

CM13.5. Albury Riverside Precinct - Updated Concept Designs Public Exhibition Results

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Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to provide Council with the feedback received on the Riverside Precinct Refined Concept Designs through the Public Exhibition period; to seek Council endorsement of the Riverside Precinct Refined Concept Designs prior to progressing to the detailed design stage of the project; and to update Council on the financial status of the project.

Background

In 2007, AlburyCity endorsed the Murray River Experience Master Plan. This Master Plan identified future improvements along the Murray River and Lake Hume, with the main objectives to:

- strengthen the relationship between the community and the Murray River;
- provide greater access to the Murray River;
- provide quality amenities in all open spaces;
- promote and develop a diversity of experiences; and
- significantly improve the health of the Murray River.

The development of the riverside area behind the Albury Swim Centre (Hume Street to Bungambrawatha Creek), known as the Riverside Precinct, was one of the key projects identified in the Murray River Experience Master Plan. Concept designs for the Riverside Precinct were developed in 2016, which could accompany future grant applications (attachment 1).

In 2018, AlburyCity applied for funding under the Regional Growth, Environment and Tourism Fund (RGETF) for projects included in the Murray River Experience Master Plan. The Riverside Precinct project was one of the projects included in this application. This application was successful and subsequently \$4.7M was allocated to this project.

In March 2019, a consultant was appointed to progress the concept design into detailed construction documentation. The initial component of their brief was to review the 2016 concept designs (attachment 1) in context of the feedback received during the initial community consultation and the current design ideology for the area.

The key issues addressed through this process were:

- retention of greenspace;
- retention of significant trees;
- improved access to the river; and
- rationalisation of car parking.

The refined concept designs (attachment 2) address these identified community issues.

To ensure there was consistency in the design development of the wider section of the Riverside Parks, the opportunity was taken to expand the refined concept design area to provide a master plan of the entire precinct, including the entire area between Mudges Canal and Hume Street, which is beyond the initial RGETF scope of works. More specifically, the Hovell Tree Park pizza oven upgrade, also one of the projects associated with the RGETF program, was included to ensure that the landscape areas around the Hovell Tree Park pizza oven shelter were consistent with the Riverside Precinct.

It must be noted that not all elements identified in the expanded refined concept design will be constructed through the RGETF funding, and some future stages of the updated designs will be subject to future grant applications and/or budget processes.

Community Engagement

This project has been identified for community engagement on two previous occasions:

- Murray River Experience Master Plan in 2007; and
- Riverside Parks community consultation in 2017.

During June and July 2019, the refined concept designs were also presented to several key government agencies seeking input into the designs.

The agencies engaged during this process included:

- NSW Fisheries;
- NSW Crown Land;
- NSW Office of Environment and Heritage;
- Natural Resources Access Regulator and NSW Roads; and
- Roads and Maritime Services.

The purpose of this consultation was to identify key elements of the concept design that may impact any future request for approval. Several elements were identified as potential barriers to approval which were forwarded to the consultant to inform the design. These potential barriers have subsequently been addressed through the refined concept designs.

Other organisations that were consulted during this period include:

- Albury Wodonga Farmers Market;
- Aligned Leisure;
- Park Run; and
- Albury Tigers Football Club.

Albury Wodonga Farmers Market are very interested in having a presence in the precinct and Aligned Leisure were consulted about the potential to utilise existing infrastructure to service the Riverside Precinct.

The refined concept designs public exhibition process was the third and most recent opportunity for the community to provide feedback (23 September - 1 November 2019). This resulted in 15 submissions being received via email (attachment 3), with a summary of the feedback received outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Summary of comments received and responses

	Name	Feedback	AlburyCity Response
1	Clayton Wood	The pictures and precinct look nice. Would like a water park/splash space which could attract more visitors	The concept plan does identify a small water activity area. This element will not be constructed as part of Stage 1. The upcoming Play Space Strategy will consider options for a larger, water play/splash park as an additional stage of the Oddies Creek Park Play Space.
2	Shalisa Allan	The design looks good but what about natural habitat for fish.	During the development of this concept plan, feedback was sought from NSW Fisheries who have provided in-principle support for the design. It is felt that the current design will improve access for activities such as fishing.
3	Debbie Burt	I feel this boardwalk concept is unsuitable for this area. I would rather it left as it is, in a very natural state.	The recent feedback from the community overwhelmingly supports the improvement of this site given its close proximity to the CBD. There are other riverside reserves within the Albury area that will remain in a more natural state.
4	Heidi Leatham	I would be horrified to see the natural beauty of this much loved area turned into timber decking and concrete. How would wheelchairs	The decking has been designed to improve access at various points along the river. Consultation with members of the Access Committee

		access the decking.	has occurred to ensure that the space is universally designed. Further refinement will occur during the detailed design process.
5	Leah Koschitzke	There needs to be more cafes and or restaurants, even canoe or paddle boat hire.	<p>There has been consideration in the design for mobile food vendors within the space.</p> <p>There will be a future master plan process undertaken in this area as part of the Murray River Experience Master Plan Review project. This will include the Albury Swim Centre and Albury Sports Ground. This master plan will explore the commercial opportunities within the space, giving consideration to planning and development constraints.</p>
6	Ro Smith	<p>1. There is too much concrete.</p> <p>2. Where is the access to the river for swimmers?</p> <p>3. Need to remove all the plants adjacent to the decks as they are great habitat for snakes.</p> <p>4. Looks like it would be awkward to access with a kayak/canoe or if you had small kids.</p> <p>5. I believe this area is being over developed instead of enhancement. I would be less likely to use the proposed facility than the current facilities.</p>	<p>1. Most of the hardstand areas are confined to existing hardstand areas and roadways.</p> <p>2. The main swim area will still be at Noreuil Park however river access has also been identified at the end of Hume Street.</p> <p>3. Revegetation of this area with riverine species assists in maintaining the natural habitat. The full extent will be determined through the detailed design process.</p> <p>4. The canoe/kayak access area is designed as a stopping point for people already paddling on the river to access the river precinct.</p> <p>5. Native flora and fauna have been considered in the development of the concept plan.</p>
7	Warren Bond	The Riverside Precinct plans don't appear to allow for car parking to launch or retrieve a large canoe.	The canoe/kayak area is designed as an access area for paddlers travelling along the river, and not a

			launch area. Canoe and kayak launch areas with appropriate parking and access are available at Mungabareena Reserve boat ramp, Kremur Street boat ramp and the newly constructed Wonga Wetlands launch ramp.
8	Access Committee feedback via Council representative	<p>1. Seating - great to see this included but would need to have bench seats with arm rests</p> <p>2. Access to the river: There are a number of steps to access this space. Consider access points and lookout that is accessible for everyone. It is disappointing to see that the space is automatically excluding community members with mobility issues through its design.</p> <p>3. It is also important to ensure wayfinding is as effective as possible and lighting is adequate for both visibility and safety - there does not seem to be lighting shown in the images provided.</p>	<p>1. Noted. Arm rest seats are included in the project</p> <p>2. This has been passed onto the consultant to review as part of the detailed design process.</p> <p>3. Included in brief but not identified in "concept plans". This will be included in the detailed design process.</p>
9	Jacinta Ducat	<p>I love the plans.</p> <p>A few questions/suggestions:</p> <p>1. I'd love to see bench seats on the platforms next to the river amongst the water plants. It would be a beautiful place to sit.</p> <p>2. Will there be toilets close by?</p> <p>3. is there an opportunity for vans/shipping containers to sell coffee etc there, similar to junction place in Wodonga?</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>1.This is included in the overall design.</p> <p>2.Council is currently investigating options for establishing new amenities to replace those that are currently located in Hovell Tree Park, to ensure amenities are located closer to the space.</p> <p>3. An area has been identified on the plan for temporary food vendors.</p>

		<p>4. I'd love to see a water park like Bright in the area.</p> <p>5. Lots of trees as you have shown will be vital for summer enjoyment.</p> <p>6. Sculptures supporting indigenous artists would be a great continuation of the Yindyamarra sculpture walk around Kremur St.</p> <p>7. Distinct spaces for walking v cycling will be important for safety reasons as the bike track is also important.</p>	<p>4. The concept plan does identify a small water activity area but not on a scale similar to Bright. This element will not be constructed as part of Stage 1. The Murray River Experience Master Plan review will consider options for a larger, water play/splash park as an additional stage of the Oddies Creek Park Play Space.</p> <p>5. Noted. Additional trees have been identified on the plan</p> <p>6. Sculptures have been included in the designs. They will be separate to the Yindyamarra Sculpture Walk which commences at the Kremur Street Boat Ramp area.</p> <p>7. The concept plans identified a number of pathways that will separate users.</p>
10	Jonathon Howard	<p>1. Supportive of overall design</p> <p>2. No bike racks in the design</p> <p>3. Suggest species selection be native species in our region</p>	<p>1. Noted</p> <p>2. Bike racks are will be included in construction project scope.</p> <p>3. Local species will be included in the construction documentation.</p>
11	Leah Hardy	<p>The design you guys are proposing for our riverside isn't appropriate.</p> <p>There's way too much cement, grassed areas are what us locals want, trees too, shade sails will look tacky and eventually stain and again look horrible.</p> <p>Whilst I agree the area definitely needs work, please don't make it look as if we are a Capital city.</p>	<p>Images only provide a snap shot of the area. The refined concept design has retained a large number of shade trees and has identified planting new trees. The recent feedback from the community overwhelmingly supports the improvement of this site given its close proximity to the CBD. Numerous riverside reserves within the Albury area will remain in a more natural state.</p>

12	Elise Bulman	<p>Concerned about how much concrete and paved areas are included in the plan. Can I ask why these can't be grassed areas? Concrete would be incredibly hot for the many weeks during summer.</p> <p>Choice of trees: gum trees would provide very lousy shade during summer. They would also add to the hot concrete/paving issue.</p> <p>Lastly could local wildflowers be considered for the underplanting of the trees which would do well in dry conditions.</p> <p>One of the best things about the riverside precinct is the ability to have a picnic by the water's edge. I'm not sure how anyone could do that with this new concept.</p>	<p>This plan indicates that a large amount of green space is being retained and that a majority of the hardstand areas are confined to existing path and roadways. Some hardstand areas are also required to support events and precinct activation, particularly in high pedestrian traffic areas. The focus of this design was to better connect people to the river in a more accessible way as well as maintaining native vegetation and leisure areas.</p> <p>The plan includes the planting of additional trees within the design to improve shade and habitat in the area.</p> <p>The species have been selected to best suit the riparian environment in this region.</p> <p>There will be several options for visitors to sit close to the water's edge.</p>
13	Carissa Furze	<p>I think the concept is fantastic. The images look spectacular and I believe this will be an enormous asset to the Albury area.</p> <p>My family and myself look forward to utilising this new riverside precinct in the coming years. Well done to all involved in the long planning process.</p>	Noted

14	Bill Bland	<p>Doesn't think materials such as recycled car rubber waste and resin is a great option for a flood plain. Decking material has also issues of sustainability with certain timber choices.</p> <p>Also concerned with concrete around trees roots.</p> <p>Main thing for me is addressing plastic and chemical pollution via stormwater</p>	<p>Recycled material products are now widely used in a variety of landscape settings. They reduce maintenance and replacement costs on products such as timber.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to tree surrounds in the detailed design phase.</p> <p>Council is currently working on concurrent projects to minimise impact of pollution into the stormwater system. This includes a redesign of the gross pollutant trap on Bungambrawatha Creek.</p>
15	Peter Hood	<p>I write concerning the development along the river foreshore, near Albury swimming pool. My concerns are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No ramps for kayaks to access the river. 2. More shade around and above the decking area. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The main access ramps for a kayak/canoe will be at the existing boat ramps (Mungabareena Reserve, Kremur Street and Wonga Wetlands). There are river access points in the design however not formal launching points for water craft 2. The design retains significant trees within the deck area that will act as shade. There will also be a number of additional trees planted in the concept design.

Key issues identified through the public exhibition process:

- **Generally**, there is support for the refined concept designs. There were a number of positive comments on social media posts however these do not necessarily result in comments received through formal submissions.
- **Water park** – a small water feature area has been included in the concept design however will not be constructed in Stage 1. Through recent feedback during other master planning process, splash parks have been a consistent request. Further investigation is required to identify a suitable location within the City for a splash park. The Play Space Strategy will consider the construction of a large splash park as a future stage of the Oddies Creek Play Space.
- **Trees and vegetation** – several comments received on shade, loss of green space and the extent of hard surfaces. There is currently over 130 new trees identified in the designs (the number will be confirmed during the detailed design stage). The refined concept designs also

identify the retention of significant River Red Gums along the streambank. These were identified for removal in the 2016 concept design. The detail of the planting palette will be confirmed during detailed design.

- **Green space/hardstand area** – The hard stand areas are required to improve accessibility to the site and to improve connectivity to key locations within the site. Hardstand is also included to facilitate events such as Albury Wodonga Farmers Markets. The majority of this hardstand has been confined to existing road and path alignments. The Peninsula area boardwalk is also being reviewed with a gravel path being considered as an alternative.
- **Accessibility** – Accessibility was a key component of the design brief. Handstand pathways and ramps are utilised to link key areas to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Accessible seating is also included in the designs.
- **River access** – River access where people can interact with the water has been identified in two locations.

With the comments received through the public exhibition process there were no significant changes required to the refined concept designs. These comments have been forwarded to the consultants for consideration through the next level of design.

Regional Growth Environment and Tourism Fund

The Albury Riverside Precinct is the signature project for the \$10.1M Regional Growth, Environment and Tourism (RGETF) grant program. A summary of projects is included below in Table 2, with identified grant funds and Council contribution.

Table 2 – Initial scope, estimates and funding sources

Project	Council funds	Grant funds	Total budget
Wonga Wetlands Visitor & Experience Centre	\$813,000	\$300,000	\$1,113,000
Wagirra Trail Extension	\$2,047,000	\$355,000	\$2,402,000
Riverside Precinct	\$255,000	\$4,414,000	\$4,669,000
Australia Park Car Park	\$682,950		\$682,950
Noreuil Park Foreshore	\$233,052		\$233,052
Oddies Creek Park linking Footbridge	\$171,618		\$171,618
Oddies Creek Play Space Stage 2	\$156,948		\$156,948
Hovell Tree Park Wood Fire Oven	\$502,650		\$502,650
Oddies Creek Weed Removal	\$197,782		\$197,782
Total	\$5,060,000	\$5,069,000	\$10,129,000

As outlined in the above table, Council's contribution to the Riverside Precinct is \$255,000. This was the estimated cost for the detailed design process as identified by the consultant during the development of the 2016 concept designs.

Expenditure year to date for the Riverside Precinct at the end December was \$151,343. The revised budget for the completing the detailed design phase is \$347,000. With the increase in detailed design costs the remaining funds available for construction has reduced to \$4,322,000.

Issues

Albury 2030 Plan

This project is in alignment with following goals:

Theme One – A Growing Sustainable Economy

1.2 Improve visitor and residents' experiences.

Theme Three – A Caring Community

3.3 The health and wellbeing of the Albury community improves.

3.4 Albury offers a diverse and accessible range of facilities and activities for all ages.

Strategies

This project has been identified in the Murray River Experience Master Plan and aligns with the AlburyCity CBD Master Plan.

Wodonga City Council's Gateway Island Master Plan has been considered throughout the concept design review phase to ensure that the concepts identified in both plans are aligned.

Community Impact

The provision of improved community infrastructure and open space along the river provides a positive impact for both residents of and visitors to Albury.

Environmental Impact

The concept design process has involved consultation with key river stakeholders. Environmental issues identified during this consultation have been considered during this design process. In addition, the designs have also sought to minimise the loss of native vegetation, as well as include a suitable replanting program using a range of suitable riparian indigenous species.

A Review of Environmental Factors is currently underway based on the refined concept plan. Environmental approvals will be obtained once the detailed design is completed.

Financial Impact

This project has funding identified as part of the \$10.1M RGETF with an identified budget of \$4,669,000 (design \$255,000 and construction \$4,414,000). The increase in design costs has reduced the construction budget to \$4,322,000.

In addition, a portion of the \$502,650 for the wood fired oven project budget (\$270,650) will be allocated to construction of the landscape elements of this project, with the balance of the wood fired oven budget (\$232,000) allocated to the structural elements of that project (storage area, extension

of the shelters, new wood fired ovens). Therefore, the total available construction budget is currently \$4,592,650.

A more holistic approach through the design process was undertaken with the inclusion of the wood fired oven area and the Noreuil Parade roadway in Hovell Tree Park to Mudges Canal. As a result, the design area has expanded which has in turn has increased the probable cost estimates. Table 3 outlined below provides details of probable cost based on the refined concept designs (attachment 2).

Table 3 – Riverside Precinct revised cost estimates

Stage	Cost Review Estimate	Comment
1. Landscaping adjoining Hovell Tree Shelter	\$750,000	The initial scope only included concreting in the immediate facility of the shelters (540 sqm). To cater for the increased activation (markets and events) an expanding hardstand has been included in the refined concept designs (total area 1422 square metres). Additional fixtures and furniture are also included in the updated designs.
2a. Riverside Precinct	\$4,533,000	This focal area includes the crossing point lookout, riverbank promenade and riverside boardwalk with river access.
2b. Peninsula	\$1,490,000	Includes elevated timber boardwalk (originally gravel pathway) and two river access points (originally one).
2c. Water Play	\$317,000	The water play area was not in the original scope but has been an item requested a number of times by the community. This element will be considered in the Citywide Play Space Strategy as an additional stage at Oddies Creek Play Space.
3. Car Park	\$490,000	The car park works will not form part of the initial Riverside construction project given it will be impacted by the duplication of the sewer rising

		main project (2020/21). The car park upgrade will be considered further as part of the remediation works associated with the sewer rising main project.
4. Noreuil Parade shared zone and market area	\$1,140,000	The original concept design identified this area as car parking. The refined concept designs upgrade this area to a shared zone space for up to 60 market stalls. This was identified as a future project however was included as part of the project to ensure consistent design themes.
TOTAL	\$8,720,000	

From a financial perspective, Table 3 shows the revised Riverside Precinct costs (\$8,720,000) are \$4,051,000 greater than the initial budget estimates for Riverside Precinct that were identified in Table 2 (\$4,669,000). The increasing costs are primarily attributable to the expanded scope to include Stages 2c, 3 and 4. In addition there have been some increasing costs associated with the refined design for Stages 1, 2a and 2b, as well as an increase in construction costs given the initial budget was forecast back in 2016 based on preliminary concepts.

These anticipated project costs will need to be further refined following completion of the detailed designs, and the true costs will only be better known once a tender has been released to test the market.

Delivery Staging

It is anticipated that the increasing costs associated with the project can be accommodated by implementing a staged delivery program over multiple financial years, using currently available funds to deliver Stages 1 and 2a, and then using future capital initiative budgets to deliver Stages 2b, 2c, 3 and 4 (subject to future Council budget deliberations).

To manage the potential risk associated with the contract costs exceeding the available budget, an initial tender will be released and structured using separable portions. This will allow the true market costs for each stage to be better understood, whilst only releasing those stages that can be accommodated within the available budget. Therefore it would be prudent to move to detailed design for at least stages 1, 2a and 2b.

The currently available construction budget of \$4,592,650 will be used to primarily complete Stages 1 and part of 2a in 2020/21, whilst the budget to complete the remaining stages will be scheduled into subsequent years for Council consideration. Table 4 below summarises the proposed budget allocations and project stages to be completed over multiple financial years.

Table 4 – Proposed staged delivery program

FY	Project Stage	Budget allocation
2020/21	Stage 1 + part of 2a	\$4,592,650
2021/22	Balance of Stage 2a + 2b	\$2,180,000
2022/23	Stage 3	\$490,000
2023/24	Stage 2c	\$317,000*
2024/25	Stage 4	\$1,140,000

* to be included in the Citywide Play Space Strategy as an additional stage at Oddies Creek Play Space.

Risk

- *Business Risk* – The project construction budget was provided to the consultant as part of the design brief document. At the completion of the refined concept design process an updated probable cost estimate for the expanded project scope has been developed (Total for all stages as designed is \$8,720,000). Staged construction and funding options are discussed previously in this report.
- *Corporate Risk* – This project is in a high-profile riverside park, and there are a range of community expectations that need to be managed whilst giving effect to the long-term vision for the precinct. There will be public scrutiny on the project through both the design and construction phase. Keeping the community informed through the website and social media will assist in minimising corporate risk.
- *Environmental Risk* – A Review of Environmental Factors is currently underway and environmental approvals will be obtained once the detailed design is completed.
- *WHS and Public Risk* – This project will improve public safety and accessibility at the site. WHS and risk management have been considered at a high level for the concept planning phase. Further risk management consideration will be undertaken during the detailed design phase and during construction when they occur.
- *Delivery Program Risk* – Stages 1 and 2a are funded through a combination of Council and RGETF program funds. Future works identified in the precinct masterplan will be considered in future budgets, and as grant programs become available.

Options

Albury Riverside Precinct Refined Concept designs

1. Endorse the refined Riverside Precinct Concept Plan noting the feedback received during the public exhibition, which will allow staff to continue the detailed design. **This is the preferred option.**
2. Do not endorse the refined Riverside Precinct Concept Plan and not progress to detailed design. **This is not the preferred option** as significant consultation has occurred with key stakeholders during the refinement of the concept design. Seeking community comments

through the public exhibition will assist in finalising the concept plan prior and commencing detailed design phase ready for construction.

Delivery options

1. Endorse a staged delivery program as outlined in Table 4. **This is the preferred option** as it would deliver the design intent of the project and fulfil our RGETF grant fund obligations. Additional funding would be required to complete additional project scope components, which will be included in future budgets for Council consideration.
2. Do not endorse a staged delivery program. **This is not the preferred option** as it will significantly impact the ability to deliver the design intent of the project and not fulfil our RGETF grant fund obligations.

Conclusion

The Riverside Precinct project is a key improvement identified in the Murray River Experience Master Plan. Concept designs for the Riverside Precinct were developed and endorsed in 2016 pending comments received through the community engagement process.

The more recent Public Exhibition process for the refined concept designs received 15 submissions. The issues with the design identified in the submissions have either been addressed in the refined concept designs or have been forwarded to the consultant for consideration during the detailed design phase. As there are no major changes required to the Albury Riverside Precinct Refined Concept Designs, it is proposed that the designs placed on public exhibition be endorsed.

Staged options for construction have been considered to accommodate additional scope and the rising costs observed since the preliminary concepts were costed back in 2016. There may also be some further refinement in costings following the completion of detailed designs, although the full extent of any variance would only be fully realised following the release of a tender for construction.

Recommendation

That Council:

- a. receive and note the community engagement comments received and responses;
- b. endorse the Refined Riverside Precinct Concept designs and proceed to detailed design for Stage 1, 2a, and 2b; and
- c. endorse a staged delivery program that will be included in future budgets and as grant funding becomes available.

Attachments

1. 2016 Concept Design Riverside Precinct. (DOC17/85965)
2. 2019 Albury Riverside Refined Concept Designs. (DOC19/121273)
3. All Comments - Riverside Precinct Refined Concept Designs. (DOC19/164535)