

CM13.3. Draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy

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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present the draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy and seek endorsement to proceed to public exhibition.

Background

Borella Road and Riverina Highway is a State Highway, controlled by Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services (RMS).

Following receipt of grant funding from the NSW Government, Ethos Urban and Cardno were engaged by Council to undertake consultation and prepare the Corridor Strategy.

The study area is an east-west corridor of approximately seven kilometres, extending from the Hume Freeway interchange in the west to Kerr Road in the east. The corridor contains several key sites including neighbourhood shops at East Albury, the Albury Hospital and Regional Cancer Centre, bulky goods retail precinct, Albury Airport and the Thurgoona Wirringa Growth Area.

The preparation of the draft Strategy was guided by two stages of consultation. Stage 1 consultation in February 2019 provided an early opportunity to share any issues or concerns regarding the existing corridor. This included an online survey completed by more than 200 people and a community workshop session at Council offices attended by approximately 55 people.

Based on this feedback preliminary draft strategies were developed and presented during Stage 2 consultation in August 2019. This included two 'drop-in' sessions held near East Albury IGA on Borella Road which were attended by approximately 150-200 people. A summary of Stage 2 consultation is included in attachment 1.

Workshops were also held during both stages of consultation with Albury-Wodonga Health, Transport for NSW, RMS and Council staff.

The feedback from these sessions helped inform the draft Corridor Strategy for public exhibition.

A Council Pre-meeting Briefing Session was held 19 August 2019 providing an overview of the draft Strategy, prior to Stage 2 consultation.

Issues

The draft Corridor Strategy supports the following outcomes of Albury 2030:

- *Outcome 1.3 - Plan and cater for increased population growth.*
- *Outcome 1.3.2 - Support and promote sustainable growth through planning and infrastructure to provide employment opportunities, housing choice and community facilities.*
- *Outcome 1.5 - Promote Albury for industry and business.*
- *Outcome 1.5.4 - Ensure access to medical and health services, health training and educational services. Ensure effective precinct planning to promote growth of these services.*
- *Outcome 1.5.7 - Ensure high quality support infrastructure and services are available to facilitate industry and business growth.*
- *Outcome 1.6 - Integrated transport network for Albury.*
- *Outcome 1.6.1 - Develop integrated transport opportunities to improve connectivity and access to housing, employment and services through a range of transport options.*
- *Outcome 1.7.1 - Improve infrastructure and opportunities for walking and cycling.*

The draft Corridor Strategy is also consistent with other previously endorsed Council plans and strategies that influence the study area, including the Airport Master Plan (2018), Thurgoona Wirringa Precinct Structure Plan (2013) and East Albury Industrial Precinct Master Plan (2012).

Discussion

The draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy has been prepared following two stages of community consultation and provides an integrated land use and transport plan that supports the long-term growth of the regionally significant corridor. As Borella Road and Riverina Highway is a State Highway, controlled by Transport for NSW and RMS, Council will use the Corridor Strategy as an advocacy document and to seek funding for major road and intersection works. It will also be used to inform Council's strategic planning processes and capital works program.

The proposals included within the draft Corridor Strategy are based on community and stakeholder input from Stages 1 and 2 consultation and seek to:

- improve safety and function;
- accommodate additional capacity (noting traffic modelling estimates volumes to double over the next 40 years);
- improve connectivity;
- enhance pedestrian and cycle access; and
- support key regional sites like the airport and hospital.

Summary plans of the key strategies relating to the draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy are provided in attachment 2. The Implementation section of the draft Corridor Strategy report (refer attachment 3) also lists the key strategies and includes staging and indicative cost estimates.

The complete draft Corridor Strategy report and Appendices are included in attachments 4 and 5 respectively, and provide further detail including:

- overview of relevant background policies, strategies, and reports;
- summary of feedback from Stage 1 and 2 consultation;
- overview of issues and opportunities;
- strategies for each precinct grouped according to themes of:
 - Access and Movement;
 - Land Use; and
 - Built Form and Landscape, Gateway and Public Art.
- concept designs for the key road sections and intersections; and
- implementation plan.

A high-level summary of the key proposals from the draft Corridor Strategy include:

- Planning for future road duplication to increase capacity as growth and demand require, and to reduce accidents and improve safety.
- Upgrading major intersections to improve access and safety and manage additional capacity. Proposed key intersection improvements include traffic lights at Keene and East Streets and roundabouts at Airport Drive, Elizabeth Mitchell Drive, Table Top Road and Kerr Road.
- Streamlining access to service roads as the main corridor and intersections are upgraded to improve corridor safety and function. This may include relocating or closing some service lane access points and converting some service roads to one-way movement.
- Improving pedestrian access and crossings, in particular between the East Albury shops and the health precinct.
- Expanding and upgrading off-road shared paths, investigating on-road cycle lanes with future road upgrades and improving opportunities to access public transport.
- Identifying future land use demands.
- Investigating potential rezoning around the East Albury shops and Albury Wodonga Health site to support growth and opportunities of the regionally significant health precinct.
- Exploring opportunities to improve parking in service roads and in and around the hospital.
- Coordinating and planning of works to ensure significant infrastructure like water mains are suitably located outside the potential future road alignment and single-lane roundabouts are designed for potential duplication as demand increases.
- Prioritising the section between Keene to East Streets, as identified through Stage 1 and 2 consultation feedback, responding to the number of accidents occurring at these two intersections, the need to improve pedestrian access and safety and potential expansion of the health precinct.

To assist in illustrating the draft strategies relating to the theme of 'Access and Movement', some indicative concepts are provided for key links and intersections along the corridor (refer Section 9 of the draft Strategy report included in attachment 4). These provide an example layout only, responding to issues raised by the community and are subject to further investigation and detailed design. As a State Highway the ultimate design and implementation may vary and is the responsibility of Transport for NSW and RMS.

All recommendations and actions of the draft Corridor Strategy are unfunded and will require collaboration with other state, regional and local organisations to enable implementation. Delivery is expected to be staged over the 2020 to 2060 timeframe as growth and demand increases and as funding allows.

Risk

- **Business Risk** – There is a risk regarding community perception and expectation of what Council can ultimately control and deliver in relation to a State Highway. As the main road is controlled by Transport for NSW and RMS, implementation will require collaboration and funding from these agencies. To help minimise this risk, workshops and meetings have been held with Transport for NSW and RMS during the preparation of the draft Corridor Strategy. The Implementation section (refer attachment 3) indicates the lead agency and includes high-level cost estimates based on several assumptions that need to be refined through further investigations and future detailed design processes.
- **Corporate Risk** – This project has considerable public interest and has been guided by a Stakeholder Engagement Plan. Two stages of community consultation have informed the preparation of the draft Corridor Strategy. Further community engagement is expected during the implementation process.
- **WHS and Public Risk** – The draft Corridor Strategy provides a number of recommendations such as intersection improvements, traffic lights and pedestrian crossings that seek to improve public safety for users of the corridor.
- **Delivery Program Risk** – As a State Highway delivery is ultimately controlled by Transport for NSW and RMS. Collaboration with these and other government agencies is required. Future reviews of the Corridor Strategy may also be needed to refine growth rates and traffic modelling and subsequent timing of proposed road upgrades.

Community Engagement

Community engagement has been a key component in developing the draft Corridor Strategy. A Stakeholder Engagement Plan has guided the various consultation methods and stages.

Stage 1 consultation in February 2019 provided opportunity for early input and included an online survey and community workshop session at Council offices. Stage 2 consultation in August 2019 sought feedback on preliminary draft strategies via two 'drop-in' sessions held near East Albury IGA on Borella Road. Workshops were also held during both stages of consultation with Albury-Wodonga Health, Transport for NSW, RMS and Council staff. Further information on Stage 1 and 2 consultation is included in the draft Corridor Strategy (refer attachment 4).

The following community engagement activities are proposed for public exhibition on the draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy:

- Public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days;
- Public notice in the Border Mail newspaper;
- Exhibition material place on the AlburyCity website;
- Notification via Council's social media;
- Letter or email notification to participants of previous consultation rounds;
- Mail-out to property owners along the corridor (approximately 400 addresses); and
- Council Strategic Planning and Traffic and Transport staff available to meet and assist with any inquiries.

Further engagement with key stakeholders such as Albury-Wodonga Health and Transport for NSW and RMS will also be undertaken.

Future implementation of the draft Corridor Strategy is also expected to include further community engagement.

Options

1. Endorse the draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy and place on public exhibition; or
2. Seek amendments to the draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy; or
3. Not endorse the draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy.

With consideration to the information outlined in this report, it is recommended that Council proceed with Option 1.

Conclusion

Following two stages of community engagement, the draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy has been prepared for public exhibition. It provides an integrated land use and transport plan to support the long-term growth of the regionally significant corridor.

The draft Corridor Strategy outlines a number of recommendations and actions that respond to community input and seek to improve safety and function, accommodate additional capacity, enhance pedestrian and cycle access and support key regional sites like the airport and health precinct.

Should Council proceed to public exhibition on the draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy, any submissions received will be considered in finalising the Corridor Strategy prior to presenting to Council for adoption.

Recommendation

That Council endorse the draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy and place it on public exhibition, for a period of 28 days.

Attachments

1. Stage 2 Consultation Summary (DOC19/159678).
2. Draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy – Illustrated Summary (DOC19/156946).
3. Draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy – Implementation Section (DOC19/159333).
4. Draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy – Report (DOC19/154677).
5. Draft Borella Road and Riverina Highway Corridor Strategy – Appendices (DOC19/154679).