

# Hunters Hill Trust Journal

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## From the President's Desktop

As you may know, Hunters Hill Council recently released a **Draft Community Infrastructure Plan 2020 (CIP)** containing their 'blueprint' for our municipality for the next 10 years.

The Trust has grave concerns that this Plan is being driven by the State Government's determination to create higher density housing and increase development. It documents proposals for Council properties, Crown Land, public parks, parcels of remnant land and their two remaining sites at Gladesville shopping and commercial area. Major development is planned for three new 'community hubs'.

Feedback we have received directly from our membership is that the Plan is deeply flawed. It fails to provide sufficient evidence to verify that it can meet its stated principle to **"deliver a net community benefit"**.

A link to the CIP is on our website at [www.huntershilltrust.org.au](http://www.huntershilltrust.org.au) where you will also find a text only copy of the Plan, the Trust's submission and the results of our survey to members, who overwhelmingly engaged with us to have their voices heard.

Since its formation in 1968, the Trust has advocated strongly for heritage and green space against inappropriate development. ***This Plan, if adopted, could have a huge impact on where we live and the special characteristics of Hunters Hill.*** For this reason, we have devoted our entire edition of this Journal to the proposals.

We have done our own detailed analysis and the major issues are listed opposite. We hope you find this useful.

The Trust is calling for transparency and a **public meeting** and is challenging all Councillors to ensure that this happens as soon as possible. We urge you to contact Council's General Manager at [miscamblel@huntershill.nsw.gov.au](mailto:miscamblel@huntershill.nsw.gov.au) with your concerns, expressing the urgent need for this meeting.



*Two of the five properties (40, 42, 44, 46 and 48 Gladesville Road) under threat of demolition*

1. In the Trust's view, a rationale for the proposals in the Draft Community Infrastructure Plan has not been made. There is no needs analysis as to the basis for these proposals, nor a business case or financial risk assessment. The community is being asked to make choices on options that are not clearly defined, justified or costed.

2. The Plan lacks explanations or drawings relevant to comprehending the scope, scale or footprint of potential development. Without a practical assessment of options to suit the needs of our community, the 'vision' statements are misleading.

3. It is clear the level of change being proposed in the Plan has major implications for our quality of life. It therefore demands more time, detailed consultation and transparency of process than has so far been afforded to residents.

4. Council's own survey in relation to this Plan was deficient in asking only for comment on the *usage* of spaces already proposed

rather than allowing for genuine community input about the direction and intent of the Plan. This gave a sense of "fait accompli" and limited the opportunity for an informed response.

5. Council's Property Advisory Committee, chaired by Councillor Zac Miles, was formed to help devise the Plan. Transparency surrounding their deliberations has been lacking and there appears to have been an unjustifiable level of secrecy around their meetings. This does not inspire confidence that the community has been properly informed as to the extent of development being pursued.

6. We acknowledge that Council has held 'consultations' to obtain community views over many years. In spite of this, residents' considerable concern for preservation of open green space, built and natural heritage and mature tree canopy, appears to have been largely sidelined in this Plan.

**Alister Sharp**

The following pages are a summary of our members' responses to the Plan's proposals:

### Hub 1 - Gladesville Road/ Figtree Park

- This is clearly not an appropriate location to be re-zoned for intensive development. This would be out of character for Council's so-called 'Village Green Hub', and will destroy the existing village.

- There is overwhelming support for Figtree Park to be retained in its entirety with no loss of green space or trees. The significance of this much loved and well-used parkland must not be underestimated.

- The attractive streetscape under threat along Gladesville Road (nos. 40-48) must be retained. Sustainable, low-rise and cost-efficient options can be explored for Sydney Community Services' buildings to enhance or adapt them to be fit for purpose.

- The business case for multi-storey residential development, a library or further retail outlets along Gladesville Road in this location, has not been made.

- The problems of additional traffic adding to the current congestion in this area, already a hazard for residents, has not been addressed in any way.



*This area of Figtree Park with its mature trees and green space is under threat from re-zoning*

- There is minimal support for moving Council administration to this site and no cost/benefit analysis or justification given for separating it from the Town Hall and Council chambers.

- Figtree Park has had recent landscaping improvements and is already used extensively daily by the community for recreation and passive enjoyment. It does not need 'activating' apart from reinstating a small children's playground in its previous location. An appropriate fence along Ryde Road should be added to make the park safer. Improved access to the Park from Gladesville Road could be achieved with clear signposting.



*This charming cottage (42 Gladesville Rd) is ripe for renovation not demolition*

### *Local school students learning a new sport*



- The Croquet Club and Green (opposite) threatened by the new development proposals, is a valued space that has been in daily use, particularly during the pandemic. The Club is a convenient meeting place for many local groups, such as the Mums & Bubs who enjoy the safe green space. It is frequently used by community classes and for private hire, as well as providing the opportunity for local school students to learn a new sport. This heritage club with its mature landscaping is a valuable part of the charm of Hunters Hill.

**We all know to our cost that, once these treasured spaces are gone, they are lost forever.**



*After a \$1M upgrade, the proposal is to move Council staff out of the Town Hall*

### Hub 2 - Town Hall, Council Administration Centre and Works Depot

- A business case has not been made to move the Town Hall administration from its current location and the proposed move does not appear to be supported by the community. We ask, what is the benefit to the community of these changes, ***particularly when retaining core administration services in their current location is strongly supported?*** Has the cost of further refurbishing Council administration offices versus moving them to a new location been fully investigated as part of this exercise?

- The Town Hall being re-configured as a cultural hub is supported, but space and parking issues need to be properly assessed.

- Preservation of the Town Hall heritage building is paramount.

- There is overwhelming support for the HH Historical Society's Museum to be retained in the Town Hall precinct.

- Leasing out the administration space at the Town Hall is not well supported and the lack of parking and access to public transport could make it difficult to achieve commercial returns. In addition there is no indication of the scale of financial return required to sustain these changes.

- There is community ambivalence about the Works Depot remaining behind the Town Hall but strong opposition to re-developing this space for residential

accommodation. However it is seen as having merit as a cultural centre and options should be explored.

- There is popular support for the theatre and music clubs to continue to be located in the Town Hall precinct perhaps housed in a re-developed Depot site.

- An art gallery could be better placed in a more accessible location with available parking, either in a Works Depot space or at the Henley Precinct.

### Hub 3 - Henley Precinct

- As the population is predicted to grow, the Henley site will become a highly valued location for shared experiences and passive recreation.

- This area should be permanently retained for public amenities, cultural events and open air activities such as art, music, markets, community gardens, a café and play spaces.

- This location has parking, access to main roads and public transport.

- The community gardens are greatly appreciated and must be retained/expanded in this location, in consultation with The Happy Hens.

- The Bowling Club building is in demand as a popular location for community activities and social events and should be renovated to enable greater use. It can provide income generation in the short or long term.

- Improved amenities for sporting activities not catered for elsewhere can be located here.

- The replacement of turf with synthetic surface is not supported.

- There is strong opposition to residential development that will alienate the waterfront.



*Henley Precinct with Bowling Club and The Happy Hens Community Garden*

## Gladesville Commercial Centre

The draft Plan identifies the only two sites still owned by Council in Gladesville, for potential 'development' ie 4 Pittwater Road and the carpark at the top of Cowell Street. It is important that this public carpark is retained and not subject to development. It is needed to provide access to support the viability of commercial services and retail outlets outside the Gladesville Shopping Village (which is referred to as the 'Key Site').

The Gladesville commercial centre has taken the brunt of medium density development in our Local Government Area with several apartment blocks already built or planned along Victoria Road. Nearly a decade ago, Council sold off the 'Key Site', which included the existing shopping centre/carpark and the heritage cottage at 10 Cowell Street. The developer put forward a proposal for major new retail and multi-storey residential towers of up to 280 units, and crucially it excluded retention of the cottage. It was a gross over-development, comprehensively rejected by an engaged community and eventually refused by NSW Planning.

In March 2018 Council finally resolved to develop a Gladesville Masterplan to provide a cohesive direction for the Key Site and surrounds, so far not completed. During this time residents have never been invited to have input on the planning for this core area, despite having previously voiced their wish for a vibrant and well-designed civic precinct providing a social meeting point. This failure to consult is clearly unacceptable.

- The Plan also includes the following properties which Council makes available for leases and licences to provide an income stream:

- **Special/Sole Purpose Facilities with Major Leases:** The Priory & Hunters Hill Sailing Club

- **Neighbourhood Facilities for Hire & Minor Leases & Licences:** Weil Park & Boronia Park Sports facility

- **Remnant Land:** No detail of these sites exists in the Plan. Disposal would need to be treated sensitively to protect community rights such as view corridors or access to the water. If these parcels of land are located adjacent to reserves or bushland, consideration must be given to adding them to the public lands.

## IS THIS THE REAL DRIVER OF THE PLAN?

In August the NSW Government announced a \$250 million **Public Spaces Legacy Program** which '*incentivises local councils to accelerate their assessments of DAs and re-zoning to create new development capacity and meet demand for housing and employment over the next decade*'.

*So - are the State's goals around high density housing and development the real driver of the Community Infrastructure Plan?*

Residents may not be aware that Hunters Hill is one of 68 Councils eligible to receive **\$4.75M** from this Public Spaces Legacy Program. To comply, Councils need to fully adopt the ePlanning system and meet targets for assessment timeframes *to accelerate local projects*. Councils must make a commitment to speed up their median assessment timeframe for development applications by 20%, between 1 Sept 2020 and 30 June 2021 which even the Urban Development Institute of Australia fears will likely lead to less scrutiny of development proposals.

To sweeten the deal, Councils were invited to provide a list of public open space projects suitable for funding if performance targets are achieved. Funds would be released in instalments for the design and delivery of projects including:

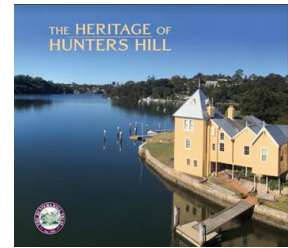
- Open spaces and parklands including regional and district open spaces and linear parklands;
- Trails and strategic linkages, including recreational improvements, to corridors such as the Green Grid;
- Heritage works associated with any of the above.

All worthy and beneficial projects but it begs the question: ***what might we have to lose in order to gain this funding for public open spaces?***

Is the Department of Planning's offer of funds in exchange for fast tracking DAs, driving the development goals and timelines of the Plan?

We believe Council should have been transparent about access to the Public Spaces Legacy Program and should now reveal the plans they have already submitted to the State Government. ***The Trust calls on Council to explain the connection of this Program to the CIP.***

## THE GREEN BOOK



Our updated publication *The Heritage of Hunters Hill* is now being reprinted! Copies will be available in time for Christmas at all the usual outlets: HH Post Office, The Lost & Found Department and the HH Museum. It is also available online at <https://greenbook.huntershilltrust.org.au>



**Preserving our heritage**

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*We acknowledge we are on the land of the Wallumedegal*

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### Why not join us?

and help swell the number of voices speaking up for our unique municipality

Membership runs calendar year  
Become a Member at  
[www.huntershilltrust.org.au](http://www.huntershilltrust.org.au)  
or email  
[members@huntershilltrust.org.au](mailto:members@huntershilltrust.org.au)

Single membership \$30  
Family membership \$50

Payment by cheque to the above address  
or by bank transfer to  
BSB: 062000 Acct: 16211909

### Publications

*The Heritage of Hunters Hill*  
*The Vision and the Struggle*  
*The Industrial Village of Woolwich*  
Available at Hunters Hill Post Office