

SUMMARY SHEET: SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE



Council commissioned Suter Planners and Elton Consulting to prepare studies of Council's social infrastructure across the City of Parramatta Local Government Area. The analysis relevant to the Epping suburb was been extracted and presented in the *Epping Social Infrastructure Study*.



This Summary Document introduces the Epping Planning Review and the proposed options, recommendations and suggested principles for the Social Infrastructure Study.

It is intended to help the community and stakeholders in making informed comment on what they believe Council should take into account when making decisions about the future planning for Epping Town Centre.

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THE EPPING PLANNING REVIEW – DISCUSSION PAPER

Due to the introduction of new planning controls in 2014 and a strong housing market, the Epping Town Centre is experiencing unprecedented levels of redevelopment and change, particularly on its northern and eastern sides. This redevelopment impacts residents significantly, particularly with regards to view impacts, reduction in tree canopy, parking and traffic, and construction noise.

New development is also increasing the centre's residential population. At the current rate of development, approximately 10,000 new residents will move into the centre in the next five to seven years.

On 12 May 2016, the council amalgamations process saw the Epping Town Centre fall entirely within the jurisdiction of the new City of Parramatta. This presents an opportunity to address these pressing issues and plan for the function of the centre over the next 20 years.

The community have voiced concerns about the changes taking place and this, coupled with the need to review planning requirements for the Epping Town Centre, has led to the City of Parramatta undertaking the Epping Planning Review.

WHAT DID THE REVIEW COVER?

The Review included technical studies on:

- **Heritage** – looking at specific areas on the northern and eastern sides of the Epping Town Centre that have new developments close by, and whether this has changed the character and nature of those Heritage Conservation Areas (HCAs).
- **Commercial floorspace** – identifying how much area is currently available for business and retail use, how other local centres are developing and what the future for Epping Town Centre needs to be in order to have a thriving, vibrant centre.
- **Social infrastructure** – understanding what facilities and programs are available within Epping Town Centre now and what will be needed in the future. This includes halls and meeting rooms, parks, playgrounds, sporting fields and libraries.
- **Traffic** – a review of current conditions and future requirements is underway. Preliminary findings have been included in the Epping Planning Review Discussion Paper.

In addition, City of Parramatta Council knew it was important that the community – residents, stakeholders, businesses – had the opportunity to say what they thought was important for Council to consider. A number of workshops, website and a feedback survey were all undertaken to hear directly what the concerns and issues for the community were.

Council has released a discussion paper which consolidates the findings from the four technical studies and invites further comment from the community which may assist Council in developing new planning controls for the Epping Town Centre and immediate surrounds.

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THE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY – THE TECHNICAL FINDINGS

The Study identified the following overarching strengths and weaknesses with regard to all types of social infrastructure in the Epping suburb:

Strengths:

- The community facilities generally benefit from good access to public transport
- The Epping suburb has adequate provision of outdoor recreation facilities for unstructured recreation (such as paths, play spaces, exercise equipment, and youth-oriented facilities) to meet the needs of the expected population at 2036.
- Epping Town Centre and suburbs benefit from a significant provision of natural areas, and a number of good-quality larger parks.
- The study indicates current flexible indoor court provision could be adequate to meet the needs of the expected population at 2036.

Weaknesses:

- In many cases, existing community facilities are not adequately staffed and have limited programming available, making much of the space unusable to the community and are underutilised.
- Many of the open space areas in Epping are not universally accessible, particularly at Dence Park and the Epping Aquatic and Leisure Centre, as access grades (the slope of the path) are not consistent with current building code requirements for universal accessibility.
- There are limited walkable connections between recreation facilities and spaces.
- The YMCA lacks car parking and connection with other West Epping sports facilities.
- Epping Aquatic and Recreation Centre is ageing and not close to the majority of expected population growth.

The Study also makes a number of observations and recommendations, some of which are included below:

- Epping Town Centre lacks a clear focal point for civic activity, with community facilities being dispersed across the centre and suburb. Epping Town Centre should have a focal point consistent with its strategic importance and size.
- Develop formal partnerships with organisations and groups in Epping and the wider catchment to increase community access to existing facilities.
- Work with Councils bordering City of Parramatta LGA to understand the capacity of sports fields and recreation facilities close to Epping to cater for Epping residents.
- Assess the condition and capacity of the Epping Aquatic and Leisure Centre to address local aquatic needs longer term and options for development of alternate or enhanced aquatic offerings including water play and indoor facilities.
- Maximise use of Epping's natural assets by creating quality recreational settings linked to natural areas.

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THE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY – COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

A community workshop focusing on all the elements of social infrastructure within Epping was held on 15 May 2017.

Feedback from this consultation included:

- Local facilities are well-known and residents are mostly satisfied with the range of services available.
- Operation and maintenance is important.
- There was a view that creating mixed-use spaces which cater to many different types of people could enhance usage.
- Epping Pool is a beloved community asset. Developing different types of activities on-site such as improving gym facilities or incorporating a café may make it more appealing to use, bringing in more money for its maintenance.
- Future infrastructure planning needs to 'enable liveable town centres' as an overarching principle.



HOW DO I MAKE A SUBMISSION?

This Discussion Paper is being exhibited from **Wednesday, 21 June 2017 to Wednesday, 19 July 2017**. You can make a submission during this time. Please quote **reference no. F2017/000210** in your submission.

SUBMISSIONS CAN BE POSTED TO:

Epping Planning Review
City of Parramatta Council
PO Box 32
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

SUBMISSIONS CAN BE EMAILED TO:

placeservices@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au

YOU CAN ALSO CALL US:

If you have accessibility concerns, please contact the National Relay Service on <http://relayservice.gov.au> and provide them with the City of Parramatta number you want to call.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY SUBMISSION?

All submissions will be carefully considered by senior staff and reported to Council in August 2017, prior to commencing *Stage 2*. *Letters of acknowledgment* will be provided for written submissions.

WHAT IS ON EXHIBITION?

The Discussion Paper is being exhibited in conjunction with the following supporting information:

1. Technical Studies:

- a. Heritage Review (prepared by City Plan Services).
- b. Commercial Floorspace Study (prepared by SGS Economics & Planning).
- c. Social Infrastructure Study (prepared by Council's Social Outcomes team).
- d. Interim Traffic Modelling Report (prepared by EMM).

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There were a number of different categories of social infrastructure which were included in the study. Further details for each main category are listed below:

Council-owned community facilities

- Epping Community Centre (School of Arts)
- Epping library
- Epping Leisure and Learning Centre
- Epping Creative Centre
- West Epping Community Centre
- B. Parker Memorial Guide Hall

Benchmarking indicates that the current population of Epping (24,530 residents) is currently well-served with community space when compared with other parts of the Parramatta LGA. Epping has the highest community facility provision in the LGA (116sqm per 1,000 people in Epping, compared with 61sqm per 1,000 people across the LGA).

Open space – sports fields and recreation parks

The Study identified a total of 16 open space reserves and parks within the Epping suburb. They range from major sports fields, including the recently upgraded West Epping Park and Boronia Park, through to smaller passive outdoor recreation spaces such as Discovery Park and Kim Rutherford Reserve.

Council officers observe that there is an opportunity to enhance the quality and function of the public spaces adjoining parks and sports fields. There is also the potential to increase the value and useability of smaller parks.

Aquatic and indoor recreational facilities

These facilities include:

- The YMCA sports centre at West Epping Park, the only indoor recreation facility within Epping.
- Epping Aquatic and Recreation Centre, which provides a 50m outdoor pool with a smaller kids play pool at Dence Park.

The study indicates current flexible indoor court provision could be adequate to meet the needs of the expected population at 2036.



SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN EPPING

DISCUSSION PAPER QUESTIONS FOR FEEDBACK

Council is seeking your feedback on the following questions and options.

Issues regarding improving open space provision in Epping to 2036

9a. Assessing where new land should be acquired for open space

Do you support an approach of expanding existing parks in and around Epping ahead of the creation of a new park in the area around Epping Town Centre?

9b. Acquisition of former bowling club site

Should Council purchase the Bowling Club site separate from the current Planning Proposal process or continue to consider the Planning Proposal option that it be provided to Council subject to additional density being permitted on the existing landowners site?

9c. Process for acquiring open space

Do you support Council pursuing a process where acquisition of land for open space is done on the basis of negotiated acquisition rather than compulsory acquisition?

9d. Utilising existing land more effect

Are you supportive of Council investing in improved landscaping and equipment in parks and sporting field, including investigating synthetic surfaces for sporting fields to cater for more intensive use?

9e. Establishing partnerships to make better use of existing facilities

Which schools should Council pursue in the Epping area to progress the MOU between Council and the Department of Education to improve the availability of sporting fields?

Location options for a potential future Civic Focal Point

1. Rawson Street Council car park site
2. Epping Library site
3. Two Civic Focal Points with a range of services

9f and g. Where is your preferred location for a Civic Focal Point incorporating a Community Facilities Hub and some form of Civic Space? And why?

9h. Would you support existing community facilities sites being sold to assist with funding a new consolidated single community hub to provide a higher quality community facility somewhere else within the Epping Town Centre?

9i. Should Council seek to develop Council-owned sites to maximise the funding available to deliver a new Civic Focal Point?

9j. Are you willing to accept further increases in density in the town centre if it would assist with funding a new Civic Focal Point?

9k. What should be the future use of the Dence Park Aquatic Site?

Please note: Questions are numbered according to how they appear in the full Discussion Paper.