29-9-2020 Community Infrastructure Plan 2020\_Draft\_(TEXT)

**Community Infrastructure Plan 2020\_DRAFT:**

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NSROC Regional Priorities Plan

Fit for the Future

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**The Community Infrastructure Plan (CIP)** sets out the future direction for Hunters Hill for the delivery of community facilities and services required to meet the needs of the current generation and provide for the future generations of Hunters Hill.

This Strategy brings together contemporary thinking and research around the provision of community infrastructure that aligns with current local, regional and State strategies and draws on significant research and consultation undertaken over the past 15 years.

This Strategy provides a blueprint for action that is focused around:

* A network of facilities including provision of three community hubs/precincts
* Specialized and/or single purpose facilities and associated management of these

This Strategy also proposes a coordinated response to the treatment of remnant parcels of land which include road reserves and drainage easements.

Underpinning this strategy is a set of principles that will guide implementation and funding mechanisms to support initial delivery as well as financially sustainable models into the future.

The Community Infrastructure Strategy is a key initiative to ensure Hunters Hill is sustainable and thriving.

**2. THE CASE FOR CHANGE**

Our facilities are ageing and are no longer fit for purpose.

Our buildings were constructed between 1866 and 2003, with minimal renovation and upgrades undertaken over the years. Facilities are generally underutilised due to either their condition and/or location. These facilities no longer suit the communities vast needs and need to be brought into the 21st Century, and set up for the next 50+ years to help service the needs of our growing community.

Over time, service delivery models have changed as have community needs and expectations. There has been a shift to multipurpose facilities that are co-located, provide economies of scale and form places where people can meet and enjoy a range of activities and services.

Our 2019 community satisfaction survey has raised concerns that many of our facilities are dated and do not meet expectations.

We need to be able to provide improved community infrastructure to meet and satisfy the needs of our current residents, as well as provide for the future generations of Hunters Hill in a sustainable manner. This means that the delivery of new community infrastructure needs to be funded as well as ensuring that there are ongoing revenues for the maintenance and renewals of these assets over time.

The following key issues and findings are now being critically addressed through the development and delivery of the Community Infrastructure Plan:

1. Many of Council’s buildings are ageing and were built for a specific purpose, which in many cases has not kept up with changes in service delivery and therefore usage rates are low.
2. The majority of Council buildings have been managed with maintenance only upgrades due to the high cost of significant upgrades.
3. The same buildings have been used by the same community groups over many years. In some cases the needs of these groups have changed, but the buildings have not been able to meet these needs.
4. The economic benefit of facilities is not being maximized because usage rates are low, which could be improved through more flexible infrastructure.
5. There is a lack of adequate facilities in park settings to maximize and encourage community use and enjoyment of open space.
6. The financial constraints as a result of rate pegging has created a need for Council to apply to IPART for special rate variations to fund maintenance and upgrades to community buildings.
7. Facilities need to be more efficiently used, embracing multipurpose and flexible design.
8. There is a need to comply with relevant legislation, applying universal design principles so that our facilities are inclusive.
9. Council needs funds to be sustainable in to the future.

**Future Asset Trends**

There is an increasing expectation that assets will be available for multiple purposes and uses. This supports a focus on maximising utilization and developing a more sustainable asset base. This is a shift away from single use, single user buildings, which Council has historically constructed.

COVID19 is also seeing new trends being established across Australian councils with service centres and libraries implementing structural changes to ensure social distancing measures are in place.

Sustainability and new technologies are being incorporated into new buildings. This is enabling councils to see a reduction in operating and energy costs, as well as gaining a clear understanding of how people are using spaces through the capture of important data.

With councils focusing on risk and multi building use, it is inevitable that places and spaces will both look and feel different into the future. Asset reliability and flexibility will be more important than ever.

**Changing demographics in the Community**

Asset based building services must be managed to ensure they effectively support changing community needs and priorities. The community in Hunters Hill Municipality has several specific demographic attributes. Traditionally, there has been an increasing proportion of the community that is ageing, there is also a significant and growing representation of young families.

**Legislative Changes**

The legislative requirements governing delivery of asset based building services are extensive and continually evolving. This is particularly so in the areas of Disability Access, Health and Safety and also provision of regulated services such as Child Care facilities. There is also greater pressure on maintenance of open space and physical infrastructure.

**Town Hall and Council Administration Office Space**

As already mentioned, this space is currently substandard and needs to be brought up to code urgently. Stage 1, to improve public access and safety and address major maintenance of the roof and air-conditioning is nearing completion. However, further upgrades are still required to deliver the best Town Hall facilities for the community.

**Community Services in Hunters Hill**

Sydney Community Services delivers a comprehensive range of services from four modest cottages on Gladesville Road. A community centre, used by a number of organisations, is also located within these premises. These are much needed valuable community services and should be accommodated in modern, fit for purpose buildings.

**Funding Limitations**

The NSW rate peg determines the maximum percentage amount by which a council may increase its general income for the year. For almost all councils, general income consists entirely of rates income. Approximately 68% of Hunter’s Hill Council revenue comes from rates and annual charges, compared to the NSW State average of approximately 45%. The long-standing rates pegging regime in NSW means that the opportunity for Council to substantially increase its income is limited, without considering alternative funding structures or engaging in commercial enterprises that may come with added risks to the independence of Council.

It would be prudent for Council to diversify its sources of revenue. One option would be to invest in income producing property.

**3. BACKGROUND**

**3.1 STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND RESEARCH**

**Council’s Community Infrastructure has evolved over many decades and has not always been guided by a strategic approach.**

The current portfolio includes land and buildings that are used for; direct service delivery by Council, the delivery of community based services by not for profit organisations, recreational and sporting pursuits, commercial activity, passive open space, environmental management and car parking.

Improved management of community infrastructure coupled with a comprehensive strategy presents a significant opportunity to improve the public value derived from these assets. This not only produces a better performing bank of resources for the community, but also improves Council’s ability to commercialise aspects of assets for financial gain to the community. This can be achieved through improved utilisation and financial performance, and at the same time enable Council and the community to understand how Council’s policies and strategies relating to community assets link together.

Over the past decade plus there has been significant research and consultation in relation to community infrastructure. This Strategy draws this together these findings and recommendations into one document. This strategy has been informed by the following documents:

**1. Key Strategic Planning Documents:**

* + Community Strategic Plan (and supporting IP&R documents)
  + Facilities Strategic Plan 2009 – 2029 (prepared in 2008)
  + North District Plan (2018)
  + NSROC Regional Sports Ground

Strategy (2017)

* + Hunters Hill Outdoor Sport and Recreational Plan (2013)
  + Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)

**2. Plans of Management:**

* + Boronia Park Plan of Management (2020)
  + Riverglade Reserve Plan of Management

(2020)

* + Gladesville Reserve and Betts Park Plan of Management (2008)

**3. Master Plans:**

* + Gladesville Masterplan (2020)
  + Hunters Hill Masterplan (2005)

**4. Other Supporting Plans and Documents:**

* + Hunters Hill Library Review Plan (2019)
  + Asset Management Plans (2020)
  + Section 7.12 Plan (2019)
  + LEPs
  + DCPs
  + Housing Strategy

**3.2 PROCESS**

**Review of strategy documents and assess opportunities**

**↓**

**Draft Community Infrastructure Plan (CIP) for Public Exhibition**

**↓**

**Review and Incorporation of stakeholder feedback**

**↓**

**Final CIP to go to Council for adoption**

**↓**

**Feasability and implementation of CIP objectives**

**3.3 OUR COMMUNITY NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE**

Hunter’s Hill Council is located 7 kilometres from the Sydney GPO and covers approximately 550 hectares and covers 19kms of river frontage. It is the smallest local government area in Sydney covering an area of 6 sq. km.

The Hunters Hill peninsula is bounded by the Lane Cove and Parramatta Rivers, with the local road network extending west to Pittwater Road, Gladesville. Hunter’s Hill Council includes the suburbs of Gladesville (part), Henley, Hunters Hill, Huntleys Cove, Huntleys Point and Woolwich.

The local government area is predominantly residential, including many parks and reserves with very little commercial land use. Hunters Hill is recognized as Australia’s oldest garden suburb.

The original inhabitants of the Hunters Hill area were the Wallumedegal Indigenous people. European settlement dates from 1795 when land was first farmed.

The area has a very French feel, with many of the early houses being designed by the Joubert brothers, who used local Italian stonemasons and sandstone.

Therefore, the most distinguishing feature of Hunters Hill is its buildings, structures and gardens. It is these that has led to a majority of the Municipality being recognised as a Conservation Area. The Municipality currently has over 700 heritage-listed items and over 450 contributory buildings, which were built before 1928.

**A Growing Population**

It is anticipated that the Hunters Hill local government area will continue to grow at a similar rate in the next five years with continued infill medium density developments along Victoria Road and other retail centres.

Growth is expected in the older population as a result of the general ageing of the population and with over 60 year olds and ‘empty nesters’ attracted closer to the city and into new medium density developments, and in the population with young and teenage children. This means that Council’s recreational and sporting facilities, along with local schools that are already in high demand will continue to be maximized.

Council has always supported the many voluntary not for profit organisations in the area, and has a policy of fostering and partnering with community managed services, rather than directly providing community services. This has resulted in strong independent local organisations that provide children’s services, aged services, leisure, environmental and local advocacy. The buildings that support these services are ageing and require continued maintenance.

**So what does this mean now and into the future?**

The age structure of Hunter’s Hill Council residents provides key insights into the level of demand for age based services and facilities, such as childcare, over 60s housing, a library, sporting and recreational facilities.

Governments at all levels, Federal, State and Local need to ensure that the framework, capability and comprehensive social and community planning needed to deliver appropriate housing and related infrastructure (not just for the over 60s) is in place now, to deliver what is needed into the future.

There is already a shift from traditionally passive lifestyle choices for the over 60s, to what is now considered active lifestyle choices. There is a growing trend across NSW for downsizing into accommodation that is centralized and convenient to community facilities and services, but still provides for independent living.

This is not only reflective for the ageing, but is also a growing movement for younger people and families seeking a more simplistic lifestyle. The popularity of urban developments, such as Harold Park in Glebe, which provide the perfect fusion of independent living, active and passive recreation coupled with amenities within a short stroll, are meeting a growing need.

The trends in housing for young professionals and those entering the property market for the first time revolve around affordability, sustainability, liveability and simplicity. Young people are looking for better design through a balance of indoor and outdoor living, such as apartments connected by greenspace and restaurants and cafes.

It is not only housing trends that are changing. There has also been a distinct shift in how people work. There is a greater emphasis on work life balance, more collaboration and flexible workspaces. There has recently been a dramatic increase in remote working, which is set to continue.

This coupled with technological improvements and a new focus on wellness means that more people are either working from home or wanting to work in flexible office spaces, such as being able to hire an office or desk space for a day or a week, or going to shared spaces such as libraries, which are now offering areas for collaboration and contemplation.

The rise in more liveable homes and workspaces and the need for sporting and recreational facilities that are better designed and more energy efficient will become the norm throughout NSW and at a local level councils such as Hunters Hill will need to ensure that planning and building regulations enable this push for appropriate and sensitive infrastructure for all age groups.

*'Purpose-built homes in retirement communities that are well located and designed to enable older Australians to be happy, independent and socially engaged is an important goal – but not one that our planning systems are well placed to achieve.’*

*(Property Council of Australia - The 5 A’s of Retirement Living - towards proactive planning policy)*

**3.4 EXISTING COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE**

Hunter’s Hill Council owns and/or manages a substantial community infrastructure portfolio. The majority of land owned or managed by Council is used for various civic, community and operational purposes. However, there are some small remnant sites consisting of former road reserves and unmade roads.

This Community Infrastructure Portfolio consists of:

* Council’s Administration Centre and Council Chambers and associated facilities, together with the Council Depot.
* Childcare facilities.
* Community facilities in parks and playgrounds.
* Heritage listed buildings on Crown land.
* Council carparks, etc.

A limited number of properties are leased for commercial purposes, providing an income stream to Council.

It is essential that Council’s community infrastructure is structured to maximise operational effectiveness, efficiency, financial performance and community benefit, and that Council maximises the value of appropriate properties. This is important because:

* Inappropriately designed/used property will lower the quality of services provided to the community.
* Unsuitable or under-utilized land and buildings tie up capital resources and waste revenue which could be better employed for service delivery.
* Consideration of long-term asset needs will result in improved financial performance over time.
* Well-managed property will provide a higher return on investment and result in lower operational costs.

This infrastructure is provided and managed in accordance with relevant legislation including:

* Local Government Act
* Crown Land Act
* Roads Act 1993
* Real Property Act 1900
* Retail Leases Act 1994

**3.5 CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITY SPACES AND PLACES**

**Multi-Purpose and Flexible Spaces**

Single purpose or standalone facilities are defined as being designed and built for one particular purpose or function, and to be used by one specific target group or service only. Single purpose facilities can be costly to maintain and are often underutilized and under-activated.

Current best practice in community facility design and provision is to provide a range of different functions, in the one building, in flexibly designed spaces that can be adapted depending on the program or activity. The ability of facilities to be adapted and transformed in the future is important given the ongoing cyclical nature of communities (particularly in relation to changes in demographic mix).

**Co-locate Services in one Facility or as Part of a Community Hub**

Co-locating services within one facility involves shared or joint use of facilities and often the integrated delivery of some services.

Co-location enables:

* pooling of resources to provide better facilities.
* concentration of compatible services and facilities to create a community focal point.
* improved access and safety for users who can access a range of services at a single location.
* integrated and innovative delivery of services.
* efficient use of land, for instance through shared, rather than separate, parking areas.

The benefit of co-locating community facilities within community hubs is that it supports the integrated, efficient use of facilities, builds social networks, encourages service users to use other facilities and services co-located on site, and reduces the number of private vehicle trips made to enhance sustainability. Community facilities and community hubs can include a range of community, commercial, and retail functions. Facilities that support community functions, events and gatherings, such as kitchen facilities, storage facilities, indoor and outdoor space are usually part of community hubs.

The Hub model will demonstrate that maintaining and operating a single, multipurpose hub facility is more financially viable over the long term than other more separate and divergent models of facility provision.

**Connected to Public Space, Pedestrian and Cycleways and Public Transport**

Current best practice is that community facilities are accessible to the entire community by being centrally located and linked to the public domain. Connections to transport links, pedestrian and cycle ways also support community access across all age groups and abilities and  
a sustainable and healthy community. Facilities should be co-located at activity nodes and on main streets, providing good access to residential populations, and contributing to a vibrant and safe street life.

**Place making and Community Identity**

Successful community facilities provide important gathering places for people and can be focal points for community activity and catalysts for social interaction. They are recognised as having the potential to contribute to the creation of vital public spaces that help grow a sense of place and distinctive community identity. A recent trend is designing community facilities that enhance the physical quality and appearance of public places, helping to reinforce place identity and making it a more attractive environment for people to gather and interact with each other. When located in or with retail and commercial uses, community facilities can help to reinforce the role of those areas as public gathering, meeting and information sharing places. It is important that community facilities have a civic quality, sense of stability and level of amenity that marks them as an important place in the community.

**Economic, Social and Environmental Sustainability**

Sustainable community facilities are increasingly being used to showcase sustainable building methods and design. Sustainable design of community facilities include newly constructed facilities or those that can be incorporated into building upgrades and renovations.

The newly constructed Oran Park Library in the Camden Council local government area is the heart of the Oran Park Civic Precinct and provides a place of community development and information, education, and recreation. The library has been described as a ‘community living room: where people of all ages, abilities and interest come for relaxation and entertainment, to experience history and culture, to play and create, to connect and communicate’. The exterior and interior are unique to the area and includes; a new high-tech open library, a sessional services office for community support and a community centre to foster art, culture, and community activities. Externally, there is an outdoor landscaped area that is used for library activities and a civic plaza in front of the building for outdoor public events. This facility was delivered through a voluntary planning agreement (VPA).

Another example of sustainability is adaptive reuse. The principle of adaptive reuse relates to not building something new unless there are no suitable options within the existing asset base that can be adapted or rejuvenated to meet the identified community needs for space. These projects can be on a grand scale such as the use of historic buildings for galleries and museums, or simple and low key.

Co-location is another option and as previously mentioned could involve shared space and/ or shared services. Co-location can reduce asset and service costs as organisations and community groups can have their own space in a wider complex; they may share a foyer, meeting rooms and amenities with other tenants, therefore significantly reducing lease and operating costs.

As part of any new or upgraded facility Council may wish to deliver, it is essential that the sites operational efficiency be examined together with options to derive recurrent income to offset annual maintenance/running costs.

**4. OUTCOMES**

This Strategy aligns with and responds to Council’s Community Strategic Plan, Council’s 2009 Community Facilities Plan, the 2019 Library Strategy, Sport and Rec Plan, and the LSPS, all of which outline key community and social outcomes, including:

* Innovative services and assets that meet current and future community needs.
* Property being used as a means of getting services to users (rather than solely for ownership purposes).
* A sustainable built environment that accommodates a growing population.
* Places, spaces and support for the wellbeing of the community.
* Well-used community and civic facilities.

These outcomes will be underpinned by the following goals:

* Improved Community Service delivery.
* A place-based approach to deliver facilities, services, programs and initiatives.
* Quality cultural facilities/spaces including a new library, art spaces and live performance.
* Quality recreational spaces both internal and external.
* Quality open space.
* Appropriate facilities for organisational requirements integrating to other community facilities.

In order to deliver these goals Council has identified the need to review current community infrastructure and its utilisation in order to plan for future facilities to support community, environmental and financial outcomes.

The challenge for Council is to raise sufficient funds to deliver improved facilities to service the community. One opportunity is to release the value and potential of its property portfolio to meet the needs of the Hunters Hill community.

Council’s Property Advisory Committee (PAC), who have helped inform this Plan have implemented a strategic framework to deliver to Council a sustainable future. In doing this the PAC have reviewed Council’s existing infrastructure portfolio using the following key elements:

* Identifying non-ownership alternatives to property solutions.
* Owning property – knowing what property is owned and why it is owned by Council.
* Managing property – knowing that the property is fulfilling its purpose.
* Investing in property – capturing the benefits of growth for the community.
* Releasing property – making informed choices about when and why to dispose of property  
  for which Council and the community has no further purpose.
* Buying property – identifying what property is needed so that the right purchase decisions  
  are made at the right time, and the necessary resources (including lifecycle costs) can be planned in advance.

Recommendations will consider the appropriate and equitable consolidation, rationalisation, construction, disposal, upgrade, reconfiguration and acquisition of social infrastructure to meet the existing and projected needs of the community.

This document will also serve to guide future investment and resource allocation decisions associated with Council-owned and operated property assets to meet the diverse and evolving needs of the local community.

**5. WHAT WILL BE DELIVERED**

**This strategy sets out projects to deliver on the outcomes set out in this Plan. These are focused around:**

1. Creation of 3 Community hubs

* Gladesville Road/Figtree Park, Hunters Hill
* Town Hall, Administration Centre, Depot and Council Chambers, Hunters Hill
* Henley Precinct (including the Henley Community Centre)

2. Key site

* Gladesville Sites: 4 Pittwater Road, Gladesville and Cowell St Carpark, Gladesville

3. Special/sole purpose facilities with major leases

* The Priory
* Hunters Hill Sailing Club

4. Neighbourhood facilities for hire/mlinor leases and licences

* Council parks and community facilities

5. Remnant land

* Road reserves
* Darainage easements
* Air spaces

**5.1 CREATION OF THREE (3) COMMUNITY HUBS OR PRECINCTS ACROSS THE MUNICIPALITY**

**Community hubs or precincts are in essence, multipurpose places that provide a range of services, activities and functions that are integrated.**

This can mean both integration of services, programs and activities within a multipurpose community facility or an integration of a range of activity generating uses including community and cultural facilities, shops, transport, and public parks.

Council’s existing facilities/assets have been categorized into the following four (4) areas:

Community hubs and precincts support service delivery opportunities, place making, community capacity building and financial sustainability.

Each community hub will have its own personality and will offer a community driven sanctuary within the City. The sites will become community offerings; new destinations which are collaborative, creative and activated.

The Hunters Hill Town Hall will remain civic and proud; the new Village Green will generate a cohesive mix of communal activity; the Henley Precinct will offer both sporting and wellbeing opportunity, and the Gladesville sites will contribute to a catalyst for the re activation of Gladesville Town Centre as part of the overall master planning offering a range of social and community services and business and employment opportunities.

Each hub/precinct will articulate the unique personality of the surrounding locality.

Broad considerations of each hub are that they are:

* Future proof
* Evolving
* Sustainable
* Adaptable
* Best value – assets deliver improved community benefits
* Informed by the community
* Customer/community centric
* Balance short term and long term objectives
* Beneficial to the community and deliver back into local infrastructure

The local values of environment, lifestyle, heritage, family and community, amenity and economic viability will be integral to the delivery of the 4 precincts.

**5.1.1 VILLAGE GREEN HUB**

(COMMUNITY AND CIVIC HUB - GLADESVILLE ROAD/FIGTREE PARK, HUNTERS HILL)

**Site**

The Village Green Hub is located within the boundary of Matthew Street, Gladesville Road and Ryde Road. This site has a mix use of green space, community service buildings, businesses, shops and limited parking. Council also has care, control and management of Figtree Park.

**Timeframe: Short**

The need to plan for a new Library, accommodate Community Services, activate Figtree Tree Park and provide opportunities for business, prioritizes this key project for commencement within the next 1-3 years.

**History**

Figtree Park was transferred to Council in an exchange by the Department of Education for an equivalent area of Boronia Park at the corner of Park Road and High Street in 1954. The site had previously been known as Figtree Playground because a playground had been located on the site.

46 Gladesville Rd is a weatherboard cottage built by Council in 1956 to house Overseer David Dorn and his family. The family vacated the property in 1981 and another Council staff member took up residence for several years. It was then adapted and upgraded by Council to provide office space for Gladesville Community Aid.

The Gladesville Rd Community Centre, 44 Gladesville Rd was built in 1965 and was originally used as the Hunters Hill Senior Citizens Hall. A games room was added to the building in 1973.

The brick cottage of 42 Gladesville Rd came under the control of Council, which was already tenanted when Figtree Park was created.

The Hunters Hill Women’s Bowling Club held a lease of about 2575sq.m of Figtree Park from 1959. The bowling green and clubhouse were located along Matthew Street.

Hunter’s Hill Council also owns 48 Gladesville Road, which is privately tenanted.

**Vision**

The Village Green Hub will be a place where community facilities and services will be centralised and will provide a renewed focus on activity. This will be a place for all ages, attracting students from nearby schools, older residents from nearby seniors housing and residents generally from across Hunters Hill.

Residents and visitors will regularly visit the new contemporary library and council administration centre. The Park will be activated and in use across the day from early morning to evening. The Hub will be a vibrant place that contributes to the life of the Hunters Hill community and lifestyle, and has a strong sense of place with points of interest.

**Opportunities**

* Improving and activating Figtree Park.
* Providing quality accommodation for community service organisations.
* Accommodating Council’s Administration.
* Accommodating a contemporary library.
* Allowing for income producing commercial space.
* Accommodating community space/s.
* Resolving access and safety issues along Gladesville Road by reducing the number of driveways.
* Accommodating flexible working spaces.
* Activating/opening up Figtree Park.
* Accommodating a residential component (for downsizing).
* Energising Hunter’s Hill Village through activation and public art.
* Supporting local business activities.
* Accommodating income producing commercial space.

**Considerations**

* Ensuring Crown Land support.
* Ensuring provisions for Sydney Community Service and seeking their feedback/ support.
* Ensuring that there is no net loss of public open space.
* Effective traffic management and parking provisions.
* Incorporating accommodation, commercial or residential components.
* Demonstrating financial sustainability.
* Accommodating existing services, such as Meals on Wheels.
* Incorporating future uses and enabling evolution.

**Imagine this...**

* Harboard Diggers
* Kiora Place – Double Bay
* Fred Kelly Place – Five Dock
* Marrickville Library
* The Coal Loader

**5.1.2 HERITAGE AND CULTURAL FACILITIES HUB**

(HUNTERS HILL TOWN HALL, COUNCIL’S ADMINISTRATION CENTRE AND DEPOT)

**Site**

The Hunters Hill Town Hall site is located on the corner of Alexandra and D’Aram Streets, Hunters Hill. Hunter’s Hill Council and Lane Cove Council have entered an agreement to share Depot services out of a site in Lane Cove. This will therefore free the existing site at the back of the Town Hall.

**Timeframe: Medium**

The prioritisation of the Village Green Hub will trigger planning for the Heritage and Cultural Facilities Hub. It is anticipated that this key project will commence within the next 3-5 years.

**History**

The original Hunters Hill Town Hall was completed in 1866 and was significantly enlarged and improved in 1902. The building was further adapted in 1938 when the Council Chamber was added, and again in 1967 with the addition of the Hunters Hill Museum. The Town Hall was used for congregational church services from 1868 until the Congregational Church was built in 1878. And, for seven years between 1890 and 1897 the Town Hall was used as a Ladies Grammar School.

The infamous town Hall fire of 1978 was thought to have been caused by possums eating through wiring. The damage was so severe that $1.2 million was spent on rebuilding the Town Hall and its offices. Fortunately, much of the front facade of the Town Hall was saved, but little else remained. In 1988 there were further additions to the administrative centre.

Behind the Town Hall and Administration Centre sits Council’s Depot. The Depot garage was built in 1982. The corner lot of 9 Madeline Street was purchased by Council in 1954 and included as part of the depot. The construction of the garage and store required the acquisition of part of the rear yards of No. 11 and No. 15 Madeline Street, which occurred in 1980.

On the corner of Alexandra and D’Aram Streets is the War Memorial and WW1 restored Howitzer cannon. The site pays homage to those who have lived in Hunters Hill and fought in the wars.

**Vision**

The vision for this site is to celebrate the cultural hub of the Town Hall, Council Chambers and Museum whilst respecting important heritage items.

The cultural hub will be home to Hunters Hill Theatre, Hunters Hill Music Club, art gallery and an expanded Hunters Hill Museum, which will celebrate our heritage.

The performance space will be contemporary and offer a unique experience.

**Opportunities**

* Improving the amenity to adjoining owners.
* Improving amenity and facilities for community groups, e.g., Hunters Hill Theatre and the Hunters Hill Music Club.
* Retaining the cultural hub of the Town  
  Hall, Council Chambers and Museum while relocating the depot and the administration functions of Council.
* Using the administration section of the building for commercial leasing/offices.
* Developing a comprehensive arts precinct which includes; an art gallery, museum, offices or commercial leasing.
* Determining whether the existing office accommodation can be retrofitted for future use or does there need to be consideration of a ‘new’ build?

**Considerations/Influences**

* Redeveloping parcels of the site, whilst remaining sympathetic to the Town Hall heritage.
* Incorporating a sustainable financial return.
* Determining the feasibility of a 99 year lease.

**Imagine this...**

* Camden Library/Museum
* North Parramatta heritage Precinct
* Arthur Boyd Centre

**5.1.3 LIFESTYLE AND WELLBEING HUB**

(HENLEY PRECINCT)

The site is approximately 8.45 Ha and includes:

* Riverside Pre-School constructed in 1999
* Former Bowling Club constructed in the early 1960’s
* Amenities Building constructed in the early 1970’s
* Cricket/Soccer Field
* Remnant bushland and harbour foreshore
* Netball/Basketball Court
* 3 onsite Carparks
* Green Waste Centre
* Community Garden created by Happy Hens
* Accessible ferry wharf and associated covered walkway
* Skatepark

**Timeframe: Short**

Take opportunities to test ideas and use these to enable a vision to evolve organically with an EOI for an operator to activate the site - taking a place and curatorial approach in including existing site partners and attracting new partners. It is anticipated that this key project will commence within the next year.

**Timeframe: Medium**

Take the learnings form the evolution of the site and use these to develop a sustainable model. Engage an urban designer or architect to bring the community vision to life. It is anticipated that this key project will commence within the next 3-5 years.

**History**

Originally known as Blandville, Henley now rests in a quiet enclave on the Parramatta River. Henley has a mix of schools, sandstone homes, sports fields and community buildings, including:

* Henley Community Centre (previously Henley Bowling Club)
* Henley Cottage
* Riverside Pre School
* Gladesville Reserve
* Skate park and basketball courts
* Happy Hens Community Garden

Huntleys Point is a small suburb adjacent to Henley and facing the Parramatta River. Huntleys Point is characterised by sandstone residential properties, Riverside Girls High School and the Huntleys Cove Wharf, which ferries passengers up and down the Parramatta River.

Gladesville Reserve was dedicated for public recreation in 1920. It is approximately 8.5 hectares of which 3 hectares is bushland. It was originally in two lots. The northern lot, closest to Victoria Rd (DP 1000859 40) was dedicated as a Hospital for the Insane in 1895. Council became trustee in July 1960.

The remaining lot (DP 1017546 903) was vested in seven (7) trustees until November 1958 when trusteeship was transferred to Council. The Henley Community Centre (previously the Henley Bowling Club) is located on this part of the Reserve. The Bowling Club suffered from declining membership and bowling ceased on the site in 1999. The land and improvements were the subject of a twenty-year lease with Henley Bowling and Recreation Club Co-operative Limited. The lease expired in November 1996.

Council undertook an Expression of Interest process for a new leasee for the building. However, Henley Bowling and Recreation Club Co-operative Limited continued in the building until July 2008 when Council took possession of the building following their liquidation. Since this time the building has been upgraded and managed by Council as the Henley Community Centre.

In May 1996 a small section of the Reserve (which was a disused green of the Henley Bowling Club) was separately gazetted as a preschool site. Council then constructed Riverside Preschool on the site following an extensive community fundraising campaign.

Hunter’s Hill Council was appointed Trustee of Henley Cottage in 1983. The Cottage was originally part of the Hospital for the Insane. Following significant restoration as a Bicentennial project the Cottage was leased.

As required, Council completed Plans of Management for the Reserve in July 1998, September 2004 and an amended Plan of Management in 2008.

**Vision**

The vision for the Henley Precinct will grow organically. Initially, Council will undertake an EOI to determine a variety of short-term mixed uses.

Over the longer term it is anticipated that the precinct will lend itself to services and facilities that support health and lifestyle, such as:

1. Increased and improved access to open space.
2. Improved community and recreational facilities offering contemporary multipurpose spaces.
3. New facilities, which will incorporate commercial aspects that will enable revenue raised to be rolled back into the asset maintenance and renewal of the buildings as well as the broader precinct of Gladesville Reserve, Betts Park, and the Henley Community Centre.

**Opportunities**

Facilities and associated uses:

* Construct synthetic field/s with a shared Sports and Community Facility.
* Improved amenities for sporting activities including storage, change rooms, etc.
* Consider gym/café to service users and local sporting clubs as part of the new amenities.
* Relocate the current cricket pitch either elsewhere on the site or subject to agreement relocate to another site.
* Cafe/restaurant to service visitors to the reserve.
* Meeting rooms to cater for community groups with associated back of house facilities such as kitchen and amenities.
* Produce/craft markets.
* Community Gardens.
* Provision of infrastructure to enable the staging of outdoor music/cultural events.
* Community playground.
* Preschool and potential for increased childcare centre.
* Public amenities.
* Potential for increased access to the waterfront.
* Potential for residential development with a sustainable focus.

**Considerations/Influences**

* Activating the site to meet the needs of a broader cross section of the community.
* Determining the most appropriate adaptive reuse for the Henley Community Centre (Bowling Club building) to enable the site to develop organically.
* Creating connectivity through the entire site for active and passive spaces.
* Ensuring cohesion through a mix of commercial and community spaces.
* Challenging topography constraints, particularly at the back of the site. However, there may be opportunities to include a residential or similar development.

**Imagine this...**

* The Greens at North Sydney
* Woollahra Council
* Calabria Bowling Club Manlyvale (bowling, futsal, pizza, salsa)
* Camperdown Commons

**5.2 KEY SITE: GLADESVILLE COMMERCIAL CENTRE**

**Sites**

The Gladesville Commercial Centre incorporates the area from Pittwater Road to Cowell Street, incorporating 4 Pittwater Road (Gladesville Occasional Care) and the Signal Hill Carpark. It is located on the western edge of Hunters Hill local government area and is made up of two commercial areas, being; Victoria Road shopping strip, and Gladesville Shopping Village. The Victoria Road shopping strip is a mix of one and two storey buildings that present to Victoria Road and are used for shops and commercial purpose like retail, restaurant/café, office-based business and health/wellness businesses.

The Gladesville Shopping Village is accessed along Massey Lane and Flagstaff Street and is a one-roof shopping centre characterised by a supermarket as an anchor tenant with variety shops and commercial spaces used for retail, restaurant/café and health/wellness businesses. The two commercial areas each operate as standalone shopping areas with little integration between the two areas or contribution to the public domain or sense of place.

Gladesville Shopping Village is located behind the Victoria Road shopping strip. Council provides a public car park to provide access to shops and businesses (Cowell Street) and there is public parking provided in the shopping centre.

The Gladesville Commercial Centre is currently subject to a Masterplan.

**Vision**

The Gladesville Commercial Centre will be renewed and revitalised, with a mixed-use urban centre. It will be the primary centre and commercial hub for the wider area, providing a full range of retail services and entertainment to the community. The Town Centre will offer a modern, convenient environment that respects the past and where people will love to be. It will have high quality mid-rise apartment living, meeting a range of housing needs. It will be a desirable and sustainable place to live.

The focal point of the Centre will be a renewed Gladesville Shopping Centre and public spaces between Massey Street and Cowell Street. The redevelopment of the shopping centre with increased commercial space and residential apartments in well- designed buildings will be the catalyst for renewal, place-making and urban design outcomes throughout the broader Gladesville centre. (Hunters Hill LSPS)

**History**

No. 1 Cowell Street was purchased by Council in 1974. At that time, the adjoining property, known as Seymour’s Yard was leased by Council with the option to purchase. In 1978, the purchase was completed and the carpark constructed.

Council also purchased three (3) lots in Flagstaff Street in 1958, 1960 and 1967 with all 3 lots being used as a carpark. Over the years there has changes to rights of way and the development of the Gladesville Shopping Centre.

No. 10 Cowell Street was purchased by Council in 1973 to house Gladesville Community Aid (who had previously occupied 6 Pittwater Road), but by the early 1990’s the building could no longer meet the need of residents and Gladesville Community Aid moved to Gladesville Road, Hunters Hill.

No. 6 Pittwater Road came to Council from the Gladesville Baby Clinic Committee in 1955. Part of the land was transferred to City of Ryde Council for the joint library to be built. Alterations to 6 Pittwater Road were undertaken in 1984 and the Gladesville Library was rebuilt by City of Ryde in 1991.

Since 1999 the Gladesville area has been targeted as an area needing revitalization by both Hunter’s Hill Council and the City of Ryde, in addition to the State Government’s strong push to see housing increased along major transport routes.

**Description**

There are two sites that Council owns within the Gladesville Commercial Centre:

* Cowell St Car Park: This site provides parking for local retail at present, but following the Gladesville Master Plan exercise, may have potential for redevelopment in association with adjacent land holdings.
* 4 Pittwater Road Gladesville: This site is in the City of Ryde local government area and adjoins land owned by the City of Ryde. The Centre currently accommodates a community based occasional care centre. The center is in need of updating. It is surplus to Hunter’s Hill Council requirements and options to realise its value will be investigated.

These two sites offer an opportunity to be consider with the overall master planning work that is underway in Gladesville.

The site at 4 Pittwater Road is located in the City of Ryde LGA and therefore will need to be considered in partnership with the City of Ryde.

**Opportunities**

* Developing a hub specifically to meet the needs of children and families; occasional care and long day care.
* Investigating commercial lease areas, outdoor areas, etc.
* Partnering with the CoR and tapping into their property opportunities.
* Supporting the Gladesville Masterplan.
* Improving traffic and parking in and around the commercial centre.
* Linking open spaces and improving pedestrian access.
* Supporting the community by offering a range of social opportunities via the provision public spaces with adequate seating and public art.
* Supporting commercial entities via a range of business and employment opportunities.

**Considerations/Influences**

* Partnering with the City of Ryde to determine an outcome for 4 Pittwater Road, Gladesville.
* Partnering with the adjoining land owners to champion a sustainable vision for Gladesville.
* Supporting the community through the provision of improved open space, transport, access, heritage and social infrastructure.

**Imagine this**...

* Merrifield, Victoria
* Green Square, NSW
* Surry Hills Village
* Stockland, Balgowlah

**5.3 SPECIAL/SOLE PURPOSE FACILITIES WITH MAJOR LEASES**

**- THE PRIORY  
- HUNTERS HILL SAILING CLUB**

Council leases or licenses many properties ranging from major leases such as The Priory and Hunters Hill Sailing Club. Leases will be regularly reviewed.

**5.3.1 The Priory**

Council was granted care, control and management of The Priory site from the NSW Department of Lands in 2007. The State Heritage Listed building required significant investment to restore and refurbish it, in order to preserve it for future generations. Fundraising for conservation works was undertaken and following a number of community fundraising events the Priory roof, chimneys and external sandstone, including retaining walls and facade were completely restored.

This initiated a process to determine a viable funding strategy and/or adaptive re-use option, which would achieve an optimal outcome in the successful preservation of The Priory.

An extensive process was undertaken, with community involvement to examine the viability of possible opportunities the Priory site could undertake. This activity, culminated in an Expressions of Interest (EOI) process.

The result of the EOI is that upon a DA approval and Crown Lands sign off, The Priory will be adaptively reused as a restaurant and community meeting place, incorporating; sustainable gardens, fresh produce, a café, and community open days. A long-term lease will ensure the sustainability of the site. Hunters Hill Sailing Club

**5.3.2 Hunters Hill Sailing Club**

The industrial area of Clarkes Point Reserve suffered during the Great Depression as work did not pick up again in the maritime industries until the Second World War. The subdivision and sale of the Morts Dock site in 1963 led to alienation of its slipways (located in Clarkes Point Reserve) from the dock itself. Whilst the dock was acquired by the Army for defense purposes, Clarkes Point Reserve was purchased by a petroleum company, but never developed and Council gained a small reserve of 1 acre named Morts Reserve – now the Hunters Hill Sailing Club site.

Hunters Hill Sailing Club moved to the site in 1971 and leased the building, where the Club is still currently located overlooking the Parramatta River. The land comprises an area of 600 square metres and is substantially occupied by the main building, which was built in the 1980’s.

5.4 **NEIGHBOURHOOD FACILITIES FOR HIRE AND MINOR LEASES AND LICENCES**

**Council has several properties where recreational facilities are provided or could be provided, including the following:**

* Weil Park
* Boronia Park Community and Sports Facility (to be delivered in 2021)

Each of these properties has opportunities to expand the recreational opportunities available to the community through improved facilities, such expanded club houses which can be used by a variety of community groups.

With minor leases/licences, it is proposed to develop a policy to recoup outgoings and maintenance where practicable. This would need to be handled sensitively, recognising the community benefit of these leases and taking into account the capacity of community groups to pay.

5.5 **REMNANT LAND**

Council holds many small parcels of land such as unformed roads, road reserves and drainage easements. These parcels are often not required by Council but can have significant value to an adjoining owner. An up to date list of these sites is required.

It would then be possible to have a systematic approach to the assessment of each site where surplus sites sell at fair market value. Disposal would need to be treated sensitively to protect community rights such as view corridors or access to the water.

In such circumstances it may be necessary to impose covenants on title.

**6. NEXT STEPS**

**6.1 PRINCIPLES**

The following principles have been developed to guide Council’s decisions on these remnant lands:

1. The land has current or foreseeable future use to Council.

2. There is no other reason for Council to sell or seek lease of the land.

3. Council will register easements, rights of way and other encumbrances that will protect:

1. Any existing or expected Operational use of the land, e.g., drainage, access, etc.
2. Any aspect of the land for Community purpose, e.g., public access, view protection, environmental, etc.

4. Council will determine the expected highest and best use for the land.

5. Reflect existing or proposed encumbrances, intended zoning, size, dimensions, shape and contour of the land, plus any other specific site characteristics. The outcomes may be;

1. An open market sale - as a standalone site.
2. Value to an adjoining owner – if multiple existing owners, which is recommended and why.
3. The easements and/or costs to deliver a saleable site cannot be justified. If so do leasing and/or licence options, bio-banking or other options exist as an alternative?
4. Retention of the land for public access to views, waterfront and other important sites.

6. Council will rezone or reclassify the land to achieve the highest and best use.

7. Secure an independent valuation and also confirmation of Council’s highest and best use conclusions: For reporting purposes;

1. Add to the valuation, estimates of any saved annual maintenance/mowing costs per annum – multiplied by a factor of 15 years to provide a lump sum.
2. deduct any re-zoning, re-classification and associated cost estimates.

8. Finalise a Council Recommendation accordingly. This may include:

* The proposed method of sale.
* A recommendation not to offer the property by tender or other open market process (i.e. a direct approach) if there is only one logical buyer.
* Whether additional authority is requested to negotiate outside or below the independent market valuation.

**6.2 DELIVERY**

**Hunter’s Hill Council has a small, but valuable, property portfolio, capable of making a significant financial contribution to improved services for our residents.**

A detailed budget for each Project is not possible at this stage. It requires a set of concept plans for each project, building costs, site valuations and ongoing running costs. A key component of the feasibility is the Government’s attitude to the value of its land, especially the Gladesville Road properties. Some initial high level work however indicates that this program is achievable.

Council has a high dependence on land rates as a source of income and property activity is seen as a way of helping to reduce this, as well as providing funding for projects and programs that might otherwise fail to make it through the budget process. Before any financial benefits are achieved however, projects that involve the development or sale of Council-owned property must:

* Prove they will deliver a net community benefit.
* Abide by probity principles to ensure procedural fairness and value for money.
* For development projects, demonstrate best practice in sustainability and urban design.
* Ensure there has been effective community engagement.

It’s important that the funding released through property activity is used sustainably, providing benefits for many years beyond the projects that generated the funds. To achieve this, certain principles need to apply:

* All revenue and expenditure relating to property development activities are channeled through Council’s Property Development Reserve (PDR) - money set aside from Council’s cash holdings to be used for property activity.
* The allocation of funds from the PDR is in accordance with long-term financial plans and ratified as part of the annual budget setting process, or at other times as opportunities arise.
* One-off revenue from property sales should not be allocated to operational expenditure unless that expenditure is also of a one-off nature.
* Opportunities to produce on-going, annual revenue from property development projects should be explored and taken up where appropriate to help reduce Council’s reliance on land rates for maintaining and improving service levels.

**Council’s Traditional Sources of Property Funding**

There are three sources of funding for Council to investigate/utilise when implementing this Strategy:

1. Fund costs through general rate income. This will mean that progress on upgrading and developing new facilities will be slow unless rates are increased.
2. Use s7.12 funds levied from Development as well as funds via Voluntary Planning Agreements  
   for expanded or new facilities where population increases can justify contributions being sought.
3. Reevaluating Council’s special rating model and determining the scope to alter or administer a change to existing special rates.

**Determining Sustainable Funding Options**

As each project (or activation) identified in this plan is progressed, a comprehensive funding plan will be produced, which will be presented to Council for consideration.

Given the dual financial impact of rate capping and asset renewal, Council will need to deal with the increasing expectations of the community for the assets they use, private benefit versus community benefit for users, level of subsidy or equitable sharing of costs for provision of assets and the need to rationalise both facilities and levels of support provided.

The following funding options can be assessed against each project:

**Sale or Long-Term Lease**

Sale or long-term leasing of land will only be considered in special circumstances and after public consultation. Assessment of land for sale or lease will consider the current state and use of the land, the services under the land and the possible future uses for the land including green corridors, open space, car parking, pedestrian ways etc.

**Continued Maintenance**

Ongoing funding must be made available to maintain Council’s current and future property portfolio. (Industry standard would be an annual allocation in the order of 1.5-2% of the portfolio’s value, excluding land value.) Property maintenance is cyclical, and

it is recommended that a Property Maintenance Reserve be established, and an annual allocation be made from council’s budget to enable maintenance to be planned and the need for large irregular funding request eliminated.

It is also important that Council review its leases to ensure where appropriate and possible maintenance costs are covered. The maintenance costs of all new property assets must be appropriately dealt with, whether through outgoings applied to leases or through the inclusion, where possible of income producing activity on the site.

**Increasing Recurrent Income**

Income from Council owned properties is derived from four main sources namely:

* Commercial rents
* Community rents – childcare, tennis courts etc.
* Car parking revenue
* Facility rentals e.g. halls, etc

Community rents, whilst not providing a commercial return, should have a requirement to meet maintenance costs.

**6.3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**The Communications Plan for the Community Infrastructure Plan is a living document that will be subject to evaluation, review and enhancement to ensure it meets objectives in a changing environment.**

It will ensure that clear and consistent messages that reflect the objectives of the Hunter’s Hill Council Community Infrastructure Plan are presented to key stakeholders and the broader community.

It will also reflect the overall direction and philosophy of the organization and our Community Infrastructure Plan.

Community engagement will be in line with Council’s Communication and Engagement Policy which is based on the IAP2 international framework.

**APPENDICES: (see original document)**