CM13.5. Albury Airport Western Precinct Concept Design - Public Exhibition Submissions

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Purpose of Report

To present Council with submissions received during the public exhibition and seek endorsement of the Albury Airport Western Precinct Concept Design.

Background

In 2018, Albury City Council in conjunction with the Albury Airport Users Advisory Committee, engaged the services of The Airport Group (TAG) to develop an Albury Airport Master Plan. This comprehensive plan strategically earmarked the Western Precinct, 16.5ha of vacant land, as a designated zone tailored for aviation-centric development, for businesses or activities which require access to the runway, taxiway, and apron system.

Specifically, the area is expected to accommodate:

- Emergency services operations (i.e. aerial firefighting, aeromedical);
- Freight and related warehousing;
- Future and emerging aviation technologies;
- General aviation hangars (private or business);
- Helipads;
- Aviation related business (i.e. aviation maintenance, aircraft painting); and
- Apron areas for parking of large charter and military aircraft

Events including the 2019/2020 Australian Bushfires also saw considerable active use of Albury Airport by both the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) and what was then known as Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP) to support their aerial firefighting capabilities.

Following the devastating 2020 Bushfires, The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements was undertaken, and the subsequent report presented in October 2020 identified several recommendations, including the need for a national approach to bushfire resilience and recovery; development of a sovereign aerial firefighting capability; developing the aerial firefighting industry's capability; and, facilitating greater cooperation and the sharing of resources between states and territories.

Given the above, the development of a concept design and feasibility study provided the opportunity to review and further consider previously proposed recommendations for the Western Precinct as outlined in the Albury Airport Master Plan 2018 to ensure that any future development continued to

align with the strategic vision and objectives of the Albury Airport, as well as how Albury Airport may support the recommendations of The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements.

In March 2022, the Australian Government announced $5 million would be allocated to expand the Western Precinct at the Albury Airport as part of the Albury Wodonga Regional Projects initiative. The funding is targeted for aeromedical and emergency service aerial support infrastructure.

Following a competitive selection process Albury City Council appointed Ontoit Global Pty Ltd to undertake a Concept Design and Feasibility Study aimed at assessing the potential development of the Western Precinct of Albury Airport. Referred to as the Albury Airport Western Precinct (AAWP) Concept Design and Feasibility Study, this initiative was identified in subsequent discussions as the Albury Airport Western Development (AAWD) to distinguish it from specific precincts within the development area.

Extensive stakeholder engagement was undertaken to develop the draft AAWD Concept Design and Feasibility Study with representatives from all levels of government, and multiple government agencies particularly those involved in aviation, aeromedical and aero-firefighting event response. The other industries that were engaged included Emerging Aviation, General Aviation and Freight as well as local business stakeholders. The Albury Airport Advisory Committee were also engaged and endorsed the draft for presentation to Council. The engagement included 19 in-depth interviews and two group workshops.

Once finalised, the Albury Airport Western Precinct (AAWP) Concept Design and Feasibility Study was presented to Council at its meeting on 13 May 2024. Council resolved to:

a. Receive and note the Albury Airport Western Precinct Concept Design and Feasibility Study; and
b. Places the preferred Concept Design on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days and, if no submissions are received, adopt the Concept Design as the basis for future development of the Western Precinct at Albury Airport.

Issues

At the conclusion of the public exhibition period, a total of 16 submissions were received. The below table details all submissions and officers' responses.

Submission 1 – Brendan Rodgers
Again, Albury City does not look into the future. Extension of the runway should be high on the priority list. And should have been done 30 years ago, when the offer was made from overseas business ventures. Lack of foresight is the MO for Albury City Council. Officer's Response: Hi Brendan, thank you for the feedback. The runway meets current and future demand by accommodating Code 4C aircraft such as the Boeing 737 with a carrying capacity of 189 passengers. The airport will continue to be developed in line with the 2018 Masterplan, in that any development surrounding the airport preserves current runway length.

No change to Concept Design recommended.

Submission 2 – Sonia Dalitz

A new entrance/ driveway off Drome street appears to be shown on the concept but is not labelled as a change to the existing situation, an omission that at best obfuscates your messaging to the community, and at worst risks invalidating the whole feedback process by not properly informing people about the concepts intentions around impacts to or around how traffic to and out of the precinct will be managed. No information is available on the Have Your Say page that points to any descriptive information e.g. an explanation of what eVTOL stands for, or description of what an aero medical service is. There is also a mismatch between the project description, for example describing a vision for freight and warehousing, while the concept plan does not show a location for this.

Officer's Response:

Hi Sonia, thank you for the detailed feedback. As identified in the Albury Airport Master Plan 2018, road access to the Western Precinct is proposed via the continuation of North Street and progressing along the western boundary and extending into Lockheed Drive in the south. The Concept Design is a stepping stone toward the next part of the project which is to develop the Preliminary Design for staged elements prior to progressing Detailed Design as funding becomes available. During the subsequent design phases your inputs will be further addressed.

No change to Concept Design recommended.

Submission 3 – Susan Bruce

I am unable to open the link to the concept design.

Officer's Response:

Hi Susan, submissions have only been reviewed post the closing date. Our apologies that the link has not worked for you. AlburyCity will send a separate email with the concept design for your viewing and can consider your feedback in future stages of the design process.

No change to Concept Design recommended.

Submission 4 – Brittany Caldwell

1. To have a regional airport that can accept larger aircrafts that can fly further would be fabulous. To be able to fly direct to Tasmania/Adelaide and one day WA would surely increase the areas liveability so that the whole region continues to expand. We are in such a lucky position here, with Melbourne/Sydney & Canberra all within reasonable driving distances.

2. To open flights to Albury to more cities, surely it would only boost snow seasons, summers, food/wine visitors, tourism etc.

3. Up, up and away - looking forward to seeing the plans come to fruition.

Officer's Response:

Hi Brittany, it is great to receive such positive feedback. Our response is outlined below;

1. Any development will preserve runway length to maintain capacity for larger planes. AlburyCity will continue to encourage and work with commercial airline partners trialling new routes that are potentially viable.
2. Albury Airport remains open to any increase in Air Transport Operations (ATO) by commercial airlines and acknowledges the in-bound and outbound tourism opportunities this presents for the community and economy.
3. It's certainly an exciting time ahead at Albury Airport.

No change to design recommended.

Submission 5 – Gregory Ellerington

Should relocate Kiewa St Fire station to Airport airport.

Officer's Response:

Hi Gregory, thanks for taking the time to provide feedback. There are many factors to consider when identifying preferred locations for fire stations. This consideration was beyond the scope of this study.

No change to design recommended.

Submission 6 – Chris Abbot

1. Is it going to be freehold?

2. Albury needs a freehold airpark that would attract a lot of quality interest bringing commercial and GA to the field.

Officer's Response:

Hi Chris, Thanks for your feedback.

In relation to your points:

1. The Western Precinct is "airside land" and like other airside land at Albury Airport it is not intended to be freehold.
2. In recent years AlburyCity has facilitated the development of freehold land, some of which includes direct airside access, immediately to the south of the airport and in close proximity to the north of the airport, which has attracted investment from the commercial and general aviation sectors.

No change to design recommended.

Submission 7 – Gus Elliot

1. Terrible idea, the western grass is instrumental in Helifly's training operations. It offers a fantastic opportunity for students to practice a variety of skills and acts as a way of decongesting the taxi way when helicopters are taxiing to the Northern Grass.

2. Please contact Helifly for their input.

3. Overall, I do not see why we need to convert the space when the rest of the current available space it underutilized.

Officer's Response:

Hi Gus, your input is noted. The development of the Western Precinct is expected to benefit businesses requiring access to the runway, taxiway, and apron systems. Importantly, the Western Precinct development is in line with the 2018 Master Plan for Albury Airport. Future planning for the Airport must consider a range of uses that benefit and meet the needs of the broader region and community. We are happy to liaise directly with Helifly in regard to its specific business needs and how they may be accommodated.

No change to design recommended.

Submission 8 – Jason Henry

1. This is a great concept for Albury and the wider community.

2. Whilst I agree there is a need for Medi-vac and firefighting services when required, this will only support/sustain a small portion of a workforce.

3. The council could consider having conversations with the defence industry primes, such as BAE and Boeing, who service, maintain, innovative and support local industries in their supply chains.

4. Albury Council needs to think strategically about the future regarding technology and invest in tech/aerospace/space organisations that foster innovation and development in sectors such as robotics, AI, and mechanical engineering.

5. Having a technology hub or having the primes in the new precinct will assist this.

Forwarding for your consideration.

Officer's Response:

Hi Jason, thank you for your feedback.

In relation to your points:

1. Thank you for the support.
2. Noted. Emergency response infrastructure is focussed on the region's public safety and asset protection rather than economic benefits. Importantly, the relocation of the aeromedical apron will also provide greater capacity for Albury Airport to attract new or increase existing Air Transport Operations, which can contribute to growth in jobs and economic activity in the region.
3. Thank you for your suggestion. AlburyCity will seek to engage a broad range of stakeholders as the project progresses to the next stage.
4. In developing the Concept Design, AlburyCity engaged the services of a consortium of aviation experts. As part of the development, they engaged a number of emerging aviation experts from the National Emerging Aviation Technology Consultative Committee and emerging aviation businesses.
5. Noted.

No change to design recommended.

Submission 9 – Geoffrey Jones

It would be good to have a major upgrade of the main entrance, use of a roundabout.

Officer's Response:

Hi Geoffrey, Thank you for your feedback. Whilst this is outside the scope of the Western Precinct Concept Design, we note that AlburyCity has allocated a total of $2.8M as a contribution to the potential upgrade of the Riverina Highway/Airport Drive Intersection in 2026/27 and 2027/28 of the adopted 2024-2028 Four Year Delivery Program. The Riverina Highway is a Transport for NSW asset so progression of the project will be subject to a co-contribution and relevant approvals.

No change to design recommended.

Submission 10 – Ella Tueben

1. It would be nice if there was a footpath from the airport arrival/departure building to the Uiver Project hangar.
2. Now that several books have been written, even by internationally acclaimed authors, this project deserves better access and advertising. A bigger carpark at the "Uiver" hangar is also needed. Parking on wet grass/waterlogged soil is a trip/fall hazard.

Officer's Response:

Hi Ella, thank you for your feedback.

In relation to your points:

1. As the project progresses to Preliminary Design the inclusion of a footpath adjacent to the proposed road network can be explored.
2. As the project progresses to Preliminary Design the provision of car parking to meet

expected future demand can be considered, in consultation with the Uiver Memorial Community Trust.

No change to design recommended.

Submission 11 – Matthew Macdonald

Hello,
With this wonderful news, could we get an Albury Airshow soon?
Regards,

Officer's Response:

Hi Matthew,

Thank you for the support of the project. AlburyCity will consider the factors associated with convening an airshow as the Aviation Strategy is developed.

No change to design recommended

Submission 12 – Liz Wood

I not happy that the aeroplanes fly over the centre of Albury. Air pollution, noise pollution
Please consider an alternative route to the airport or better still rebuild the airport outside city area (original plan for airport was Barnawartha area.)
A big, short-sighted mistake.

Officer's Response:

Hi Liz, thank you for the feedback.

With regards to aircraft movement at Albury, the preference is for arrival / departure from the east. This can be done on most occasions; however, it is dependent on wind direction and on those occasions when wind does not permit, the planes will arrive / depart from the city side due to safety reasons.

No change to design recommended.

Submission 13 – Phillip Sefton

Hi, cannot really add much to your input except:

1. Need to sort out the Airport intersection onto Borella Road - It is becoming very congested at times - need to be at least a roundabout

2. I would have thought by now plans would be in the works for some extension of the runway in all this before available land gets so difficult that the airport locks itself in and cannot take bigger planes.

3. I hope people will be able to roast their own coffee on the precinct - That was really a disastrous PR decision by ACC.

Anyway, my 20c worth.

Officer's Response:

Hi Phillip, thank you for your feedback.

In relation to your points:

1. Thank you for your feedback. Whilst this is outside the scope of the Western Precinct Concept Design, we note that AlburyCity has allocated a total of $2.8M as a contribution to the potential upgrade of the Riverina Highway/Airport Drive Intersection in 2026/27 and 2027/28 of the adopted 2024-2028 Four Year Delivery Program. The Riverina Highway is a Transport for NSW asset so progression of the project will be subject to a co-contribution and relevant approvals.

2. The runway meets current and future demand by accommodating Code 4C aircraft such as the Boeing 737 with a carrying capacity of 189 passengers. The airport will continue to be developed in line with the 2018 Masterplan, in that any development surrounding the airport preserves the current runway length.

3. Noted.

No change to design recommended.

Submission 14 – Garry Simonis

Yes right. But what infrastructure are you going to put in to cope with all the extra local traffic coming from Thurgoona that council and RMS has done nothing in the last 2 years. Until all roads are duplicated, roundabouts put in and the traffic lights on Thurgoona Drive intersection are removed. Nothing will get resolved. Only resolution is Albury councillors are removed from office.

Officer's Response:

Hi Gary,

Thank you for your submission. Traffic demand on the Riverina Highway is beyond the scope of the Albury Airport Western Precinct Concept Plan. However, we note that AlburyCity has allocated a total of $2.8M as a contribution to the potential upgrade of the Riverina Highway/Airport Drive Intersection in 2026/27 and 2027/28 of the adopted 2024-2028 Four Year Delivery Program. The Riverina Highway is a Transport for NSW asset so progression of the project will be subject to a co-contribution and relevant approvals.

No change to design recommended.

Submission 15 – Andrew Boyd Barber
I suggest that the information provided on the 'have your say' page is insufficient for the public to have an informed view. The one image supplied contains no site boundary, scale bar, north point, or legend. It is difficult to understand what is retained without change, what is new and what is an enhancement of the existing. I request that the consultation be undertaken again with a sufficient level of information. Officer's Response: Thank you for your feedback on the format of information provided. The Concept Plan builds on the relevant section of the Albury Airport Master Plan 2018 and is high level in nature. Further consultation will be undertaken with key stakeholders and users as the project progresses through Preliminary and Detailed Design phases to ensure a sound understanding of the proposed future development of the precinct. **No change to design recommended.**
Submission 16 – Russell Hamstead
Whilst I support an expansion of the airport, it needs to be accompanied by a noise curfew between 10pm and 7am Officer's Response: Hi Russell, thank you for your feedback and support regarding development. With regards to noise curfew there are restrictions relating to training flights after 9pm. The majority of regular Air Transport Operations occur between 7am and 7pm. The preference for departure and arrival is always from the east of the airport to minimise any effect on the majority of the city's residents. **No change to design recommended**

As a result of the feedback received through the public exhibition period, no design changes are recommended for the Concept Design. The inputs received throughout the submissions process will be considered during the Preliminary Design and Detailed Design phases.

Risk

- **Business Risk** – The cost of the Albury Airport Western Development (AAWD) project as previously reported ($138M) reveals the potential for cost overruns or fluctuations in construction costs during the three identified stages. To address constant monitoring of project expenditures, ongoing market analysis for material and workforce costs, and contingency planning for unexpected budgetary challenges. Airport management are to remain engaged with contractors and suppliers to gain cost predictability and help in identifying potential cost-saving measures without compromising the master plan once developed.

- **Corporate Risk** – The construction timeline for the AAWD introduces corporate risks, particularly in the realm of public perception and stakeholder engagement. The prolonged duration may lead to potential public dissatisfaction or concerns about the project's progress, impacting the community's perception of the Council's efficiency. To mitigate this risk, transparent and proactive communication strategies should be implemented. Regular updates, community forums, and accessible channels for inquiries will foster public understanding and maintain a positive perception. Where required, engaging stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and community leaders, can help align the various project elements with community expectations and address concerns before they escalate.
- **WHS and Public Risk** – Workplace health and safety risks in the context of the AAWD construction project can encompass numerous factors associated with the construction. Regular safety audits, incident reporting systems, and continuous safety training will be essential to minimise exposure to WHS and public risk events.
- **Environmental Risk** – Construction activities naturally inherit a wide range of risks associated with habitat disruption, water contamination, waste generation and noise pollution. These risks will be addressed prior to construction during a thorough environmental assessment. The Albury Airport has no significant heritage or cultural impacts.
- **Delivery Program Risk** – Undertaking the AAWD in three distinct stages spanning a 10-year period introduces inherent business risks associated with the extended construction timeline. The primary risk lies in the potential for external factors such as regulatory changes, economic downturns, or unforeseen challenges impacting each stage. To mitigate this risk, as project elements are further progressed, detailed risk management plans will be established, incorporating regular reviews and adaptability to address evolving circumstances and constraints.

Community Engagement

The public exhibition of the preferred Western Precinct Concept Design (refer Attachment 1) was undertaken for a period of 28 days to garner any further feedback from the broader community. Promotion of the public exhibition included:

- Public exhibition via existing AlburyCity channels.
- Direct emails to relevant stakeholders.
- Media release.

Subject to endorsement of the Albury Airport Western Precinct Concept Design, AlburyCity will use a range of communication mediums to inform the community and other airport stakeholders and users of the development as it progresses through the next design phases.

Options

1. That Council:
    a. Receive and note the submissions received during the public exhibition of the Albury Airport Western Precinct Concept Design; and
    b. Adopt the Concept Design as the basis for the future development of the Western Precinct at Albury Airport.

    Recommended.

This is the preferred option as the public exhibition process did not identify a need for further changes.

2. That Council seek further amendments to the Albury Airport Western Precinct Concept Design. **Not Recommended**.

Conclusion

The Albury Airport Western Development Concept Design represents a comprehensive and strategic effort to enhance the Western Precinct of Albury Airport, aligning with the broader objectives outlined in the Albury Airport Master Plan and various local, regional, and national strategic objectives. The thorough background investigations, stakeholder engagement, and technical business case studies have informed the preferred concept design.

The preferred draft Concept Design (Attachment 1) was presented to Council on 13 May 2024 and endorsed for public exhibition for 28 days. During this time 16 submissions were made. Comments received were generally supportive or raised questions not directly related to the Concept Design. Following consideration of the submissions received during the formal public exhibition period, no amendments are considered to be required and Council's adoption the Concept Design is now sought. The feedback that has been received will be further considered as the project progresses through the Preliminary and Detailed Design phases.

Recommendation

That Council:

a. Receive and note the submissions received through the public exhibition of the Albury Airport Western Precinct Concept Design; and

b. Adopt the Concept Design as the basis for future development of the Western Precinct at Albury Airport.

Attachments

1. Albury Airport Western Precinct Concept Design (DOC24/144260)