

# **CITY OF COCKBURN**

## **FACILITATION OF THE LAKES REVITALISATION STRATEGY COMMUNITY VISIONING FORUMS**

### **~ OUTCOMES REPORT ~**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Lakes Revitalisation Strategy is the latest of the City of Cockburn's revitalisation projects. The previously completed Phoenix, Hamilton Hill and Coolbellup Revitalisation Strategies have provided comprehensive plans to guide future development within the established suburbs of Spearwood, Hamilton Hill and Coolbellup respectively. The Strategies will guide the planning and delivery of future housing types and housing choice to those suburbs, as well as identifying the works required to facilitate improvements to the natural and urban environments.

As part of the initial community consultation for The Lakes Revitalisation Strategy, Chris Antill Planning and Urban Design Consultant was appointed to help prepare a program for, and to facilitate, four community forums aimed at drawing out and articulating the residents' "vision" for the future development of their suburbs, with the principal emphasis on housing types and housing choice.

#### **PROGRAM FOR THE COMMUNITY VISIONING FORUMS**

Four Forums were held on the evenings of:

- Monday June 8<sup>th</sup>
- Wednesday June 10<sup>th</sup>
- Monday June 22<sup>nd</sup>, and
- Wednesday June 24<sup>th</sup>.

The first two forums were attended by residents of the North Lake and Bibra Lake communities, and the second two forums were attended by residents of South Lake.

The first two forums were attended by a total of approximately 160 community members, and the second two forums by approx. 110 community members (total of approx. 270).

The program for each forum was similar:

- Introduction;
- A presentation by the facilitator explaining the forum format and general aims;
- A presentation by the City's Manager of Strategic Planning explaining background and context information;
- Workshop [(attendees working in groups of approx. 5-7 with the assistance of a table co-ordinator (City of Cockburn staff member and planning students from Curtin University)];
- Presentations by a spokesperson from each table;

- Brief summation by the forum facilitator of the common “themes” and consensus views that emerged from the individual table presentations;
- “Where to from here, and next steps” explanation by the City’s Manager of Strategic Planning;
- Close of forum.

Each forum ran for about three hours.

## **WORKSHOP STRUCTURE**

The attendees were asked to debate and discuss five questions (see **Appendix 1**). A period of approximately 45 minutes was allocated to this part of the forum. The table co-ordinators were asked to stimulate debate amongst those at their table, and to record both individual comments and collectively-held views.

Attendees were encouraged by the table co-ordinators to discuss each of the five questions in turn, and the co-ordinators had the responsibility of formulating a consensus “table view” for each question.

At the end of the workshop phase, a spokesperson from each table was asked to present, in turn, their table’s responses to the five questions. Both individual comments and collectively-held views were articulated.

Each evening concluded with an attempt to summarise the individual table responses, however, given the large attendance at each of the four forums, there was, unsurprisingly, a diverse range of views. This was reflective of the diverse nature of the suburbs, as well as the differing needs and aspirations of the attendees.

As a result, in addition to each table presenting, all of the notes taken at the tables by the co-ordinators were collected for analysis in preparing this Outcomes Report.

## **CONSENSUS THEMES ACHIEVED**

A number of clearly identifiable and consistent responses emerged from the table presentations and the table notes.

The consensus themes of the first two forums (Bibra Lake and North Lake) were generally consistent across both forums. Likewise, the consensus themes of the second two forums (South Lake) were also generally consistent across both.

### **(1) North Lake & Bibra Lake:**

#### **What aspects of North Lake/Bibra Lake do you value and are important for the future?**

(Most commonly mentioned values listed first)

The most highly valued aspects were:

- The lakes/wetlands/natural environment;
- The greenery/trees/flora/fauna;
- The suburb’s location and proximity to surrounding facilities/freeway/train station/attractions/employment, and accessibility to local shops and schools;
- Community pride/sense of community;

- Quiet environment;
- The public open spaces/parks;
- Safety and security;
- Wide, attractive streets/streetscapes/current dwelling setbacks;
- The walkways/cycleways;
- Existing character/amenity;
- Low traffic volumes/no through traffic; and
- Good distribution of shopping facilities.

Other aspects of value included:

- The current low density of development/low building heights;
- Underground power;
- The walkability of the suburbs;
- Public transport; and
- Aged care facilities.

**What is your appetite for change in terms of new residential development and redevelopment within North Lake/Bibra Lake? Low, medium, high?**

The individual tables rated their appetites for change as follows:

- |               |    |
|---------------|----|
| ▪ Low         | 4  |
| ▪ Low-medium  | 6  |
| ▪ Medium      | 10 |
| ▪ Medium-high | 1  |
| ▪ High        | 0  |

It appeared that North Lake attendees were generally less enthusiastic about the prospect of change and renewal than the Bibra Lake attendees.

**Would you support a greater variety of housing and therefore residential densities throughout North Lake/Bibra Lake? If yes, where would you like to see medium to high residential densities provided?**

There was very strong support for a greater variety of housing to be provided in the future. The most common responses were:

- More variety generally – e.g., town houses, villas, grouped dwellings (10 tables)
- Battle-axe lots/maximum of two dwellings/lot (6 tables)
- No high density (6 tables)
- More retirement housing (2 tables)

There was generally good support for “targeted change”. This was identified as permitting higher densities in the following locations:

- Around activity centres/shops/schools;
- Around parks;
- Along public transport corridors;
- Around the lake;
- Closer to Fiona Stanley Hospital/Murdoch;
- Along the railway reserve.

There was strong support for the principle of future housing types maintaining existing residential amenity, and having quality design, possibly through the imposition of appropriate design guidelines.

There was also support for restricting building heights to a 2 or 3 storey maximum.

**What public domain improvements should take place for North Lake/Bibra Lake? (e.g., street trees, parks, public art, plantings and car parking under power line easements, improved public transit and facilities)**

(Most commonly mentioned proposed improvements listed first)

Proposals receiving strong support included:

- Improve public (bus) transport (i.e., higher frequency of services, greater route choices, more direct services);
- Provide more (appropriate/native) street trees;
- Improve the quality and connectivity of footpaths and shared use paths;
- Upgrade facilities and levels of maintenance at parks and public open spaces (e.g., toilets, shade structures, drinking fountains, play equipment, seating etc.); and
- Improve street lighting.

Other improvements receiving good support included:

- Provide a café/food and drink outlet on the edge of Bibra Lake (possibly to also act as a new community focus or hub);
- Provide better road access and more access points in/out of the suburbs, and between the North Lake and Bibra Lake communities;
- Provide some fenced parks/off-leash dog areas;
- Provide better public facilities at the lakes (including the east side of Bibra Lake);
- Extend underground power to all of the suburbs;
- Improve parking at the shopping centres; and
- Upgrade/expand the local centres.

Other improvements receiving support included:

- Protect the environmental assets of the area;
- Upgrade street lighting;
- Provide more information/education regarding the lakes and wetlands;
- Protect/improve streetscapes;
- Upgrade the skate park;
- Protect the environmental assets of the area;
- Eradicate the mosquitoes/midges associated with the lakes;
- Stop trail bikers;
- Provide lighting around Bibra Lake;
- Improve traffic flows/ease congestion;
- Improve parking around the lakes;
- Provide more seating and public amenities;
- Provide community gardens;
- Provide street markets;
- Ameliorate freeway noise.

## What are the three priority actions that authorities could take which would improve your community?

(Most commonly mentioned priorities listed first)

- Protect/enhance the lakes/wetlands/natural areas/wildlife (easily the highest priority);
- Upgrade public transport;
- Improve public open space facilities/environments;
- Improve levels of access and safety for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Upgrade road connectivity;
- Improve the appearance/maintenance levels within the area;
- Minimise the impact of any higher densities that may be provided;
- Provide more, and more appropriate, street trees;
- Improve street lighting and extend underground power.

There appeared to be no support stated by any individual or table for the Roe Highway extension.

## SUMMARY

- Bibra Lake and North Lake residents greatly value and appreciate the lakes, wetlands and the natural environment. The existing trees, greenery, and flora and fauna are all rated highly by the community. The suburb's location and accessibility are seen as major advantages, and the sense of community is pronounced. The parks, other public open spaces, the quiet environment and the relative safety and security of the suburb are highly valued.
- Overall there is a low to medium appetite for change. Bibra Lake residents appear, however, to be more enthusiastic about change and renewal than North Lake residents.
- There is strong support for a greater variety of housing types to be provided: e.g., town houses, villas and grouped dwellings. A 2-3 storey maximum building height is generally supported.
- These higher density-type dwellings should preferably be provided in targeted areas, such as around shopping centres, parks and schools, and along the main public transport routes.
- There is good support for the view that subdivision of all single lots presently accommodating a single dwelling should generally be permitted, so that in future two dwellings can be accommodated on each lot in a "battle-axe"-type configuration.
- New housing should be of a high quality and maintain existing residential amenity, and development/design guidelines should be introduced alongside new R-Codes to ensure this occurs.
- The major public transport system in the locality (buses) is appreciated, but the community is strongly of the view that it needs upgrading through greater route choices, more direct routes, and higher frequency of services.
- More street trees need to be introduced – preferably native species.

- The quality and connectivity of the existing footpath and shared use path systems needs improving.
- Existing public open space reserves are highly valued, however there is scope for improvements to the standard and scope of the facilities within them. The opportunity exists to upgrade and improve the parks to encourage greater usage, particularly by the youth in the community. The value of the public open space reserves will increase over time as population and demand increases. Facilities that could be introduced include public toilets, shade structures, drinking fountains, play equipment, seating etc. The local residents would like to be consulted by the City when changes are being planned.
- A café/food and drink outlet located on the edge of Bibra Lake would act as a new community focus, and would be welcomed. More public facilities generally around Bibra Lake would be appreciated, including on the Lake's east side.
- Better access into and out of the suburbs is required, and the two communities should be better linked.
- Some fenced-off dog exercise areas should be provided where dogs can be allowed to run without leads.
- The program of undergrounding the powerlines within the suburb should be completed as soon as possible.
- The local shopping centres could be upgraded and allowed to expand, provided sufficient car parking was also provided.
- There seems to be very little support, if any, for the extension of Roe Highway.

## **(2) South Lake:**

### **What aspects of South Lake do you value and are important for the future?**

(Most commonly mentioned values listed first)

The most highly valued aspects were:

- The suburb's location and proximity to surrounding facilities/freeway/train station/attractions/employment, shopping and accessibility to local schools;
- The parks and open spaces; and
- The lakes/wetlands/flora & fauna, natural environment.

Other aspects of value receiving good support included:

- The suburb's quietness;
- Public transport, especially the bus service;
- The streetscapes/greenery/trees;
- The sense of community that prevails;
- Safety and security;
- The suburb's walkability; and
- Large blocks with gardens.

Other values receiving some support included:

- The Leisure Centre;
- The suburb's affordability;
- The footpaths and cycle paths;
- The wide streets;
- The shopping centres; and
- The lack of high rise/high density development.

**What is your appetite for change in terms of new residential development and redevelopment within South Lake? Low, medium, high?**

The individual tables rated their appetites for change as follows:

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| ▪ Low         | 1 |
| ▪ Low-medium  | 0 |
| ▪ Medium      | 6 |
| ▪ Medium-high | 6 |
| ▪ High        | 8 |

**Would you support a greater variety of housing and therefore residential densities throughout South Lake? If yes, where would you like to see medium to high residential densities provided?**

There was very strong support for a greater variety of housing to be provided in the future.

- More variety generally – e.g., town houses, villas, grouped dwellings, apartments (20 tables), including battle-axe type development (7 tables).

There was also very strong support specifically for “targeted change” (17 tables). This was identified as permitting higher densities in the following locations:

- Around activity centres such as shops;
- Around parks;
- Along selected main roads (such as Elderberry Drive and Berrigan Drive); and
- Along bus routes.

Five tables also suggested that medium density housing could be permitted throughout the suburb.

There was good support for the principle of future housing types maintaining existing residential amenity, and having quality design, possibly through the imposition of appropriate design guidelines.

Views on height limits varied between one and four storeys maximum. There seemed to be greatest support for restricting building heights to 2 to 3 storeys maximum.

The need for more aged care housing and over-55s housing was also mentioned by three tables.

## **What public domain improvements should take place for South Lake? (e.g., street trees, parks, public art, plantings and car parking under power line easements, improved public transit and facilities)**

(Most commonly mentioned proposed improvements listed first)

Proposals receiving strong support included:

- Upgrade facilities and levels of maintenance at parks and public open spaces (e.g., toilets, shade structures, exercise equipment, nature play, lighting, drinking fountains, play equipment, seating, BBQs, parking etc.);
- Underground the powerlines;
- Improve public (bus) transport (i.e., higher frequency of services, greater route choices, more direct services, greater reliability of services); and
- Improve the quality and connectivity of footpaths and shared use paths.

Other improvements receiving good support included:

- The need for more, and more appropriate (native or fruit) street trees;
- Upgrading of suburb entry statements (landscaping, signage, art works);
- Upgrading of street lighting;
- Traffic calming, better traffic management;
- Maintain/improve streetscape character; and
- Improve the building appearance and car parking availability at the local shopping centres.

Other improvements receiving support included:

- Upgrade the pedestrian accessways;
- Improve the number and accessibility of parks;
- Provide an enclosed (off-leash) dog exercise area;
- Provide more main road crossing points;
- Improve the area under the major powerlines;
- Provide more street art/public art;
- Stop the use of trail bikes within the suburb; and
- Upgrade security.

## **What are the three priority actions that authorities could take which would improve your community?**

(Most commonly mentioned priorities listed first)

- Upgrade facilities and levels of maintenance at parks and public open spaces (e.g., toilets, shade structures, exercise equipment, nature play, lighting, drinking fountains, play equipment, seating, BBQs, parking etc.);
- Underground the powerlines;
- Initiate zoning changes to permit the development of a wider choice of housing types; and
- Provide more street trees/upgrade streetscapes.

Other significant priorities included:

- Improve public (bus) transport (i.e., higher frequency of services, greater route choices, more direct services, greater reliability of services);
- Improve traffic management generally;
- Upgrade the suburb entry statements (landscaping, signage, art works); and
- Improve the quality and connectivity of footpaths and shared use paths.

There appeared to be very little support for the Roe Highway extension.

## SUMMARY

- South Lake residents greatly value and appreciate the lakes, wetlands and the natural environment. The existing trees, greenery, and flora and fauna area all rated highly by the community. The suburb's location and accessibility are seen as major advantages, and the sense of community is pronounced. The parks, other public open spaces, the quiet environment, the attractive streetscapes and the relative safety and security of the suburb are highly valued. The suburb's walkability is valued, as are the large residential blocks with gardens.
- There is a medium to high appetite for change. Very few residents want to resist change. Initiating zoning changes to permit the development of a wider choice of housing types is a high priority for the community.
- There is strong support for a greater variety of housing types to be provided: e.g., town houses, villas, grouped dwellings and apartments. A 2-3 storey maximum building height is generally supported.
- There was also a need expressed for more aged care housing and over-55s housing.
- Higher density-type dwellings should preferably be provided in targeted areas, such as around shopping centres, parks, along selected main roads, and along the main bus routes. However, there was also good support for allowing redevelopment to occur throughout the suburb.
- There is good support for the view that subdivision of all single lots presently accommodating a single dwelling should generally be permitted, so that in future two dwellings can be accommodated on each lot in a "battle-axe"-type configuration.
- New housing should be of a high quality and maintain existing residential amenity, and development/design guidelines should be introduced alongside new R-Codes to ensure this occurs.
- Existing public open space reserves are highly valued, however there is scope for improvements to the standard and scope of the facilities within them. The opportunity exists to upgrade and improve the parks to encourage greater usage, particularly by the youth in the community. The value of the public open space reserves will increase over time as population and demand increases. Facilities that could be introduced include public toilets, shade structures, drinking fountains, play equipment, seating etc. The local residents would like to be consulted by the City when changes are being planned.

- The program of undergrounding the powerlines within the suburb should be completed as soon as possible.
- The major public transport system in the locality (buses) is appreciated, but the community is strongly of the view that it needs upgrading through greater route choices, more direct routes, a higher frequency of services and greater reliability of services.
- The quality and connectivity of the existing footpath and dual-use path systems needs improving.
- More street trees need to be introduced – preferably native species and/or fruit trees.
- High quality entry statements to the suburb are required. These could be made up of a combination of attractive landscaping, signage and artworks.
- Street lighting should be upgraded, and better traffic management and traffic calming introduced to reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety for pedestrians and motorists.
- The existing, highly valued streetscapes should be maintained and/or improved.
- The appearance and parking availability of the local shopping centres require upgrading.
- There seems to be very little support, if any, for the extension of Roe Highway.

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Chris Antill Planning & Urban Design Consultant

16.07.2015

## APPENDIX 1 – Questions

### THE LAKES VISIONING FORUMS ~

1. What aspects of North Lake/Bibra Lake/South Lake do you value and are important for the future?
2. What is your appetite for change in terms of new residential development and redevelopment within North Lake/Bibra Lake/South Lake? Low, medium, high?
3. Would you support a greater variety of housing and therefore residential densities throughout North Lake/Bibra Lake/South Lake? If yes, where would you like to see medium to high residential densities provided?
4. What public domain improvements should take place for North Lake/Bibra Lake/South Lake? (e.g., street trees, parks, public art, plantings and car parking under power line easements, improved public transit and facilities)
5. What are the three priority actions that authorities could take which would improve your community?

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