
Southern Palusplain Precinct Plan

Community Workshop

Summary Report

prepared for the Shire of Murray



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PLANNING DESIGN ENVIRONMENT

Prepared by
Land Insights

PO Box 289, Mt Lawley WA 6929
Fax (08) 9370 5786
admin@landinsights.com.au
www.landinsights.com.au

Document details

File: 974
Revision: 1
Date: March 2015
Author: JE/MT
Verified: JE
Approved: MT

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Appendix A - Workshop Presentation

1.0 introduction

This report presents the outcomes of a Community Workshop held to assist the Shire in preparing the Southern Palusplain Precinct Plan. The workshop was held at 6pm, 18th March 2015 at the Coolup Hall.

The Shire of Murray is currently preparing the Southern Palusplain Precinct Plan to provide direction on land use and economic development opportunities within the precinct over a 10-15 year period. The precinct encompasses the southern sector of the Shire, south of Greenlands Road and extending west from the South West Highway through to the Peel Harvey Estuary. The plan will consider the planning, environmental, agricultural, scenic, economic and social attributes (opportunities and constraints) of the area and will provide for a sustainable rural future.

To assist in preparing the precinct plan, and to ensure that all relevant issues and interests are considered, the Shire has instigated a detailed consultation program for the project. The details of the consultation program can be found in the "Communications Plan" for the project, available from the Shire's website. Consultation is supported by a Technical Working Group comprising officers of relevant Government departments.

Prior to the workshop, the community has been engaged on three separate occasions as follows:

- Community Questionnaire1, 2012
- Focus Group Sessions (by invite only), late 2014
- Community Questionnaire 2, late 2014

The community workshop was the fourth engagement with the community. It was advertised widely and was open for all to attend. At the end of the RSVP period 55 people had indicated their intention to attend. On the night there were 78 people in attendance in addition to Shire staff and a representative from the Department of Planning, Peel Development Commission and Department of Agriculture and Food.

The evening was broken into two broad stages, as follows:

- Presentation to attendees on the background and purpose of the Southern Palusplain Project (including presentations from the Shire and the Department of Agriculture and Food)
- Community input via group-based work.

The workshop was facilitated Land Insights with assistance from the Shire. The group-work component of the workshop

comprised the majority of the evening. It focused on identifying and documenting the values, concerns and vision of the participants in respect to two or more of the following key topics:

- **Agri-business**, organic farming (type and location)
- **Future of broad acre agriculture** (cattle and sheep grazing; dairy)
- Land uses and lifestyle pursuits associated with the **equine industry**
- **Rural-tourism** (Farmstay/Chalets; Restaurant/short stay accommodation; Food and Wine Tourism)
- **Environmental Management, Landscape Protection and Conservation** (ecological linkages; visual amenity; conservation zoning; landowner voluntary incentives)

The workshop process was designed to be a collaborative exercise aimed at eliciting the views of all participants. To facilitate this, workshop participants worked in ten groups of approximately ten people. Each table was provided with one of the key topics identified, and were free to choose their own second topic. The Future of Broadacre Agriculture and Rural Tourism were the most popular topics addressed by the workshop.

Each participant considered and identified values, concerns and visions on both an individual and group level before reporting back to the main group at various points of the evening. Discussions within the groups were both energetic and passionate, with many common themes emerging.

This report highlights the key outcomes of the workshop, based around each of the key topics outlined above. The outcomes will assist in providing a basis and framework for the preparation of the Southern Palusplain Precinct Plan. To provide an accurate representation of discussions during the workshop, the comments received from each group have been transcribed directly where possible.

2.0 agribusiness

The SPPP will explore opportunities for the establishment of agribusiness pursuits within the broader Priority Agriculture resource policy Area over the medium to longer term. Examples of such activities may include glasshouse/hydroponic/organic food growing Horticulture operations, algae pond and Aquaculture production ventures that utilise 'closed loop' operating systems.

Agribusiness was discussed by three tables. The land use was seen as having potential for the precinct – attracting investment, creating employment opportunities and recognising the close proximity of the precinct to transport infrastructure and the Metropolitan Area. Increased support (mainly via the approvals process) from the Shire and State Government was seen as fundamental to realising the potential of Agribusiness in the precinct.

The specific comments identified by each group are presented below.

TABLE	VALUES	CONCERN	VISION
XX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect Environment Educate Reduce time taken with red tape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage Small Business Too much obstruction from local government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need growth, variety, expansion, lifestyle, vibrancy. Fewer restrictions and discouragement Agri-business is a worthwhile option in this area due to the excellent transport, closeness to the City, availability of water, labour, markets etc.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity to Perth/Mandurah Peace/quiet lifestyles Country/rural atmosphere Diversify (opportunity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental impacts/Estuary Limited future in the way we currently farm Limited opportunities to diversity Cost of land/Unaffordable Limited Government support/pensions/Centre link Farms are out super but we cannot sell/cannot subdivide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperous future Viable More opportunities for employment and diversity Attracting/maintaining young people to the Shire for Agricultural Purposes Attracting investment
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unique position to supply quality and efficient produce Closed loop systems (potential for huge economy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of interest in infrastructure (electricity and water) State Planning Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Palusplain strategy supports closed loop intensive agriculture for employment and economic development

3.0 broadacre agriculture

The SPPP is contemplating the protection of broadacre agriculture through a 'Priority Agriculture Resource Policy Area'. The purpose of the area would be to maintain the integrity and productive capability of land for agricultural enterprises including both Extensive and Intensive Agricultural pursuits.

The future of broadacre agriculture in the precinct (and broader Shire) was discussed by seven tables during the workshop, with a wide range of comment and opinion being provided.

In summary it was considered the broadacre agriculture does have a future in the precinct, subject to less land use controls being imposed by the Shire, the consideration of limited smaller lots for particular types of agriculture, and implementation of continually improving land management practices.

The specific comments identified by each group are presented below.

TABLE	VALUES	CONCERN	VISION
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ROI on land with cost of land, land size, lifestyle blocks and/or equine zoning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Runoff – excessive nutrients from fertilisers/livestock Intensive agriculture – minimal runoff & freeway Can the region maintain rural landscape cost of broad acre to the economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support local government - power of zoning, rapid change & environmental Speed up planning process
XX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value Farmers (No farmers, No food) Increasing demand Encourage youth - Education New Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect the Right of private ownership Economic Considerations (rates) Change Practices and products Increase efficiencies Lack of research and development from the Department of Agriculture Vernon, weed control and food circuits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadacre Farming has a future in this area provided it becomes economically viable and restrictions are kept in control.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller holdings Easy access to Perth via the Forrest highway and railway Horticulture We have an extra 6 week a year of sunshine for grass production. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pollution Schools set aside. Areas for schools and shops Parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better lifestyle for younger people between Bunbury and Perth

TABLE	VALUES	CONCERN	VISION
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High value • Conservation area with Rural buffer not Urban. • Value ground water • Sustainable rural landscape • Productive Lifestyle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage cause by high tides • Quantity and Quality of Water (groundwater from one area detrimental to another area) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Rural zoning we need to protect groundwater • If lifestyle is in then smaller blocks and appropriate soil types are needed • High quality nature
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference over intensive • Support local producer/tourism etc • 100% Australian Produce • Support small business • Freedom to use land • Rezoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrient export • Lack of Rainfall Down 20% • Adhoc subdivision • Lack of education in land management practice • Mixture of both • Reference groups and Rural Landowners Advisory groups - when can new people be elected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity • Sustainability • Australian/locally owned and operated
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting agriculture/horticulture • Sustaining business • Location close to estuary and amenities • Beef farming is booming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beef industry is booming • Land values are inhibiting continued growth- • Lack of basic facilities eg. school, medical day to day supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of town site instead of spread through rural area. eg. a settlement of 500 persons will sustain basic serves and facilities. Options to use facilities of equestrian centre for optional horse properties and subdivision opportunities for farm consolidation. Boundary adjustments. • Industry based on waste products.
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents are here for the lifestyle associated with farming • Generations of farming families 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More support to farmers to improve farming practises • Natural nutrients versus chemical nutrients • Science to help with more environment friendly options to farms • Make help available and known to farmers • More options for farmers

4.0 equine industry

Development of a new Equine Centre in Coolup is well advanced and preliminary construction has commenced. While the development of the Centre is outside the scope of the SPPP, the importance of the industry and associated development is certainly recognised. The SPPP is proposing an 'Equine Lifestyle Development Policy Area'. The purpose of this policy area is to recognise the social and economic importance of the Equine sector in the Peel Region and provide a separate zoning category that allows for intense recreational equine activities (non racing sector) to compliment the proposed expansion of the Murray Equestrian Centre at Coolup.

One table considered Equine Industry and their comments are below.

TABLE	VALUES	CONCERN	VISION
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farming Lifestyle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds Liquidation of farm land Ring barking/vegetation Affordability to leave arena for events Increase in rates Maintenance of roads/gravel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain history of Coolup and its farming practices Environmentally friend options for tradition farming Scientific and education to farmers to help develop sustainable farming practices Walking trails horse/BMX Shared focus with other sports Continue level of support to Coolup as shown to Pinjarra equine ventures (trots/racing)

5.0 rural tourism

The SPPP is proposing a 'Tourist Node Sites Policy Overlay' that deals with sites that require specific zoning and land use controls and potential for creation of new Tourist nodes and linkages with environmental and natural landscape features and waterways. Workshop participants at six tables considered Rural Tourism as an integral part of the precinct, mainly in the context of supporting other existing rural and agricultural based activities.

Workshop participants generally agreed that there was potential for rural-based tourism to capitalise on the unique values of the precinct and become an important part of the economic development of the area, focussing largely on its environmental values and proximity to the estuary. Flexibility in the planning system and the support of the Shire were seen as fundamental requirements to facilitate the development of a tourism industry in the precinct.

TABLE	VALUES	CONCERN	VISION
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location/Proximity to Perth Maintain rural/Country character Lifestyle (ie. Quiet, peaceful, tranquillity) We value the ability to unlock our land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning/Shire restrictions are too prohibitive Planning framework has been predetermined by SOM & DOP. Other land use possibilities must be explored Govt agencies applied broad brush policy Govt agencies are too risk adverse should focus on what we can do NOT what we can't do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to have more than one dwelling Capitalise on Harvey estuary and Murray River Mixture of broad acre & smaller lifestyle lots Coolup needs to be a destination
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment around estuary Rural Lifestyle Central location easy access Utilisation of highway Attract people to Murray Shire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities (lack of) Approval & development Increase people, regulations, rangers, farm shops, farmers markets, chalets and B&B's Runoff – nutrient excess Fertilisers/livestock Land Costs Can the region maintain rural landscape – contributions of broadacre to the economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract and educate community tourists on region Links between environment and agriculture Opportunity for educators (tour guides etc) Walking trails Support Local government , power of zonings, rapid change and environment (speed up the planning process)

TABLE	VALUES	CONCERN	VISION
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversifying core business • Value adding • Making the shire a destination • Education (connect with city consumers/show the way of life) • Proximity to Perth to encourage day trips • Rich Agricultural history needs to be shared • Estuary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red tape/planning timeframes • Zoning • Land use conflict • Miss opportunities • Costs/insurance/liability • Land closed to walking/bridal paths • Closure of tourism ventures/lacking tourism • Unviable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination - make it a new Margaret River • Use rural tourism to connect with the City, • Share our history and educate future generations about Agriculture.
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees • Flora • Wildlife protection and conservation • Private Nature reserves incentives/concession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% remnant vegetation not being achieved • Targets not lifestyle • Degradation from lifestyle uses eg. Ringbarking • Demise of Landcare groups • Weeds • Lack of education for new landowners • Onerous on private landowners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent wetlands • Increase preserve protect wildlife corridors- vegetation.
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive subdivision • Existing landscape close to amenities. • Primary value is Estuary itself and groundwater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of vegetation • Nutrient content • Fragmentation unless subdivision around existing facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to use waste products and nutrients as a business opportunity • Conservation incentives for subdivisions
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm gate sales • Farm lifestyle • Estuary/rivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance/no over-development • Soil improvements/poor soils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking trails • Enclaves/small villages • Farm B&B/Farm stays • Education agriculture, horticulture & conservation

6.0 environment, landscape & conservation

Separate precincts and/or overlays are being considered for inclusion in the SPPP, including:

- Rural Landscape enhancement policy area
- Rural bushland protection policy overlay
- Places of Heritage and Landscape Value Policy Overlay

During the workshop, the broader issues of landscape and conservation were explored, with two groups considering the issue. The natural and cultural features of the area were identified as values, with a range of threats to these values also considered. A broad vision of shared responsibility for ongoing management, coupled with appropriate management of identified values, were developed.

The specific comments identified by each group are presented below.

TABLE	VALUES	CONCERN	VISION
5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weeds • Road site control • Stream lining • Animal Pests (cats, rabbits, Fox) • Wildlife Sanctuary • Use of Peel inlet - small sailing training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 5 offered solution to their concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger penalties for people who do not comply with the department of Agriculture or Shire responsibly. • Parks and Wildlife • Shire to explore with other Shires.
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estuary & environs • Nature reserve and remnant veg • Historical settlement/development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polluting of estuary • Loss of trees/wildlife • Loss of character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Rural base' Incorporating a mix of values • Protection of estuary 'asset' • Linkages through landscape

appendix a

workshop presentation

Study Area

18/3/2015

Rural Strategy Precinct Areas

18/3/2015

Key Issues for consideration

- Agri-business, organic farming (type and location)
- Future of broad acre agriculture (cattle and sheep grazing; dairy)
- Land uses and lifestyle pursuits associated with the equine industry
- Rural-tourism (Farmstay/Chalets; Restaurant/short stay accommodation; Food and Wine Tourism)
- Environmental Management, Landscape Protection and Conservation (ecological linkages; visual amenity; conservation zoning; landowner voluntary incentives)

18/3/2015

Place based/Specific Issues

- Previous consultation has raised/ and addressed other issues that are specific or place based and include matters such as:
 - Town site expansion areas (Consolidation of Coolup Townsite)
 - Specific development concepts
- Rural Subdivision – will be guided by existing Department of Planning/WAPC Policy
 - SPP2.5
 - DC3.4
- Opportunity to comment on these issues and offer alternate ideas or views via other consultation mechanisms

18/3/2015

Small group program

- Purpose: discuss key topics that will be addressed in the Precinct Plan
- Topics to be considered:
 - **Agri-business (type and location)**
 - **Future of broad-acre agriculture**
 - **Land uses associated with the equine industry**
 - **Rural-tourism**
 - **Landscape and Conservation**
- Plans and community survey results provided
- Use the maps to mark key elements of your group discussion
- Each table will consider two topics (30 mins each)
- Group Discussion on any values, concerns or vision associated with the topic
- Each table to report back to the meeting

18/3/2015

Values, Concerns and Vision

- What do you value?...
 - *good points and opportunities*
 - *protect and preserve*
 - *enhance and replicate*
- What concerns you?
 - *bad points or constraints*
 - *get rid of or minimise*
 - *manage better*
 - *find solution to*
- Vision ideas:
 - *should enhance the things you value*
 - *should address the things that concern you*
 - *can be solutions to issues or trends you see occurring*

18/3/2015

A couple of ground rules...

- Timeframe: Think 'current' and 'future' – 20 year plan
- Respect different views and opinions
- One person talking at a time
- Please be brief and concise
- Please stick to the topic
- Most importantly - Think big picture & be creative...!

18/3/2015

Agri-business

- “Examples of such activities may include glasshouse/hydroponic/organic food growing Horticulture operations, algae pond and Aquaculture production ventures that utilise ‘closed loop’ operating systems”.
- *Reflect in silence and think about how Agri-Business could develop in the precinct over the next 20 years...*
 1. Write down three *values and concerns*
 2. Discuss within group
 3. Prepare a ‘top 3’ list of values and concerns for your group
 4. Prepare a ‘Vision’ for Agri-Business (written or spatial)



18/3/2015

Future of broad-acre agriculture

- “The purpose of the priority Agriculture Policy area is to maintain the integrity and productive capability of land for agricultural enterprises including both Extensive and Intensive Agricultural pursuits and the extraction of mineral resources”.
- *Reflect in silence and think about how broad-acre agriculture could develop in the precinct over the next 20 years...*
 1. Write down three *values and concerns*
 2. Discuss within group
 3. Prepare a ‘top 3’ list of values and concerns for your group
 4. Prepare a ‘Vision’ for broadacre agriculture (written, spatial or both)



18/3/2015

Equine industry

- “The purpose of this policy area is to recognise the social and economic importance of the Equine sector in the Peel Region and provide a separate zoning category that allows for intense recreational equine activities (non racing sector) to compliment the proposed expansion of the Murray Equestrian Centre at Coolup.”.
- *Reflect in silence and think about how the equine industry could develop in the precinct over the next 20 years...*
 1. Write down three *values and concerns*
 2. Discuss within group
 3. Prepare a ‘top 3’ list of values and concerns for your group
 4. Prepare a ‘Vision’ for the equine industry (written, spatial or both)



18/3/2015

Rural-tourism

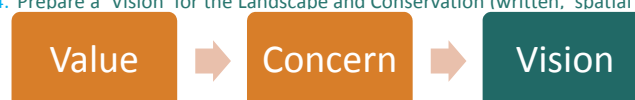
- “This policy overlay deals with sites that require specific zoning and land use controls and potential for creation of new Tourist nodes and linkages with environmental and natural landscape features and waterways.”.
- *Reflect in silence and think about how the rural-tourism industry could develop in the precinct over the next 20 years...*
 1. Write down three *values and concerns*
 2. Discuss within group
 3. Prepare a ‘top 3’ list of values and concerns for your group
 4. Prepare a ‘Vision’ for the rural-tourism (written, spatial or both)



18/3/2015

Landscape and Conservation

- “The aim of this Policy area is to maintain the integrity of the Shire’s rural character and to protect the landscape amenity, high conservation value and natural scenic qualities of land adjoining the Peel Harvey Estuary and Forrest Highway route traversing through the hinterland”.
- The aim of this Policy overlay is to provide an increased level of protection and management of privately owned rural land and existing reserved land with significant environmental values.
- *Reflect in silence and think about how these aspects can be addressed in the precinct over the next 20 years...*
 1. Write down three *values and concerns*
 2. Discuss within group
 3. Prepare a ‘top 3’ list of values and concerns for your group
 4. Prepare a ‘Vision’ for the Landscape and Conservation (written, spatial or both)



18/3/2015

Where To From Here

- Review of workshop findings by Technical Working Group/Consultant/Community and Advisory Reference Groups
- Formulation of draft strategy plan and report with input from community stakeholder comments
- Palusplain Precinct draft strategy plan considered by Council and endorsed by WAPC for consent to advertise (mid 2015)
- Council and Department of Planning/WAPC consideration of submissions and endorsement of final plan (end 2015)
- **Any General Questions??**
- Thank you for attending!

18/3/2015



landinsights
PLANNING DESIGN ENVIRONMENT

PO Box 289, Mt Lawley WA 6929
Phone: (08) 9271 8506 | Email: admin@landinsights.com.au | Web: landinsights.com.au