

CM13.2. Review of Albury and Lavington CBD Master Plans - Project Scope and Stakeholder Engagement Plan

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Purpose of Report

To present the proposed scope, timeframe, and Stakeholder Engagement Plan for review of the Albury and Lavington CBD Master Plans.

Background

In 2009, the Albury CBD Master Plan and Lavington CBD Master Plan were developed to provide a long-term planning framework for both our Central Business Districts. The Master Plans have helped to guide and enhance our CBDs over the past 12 years including various built form controls and capital works upgrades.

Another recent relevant project is the Cultural Precinct Master Plan. This Master Plan was adopted at the 26 July 2021 Council Meeting. Prior to placement of the Draft Cultural Precinct Master Plan on public exhibition, Council, at its meeting on 26 April 2021, resolved:

- e. *That the scope of the CBD Master Plan review includes specific built form guidelines for any modifications to existing buildings or new buildings within the cultural precinct.*

This aspect is included in the scope of the CBD Master Plan review.

A key objective for undertaking this review is to ensure the Master Plans remain relevant to contemporary community expectations and continue to provide a collective vision that supports cohesive growth and enhancement of our CBDs.

Thurgoona centre is outside the scope of this review as it is considered separately as part of the Thurgoona Wirlinga Precinct Structure Plan which is scheduled for review in 2022-23. While Thurgoona is outside the scope, the review will consider the role and influence that the existing Thurgoona centre (and future centres in this growth area as identified in the Structure Plan) currently has, and will have, on the form and function of Lavington and Albury CBDs.

Issues

Review of the Albury and Lavington CBD Master Plans aligns to the following Albury 2030 outcomes:

- *1.2.4 – Continue to enhance Albury and Lavington CBDs.*
- *1.3.1 – Support and encourage a diversity of residential and commercial development in the Albury and Lavington CBDs.*
- *1.6.2 – Improve CBD accessibility.*

This project will also support one of the stated visions of Albury's Local Strategic Planning Statement:

- *Our CBDs and local centres continue to support our region and community as vibrant places with a variety of residential and commercial development. Albury CBD retains its important role as the highest order retail destination in the region, with Lavington and Thurgoona as important supporting retail centres.*

This project has a strong relationship to other Council strategy projects currently being developed and/or implemented, including:

- Albury Wodonga Integrated Transport Strategy;
- Review of Albury Retail Development Strategy;
- Dean Street Parklets Trial; and
- Riverside Precinct upgrades and Murray River Experience Master Plan Review.

Project Scope

The proposed study area for Review of the Albury and Lavington CBD Master Plans is provided as attachment 1. These geographic areas are similar to the study areas used for the 2009 CBD Master Plans. The project also includes investigation of the context surrounding the CBD study areas as well as transport 'gateways' into the CBDs.

Review of the Albury and Lavington CBD Master Plans is proposed to:

- consolidate previous works to ascertain the implications of changes which have occurred since 2009;
- effectively engage key stakeholders and the community to produce a long-term sustainable planning framework that guides a coordinated approach to new proposals for future change; and
- deliver easily understood updated Master Plans presenting a high quality, holistic vision for our CBDs with clear recommendations (including public domain concepts and built form controls) based on sound analysis and consultation outcomes.

The project scope includes review of the strategic directions, concepts and built form guidelines from the 2009 Master Plans. This includes review of specific built form guidelines for any modifications to

existing buildings or new buildings within the Cultural Precinct (as per the Council resolution in relation to the Cultural Precinct Master Plan).

The scope also includes review of the concepts for the landmark sites from the 2009 Master Plans. For Albury, this includes the Railway precinct, Council depot and the Cultural Precinct. For Lavington, this includes Lavington Town Square, Five-Ways and the entry ('gateway') off the Hume Highway (Wagga Road and Union Road). Concepts may also be developed for additional sites within each CBD.

Being a master plan, the review will focus on top-level strategies and identify key actions and priorities. The scope excludes detailed designs, cost estimates or any specific technical studies (such as traffic, heritage, or retail). This project also excludes any formal amendment to LEP or DCP planning controls. If required, these will form subsequent projects or stages as part of implementing the master plan. Minor scope adjustments may also result from the Request for Quote and consultant appointment processes.

Stages and timing

The aim is to complete the project as soon as possible while also providing suitable opportunity for community and stakeholder input. The proposed timeframe also seeks to align with other projects being undertaken including Albury2050, the Albury Wodonga Integrated Transport Strategy, Review of Albury Retail Development Strategy and Dean Street Parklets Trial. This will allow for appropriate integration of the relevant consultation outcomes and strategy coordination.

A project of this significance may also identify additional scope, or areas that would benefit from further investigation or consultation as the project is undertaken and may require a corresponding extension to the project delivery timeframe. However, where possible, any additional tasks will be undertaken concurrently with other phases to complete the Master Plans as soon as possible.

It should be noted that this report is being presented concurrent to the RFQ being considered.

The proposed project stages and timeframes are:

Preliminary: Consultant appointment and commencement (October 2021)

- RFQ assessment, awarding and commencement meeting.

Stage 1: Evaluate the impacts of change (by end of 2021)

- Community and Stakeholder Engagement (Have Your Say #1).
- Affirm CBD visions and principles.
- Identify key issues.

Stage 2: Develop priority issues and opportunities into new proposals (early 2022)

- Community and Stakeholder Engagement (Have Your Say #2).
- Councillor Pre-meeting Briefing Session.

- Prepare updated sketch concepts/options for the public domain and landmark sites.
- Test directions and strategies (including review of built form controls) to identify potential opportunities and challenges.

Stage 3: Draft updated Albury and Lavington CBD Master Plans (May 2022)

- Councillor Pre-meeting Briefing Session.
- Council Meeting seeking endorsement to exhibit draft.
- Public Exhibition seeking feedback on the draft Master Plans.

Stage 4: Final Albury and Lavington CBD Master Plans (July 2022)

- Consider submissions.
- Finalise updated CBD Master Plan.
- Council Meeting for adoption.

Risk

- **Business Risk** – It is proposed to appoint an external consultant to lead the preparation of the Review of the CBD Master Plans. Funding for this is included in the current budget. Implementation of the revised Master Plans is anticipated to require resourcing that can be considered through Council's planning and capital works programs and budgeting processes.
- **Corporate Risk** – This project is anticipated to invite considerable public interest. It will be guided by a Stakeholder Engagement Plan. Refer Community Engagement section below.
- **WHS and Public Risk** – Community and Stakeholder engagement methods will need to comply with any COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing requirements. Engagement approaches will include online meeting arrangements as needed.
- **Environmental Risk** – The 2009 CBD Master Plans include various directions and actions relating to the environment. These will be reviewed and updated with current best practice approaches to further improve environmental outcomes for our CBD areas.
- **Delivery Program Risk** – As outlined above, this project seeks to align with other relevant concurrent projects such as Albury2050, the Albury Wodonga Integrated Transport Strategy, Review of Albury Retail Development Strategy and Dean Street Parklets Trial. The aim is to make timely progress on these projects while also aligning community engagement sessions and strategy development where possible. Any changes to the scope or additional consultation phases may require an extension to the project delivery timeframes and will need to be appropriately coordinated with these other projects to minimise risks of delays.

Community Engagement

The Albury and Lavington CBDs attract high visitation from residents and workers both from within and outside the Albury Local Government Area as well as being a tourist destination. It is likely there will be considerable community and stakeholder interest in the project.

Proposed engagement will include a variety of stakeholders including:

1. Our community, representing a range of residents from within Albury and its surrounding regions, visitors, including tourists and students, and workforces;
2. Government representatives, including AlburyCity Councillors and staff, the Local Aboriginal Land Council, Crown Lands, Property NSW, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Transport for NSW, Department of Justice and NSW Police;
3. Development interests ranging from property owners, landlords and business owners and tenants; and
4. Peak bodies and industry groups such as Albury Business Connect, the Access and Inclusion Committee, community sector organisations, Albury & District Historical Society.

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been prepared and is included in attachment 2. This proposes three key stages of consultation summarised as follows:

Stage 1: Have Your Say #1

- Review of previous community consultation outcomes from past and current projects relating to the study area.
- Opportunity to raise awareness of the project.
- Confirm the vision for our CBDs.
- Invite initial input into identifying key issues.

Stage 2: Have Your Say #2

- Opportunity to discuss proposed ideas for change.
- Invite feedback on draft public domain and landmark site sketches.
- Test implementation feasibility with key stakeholders.

Stage 3: Exhibition

- Public Exhibition opportunity for formal feedback on the draft Master Plans.

Refinements may be made to the Stakeholder Engagement Plan as the project progresses to maximise input from stakeholders and our community and encourage continuous improvement of consultation techniques. It is also identified that the appointed consultant for the project may identify additional refinements.

Options

1. Endorse the proposed scope and approach to review the Albury and Lavington CBD Master Plans.

This is the preferred option as the existing 2009 CBD Master Plans are now 12 years old and would benefit from a review. There are also several concurrent projects being prepared or implemented currently that are relevant to our CBDs and make it an opportune time to review the Master Plans.

2. Amend the proposed scope and approach to review the Albury and Lavington CBD Master Plans.

This option could include changes to the scope or timeframes. For example, Council may seek to exclusively focus on one CBD area or precinct and defer investigation of the other aspects. Alternatively, Council may seek to expand the scope or consider additional areas. This is not the preferred option as the proposed scope is designed to fit within the existing project budget and timing (including Stakeholder Engagement Plan) and align with other concurrent and related projects. Expansion of scope is likely to require more detailed sub-strategies or studies which may be more expensive and require additional time. If further targeted studies or detailed designs are required, these could potentially occur as a subsequent stage or project as part of implementing the updated CBD Master Plans.

3. Not proceed with the review of Albury and Lavington CBD Master Plans.

This is not the preferred option as it would rely on continuing with the existing 2009 Master Plans. While the 2009 Master Plans are considered suitably robust documents that contribute positively to shaping our CBDs, there have been numerous major projects, policy changes and best practice learnings that have occurred over the last 12 years. Without review, there is a risk the 2009 Master Plans are not relevant to contemporary community expectations.

Conclusion

This report outlines the proposed scope, timeframes, and Stakeholder Engagement Plan to Review our Albury and Lavington CBD Master Plans. These CBD areas provide significant retail, commercial, health, administrative, and cultural facilities. They serve a broad spectrum of residents, workers, and visitors both within and outside our Local Government Area. The current 2009 CBD Master Plans are now 12 years old and require a review to ensure they remain relevant to contemporary community expectations.

Recommendation

That Council endorses the general project scope and Stakeholder Engagement Plan for review of the Albury and Lavington CBD Master Plans.

Attachments

1. Albury and Lavington CBD study area (DOC21/194259).
2. Stakeholder Engagement Plan (DOC21/187805).