

Fact Sheet 3:

The Coburg Initiative Design Workshop

Introduction

The Coburg Initiative Design Workshop was held from 1st – 3rd June, 2009. The intensive three-day workshop brought together over 250 community members and key stakeholders to help shape the future of Coburg.

The Design Workshop included a series of integrated workshops and design sessions that enabled an intensive discussion and design process. Each session was attended by the technical design and delivery team who responded to a comprehensive 'vision' and have produced a draft concept plan for Central Coburg.

This fact sheet provides a summary of the major themes identified by key stakeholders and community members from each of the eight workshop sessions.



Session 1: Regulatory Framework

What regulatory framework is needed for the delivery of the Coburg Initiative?

The participants identified that there is a need for quality infrastructure prior to any construction in Central Coburg commencing. Infrastructure included public transport, roads and key services including energy, water and telecommunications. A regulatory framework that encouraged car free zones within Central Coburg was also identified by participants as important.

Discussions also focused on the anticipated introduction of the Activity Centre Zone and the Development Activity Committee which will have implications for the Coburg Initiative. Community involvement was also considered crucial to the successful delivery of the Coburg Initiative.



Session 2: Access and Movement

What access and movement issues and opportunities need to be addressed when designing the future of Coburg?

The session on access and movement in and around Coburg identified that car parks will play an important role in the future of Coburg and especially the demand for commuter car parks.

A bus interchange could play a key role in increasing the patronage numbers on local public transport. This includes the SmartBus and local bus connections with train and tram. Other improvements to public transport services and infrastructure were considered important to encourage greater patronage. This included dedicated bus lanes, security on public transport, relocating bus stops for more efficient transport connections and on road priority for trams and buses.

It was also identified that improvements need to be made to pedestrian access throughout the study area including better access between the east and west of Sydney Road and to the Coburg Train Station.

Session 3: Land Ownership and Aspirations

What are the challenges and opportunities around land ownership in Coburg?

The participants felt that the current character of Coburg is reflected in the smaller shops and it is this small scale retail experience that is a significant aspect of Central Coburg's Sense of Place.

It was also identified that diverse housing opportunities need to be considered such as social housing, including appropriate housing for larger families.

Key questions around the location of community facilities were also debated. This included the possible relocation of the Leisure Centre and identifying an appropriate site for a high school in Coburg.



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Session 4: Civic Realm and Public Open Space

What should be considered when designing the civic realm and public open space?

Participants identified that street activity will make Coburg's streets safer by incorporating passive surveillance. A greater police presence was felt to be important, but it was also recognised that there needs to be a wider response by the entire community.

The need for both active and passive open space throughout Coburg was also identified as a key component of improving public amenity.

Design Workshop participants also felt that incorporating public art, artists' studios, gallery space and open space for festivals and carnivals would enhance Coburg's Sense of Place.

On the whole, participants felt that the Coburg Initiative had the opportunity to unify spaces by making them more accessible.

The key output of the Design Workshop is a Draft Concept Plan which the community had an opportunity to review and comment on at the Community Information Forum on 30th June 2009 and the online forum run from the 22nd June to 3rd July 2009.

For further information on the Coburg Initiative please contact the Project Information Desk, details are below.

Session 5: Social and Community Infrastructure

What social and community infrastructure should be part of the new Coburg?

The Coburg Library is a well used community resource and there was considerable support for an expansion and possible refurbishment. Children's services and meeting rooms could be incorporated and some felt there is an opportunity to provide student housing above or adjacent to the library facility.

The co-location of specific services and facilities was identified as a means of improving services in Coburg. For example, Merri Community Health is currently dispersed making access for some difficult.

It was emphasised that youth are an important part of the community. Services and facilities should be designed to meet their needs. A Cultural Hub could also play an important role in future of Coburg by supporting local arts, schools and the general community.

Session 6: Sustainable Environments

What role does sustainability have in future Coburg?

Transport was identified as a key issue in moving towards a sustainable future for Coburg. This includes the need for a mode shift to push for increased public transport patronage.

Design Workshop participants supported the introduction of community gardens in Coburg and felt the gardens could play a leading role in new developments. It was emphasised that in the future, Coburg should involve high quality urban design that puts sustainability at the forefront.

It was also recognised that buy-in from a range of stakeholders would be critical to deliver sustainable outcomes.

Session 7: Built Outcomes - retail and workplace

How will retail and workplace be incorporated into future Coburg?

Small scale developments were identified as critical in maintaining the character of Coburg. It was highlighted that Coburg does not want a "Northland". There was significant support for smaller scale shops and offices.

It was felt that there is a strong need to revitalise the current retail experience in Coburg, with a focus on fresh food. Design Workshop participants identified that Coburg needs quality and diversity.

Car parking is important, but participants suggested that this could be above shops and incorporated into other developments. It was also identified that car parking at street level is important for shorter visits.

Session 8: Built Outcomes - housing, hotel, cinema, mixed use

What are the housing, hotel, cinema and mixed-use considerations for future Coburg?

Student housing or housing for younger people will help to give Coburg life and character. Coburg is an ideal location for students as it is close to the city and has accessible public transport.

Other considerations were given to a hotel, which could help to attract wider corporate interests. A local cinema received strong support, but it was felt that an independent cinema would need to reflect Coburg's diverse community.

Participants also identified the need to develop appropriate linkages between housing and other developments.

For more information:

For more information about the Coburg Initiative please contact the Project Information Desk on 03 9240 2475 or email info@thecoburginitiative.com.au. Alternatively, please visit the project website www.thecoburginitiative.com.au for regular project updates.

Representatives of the Coburg Initiative will also be located in the Victoria Mall every Thursday commencing on the 30th of April 2009.

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