

Thornton North Master Plan Community Information Evening

Date: Thursday 6 March 2003
Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm
Venue: Pat Hughes Community Hall, Thornton

Attendees: Peter Cameron, Manager City Strategy - Maitland City Council
Monica Gibson, Planner - Maitland City Council
Stacey Brodbeck, Project Manager - Parsons Brinckerhoff
Shay Gill, Environmental Scientist / Planner - Parsons Brinckerhoff
Julie Parsons, Facilitator - Parsons Brinckerhoff
Mayor Maitland City Council
Councillors
Approx 170 community members

Refer Slides from the evening (info evening.ppt)

Introduction

Julie Parsons (PB) welcomed the group and outlined the purpose of the meeting.

Background

Peter Cameron (MCC) discussed the background to the project, describing the study area and why a Master Plan is to be developed.

Our Approach

Stacey Brodbeck (PB) introduced the company, describing PB's expertise and experience. Stacey overviewed what a Master Plan includes and the key issues the study team will be investigating.

Questions

Julie Parsons facilitated an open question session with the group. The group was asked to identify what their key concerns or priorities are for the study area.

After initial issues were raised, Julie went through the tasks involved in investigating each of the key issue areas and asked the group to highlight any further issues potentially not covered by the proposed methodology.

The key issues raised are listed below. Note: this is not a complete record of discussions but rather a summary of the main issues raised.

Q: Why has no land to the east of McFarlanes Rd been identified?

The study area is not absolute and was based on the next likely development area relatively free of physical constraints. Parts of the study area are identified for urban investigation in the Maitland Urban Settlement Strategy. The study area boundaries generally followed natural boundaries.

Q: Maitland Urban Settlement Strategy identified land at Thornton North since 2001, why no work until now?

Work has been progressing since the Strategy to get to this point.

Q: What are the surveyors doing on Barters land?

Land owners within the study area are free to pursue detailed investigations of their own. This surveying is in relation to a separate boundary modification and not related to any urban development.

Q: Is Farraghers land included in the study area?

Yes.

Q: How was the study area determined and will there the Master Plan be considered for areas bordering the study area?

The Master Plan will be considering impacts beyond the study area for many factors including traffic, vegetation corridors, flooding etc. and therefore will assist in considering development applications in the areas adjacent to the study area.

Q: How many people do Council want in the study area?

Council has no set density or population requirements from the area. The Master Plan objective is to identify the best use of the land within all the constraints and recommend a suitable population capacity.

Q: Will the Master Plan be adopted in light of Planning NSW's PlanFirst policy?

Planning NSW has been supportive of Master Plan process and will be involved in the consultation process. It is expected the Master Plan will link well with the new regional plans for the area under PlanFirst.

Q: How will the Master Plan be enforced?

The Master Plan will not have legal standing like an Local Environmental Plan or Development Control Plan. However, Council will adopt the Plan and it will be considered for all future development applications within the study area. Council is obliged to enforce the provisions of the Master Plan once it is adopted. A Development Control Plan may be developed as an outcome of the Master Plan to provide more planning control.

Q: How will the Master Plan ensure the services and facilities will be provided in time for the new population?

The relevant service and government authorities are being consulted now to determine their capacities and future upgrade plans. This will assist in determining any staging requirements to compliment the timing of any required upgrade works. The key authorities will also be involved in a workshop to consider options and determine what is feasible.

Discussion of local issues

- Need to review clay conservation area and policy.
- Flooding and drainage at Millers Forest, should be directed to the river not to low lying land.
- Difficult making turns off Raymond Terrace Rd, turning bays are needed.
- New developments must accept the existing agricultural activities and associated noise, odours, dust, etc.
- Timberlane Estate rural character should be maintained

- Want to see low density rural residential acreages around Timberlane Estate to maintain character and protect visual amenity.
- Continued consideration of a waste facility at the former clay quarry would drastically affect any future land uses.
- Need a buffer zone between existing rural residential estate and any new developments.
- Existing Timberlane Estate 'Master Plan' should be considered. It identified the rural character and outlook of the area.
- Bushfire hazard considered low in this area.
- There should be no development on the floodplain.
- Do not want high density of development.
- The existing bushland in this area which is the most easterly bush in the LGA should be maintained.
- Consider impact on traffic movements.
- Need to ensure infrastructure provisions (especially state government provided) are in place before development occurs, given the quick development time, how these facilities will be funded needs to be included in the Master Plan.
- The impact on essential services such as medical, ambulance and policy needs to be considered.
- Former brick pit on the corner of Metford Road and the railway should be considered for future urban development.
- The Master Plan will need to consider a suitable urban form and structure to complement the existing rural character.
- Views to and from the study area must be protected.
- The potential for fragmented development must be planned for.
- Improved access to Metford train station is required.
- Effective community consultation is very important.
- Flood free access for livestock is required.
- Do not want access to any new development behind Timberlane to be via the existing local roads.
- Any development applications within the study area should be deferred until the Master Plan is finalised.
- Old growth green corridor to be maintained through the site.
- Consider flood impacts within and beyond the study area.
- Raymond Terrace Road was raised when the road was realigned for flooding reasons, but is still cut in flood events.
- Heavy vehicles need to be considered in traffic study.

- Consider the heritage value of the former brickworks.
- Consider the reduction in land values of existing properties as a result of development.
- Wildlife to be protected.
- Change to amenity and loss of character needs to be considered.
- Provide quality open space that is useable by the community, not just open space behind houses.
- The existing local schools and child care facilities are at currently at capacity.
- Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) level needs to be identified and considered. One recent report reported the PMF 2 metres greater than the 1:50 year flood level.
- Water sensitive urban design needs to be considered.
- The floodplain creates important visual buffers.
- Need to manage stormwater on site and ensure ongoing maintenance.
- Clay resources have been identified in East Maitland as well as Thornton and there is nothing particularly unique about the resource.
- Consider the impacts of air and dust when considering the role of the clay resources.
- Consider an area of 5 acre lots.

Consultation Activities

Shay Gill (PB) described the key consultation activities as being:

- Information Evening
 - comment cards at back of room for written comments.
 - cards and box will be placed at Thornton library for two to allow people to gather their thoughts and make a submission.
- Newsletter
- Correspondence with government agencies
- Meeting with special interest groups/ landholders (within the next few weeks – mid March 2003)
 - people interested in meeting with the study team to discuss issues not raised tonight or not able to be conveyed in a written submission were asked to register their interest on the comment cards at the back of the room
- Government agency workshop (approximately May 2003)
- Community workshop (approximately May 2003)
 - numbers will be limited to allow productive workshopping.
 - to ensure all interested are represented, those with common issues were encouraged to nominate a representative to attend the workshop.
 - those who wish to attend were asked to register an expression of interest with Monica or Shay.

- Public display of draft Master Plan (approximately June 2003)
- Consideration of submissions

Timing

Julie Parsons (PB) summarised the key timeframe events as the above consultation activities and a final Master Plan submitted to Council approximately August 2003.

Meeting closed 8:00pm.



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Thornton North Master Plan Community Workshop Summary of Workshop Outcomes

Date: Tuesday 29 April 2003

Time: 6:00pm – 9:00pm

Venue: Maitland Town Hall, Maitland

Attendees: Peter Cameron, Manager City Strategy - Maitland City Council
Monica Gibson, Planner - Maitland City Council
Stacey Brodbeck, Project Manager - Parsons Brinckerhoff
Shay Gill, Environmental Scientist / Planner - Parsons Brinckerhoff
Bruce Colman, Senior Environmental Planner - Parsons Brinckerhoff
Carolyn Stone, Facilitator – PPM Consulting
Mayor Maitland City Council
Councillors
Approximately 60 community members

Introduction

Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) have been commissioned by Maitland City Council (MCC) to prepare a master plan for the Thornton North area. Its purpose is to identify appropriate future land uses for Thornton North, taking into account environmental, traffic, infrastructure and community service planning and other local community issues. The overall objective is to produce a master plan that considers future planning of the site and surrounds as a whole and provides a high quality living environment for future and existing residents.

Workshop Objectives

The two main objectives of the community workshop were to seek information from the local community on:

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- i) A 'vision' of what any future development at Thornton North should look like.
- ii) Suggestions for how this vision might be achieved.

The format for the workshop was that the attendees were broken into a number of separate groups of about 8-10 persons. These groups then considered the two objectives stated above, and used large sheets of paper to record their responses. A member from each group then spoke to the entire meeting about their group's results. A general discussion then followed.

Summary of Workshop Group Comments

The following is a summary of the general comments presented by the various workshop groups. The main comments have been summarised on an issues basis rather than on a group-by-group basis, however not every comment may be recorded here.

Ideas for 'Visions' for the Area:

- A sustainable, low density residential lifestyle community;
- Series of urban areas separated by green corridors (open space, recreation areas), maintain rural character with combination lot sizes, mixed development types within the flood free zone;
- Development integrated with existing communities, consisting of low density land use, maintaining 'green' areas and supported by adequate infrastructure;

How To Achieve Vision/Main Issues Raised

Infrastructure, Services & Facilities:

- Look at area in context of the entire LGA when examining thresholds for services and facilities;
- Infrastructure (roads, schools, sport fields, community/recreational facilities, power, sewerage, town water) should be built in time to accommodate expansion before it occurs (timing);
- Provision of community facilities, open space, recreational and sporting facilities, commitment for infrastructure and services provision from government prior to development;
- Infrastructure and utility services to be provided at a level commensurate to demand and long term population projections;
- MasterPlan should stage development, create S94 plan, identify basic infrastructure needs prior to rezoning, recognise government funding for infrastructure (schools, roads, railway) won't come until after rezoning, no artificial staging of development;
- Traffic impact is a key issue;
- New roads, footpaths etc. to be of an appropriate size and provide connections to existing roads, cycleways, etc. – make sure development connects to Thornton suburb;
- Traffic corridors not to impede residents – no street access through Timberlane Estate, not direct traffic through existing residential roads (potential use of Haussman Drive);
- Vehicle connectivity with immediate area and beyond, accessibility;
- Deflect traffic out of Thornton, consideration of traffic corridor and its impacts;

- New bridge – new rail location – traffic out of Thornton;
- Improve north/south vehicular access to NEH – possible second connection funded through S94 contributions?, improve access to railway stations, Need government commitment to upgrade Thornton Rail Bridge and second access to NEH;
- Balance community facilities and development – ensure development is self supporting;
- Development must be self-sufficient, with infrastructure, community and commercial facilities (schools, ambulance, police, retail facilities) to lead development – commitment from Council/government.
- Self contained suburb with appropriate infrastructure (schools, shops, aged care, childcare), appropriate drainage infrastructure;
- Balance between utilisation of existing infrastructure/respect character and amenity of locality;

Community Input to the Planning Process:

- Meeting biased by developers – too large an area for community to comment on;
- Options should be placed on community display – including documentation to support how the MasterPlan was developed and the option that were chosen – show options that were discarded – community needs to have access to the MasterPlan;
- Ensure holistic approach as part of the big picture for Maitland, ongoing community consultation.
- Continued community involvement.

Mixed/Competing Land Uses To Be Considered:

- Protect existing land uses (clay resources, buffer zones);
- Mixed land uses, ESD principles, population densities to vary;
- Clay Conservation Area - removal of inappropriate land (uneconomic, poor quality clays) – realise demand (types, quality clays) is in excess of available resources, buffer to be contained within land identified as being suitable for clay extraction – not on adjoining land, area not be sterilised by clay if it has a greater value;
- Clay Conservation Area – value clay vs. development vs. conservation, contain buffers with CCA land;
- Compatible land uses with adjoining rural/mining activities;
- Resolve clay conservation/vegetation issues;
- Aboriginal heritage is a key issue;

Rural vs Urban:

- Maintain rural character and amenity of existing rural estates.
- Maintain rural character (lots sizes no less than 5 acres), development in character with the area, balance residential/rural development;
- Key site as development potential in Thornton is limited.
- Preference for no development – “like as is”;

- Urban centre with high densities – increasing lot sizes towards the edges;
- Rural lot sizes (1-5 acres), covenants ensuring dwelling envelope;
- Develop sustainable, low density, residential, lifestyle community – self supporting community;
- Maximum population capacity vs. maintaining character vs. development suiting potential housing demand – development in floodplain area?
- South side Raymond Terrace Road – residential development – varying lot sizes/densities, diversity of housing choice to suit people;
- Low density residential – not dormitory suburb, mixture lot sizes, larger lots sizes on periphery (wetland fringe);
- Balance between urban sprawl and containment;
- Review Settlement Strategy for possible expansion of urban options;
- Step away from large areas of continuous development/suburbia;

Surrounding Environment and Community Key Issues:

- Consider environmental issues (wetlands, bushland);
- Revegetation and conserve existing native vegetation;
- Preserve bushland;
- Conservation corridor (approx. ½ acre) instigated as a covenant for development adjoining timberland estate;
- Bushland should be purchased, owned and maintained by the community as a parkland – compensate land owners for purchase of bushland;
- Revegetate cleared areas, retain village atmosphere with green corridor, open space areas maintain vegetation and bushland;
- Retain environmental areas (conservation, flooding, parkland) – ensure flood management;
- Flooding is a key issue;

Other Considerations/Form of MasterPlan:

- Look at Rathluba Estate – bridle track and passive recreation track;
- MasterPlan should identify what the area will look like in the long term, should be included in planning instrument to ensure development controls are enforced (how defensible is the MasterPlan in the Land & Environment Court? Is it defensible if consistently applied);
- Need to look at long term, holistic and cumulative impacts of development throughout Newcastle and the Hunter;
- Appropriate planning controls – conditions preventing further subdivision of rural/residential lots, dwellings more sympathetic to environment (sustainable building codes), water sensitive urban design, principles of ESD, rainwater tanks, control keeping domestic animals next to sensitive environmental features (wetlands, bushland, native vegetation);

- Study area should extend to the limit of flood liable rural land;
- Cohesive Urban/Rural/Residential node within Maitland City – needs to be balanced – not under utilise the value of the land, higher population densities – promote better establishment of infrastructure and services;
- Compliment existing areas – edges between areas – enhance areas;
- New name for suburb – Clayton (sense of industry);
- Maintain sense of existing community.

Where to from here?

Workshop Information

The community comments received at the workshop will be recorded as a key input into the master planning process. These comments will be considered during the current option development phase, and eventual finalising of a draft master plan for public display.

Public Comment

It is envisaged at this stage a draft master plan will be approved by Council in early June for public display. This display will then follow in the subsequent few weeks. Public notices in local papers will advertise this display. Addressed notifications of the display will also be sent to all those that have registered during the course of the study.

Project Contacts

Should you require further information on the project, please contact:

Monica Gibson

Maitland City Council

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