
Feedback from community engagement

Purpose

We have provided a summary of our response to the feedback we received on-line during the previous community engagement held in relation to preparing the Draft Wickham Masterplan 2021 Update, currently on public exhibition.

Background

During December 2020 and January 2021, the City of Newcastle (CN) carried out a community engagement campaign on its Have Your Say webpage to gain community feedback as to the potential changes proposed to Wickham Masterplan 2017 in response to:

1. findings of a review of implementation since adoption
2. new information on the challenges to achieving the envisaged redevelopment densities within parts of Wickham, due to mine subsidence risk
3. further details of the type and location of community infrastructure that we seek to implement within the public domain
4. measures proposed to provide incentives to redevelopment that enable densities consistent with the adopted masterplan, where this results in provision of community infrastructure.

The feedback we received during the community engagement process was considered in preparing the final Draft Wickham Masterplan 2021 Update, with a summary of our response included below:

Car parking adjoining Wickham Park

Numerous comments were received with respect to the provision of new streets within Wickham Park, with particular emphasis on the loss of parking to the areas adjoining the playground and Badminton Club at the northern end of Wickham Park.

Upon review we determined that the traffic and transport map provided as part of the engagement documentation was not clear in identifying that the proposed vehicle access through Wickham Park remains one-way as per the adopted masterplan. Formalised vehicle sleeved with on-street parking will result in more formalised car parking and reduce the current random vehicle access and parking on game days of the associated sporting fields.

We have changed the maps but have also passed on this feedback to City of Newcastle's recreational planners, who will prepare a comprehensive plan of management for Wickham Park that will address these issues in greater detail.

Local area traffic management plan

We received several comments regarding traffic management issues that questioned the currency of the traffic planning that was undertaken to inform the adopted masterplan.

The traffic study and planning that was previously prepared by our consultants included best practice traffic modelling and data with permission from Transport for NSW, which simulated conditions based on a trajectory to 2036, without additional traffic generated within Wickham to determine the base loading on the local network (including in Wickham) to determine the effects on various intersections.

This modelling was tested against various redevelopment density scenarios and by applying various intersection treatment scenarios. The modelling and testing helped Council's traffic planners prepare a Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) plan that was adopted at the same time as the masterplan. The LATM is implemented as redevelopment occurs and traffic thresholds are reached. However, each action is first reviewed and reported for consideration and endorsement by the Newcastle Traffic Committee, which includes representatives from CN, Transport for NSW and NSW Police.

While the traffic study and plan that underpinned the LATM are valid to 2036, we have passed on specific traffic comments for consideration by CN's traffic planners and have included some minor changes to that will be included in a revised LATM plan currently being prepared for further consultation later this year.

On-street carparking

Feedback was provided as to how on-street parking could be improved for existing residents and business.

To reduce competing demand for car parking on local streets, the Draft Wickham Masterplan 2021 Update, will propose the investigation of a new public car parking area (subject to land acquisition) within the former Bullock Island Railway corridor. This land was previously identified under the Wickham Masterplan 2017 for high density development, however due to information on mine subsidence risk, this land may no longer be viable for such redevelopment.

A public car park has the potential to better cater for visitors and workers of adjoining areas, as well as users of Wickham Park. This together with other measures introduced by the City of Newcastle's Parking Plan – *On the street*, including a range of timed parking zones aimed to better manage demand, will ensure more on street parking is available for local businesses and residents.

The Wickham Masterplan area is located within [Precinct 15 - Wickham](#) of the City of Newcastle Resident Parking Precinct Maps. Resident parking permits are available, subject to eligibility, to residents living within a residential parking precinct. Further information on acquiring a residential parking permit is available at: <https://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/living/transport/parking/parking-permits>

Extension of Village Hub

Local community group GLOW prepared a joint letter and signed petition that requested an extension to the Village Hub precinct. While the entire masterplan area is included in the B4 Mixed Use Zone of the Newcastle Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012, the adopted master plan defined six interconnected urban precincts based on their location and the physical characteristics of the subdivision pattern and existing built form. The precincts were used to describe the envisaged future character of the various parts of Wickham, which is reflected in the development controls for redevelopment and the identified potential densities.

Council at its ordinary meeting of May 2021 endorsed the public exhibition of the current Draft Wickham Masterplan 2021 Update subject to CN first extending the Village Hub to incorporate land along Bishopsgate Street from Union to Station Street as well as extending across the entire block bound to the north by Lindus Street Wickham.

The public exhibition provides an opportunity for property owners within this area to be consulted and provide their feedback as to the change in future character and densities of this area for Council's consideration prior to adopting the Draft Wickham Masterplan 2021 Update and implementing this change.

Additional residential uses

Comments were received in support of allowing a greater range of housing types within the masterplan area, particularly on land that is not feasible for supporting higher densities. Currently landowners rely on existing use rights in order to allow for a dwelling house or other dwelling types otherwise prohibited within the B4 Mixed Use Zone.

This change is proposed within the Draft Wickham Masterplan 2021 Update as an action to amend the LEP to allow for this as an additional use within Wickham, subject to meeting the appropriate criteria to avoid new dwelling houses sterilising redevelopment opportunities otherwise available to the benefit of the city.

Increased density

Individual requests were provided by landowners seeking to have the potential density of their property increased given their land is not impacted by mine subsidence and could cater for the loss of housing in other parts of Wickham.

This feedback was not applied given that there is suitable capacity within the city centre to accommodate this loss. Furthermore, the impacts of higher density would need to be considered in context of its potential impact on the surrounding area. We are however interested to hear from the community as to this current position.

Emerging Industry Quarter

There was a suggestion that the term 'industry quarter' was outdated as the area was no longer industrial.

The term Emerging Industry Quarter was coined by the smart cities team in a workshop for preparing the adopted masterplan as a way of promoting this area for new emerging tech start-ups and co-lab working spaces, close to the city but celebrating its unique character that builds on Wickham's industrial and employment generating history. The term was also considered as a potential marketing tool by applying the acronym for Wickham Emerging Industry Quarter, being WE IQ.

Photos and images

Comments regarding the use of outdated photos and images suggested that these should be updated.

The photos in the Draft Wickham Masterplan 2021 Update were captured prior to finalising this document. Other images used, where the same as the within the adopted masterplan and were chosen for a reason. These images sought to communicate a message of the potential character envisaged by the masterplan.

The Wickham Masterplans primary purpose is to guide CN in coordinating urban renewal activities in this part of Newcastle. Should people find an image or photo that they believe will assist in communicating this, we welcome submissions of these during public exhibition, together with details of its source (to avoid infringement of copyright).

Pedestrians and cycling

Feedback was sought as to what is being done in relation to the provision of footpaths, cycleways, shared pathways and pedestrian crossings.

The narrow width of many local streets limits the ability to provide each competing element. As a result, some streets may need to be converted to one-way traffic, have lower speed, or limit vehicle crossovers particularly along key pedestrian and/or cycle routes.

The Wickham Masterplan 2017 and the Wickham Local Area Traffic Management Plan 2017 identified improvements to pedestrian accessibility, amenity and safety within local streets, which are required as the area continues to redevelop.

The Draft Wickham Masterplan 2021 Update identifies land and works, for the provision of footpaths and shared pathways, to be funded by development, either as a condition of consent or for the provision of development incentives.

Public domain

Comments were provided in relation to how and when public domain improvements may be implemented given the level of development that has occurred in recent years.

The Draft Wickham Masterplan 2021 Update proposes a range of community infrastructure projects, consistent with the urban activation areas, public domain elements, pedestrian connections and laneways identified by the Wickham Masterplan 2017.

Further public domain planning by City of Newcastle will determine the preferred design and inclusions of each urban activation areas. However, implementation of these is subject to redevelopment of the associated land by applicants seeking to access increased density through development incentives that City of Newcastle proposes to introduce within Newcastle LEP 2012.

Further community consultation will be carried out in relation to the LEP amendments required to enable such development incentives and community infrastructure.

Heritage listings

As part of the engagement, we received a request for several dwellings within Wickham to be included as Local Heritage Items within Council's LEP to protect these into the future. This information was passed on to CNs Heritage Planner for consideration. The advice provided was that these properties and others were previously considered within a heritage review. Items of local significance (on heritage grounds) were already included within the LEP and while the dwellings were old per se this alone does not provide grounds for listing. Heritage listing requires specific criteria to be met before being considered worthy of listing.

The dwellings suggested for listing also do not meet the criteria to warrant inclusion as a heritage conservation area as they are not part of a contained consistent example of a specific timeframe that is not found elsewhere within the city. Furthermore, given these dwellings are all located on very small landholdings, they do not warrant redevelopment given the limitations of what they could be replaced with through urban renewal.

However, we welcome landowners to nominate their own property where they have sufficient grounds based on information that demonstrates real Heritage significance (not character, amenity or age) during the public exhibition for further consideration.