

Gidgegannup Progress Association (Inc.)

Working with the Community – For the Community

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1st June, 2009

M.J. Foley,
Chief Executive Officer,
City of Swan,
P.O. Box 196,
Midland 6936.

Dear Mr. Foley,

Re.: Proposed development of Gidgegannup Townsite by Port Bouvard

Port Bouvard have now presented their Master Plan to some of the community at two information sessions held on 2/3 May 2009. The GPA is now receiving feedback regarding the Plan.

People are concerned regarding three main points, and several others as well. The three main points being:

Proposed Commercial/Light Industrial land

This land coloured blue on the Masterplan is, in the main, not owned by Port Bouvard, but by independent landowners including the City of Swan. This is proposed to be Gidgegannup's Town Centre and commercial hub. Port Bouvard inform us that, apart from identifying the area, this is not part of their plan and the City of Swan will need to facilitate a structure plan for this area in consultation with landowners. It is stated in the Minutes of the OMC of 18th March, 2009, Item 6.1 - Annual Electors Meeting – consideration of resolutions, Resolution 13, that Provision has been made in the draft Business Plan for this work to be carried out. Please can you let the GPA know when this process will be undertaken?

The community has been asking for commercial zoning in our Townsite for many years. A plan needs to be put in place, facilitated by the City, as the commercial centre of a Town is its hub, and without this, any development by Port Bouvard will be nothing more than a residential subdivision and will provide no benefit to existing residents.

Size and mix of lots and density of residential development

Concern has been expressed at the average size of lots in this proposed development – being 600-700 sqm. This will not deliver the “Hills Lifestyle” which is one of the chief aims of the North Eastern Hills Settlement Pattern Plan (NEHSPP).

The primary reason for these small lots is the direction by the NEHSPP that the Gidgegannup townsite should accommodate 4000 people as the “Small Townsite Option” was considered more sustainable than rural residential or village style settlements. The NEHSPP did go on to say that the siting of such settlements would be crucial to ensure that such settlements do not have a significant detrimental impact on the “hills lifestyle” and in particular the visual amenity of the area.

The proposed 1900 lots in the Gidgegannup townsite will have a profound detrimental impact on the “hills lifestyle” and on the visual amenity of the surrounding rural residential properties.

Environmental studies have shown that 23% of the designated Townsite land cannot be used for development and this is now proposed to be Public Open Space. This means that 4000 people are to be accommodated in a much reduced area to that originally proposed. Port Bouvard’s proposal is for 4500 not 4000 people, which puts even more need for small lots.

The GPA does realize that a mix of lots is necessary to produce a balanced townsite meeting the requirements of the population, but what is being proposed is a “suburban” settlement not a rural townsite.

These predominantly small lots will mean that the majority of the site, apart from the proposed Public Open Space will need to be cleared. This is not an assumption, the developers tell us this. They do add, however, that once cleared, roads installed, blocks marked out and sold and houses built, then trees can be replanted. These trees are going to take a very long time to replace the stands of mature native trees that will be bulldozed. That concept is suburbia, not the retention of the “hills lifestyle”, on which the NEHSPP places such value.

If we go back to 4.1 Planning Guidance in the NEHSPP the statement is made that “The State Planning Strategy (SPS) reinforces this general approach by suggesting the possibility of developing three new townsites of between 2000 and 5000 people each in the study area. NEHSPP translated this as three townsites of approximately 4000 people each. The Gidgegannup site cannot accommodate 4000 people and retain the “hills lifestyle”. This figure needs to be revisited.

We understand that 5000 people is the threshold to provide services. We already have nearing 1000 people in the surrounding Rural Residential subdivisions and the existing townsite blocks. Gidgegannup has an extended catchment of nearly 3500 people from the Gidgegannup District and Morangup, who use the existing Gidgegannup townsite.

We do not need 4000 people in the proposed Gidgegannup townsite to boost these numbers. A figure nearer to 2000 would be realistic.

Port Bouvard's proposal is for 1900 lots – given that the average number of people per household, according to the latest statistics for the City of Swan, is 2.7, these 1900 lots would yield a 5130 population.

We ask that consideration be given to reducing the required population in the designated Gidgegannup townsite area from 4000, taking into account also that 23% of the land cannot be used for development.

Proposed Rural Residential/Strata Development East of the Townsite

The Port Bouvard Master Plan contains a Rural Residential/Strata development to the East of the Townsite. The GPA is totally against this proposal.

The proposal should not be part of the Townsite Plan as it is not on the designated land set aside for a Townsite. It is on land that is designated as buffer to the townsite and abuts a property which has an ODP for 147 chalets. This would ultimately lead to a strata type sprawl right to Lilydale Road.

The land is zoned Landscape, has extensive pristine vegetation, significant slopes, water courses and is habitat to a number of protected fauna. It should not be subdivided less than the 20 ha minimum proposed under the Gidgegannup Rural Strategy.

Developing this land as strata dwellings would pose a significant fire management risk and extensive clearing of vegetation to address this. There also appears not to be adequate entrance/exit routes.

The GPA is totally against this Strata development and ask that it be excluded from the Master Plan.

Master Plan

The Plan appears conceptual and little detail is given as to mix of lots. We are told an average and that some will be 300 sqm and some up to 1 ha on the perimeter of the development abutting the existing Rural Residential subdivision. This is all extremely vague and we expect that when this Plan is put to public comment that there will be a lot more detail either in the plan or supporting documents. The community need this detail to form an informed view. Traffic management is another area that appears vague and this will have significant impact on the community particularly in relation to the Toodyay Road and Red Hill..

Consultation

The community is still unhappy about the consultation process. The consultants, SMR, have explained their rationale for this, that they believe it gives everyone a chance to have a say in small groups with facilitators, but there is a need for a well controlled

public meeting with everyone having the chance to attend and have their say or just listen to the information. The GPA are more than happy to cooperate in organizing this.

Having made the above comments, we would confirm that we are not against the development of the Gidgegannup townsite, but require that it be made in a way that will not be detrimental to existing residents and will provide the “hills lifestyle” for future residents.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Block

Cc.:The Hon. John Day, MLA, Minister for Planning, Culture and the Arts
The Hon. Donna Faragher, MLC, Minister for the Environment, Youth
Frank Alban, MLA, Member for Swan Hills
Eric Lumsden, Director General Department of Planning and Infrastructure
Tony Evans, Secretary, WA Planning Commission
Cr. Charlie Zannino
Cr. Steve Croy