CM14.5. Cultural Precinct Master Plan Review

DATE	28 July 2020	**FIL REFERENCE**	FIL20/02511
CONFIDENTIAL	No		
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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present the proposed scope, timeframes and Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the review of the Cultural Precinct Master Plan, which is being undertaken in 2020/21.

Background

The Cultural Precinct is in the heart of Albury, encompassing the city block between Dean, Olive, Swift and Kiewa Streets (refer Study Area in attachment 1). The civic parkland of QEII Square is at the centre of the precinct and surrounded by a family of notable cultural institutions and buildings of architectural significance such as (but not limited to) St Matthews Anglican Church, Albury Library Museum, Albury Entertainment Centre, Murray Art Museum Albury (MAMA), Retro Lane Café, post office, court house and Murray Conservatorium.

In 2010, a draft Master Plan prepared by Brewster Hjorth Architects provided some guidance to the whole cultural precinct but focused primarily on MAMA, QEII Square and the Albury Entertainment Centre. This plan remained as a draft as it became clear the changes in QEII Square as a result of the art museum redevelopment and the proposed relocation of the Youth Café (at this time), meant this plan no longer reflected community expectations.

The current Master Plan was prepared by Habit8 and endorsed by Council in 2015 (refer attachment 2). This plan focused on QEII Square and encompassed plans for the Retro Lane Café and MAMA (under construction at this time) but did not include the wider cultural precinct.

Since this time, several projects have been completed or established such as:

- Retro Lane Café;
- Opening of MAMA (October 2015);
- Summer Place activation program;
- Swift Street pedestrian crossing; and
- Various landscape improvements to QEII Square such as upgraded promenade (central pathway), extended lawn area and garden beds on the western side of the promenade, installation of electrical conducts for future lighting and safety bollards installed.

There are also a number of plans and proposals in the precinct currently being developed and considered, such as:

- Albury Entertainment Centre (AEC) Convention Wing Redevelopment design;
- Uiver International Museum of Flight concepts (refer Council meetings 10 February 2020 and 11 May 2020);
- Plans relating to the properties owned by others in the precinct such as Belbridge Hague, Diocese of Wangaratta and NSW Government;
- Public Toilet Strategy; and
- Ongoing landscape designs to continue enhancement of QEII Square.

At its meeting on 11 May 2020, Council resolved as follows:

That Council:

b. Gains feedback from the community as soon as possible regarding the impact of the concept plans in the review of the Cultural Precinct Masterplans in 2020/21 with specific reference to:

i. the establishment of a museum specifically related to the Uiver story that may or may not include housing the restored DC2 and/or other articles relating to the flight of the Uiver and its landing in Albury;
ii. changes to or relocation of the Retro Café; and
iii. plans or concepts relating to developments of St Matthews and Belbridge Hague's properties.

A review of the Cultural Precinct Master Plan is required given the changes that have occurred since 2015 and the need to seek community input into the range of concepts currently being explored. This will enable the creation of an integrated and long-term vision for the precinct to inform its future development and enhancement.

Issues

The Cultural Precinct Master Plan review aligns to the following Albury2030 outcomes:

- 1.2.4 – Continue to enhance Albury and Lavington CBDs; and
- 3.7.1 – Activate the cultural precinct and create connections between stakeholder facilities.

The Cultural Precinct Master Plan review also relates to other Council strategies such as:

- Albury CBD Master Plan 2009 (review scheduled for 2021/22);
- Albury Creative Economy Strategy 2017 – 2021;
- Cultural Plan 2012 – 2016; and
- Heritage Study 2003 (review commencing later in 2020).

The Master Plan review provides the opportunity to develop an aspirational 20-30 year vision and long-term planning framework for the Cultural Precinct. It will also seek to provide a coordinated

approach and priorities for next steps and shorter-term improvements to enhancing the precinct, including the function and amenity of QEII Square.

Project Scope

The project is anticipated to include the following:

- Review of previous master plans and other relevant strategies and plans;
- Engagement with stakeholders and community (Refer Stakeholder Engagement Plan);
- Consideration of current proposals and plans including the AEC Convention Wing Redevelopment design, Uiver Museum considerations, Public Toilet Strategy recommendations and any plans relating to the properties owned by others in the precinct, such as Belbridge Hague, Diocese of Wangaratta and the various NSW Government buildings.
- Preparation of a new master plan and accompanying report including high-level analysis and recommendations for:
    - Paths and movement – focusing on pedestrian permeability and links to the wider CBD area including pedestrian crossings, shopping precincts and large car parking areas;
    - Heritage, architecture and urban design – including long-term opportunities for existing buildings and spaces adjoining QEII Square;
    - Planning requirements – including review of existing provisions relating to built form;
    - Trees and planting;
    - Furniture and structures – such as seating, shelters, lighting, technology, etc;
    - Signage and wayfinding;
    - Public art; and
    - Events and activation.
- Identification of priorities, actions, key capital works projects and indicative cost estimates; and
- Preparation of photomontages or visualisations of possible master plan outcomes from key locations.

The Master Plan will identify top-level actions and priorities. The scope excludes detailed design or any detailed studies, but these may form subsequent projects as required. 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 and appropriate consideration of master plan options.

The proposed timeframes also seek to align with key proposals and plans currently being considered in the precinct (e.g. the AEC Convention Wing Redevelopment design).

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 Plan review as soon as possible.

The proposed project stages and timeframes are:

Preliminary: Consultant appointment and commencement

- Issue and advertise Request for Quotation (RFQ) – Early August 2020; and
- RFQ assessment, awarding and commencement meeting – September 2020.

Stage 1: Site analysis and Community/Stakeholder Engagement

- Councillor pre-meeting briefing session – October 2020; and
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement (Have a Say) – October 2020.

Stage 2: Draft Master Plan

- Preliminary 'sketch' Master Plan – November 2020;
- Stakeholder meeting – testing 'sketch' Master Plan – December 2020;
- Councillor Pre-meeting Briefing Session – December 2020;
- Draft Master Plan and report issued for review – December 2020; and
- Finalise draft Master Plan – January 2021.

Stage 3: Public Exhibition

- Council Meeting seeking endorsement to exhibit draft – February 2021; and
- Public Exhibition – March 2021.

Stage 4: Final Master Plan

- Submissions summary and response – April 2021;
- Finalise Master Plan – April 2021; and
- Council Meeting for adoption – April 2021.

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

Risk

- **Business Risk** – It is proposed to appoint an external consultant to lead the preparation of the Master Plan review. Funding for this is included in the current budget. Implementation of the revised Master Plan 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 have 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.
- **Environmental Risk** – The precinct includes several heritage items to be considered in the Master Plan review. Implementation of the Master Plan may require further investigation on

matters such as land contamination and Archaeological Assessment depending on the project stage and site.

- **Delivery Program Risk** – As outlined above, the proposed timeframes are compressed with the aim to complete the project as soon as possible. Any changes to the Master Plan scope or additional stakeholder and community engagement may require an extension to the project delivery timeframe. The completion of this project is a key requirement prior to the commencement of the overall Albury and Lavington CBD Master Plan reviews scheduled for 2021/22.

Community Engagement

The Cultural Precinct (including QEII Square) is our most important civic area and a much-loved place with significant community and stakeholder interest. Effective engagement will be key to the success of the Master Plan review.

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been prepared and is included in attachment 3. This proposes three key stages of consultation summarised as follows:

Stage 1: Have a Say (Community & Stakeholders)

- Opportunity to share any issues or ideas and help develop a collective vision and key design principles guiding the precinct.

Stage 2: Testing sketch plan (Key precinct property stakeholders)

- Discuss sketch Master Plan concepts and ideas with the key precinct property stakeholders.

Stage 3: Exhibition (Community & Stakeholders)

- Opportunity for formal feedback on the draft Master Plan and report.

Conclusion

The Cultural Precinct (including QEII Square) is our most important civic place. The current 2015 Master Plan requires review to effectively consider and integrate current plans and proposals and agree a collective vision and long-term planning framework for the precinct. This report outlines the proposed scope, timeframes and Stakeholder Engagement Plan for undertaking the review of the Cultural Precinct Master Plan.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the Cultural Precinct Master Plan Review report.

Attachments

1. Cultural Precinct Study Area (DOC20/123176).

2. 2015 Cultural Precinct Master Plan (DOC20/123180).
3. Stakeholder Engagement Plan (DOC20/125522).