

Item: CCL059-17 **Community Consultation Results on the Future Uses of the Former Oatley Bowling Club**

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Directorate: Office of the General Manager

Matter Type: Environment and Planning

Recommendation

- (a) That the results of the independent peer review, undertaken by Cred Consulting, of the community consultation process for the future uses of the former Oatley Bowling Club site are noted, particularly that the report “is considered to be a high-quality report based on a robust methodology and wide ranging activities”.
- (b) That Council acknowledge the ongoing community support for aged care facilities as an important issue for Council as outlined in the Elton Consulting report.
- (c) That the Elton Consulting report and the Cred Consulting report be provided to City Plan Services for consideration during the assessment and review of the Planning Proposal for the former Oatley Bowling Club site.
- (d) That the Georges River community be updated on the community consultation results via the Council website and usual communications and media channels.
- (e) That the draft Georges River Council Community Engagement Policy be reviewed having regard to the feedback from the Elton Community Consultation report, prior to adoption by Council.

Executive Summary

1. The results of a detailed community consultation process from Elton Consulting and independent peer review by Cred Consulting are provided in this report. This follows a Council Meeting on 7 November 2016, where it was resolved that Georges River Council would undertake extensive community consultation on the Planning Proposal and future uses of the former Oatley Bowling Club site.

Background

2. At a Meeting of Council on 7 November 2016 it was resolved:
 - a. That Council not proceed with the 2014 resolution of the former Hurstville City Council to rezone the site to residential to facilitate a 7-9 storey, mixed use residential and seniors housing development.
 - b. That it be noted that if the Planning Proposal proceeds to Gateway determination, any plan making (re-zoning and reclassification) is unlikely to occur before December 2017, and would require the prior approval of the Council elected in September 2017.
 - c. That the Planning Proposal to reclassify the site from ‘community’ land to ‘operational’ and to rezone the site to SP2 Infrastructure with the designated land use of seniors housing (nursing home) and community facilities be amended to apply only to that part of the site which would accommodate the seniors housing (aged care component) and ancillary support requirements, i.e. approximately 50% of the site.
 - d. That extensive public consultation commence immediately and a report be submitted to Council in March 2017 detailing the outcomes of the public consultation (including any proposed amendments to the Planning Proposal arising from such consultation) prior to any Gateway submission to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

- e. That an independent peer review of the community consultation results ((d) above) be undertaken.
 - f. That the Planning Proposal be assessed by an independent expert who will make recommendations to the Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel for endorsement or otherwise prior to any Gateway determination.
 - g. That if the Planning Proposal proceeds, i.e. after independent assessment, approval by IHAP and Department of Planning and Environment, the reclassification Public Hearing be undertaken by a former Judge of the NSW Land and Environment Court or a person with equivalent standing and experience, and that a post Gateway exhibition report be prepared by an independent consultant for consideration by the Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel and the newly elected Council panel prior to forwarding to the Department of Planning.
3. At the Council Meeting on 6 March 2017, Council resolved:
- a. That the progress report on the community consultation process for the former Oatley Bowling Club site is received and noted.
 - b. That respondents to the community survey are sent an update on the community consultation process contained in this report.

Consultation Process

4. In accordance with point (d) above, Council undertook extensive community consultation on future uses of the former Oatley Bowling Club site. The consultation process sought to understand the Georges River community's support for the development of the former Oatley Bowling Club site, their attitude towards the need for seniors housing and preferences for community uses on the site. This consultation included:
 - c. Three (3) community information sessions held on Wednesday 23 November 2016 and Saturday 26 November 2016
 - d. A community survey available on the Council website and in hard copy at the community information sessions
 - e. A telephone survey
5. The consultation was additional to that which is legally required to be undertaken as part of the Planning Proposal gateway process. Council is committed to ongoing community consultation on the Planning Proposal for this site. The community consultation was undertaken by an independent facilitator, Elton Consulting, between November 2016 and February 2017. Elton Consulting has extensive communications and community engagement experience.
6. The independent facilitator designed the sessions to provide residents with an opportunity to find out more about the Planning Proposal for the former Oatley Bowling Club site. The sessions were an opportunity for the community to talk to Council staff and experts in a range of areas. The independent facilitator captured feedback from members of the community.
7. A community survey was available in hardcopy format at the information sessions and on Council's website. The independent facilitator developed the survey to explore, amongst other things:
 - a. If the provision of aged care (seniors housing), as identified by the community and former Hurstville City Council since 2006, in the Hurstville Community Strategic Plan 2021 and the Hurstville Community Strategic Plan 2025, continued to be a priority for the Georges River community;
 - b. Preferences for the types of seniors housing proposed at the former Oatley Bowling Club site;
 - c. Options for community facilities proposed for the site; and

- d. Ideas for improving access to the adjacent Myles Dunphy Reserve.
8. The independent facilitator also arranged a telephone survey to be conducted with randomly selected residents from the Georges River Local Government Area. Participants were recruited and sent an information pack prior to a one-on-one interview. The information pack contained copies of the information panels used in the community information sessions and a short introductory letter.
 9. Following the community consultation process, an independent peer review was undertaken by Cred Consulting. Cred Consulting has extensive experience in community engagement processes and social planning.
 10. In the interests of transparency, Council also publicly released the OBC Planning Proposal in order to obtain community feedback early in the rezoning process. The submissions were analysed by Elton Consulting and a series of key themes were determined by the independent consultant.

Promotion and Participation Results

11. The community information sessions were promoted on Council's website and in the St George and Sutherland Shire Leader. An invitation to the sessions was delivered to 1,200 homes and businesses in streets located close to the former Oatley Bowling Club site. Information panels, on display at the sessions, explained the Planning Proposal and background to the former Oatley Bowling Club site. The survey was available in hardcopy format at the sessions and was also available for completion online, on Council's website.
12. Background information on the former Oatley Bowling Club site was available on the Council website and as hardcopy information panels at the Hurstville Service Centre. The Planning Proposal was also available in hardcopy format at local libraries and customer service centres.
13. There was strong community participation in the consultation process with:
 - 149 participants at the 3 community information sessions
 - 146 community surveys completed at the community information sessions or online
 - 501 residents participated in a phone survey, of which 30% were from Oatley
 - 52 submissions were received in response to the Planning Proposal
14. Participants of the telephone survey included 194 males and 307 females. 154 participants were from the suburb of Oatley, representing 30% of the overall telephone participants.
15. Participants in the community survey indicated that their preferred methods of engagement include, in order of preference:
 - Community information sessions
 - Surveys
 - Open days
 - Newsletters
 - Presentations

Community Consultation Results

16. Three reports are attached to this report:
 - Outcomes Report by Elton Consulting
 - Submissions Report by Elton Consulting
 - Peer Review by Cred Consulting

17. These reports provide further detail on the results of the community consultation process, results and subsequent peer review.
18. Elton Consulting found that “Generally, those people who participated in the phone survey, both within the suburb of Oatley and those in surrounding suburbs, were supportive of the proposal” (Outcomes Report, p.4). The telephone survey found that:
 - 92% of surveyed respondents consider the provision of aged care facilities was an important issue for Council and 47% felt that they or a family member would be interested in aged care accommodation at the Oatley Bowling Club site.
 - Most respondents felt that self-contained dwellings would be most appropriate to the site.
 - 58% of respondents felt that the proposed three-five storey aged care facility was appropriate for the site
 - 71% felt that the proposed rezoning would result in an appropriate intensity of development for the site
19. Those participants who expressed concerns about the proposal provided insights into their concerns which are summarised in the Outcomes Report as:
 - The scale of the development and setting a precedent for the area
 - Visual impact of the development
 - Preserving the character of Oatley’s built environment
 - Privatisation of public land
 - Desire for the site to be preserved for open space, passive recreation and environmental value
 - Road access to the site, including clearing to widen the road and turn off into the site
 - Risk of bushfire to residents, the Myles Dunphy Reserve and the proposed development site
 - Parking for the site
20. Respondents of the telephone survey provided a range of preferred uses for the community facilities, including:
 - Community gardens (88%)
 - Walkways (86%)
 - Public toilets (75%)
 - Picnic shelters (75%)
21. A review of the 52 submissions received in relation to the Planning Proposal were themed in the following key categories:
 - General comments: 13% of submissions expressed a view that the community survey was skewed towards supporting the planning proposal.
 - Site location: 6% suggested the site be located close to Oatley.
 - Scale and impact of development: 71% were opposed to commercial development of the site while 2 submissions supported the proposed reduction in heights of the planning proposal.
 - Environmental concerns: 37% objected to the rezoning and advocated that the site be reserved for native fauna and flora. Some submissions were concerned that the proposal would negatively impact the Myles Dunphy Reserve.
 - Traffic and parking: 19% of submissions were concerned about the impact on traffic and parking on the existing road networks. Several submissions called for a more detailed analysis of traffic and parking issues.
22. The submissions provided a mix of suggestions for the community uses of the land, including:

- Parkland (10%)
- Bike/pedestrian paths, signs, public amenities and facilities (10%)
- Native habitats are preserved (6%)

Independent Peer Review Results

23. The independent peer review of the community consultation process for the future uses of the former Oatley Bowling Club site noted that the Outcomes Report “is considered to be a high-quality report based on a robust methodology and wide ranging activities”.
24. As reported by Cred Consulting and confirmed by Georges River Council Officers, a typographical errors was made on page 9 of the Outcomes Report: 38% of respondents to the community survey believed there was enough aged care options in the LGA, not 48% as reported in the Outcomes Report.

Future Consultation and Engagement

25. Participants in the community engagement process indicated that they would be interested in participating in future consultations and would welcome further information through newsletters, email updates, surveys, pop-ups and face-to-face events.
26. Georges River Council is committed to ongoing, effective community engagement. It is proposed to review the *draft* Community Engagement Policy and Strategy for Community engagement in light of the feedback from the Elton Community Consultation report. The insights from the above community consultation process will inform the development and review of the Community Engagement Policy and Strategy.

Next Steps

27. Following the Meeting of Council on 3 April 2017, it is proposed that the Elton Consulting report and the Cred Consulting report be provided to City Plan Services for consideration during the assessment and review of the Planning Proposal for the former Oatley Bowling Club site.

Financial Implications

28. Within budget allocation.

File Reference

16/1212

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 Outcomes Report Elton Consulting
- Attachment 2 Outcomes Report - Appendix A
- Attachment 3 Outcomes Report - Appendix B
- Attachment 4 Outcomes Report - Appendix C
- Attachment 5 Submissions Report Elton Consulting
- Attachment 6 Independent Peer Review by Cred Consulting