Outcomes Committee

AGENDA

DATE OF MEETING: 10 October 2017
LOCATION: Staff Lunch Room
TIME: 7.00pm

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OUTCOMES COMMITTEE

Meeting Date 10 October 2017

Item Number. 116

SUBJECT: Draft Urban Design Study - Fairfield Heights - Endorse for Exhibition
Premises: Fairfield Heights Town Centre
Applicant/Owner: Fairfield City Council initiated Urban Design Study funded by Bolden Pty Ltd (Director - Frank Carioti) in response to Planning Proposal/Ownership of affected land in private and Council ownership
Zoning: B2 Local Centre

FILE NUMBER: 17/18667

PREVIOUS ITEMS: 63 - Urban Design Study for Fairfield Heights Town Centre - Outcomes Committee - 7 June 2016

REPORT BY: Sunehla Bala, Senior Strategic Land Use Planner

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

1. Council endorse the draft Fairfield Heights Urban Design Study for public exhibition in accordance with the consultation strategy outlined in the report.

2. Council notify and invite property owners within the study area to discuss the impact of the draft Urban Design Study on their land with Council’s planning officers.

3. Council receive a further report following the exhibition of the draft Fairfield Heights Urban Design Study advising of any submissions received and further action to be taken.

Note: This report deals with a planning decision made in the exercise of a function of Council under the EP&A Act and a division needs to be called.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

AT-A Urban Design Study Fairfield Heights 38 Pages

CITY PLAN

This report is linked to Theme 2 Places and Infrastructure in the Fairfield City Plan.
SUMMARY

The draft Fairfield Heights Urban Design Study has now been completed following extensive consultation with Council officers and initial consultation with several key stakeholders.

This report provides an overview of the outcomes on the draft Urban Design Study undertaken for the Fairfield Heights Town Centre.

The Urban Design Study will guide a future Planning Proposal to amend the height of buildings to allow for greater residential density within the centre.

This report seeks Council's endorsement to exhibit the draft Fairfield Heights Urban Design Study in accordance with the consultation strategy outlined in the report. At the conclusion of this period a post exhibition report to Council would be prepared.

BACKGROUND

On 21 December 2015, Council received an applicant initiated Planning Proposal for the entire Fairfield Heights Town Centre. The Applicant, Bolden Pty Ltd owns 6 properties within the Fairfield Heights Town Centre. The Planning Proposal was seeking to amend Fairfield Local Environmental Plan (FLEP) 2013 as follows:

- Amending the Height of Buildings map from 9 metres to a range between 20 metres (6 storeys) to 26 metres (8 storeys) for the B2 Local Centre zoned land in Fairfield Heights (also known as Fairfield Heights Town Centre).
- Rezoning certain land from B2 Local Centre to SP2 Infrastructure (Local Road) to facilitate improved service lane access through the centre.

The proposal did not seek to change the commercial zoned area or increase the retail and commercial capacity of the centre.

The Application also indicated the need for a site specific Development Control Plan (SSDCP) for the Fairfield Heights Town Centre with the Applicant proposing that this be prepared once Gateway Determination had been received. The Development Control Plan (DCP) was to provide greater details on the form of future mixed use development within the town centre in order to deliver high quality residential amenity and urban design outcomes.

At the time of submission of the Planning Proposal, Council had limited strategic planning direction for the town centre. This was due to the Fairfield Heights Town Centre DCP being an older document in need of review. Due to the limited strategic direction, it was determined that there was a need for an urban design study to inform Council's further consideration of revised development standards for the centre. Given the significant land holdings of the proponent and their timeline, it was agreed that the urban design study would be fully funded by the Applicant.
On 14 June 2016, a report (Item 63) was presented to the Outcomes Committee seeking Council endorsement of the preparation of an applicant funded urban design study for Fairfield Heights Town Centre.

In November 2016, Council engaged town planning (TPG), urban design (LFA) and economic feasibility (AEC) specialist consulting firms to undertake the urban design study work.

The project commenced with a comprehensive site visit and an invitation to landowners to participate in consultations which were held at Council’s Administration Centre during December 2016. Landowners were encouraged to share their vision and ambitions for their sites, including submission of development concepts for review. The President of the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce also attended.

The draft concepts were presented to Councillors at a briefing on 26 April 2017. It was agreed at the Councillor briefing that the landowners should be informed of the preliminary outcome of urban design work proposed for their land holding prior to the matter being reconsidered by Council.

Additional land owner consultation was undertaken prior to a further Councillor briefing on 15 August 2017 at which the final draft was presented to Councillors. The Applicant was kept informed of the project progress.

**HEADS OF DISCUSSION**

**Study Area**

The Fairfield Heights Town Centre is a B2 Local Centre. The town centre primarily focused along The Boulevarde, between Polding Street to the north and Beemera Street to the south. The Boulevarde intersects with Bodalla Street, Stanbrook, Karabar Street, Kihilla Street and Station Street. Figure 1 below illustrates the study area and the adjoining residential and open space parcels.
Figure 1 – Site context and study area

The town centre has a Height of Buildings provision of 9m (2 to 3 storeys) and no floor space ratio. The B2 Local Centre zone permits a variety of land uses consistent with contemporary town centre activities, including but not limited to retail, shop top housing, medical centres, commercial and business premises and community facilities.

No RE1 Public Recreation zoned land currently exists within the centre or immediately adjoining the centre to provide for the recreation needs of existing and future residents. There is a high retail vacancy rate on the town centre edges and a higher concentration of lower order businesses such as discount retailers which are indicative that the centre is not functioning to its potential.

Constraints and Opportunities

The study identifies a number of constraints of the study as follows:

- Fragmented land ownership is a barrier to redevelopment of the older 1-2 storey retail buildings.
- The narrow footpath along The Boulevarde limits the ability to activate footpaths and introduce street tree planting due to awning overhang.
- The town centre is surrounded by low and medium density residential development up to 2 storeys.
- There are limited opportunities to achieve a well located neighbourhood park to accommodate the future population growth in the area.
The study identifies a number of opportunities to enhance the centre as follows:

- Increase street trees, street furniture and public art along The Boulevarde.
- Existing private car parking for the Brown Jug Hotel could accommodate future residential development.
- Opportunities for new public open space adjoining the centre along Station Street, corner of Polding Street and The Boulevarde and the western service lane and Ann Street.
- New laneways to provide greater connectivity, servicing and traffic flow.

**Urban Design Study**

In November 2016, Council engaged town planning (TPG), urban design (LFA) and economic feasibility (AEC) specialist consulting firms to undertake the urban design study work. The brief contained the following project objectives:

- **Reimagine development options for the Fairfield Heights Centre** that supports a liveable built form, active street frontage, and growth of the local economy – a centre that is developing and business is thriving and, and where people feel welcome, safe and proud to call it home.

- **Progressively develop a permeable public domain** with pedestrian connections, increased walkability and town centre identity through social, cultural and public art elements – a social, healthy and proud community that “celebrates diversity” because of the quality of public places, spaces and connections we create.

- **Achieve public domain, pedestrian connections and community infrastructure** as part of the community benefit offered in future development – exploring proposed changes to existing land use zoning and development standards where it is clear the community also benefits in creating the centre we all want.

The study also responded to and incorporated the following draft District Plan actions and directions:

- **3.3 Integrating land use and transport planning to drive economic activity**;
- **3.7.1 Facilitate local employment in land release and urban renewal area**;
- **4.6.2 Plan for safe and healthy places; and**
- **4.7.2 Support the creative arts and culture**.

**Urban Framework and Development Strategy**

The Urban Design Study adopts the following urban design objectives and principles for the Fairfield Heights Town Centre:

**Accessibility/Connectivity**

- To create a robust, walkable town centre with accessible services, facilities, open spaces and public transport connections (bus).
- To provide attractive opportunities and incentives for future developers through exploring changes to existing planning and development standards that would also provide community benefits through the provision of laneways and public car parking.

Built form and land uses

- To develop a mixed use character with a focus on residential and opportunities for work, life and play.
- To provide attractive opportunities for future developers to deliver desired built form and place making outcomes guided by appropriate bulk (building footprints) and scale (height of building)
- To incorporate sustainability practices in urban design, landscape and building design (e.g. solar passive design and energy efficiency).
- To address and improve the interface between mixed use development sites and adjoining residential land uses.

Centre vitality and economy

- To transform Fairfield Heights Town Centre into an active, safe and vibrant local centre.
- To encourage apartment style living to enliven and regenerate the town centre and stimulate business activity.

Civic and open spaces

- To support place-making in Fairfield Heights Town Centre to increase local identity, memorable experiences and sense of place.
- To provide enjoyable, active, permeable, high quality public domain and open spaces through social, cultural and public art elements.
- To provide attractive opportunities and incentives for future developers through exploring changes to existing planning and development standards that would also provide community benefits through the provision of public spaces.
- To undertake streetscape improvements to The Boulevard as the main focus of retail and community activity.

Housing

- To support the development of shop-top apartment style housing/ mixed use development along The Boulevard main street, side streets and larger sites.
- To integrate future housing with new or existing community facilities and open space to provide community benefits.
Based on the Urban Design Principles, the following urban framework has been developed for the Fairfield Heights Town Centre:

- The Boulevarde as the main street with active retail at ground level.
- Shop-top housing 4-6 storeys (with partial 8 storeys at gateways with design excellence).
- Providing the potential for approximately 690-775 apartments.
- Gateway treatments to define north/south entry points.
- New civic spaces in the heart of the town centre.
- New development is to be accessed and serviced from new rear laneways.
- New open space options and access provisions for existing and future residents.

Figure 2 below illustrates the urban framework for Fairfield Heights Town Centre.

The draft Urban Design Study recommends the following provisions for the height of buildings (HOB):

- Increase the HOB from 9m to 14m to allow a minimum of 4 storey developments to be achieved throughout the town centre.
OUTCOMES COMMITTEE

Meeting Date 10 October 2017       Item Number. 116

- Increase the HOB from 9m to 20m for the Brown Jug Hotel site (47 Stanbrook Street) to allow developments up to 6 storeys. An additional provision may be considered under Clause 4.3 for this site to allow for additional HOB up to 6.5m (2 storeys) subject to achieving design excellence and public benefits such as public open space, affordable housing, laneway provision and community facility.

- Introduce a provision under Clause 4.3 to allow for additional HOB up to 6.5 metres at identified key corner gateway sites.

Community Benefits

The draft Urban Design Study also generates opportunities for community benefits that can be provided through the development contribution funds accumulated from the future developments within the town centre and through negotiating voluntary planning agreement.

The draft Urban Design Study has identified preferred sites for a town centre village square as well as public open space purposes (refer to figure 2) and recommends Council investigate the feasibility of acquisition. Another key proposed community benefit is a new laneway along the eastern boundary of the town centre adjoined the existing R3 Medium Density Residential zoned land. This laneway would provide improved vehicular circulation along with pedestrian connectivity, with at grade angled car parking and provide a second street frontage to proposed open space.

In respect to traffic issues, input will be sought from the Roads and Maritime Service as part of the public exhibition process. Planning mechanisms to ensure that new roads/laneways are created will need to be resolved with landowners during the consultation period and prior to the finalisation of any future Planning Proposal(s). There may also be a need for more detailed studies of the traffic and road network in and around the Town Centre. This process would resolve the capacity, infrastructure and funding requirements to accommodate the increased development potential.

Other public benefits identified are streetscape enhancement, footpath widening and street trees.

Planning provisions and associated funding mechanisms to achieve these community benefits will need to be further evaluated during the exhibition period and will form part of a subsequent Planning Proposal.

Broader Implications of the Study

The following assessment provides an overview of broad implications arising from the outcomes of the Urban Design Study:
Economic implications

- Enable residential development (increase catchment population);
- Pedestrian connectivity (encourage more linked shopping trips and increase overall visitor spend);
- Upgrade to public domain (enhance retail experience);
- Migrant population (promote a rich retail experience through culturally specific retail and food opportunities).

Social and recreation implications

- Potential to provide open space in and around the centre where there is significant lack of public open space.
- Potential to investigate open space and recreation opportunities within a radius of 200 to 400 metres of the centre.
- Increase health and well-being impacts upon a community and the desirability of areas within which to move or invest.
- Provide housing choice in an area of low socio economic status and a higher level of households living in rental stress.

The concepts prepared seek to build upon Council’s past place making achievements and identify opportunities for local new, improved, accessible and diverse open space destinations.

The draft Fairfield Heights Urban Design Study unlocks the development potential of the Fairfield Heights Town Centre. It is anticipated that this future growth as well as that of the uplift in zoning identified in the Fairfield Residential Strategy 2009 will provide increased developer contributions levies in the study area that can be directed to funding additional community infrastructure such as that identified in the draft Study. This is in addition to any other potential Voluntary Planning Agreements that may be negotiated with landowners seeking to redevelop.

Urban Design Study Timeline

The key milestones for the urban design study are show in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 2016</td>
<td>Urban Design Study commenced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2016 to March 2017</td>
<td>Consultations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>Councillor briefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May to July 2017</td>
<td>Further reviews and refinements by consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2017</td>
<td>Councillor briefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2017</td>
<td>Report to Outcomes Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>November to December 2017</td>
<td>Community consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2018</td>
<td>Report to Outcomes Committee to adopt the Urban Design Study</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Should Council adopt the recommendations of this report, the next step would be to commence the community consultation process in November.

**NEXT STEPS**

**Community Consultation**

It is intended that the draft Fairfield Heights Urban Design Study be placed on public exhibition to seek community feedback. It is proposed that at a minimum the following consultation methods be utilised:

- 28 day public exhibition period
- Notification on Fairfield City Council’s Website
- Newspaper advertisement
- Targeted letters to the owners and surrounding community in the vicinity of the Fairfield Heights Town Centre
- A community meeting with residents and interested stakeholders
- Letters to major stakeholders such as Roads and Maritime Service.

Further to the above, as the recommendations of the draft Fairfield Heights Urban Design Study involve the potential rezoning and acquisitions of privately owned land, it is important that affected owners are notified at an early stage so as to discuss the recommendations of the study.

**Post Exhibition**

A further report will be prepared for Council at the conclusion of the public exhibition of the draft Fairfield Heights Urban Design Study. It is anticipated that the following documents will also be prepared for Council consideration at this time:

- Planning Proposal to amend the FLEP 2013
- Development Control Plan provisions for the Fairfield Heights Town Centre
- Possible amendments to the Fairfield Direct (Section 94) Development Contribution Plan 2011

**CONCLUSION**

The Fairfield Heights Town Centre is at an important stage in its evolution. The preparation of the draft Fairfield Heights Town Centre Urban Design Study represents a key step and will provide the community with a planning framework that facilitates and guides the renewal of the centre into the future.

It is recommended that Council endorse the draft Fairfield Heights Town Centre Urban Design Study for public exhibition in accordance with the consultation strategy outlined in this report.
Sunehla Bala
Senior Strategic Land Use Planner

Authorisation:
Coordinator Strategic Planning
Manager Strategic Land Use & Catchment Planning

Outcomes Committee - 10 October 2017

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***** END OF ITEM 116 *****