Epping.
- CoP Resp: HCAs at Essex Street to be considered by the Heritage Study.

Resident No.31:

- Notes the West Epping Park development as being radical change over 3 months. Sees parking as a big issue.
- Sees the West Epping School looking more temporary with so many demountable buildings.
- The Facilitator – this comment is noted.

Resident No.32:

- Queried the unimproved value of \$800,000 and the rate multiplier between the two council rates policies. Notes the rate multiplier is higher in Hornsby and what Parramatta is charging.
- CoP Resp: There is a commitment of the State Government and merged councils that the rates before the amalgamations will continue in place for a time.

Resident No.33:

- Noted concerns with any increase in density.
- Noted that recently, an echidna walked in the back yard and blue tongues are often found in the laundry.
- The tree canopy provides this fauna links. Critical element of Epping character.
- The Facilitator – this comment is noted.

Resident No.34:

- Notes that traffic can stretch back Epping Road when on Carlingford Road.
- See that a proposal to widen Epping Road by one lane seems very piecemeal. Sees that a tunnel from Terry's Creek might be a better solution.
- The Facilitator – this comment is noted.

Resident No.36:

- Concerned at the future direction and quality of education. Says expert demographers are planning for the future. Are we also going to see multistorey education development for schools? Used Arthur Phillip School as an example.
- Damien Tudehope MP response: don't disregard the vertical school model as a development model if it provides for more recreational open space for students.

Resident No.37:

- Traffic planning – units along Carlingford Road – impact west and wanting turn into their drive way. Needs to be some kind of planning so that they don't back up traffic
- The Facilitator – this comment is noted. Traffic and Land Use study will address this.

Resident No.38:

- Education/schools
 - Questioned why demountable buildings were part of the building form at schools.
 - Sees that development should be halted.
 - Government funding is need for investment in the centre.
- Epping Road - Protection of trees – Provided New Zealand examples.

Resident No.39:

- Noted that with predicted increases in population in Epping, are there plans to increase the open space? With regards to the planning proposal on the corner of Epping/Blaxland Roads, there is concern that parks are just 'spirited away'.
- The Facilitator: (1) this is being considered as part of the Epping Planning Review; and (2) this is a good segue into next steps.

Next steps

- Take the feedback from this meeting and carry it through into the Epping Planning Review work. Will
- Commence the three technical studies and exhibit with the Discussion Paper.
- There will be continuing opportunity for input.

Ed Blakely (West Central District Commissioner, Greater Sydney Commission)

- All parties need to work together to get the right outcome for Epping.

Meeting closed.