

Community Consultation Summary Report

42 – 44 Dunmore Street, WENTWORTHVILLE



*Prepared by: **Think Planners***
Document Date: October 2015
Consent Authority: Holroyd City Council



Contents

Executive Summary	3
Holroyd City Council’s Social Impact Assessment Policy	4
Consultation Methodology	5
Business Community Consultation Summary	9
Resident and Visitor Community Consultation Summary	15
Findings.....	18
Next Steps and Conclusion	19



Executive Summary

The Austino Property Group (Austino) are proposing to redevelop the Wentworthville Mall (The Mall).

To facilitate its redevelopment a Planning Proposal has been prepared that seeks to –

- Increase the maximum building height from 23m to 88m
- Increase the maximum floor space ratio from 2.4:1 to 7.5:1.

Austino have engaged Think Planners Pty Ltd to undertake community consultation; review previous consultation undertaken with the business community; and to prepare a summary report.

The consultation undertaken by Think Planners was designed to invite people to learn more about the proposal and give opportunity to share ideas and make comments about The Mall and its redevelopment. As the proposal is for additional height and FSR that will result in apartment development over a renewed Mall and public space, the consultation undertaken by Think Planners specifically sought comment on this aspect of the proposal.

The feedback received throughout the consultations had a consistent alignment of main ideas and concepts for redevelopment of Wentworthville Town Centre and more specifically The Mall -

- Support for the introduction of a public plaza that will provide a community focal point, activation of the town centre and place to gather.
- Support for the introduction of upgraded and improved retail shopping.
- Support for additional height and residential apartments that will enable the delivery of an upgraded Mall and public space.

This report seeks to provide an analysis of the views and comments that emerged from the community consultation. The goal of the consultation was to inform the proponent, the Council and the community of the views and attitudes toward the Planning Proposal. It is noted that the Planning Proposal, once passed “Gateway” will also be the subject of a statutory advertising period where additional comments are likely to be generated.



Holroyd City Council’s Social Impact Assessment Policy

A review of Councils Social Impact Policy has been undertaken and in the current circumstances it has been determined that a Social Impact Assessment and relevant community consultation envisaged under such an assessment has been undertaken.

The specific objectives of the Holroyd City Council Social Impact Assessment Policy are to:

- *Ensure that the social impacts of all relevant interventions (new policies, plans, projects or proposed development) are assessed and understood in Council’s decision-making and planning*
- *Enhance consistency and transparency in Council’s assessment of social impacts*
- *Maximise positive social impacts and eliminate (or minimise) negative social impacts*
- *Generally support the objectives of Council’s Social Plan 2010-12 and the Living Holroyd Community Strategic Plan and delivery program*

Applicability

Pursuant to the SIA Policy Council requires the assessment of social impacts as an integral component to the development of strategic land-use plans. The policy intent is that Council is able to update its statutory planning instruments with full knowledge of the possible social impacts of any proposed changes. The Policy states that the SIA will -

- *Identify the potential impacts of the changes proposed*
- *Estimate potential demand for community facilities and services*
- *Identify opportunities to manage both positive and negative impacts*
- *Provide Council and future developers with a range of information about potential residents and their needs*

A separate SIA has been prepared that appropriately considers and addresses the above matters.

It is noted that the statutory process required for rezoning land, pursuant to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and its Regulations, involves the notification and advertising of proposals by the local authority.

Community & Stakeholder Consultation

Council’s policy confirms that consultation is to be tailored to the specific circumstances prevalent in each project. Consultations are to include those groups and individuals that are directly and indirectly impacted by the proposal.

The chosen methodology of consultation is discussed in the next section – Consultation Methodology.

Consultation Methodology

Think Planners identified that there are two key groups / stakeholders that are directly and indirectly impacted by the proposal –

1. The business community of the Wentworthville Town Centre;
2. The residents and customers of the Wentworthville Town Centre, specifically The Mall.

As a result each group / stakeholders need to be engaged in relation to the planning proposal for The Mall.

Business Community

In July 2015 a Business Community Report was published entitled “Revitalisation of Wentworthville Town Centre”. The report contains the vision of the land owners and shop keepers of the town centre for a revitalised town centre, and how that vision can be achieved.

Two forums, organised by the Wentworthville Business Community, were held in April and May respectively. The forums included presentations by industry-recognised guests (Chris Johnson of the Urban Taskforce and David Borger of the Sydney Business Chamber). Importantly, each forum had time dedicated to discussing issues.

The Business Community Report encapsulates the issues discussed and that are relevant to the land owners and shop keepers of the town centre. The analysis and findings of the Business Community Report are discussed in the next section – Consultation Outcomes.

Residents and Customers

To ensure that residents and users of The Mall were given opportunity to make comment on the Planning Proposal, Think Planners undertook consultation specifically designed to seek their involvement.

Two “Drop In Community Consultation” sessions were held on 8th October 2015 at 3:00 – 5:00pm and then 6:00 – 8:00pm. The Drop In sessions were held at the Wentworthville Community Centre, adjacent the Wentworthville Library, in the town centre.

Advertisements were placed in the Parramatta Advertiser and the Holroyd Sun over 2 weeks inviting people to attend the drop in sessions. The adverts were placed Wednesdays 30th September, Wednesday 7th October, Thursday 1st October and Thursday 8th October. A copy of the advert is illustrated below.

In attendance at the Drop In Sessions were two representatives of Think Planners Pty Ltd at any one time (Adam Byrnes – Director; Brad Delapierre – Planning Manager; or Sameer Kunwar – Senior Planner). Prior to attendance at the Drop In Session, Think Planners reviewed all documentation associated with the Planning Proposal and were briefed on the project by JBA Planning and Austino.



Sample Newspaper Advertising placed in public notice section of the two local papers in circulation.

At the Drop In Sessions the following materials were made available for review and discussion with the community: -

- Planning Proposal (JBA Planning)
- Wentworthville Urban Design Study (PTW)
- Wentworthville SEPP 65 Town Centre Report (PTW)
- Wentworthville Centre Planning and Place Making Strategy (Holroyd City Council)
- Various images at A2 and A3 size including
 - North Courtyard perspective
 - Dunmore Street perspective
 - Context plans and images from the Planning Proposal
 - Indicative layouts of future towers and potential internal configuration
 - Public Space perspective
 - Historical images of Wentworthville
 - Image of the current through site link compared to the potential through site link
 - Questionnaire seeking community feedback



Documents, Perspectives and Questionnaires arranged to assist participants on a visual and explanatory journey of the Planning Proposal; ending in opportunity to make written comment.





A questionnaire was prepared by Think Planners Pty Ltd seeking comments primarily on the two key aspects of the Planning Proposal –

- Views in relation to the revitalisation of Wentworthville Mall and the resulting improved retail and medical facilities, along with the provision of public space via the through site link and plaza and public building within the Mall.
- Views in relation to the proposal for additional height and residential apartments above the retail and public spaces, which is integral to the sites redevelopment.

Opportunity was given to make comment on any other matter that the attendee wished to.

Business Community Consultation Summary

The Business Community Report, entitled “Revitalisation of Wentworthville Town Centre”, contains a summary of the outcomes of the business community forums and discussion sessions. The business community is in full support for improved investment in the town centre that will result in a revitalisation.

The Business Community Report commences with an important characterisation of the economic situation in the town centre. The report states that there is not a need for a masterplan to manage growth, rather there are more fundamental issues that need to be addressed. The report notes –

“In Wentworthville, what we are dealing with is a Town Centre that has reached a stage of economic, social and physical decay where market forces alone will not be sufficient to tackle the problems identified.”

A summary of the views expressed by the business community is provided below.

Issues

- Loss of jobs as the manufacturing sector in Australia shrinks.
- An increase in on line shopping has impacted on retailing in the town centre.
- Increasing land prices has led to increasing land tax costs for businesses.
- Retailer and landlord disconnect as retailers focus on short term issues such as “survival”, while landlords look to long term investments.
- The town centre has fragmented ownership, with numerous small sites. The result is that there is no management or key vision being expressed by a single party.

Opportunities

- Incredible potential for employment growth from Westmead Precinct investments by Government, UWS and University of Sydney.
- Wentworthville strategically located in close proximity to transport corridors, Westmead and Parramatta.
- There are some larger land holdings in the town centre that can provide a catalysis for early revitalization.
- Few local heritage issues.
- There is no core civic urban space and opportunity exists for the development of a civic urban space with activated through site links and improved retailing.

Business Vision

The Forums and discussions led to the following published community vision for revitalisation:

- *there is a need for a strategic and co-ordinated approach to revitalisation rather than a piecemeal incremental changes of use for ground floor retail to residential;*



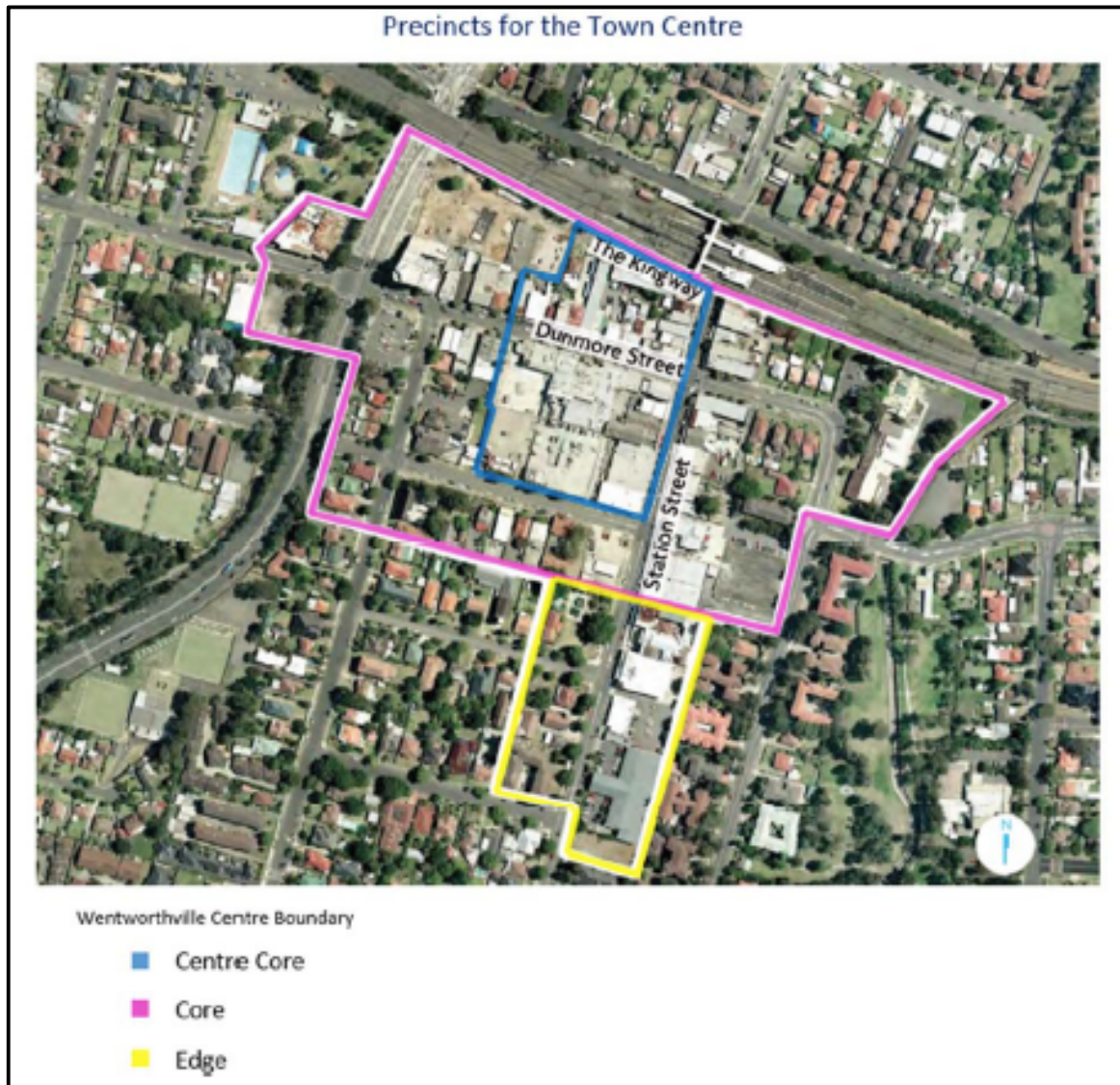
Community Consultation Summary Report – “The Mall”

- *Town Centre revitalisation will be driven by creation of jobs and housing intensification alongside quality while maintaining shop front retail;*
- *enshrine high standards of quality in design, the Town Centre environment and public realm;*
- *better utilizing existing facilities and developing new infrastructure;*
- *create vibrant through-site links to significantly improve amenity and pedestrian walkability to the Town Centre and transport options;*
- *enhance the Centre’s important civic role, which needs to relate better to the rest of the Centre;*
- *simplify and improve carparking to support town centre vitality;*
- *Holroyd Council amend the Council’s Planning Controls to put in place the framework for the revitalization of the Town Centre;*
- *Amend Council’s future Community Strategic Planning detailing the priority, delivery method and funding strategies for projects on and/or sale of Council owned land and the public domain improvements which Council will deliver to the Town Centre to achieve its vision; and*
- *a proactive partnership approach to manage the implementation of the revitalization process going forward.*

The business community identified three precincts (illustrated on the map below) within the town centre –

- Centre Core;
- Core; and
- The Edge.

The Mall is located in The Core Precinct.



Residential Revitalisation

It is interesting to note that the business community, who traditionally resist the introduction of residential into commercial centres, made numerous recommendations in relation to the inclusion of residential in the town centre. It is clear that the business community understand that residential development, at increased heights and FSRs, is integral to the revitalisation of the town centre.

Comments and recommendations include –

- *Encouraging redevelopment by substantially increasing floor space yields;*
- *Provide flexibility and incentive for redevelopment within desirable building envelopes by:*
 - *amending maximum building height controls for certain land within the Town Centre; and*

- *remove the maximum FSR control for land in the Town Centre.*
- *provide incentive and facilitate efficient and effective redevelopment which is capable of delivering public benefit by permitting additional building height ,for consolidating development sites and providing quality excellence in development;*
- *create a transition in land use and density from the centre core to the surrounding residential area by increasing permissible building heights.*
- *It is proposed that Council request to amend the objectives for the B2 Local Centre zone by deleting the existing first, third and fourth local objectives to be replaced with the following two objectives:*
 - *To accommodate population growth through high density use development which complements the role of retail, commercial civic and cultural premises in the Centre; and*
 - *To create a lively Centre with an amenable and pedestrian focused public domain activated by building uses which engage the street.*
- *It is proposed that Council remove FSR controls of the land within the Wentworthville Town Centre. The impact of this change is to remove conflict with other controls and rely on maximum building height, building setbacks and other built controls to guide development.*
- *Limit residential accommodation in the commercial core to include ‘shop top housing’ only. This has the effect of prohibiting residential accommodation on the ground floor of new developments and ensuring that ground floor uses comprise non-residential development only;*
- *permit a range of land uses, but require activation of the street frontage through DCP controls, requiring active street frontage uses to a depth of say 10 metres, reinforcing the vitality of the centre; or*
- *prescribe a ‘minimum FSR of 1:1 to be achieved for non-residential development within the commercial core. This would ensure that each site’s redevelopment contributes to the Council’s employment generation targets, so that the ultimate non-residential floorspace of the redeveloped town centre can be better quantified.*

The report recommends on one hand that the City Core have a height limit of 45 metres or 14 storeys, yet on the other hand recommends heights are increased based on whether the development delivers community benefits such as amalgamated sites, design excellence, through site links, dedication of space for Council or community facilities. In relation to The Mall the report states –

The Wentworthville Mall, with its two street frontages with IGA being the anchor tenant, its redevelopment is central to any revitalisation as is other larger land holding held in one ownership. Council should enter into discussions with these major

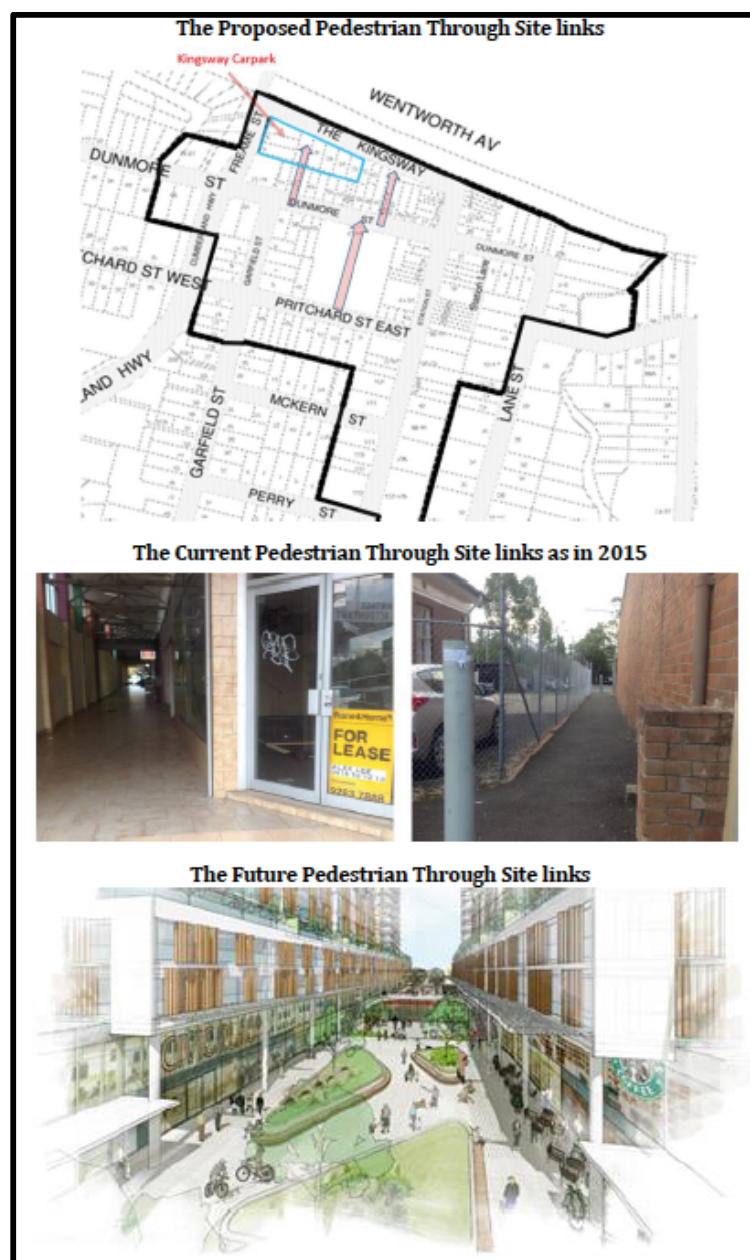
land owners to encourage redevelopment ensuring that a central Town Plaza and that are permeable to pedestrians.

Accessibility and Connectivity

The report notes –

The different precincts of the centre will be connected by laneways and a pedestrian network making the Centre easy to explore for visitors and enjoyable for residents.

The Mall site is specifically identified in the business community summary report as being a site for an improved through site link that will contribute to movement in the city centre.





Other

The report contains other discussion in relation to parking; future parking rates; improving safety; establishing a management regime for the revitalisation of the town centre and engaging a Place Manager; and assisting business through measures such as rate discounts, encouraging temporary use of vacant spaces, reconsider the methodology for the application of rates and to implement free controlled parking schemes.

Comment

It is apparent that the Planning Proposal is entirely consistent with the aspirations and views for Wentworthville Town Centre and the Wentworthville Mall site. The Planning Proposal: -

- Seeks to be a catalysis for other redevelopment in the town centre;
- Proposes significant community benefits in the form of a new public plaza; an activated through site link; renewed retailing; the provision of a Council or community facility; and generating a safe environment that is activated and espouses the principles of passive surveillance and territorial reinforcement; and
- Delivery of public benefits and revitalised retailing and commercial activities at the ground level through the provision of residential housing in the form of towers with increased height and FSR provisions in the planning controls.



Resident and Visitor Community Consultation Summary

The two drop in community consultation sessions resulted in seven (7) people attending and making written comments. Separately, Think Planners received two (2) email submissions from interested parties. Given that there were only 7 written comments a full transcript of the responses to the 5 questions asked have been collated and provided below. A separate comment from Think Planners is provided at the end of each question.

Question 1 – Do you currently shop at, or visit, Wentworthville Mall? If so, how often?

1. Weekly Basis
2. Yes, I visit but do not shop as there is nowhere decent to shop, unfortunately.
3. Yes, around 1-2 times a week.
4. Yes, weekly.
5. Yes. I visit Wentworthville from time to time.
6. 1-2 weekly.
7. Twice per month.

Think Planners Comment – It was apparent during discussions that people were required to visit other centres to supplement or undertake further shopping requirements as the town centre does not currently meet the full suite of demands for shopping.

Question 2 – What suburb do you live in?

1. Constitution Hill.
2. Work in Wentworthville.
3. Campsie.
4. Wentworthville.
5. Parramatta.
6. Wentworthville.
7. Parramatta.

Think Planners Comment – The majority of attendees were local residents with those who were from Campsie and Parramatta having reason to be in the town centre for employment purposes.

Question 3 – Are you in support of the revitalisation of Wentworthville Mall and the resulting improved through site link, new medical facilities, new retail shopping and public plaza? Why?

1. Public Plaza – Currently there is no open plaza, is not available for any activity other than adjacent Council carpark.
Retail Shopping – existing retail capacity is not enough and people are travelling to Parramatta.
2. Yes! Wentworthville desperately needs to be revitalised as it has diminished greatly over the recent years. We have lost draw card tenants and the only way to bring them back is to provide a new, vibrant and revitalised town. The residential component / height is critical as any major/national tenant will want to see that there will be enough local population to substantiate investing in the town centre. The residential and commercial will support each other.

3. Yes. Right now the state of Wentworthville’s town centre is very out-dated. It would require a massive revitalisation project to make it more on par with modern times, and to make Wentworthville an exciting place to live.
4. Yes, expecting more shops, easy to shop.
5. Yes, it provides employment, safety, community engagement, social activities, more retail, more dining choices.
6. Yes, the area is run down, unattractive.
7. Yes. The centre needs new life. The whole town centre needs new life for it to survive.

Think Planners Comment – There was a palpable urgency in the verbal and written responses of people to see revitalisation of the town centre. Once The Mall planning proposal was explained and concepts were viewed, people became very supportive of the significant improvements proposed and commented that elements such as the public space and through site link were very much needed as part of any renewal of the town centre.

Question 4 – Do you support the proposal for additional height and residential apartments above the retail and community spaces, which will enable the site to be redeveloped? Why?

1. Additional height need to be considered with the public benefit as it is next to Railway Station and adjacent suburb to Parramatta additional height can be supported. Also, it may required to provide a viable development opportunity.
2. Yes, see above.
3. Yes, this follows with suburbs like Parramatta, which I believe has been developed and transformed into one of Sydney’s premier suburbs. Also this would allow for Wentworthville to cater for more residents, leading to benefits such as greater business opportunities.
4. Yes, as this will enable the site to be redeveloped, more excited to see this are to be redeveloped, attract more people.
5. Yes, only with right planning and careful design, density and height will create population and more trades for the local business. I support additional height and residential apartments on top of Wentworthville shopping centre.
6. Yes, more housing above retail spaces is ok as well as it is well designed and incorporates public spaces. Sydney needs more housing though I don't agree with high rise over 6-8 floors.
7. Yes. The more people living in Wentworthville town centre the better for local business. Wentworthville town centre is virtually dead at night. People will bring night time economy.

Think Planners Comment – Similar to the business community comments, there is acceptance that residential development will assist in the delivery of improved retailing and public benefits. There is acceptance that such residential must occur in the form of increased height and FSR in the town centre. Think Planners explained the heights and FSR proposed in the planning proposal and only 1 of the above submissions suggested a lower height for the town centre, while others were supportive.



Question 5 – Any other comment?

1. Existing parking capacity in the area is not enough. Additional parking and intersection treatments need to be addressed. All adjacent intersections are almost at capacity (by peak hr experience).
2. We need this!
3. (Blank)
4. (Blank)
5. We want a new supermarket like Coles and Woolworths. More population will help the centre to attract Coles and Woolworths.
6. Affordable housing needs to be a consideration.
7. Development needs to commence sooner than later.

Think Planners Comments – The only matter relevant to the planning proposal is the comment in relation to timing, indicating that the revitalisation of the town centre is needed immediately.

In addition the following two (2) emails were received by Think Planners –

Email 1

My local agent Maria who just attended the information section had briefed me about the Wentworthville Mall's redevelopment proposal. Our company owns few shops in the town centre and we found it very difficult to attract national retail tenants, reason being lack of customers in the area. We want to support the Mall's redevelopment to allow population growth. We want to see 25-30 storey high rise residential development in the main location with excellent design, so A grade retail and restaurants will come to Wenty rather than other areas such as Merrylands or Parramatta. We are very exciting to see the proposed Plaza and public walk through area, they are great benefits to the community!

Email 2

Hi Adam in regards to the proposed redevelopment of the Wenty Mall we have reviewed the proposal on exhibition and confirm that we are in support of it. Our company owns numerous properties in the Wentworthville town center, namely properties abutting the Wenty Mall on Station St.

The proposed redevelopment will Revitalize the current struggling town center and encourage high grade tenancies of which it is lacking at the moment. The Height of the proposed scheme allows the open central corridor which connects Dunmore st with Pritchard st encouraging pedestrians to use this thoroughfare connecting the entire Wenty town center creating a vibrant atmosphere.

We are very excited to see such a proposal being put forward. For the past 15 years the Wenty town Center has been in decline, this proposal would bring Wentworthville Town Center into the future and create an atmosphere where people would want to live and shop.

Findings

The key findings or comments emerging from the Community Consultation, having regard to both the business and resident / stakeholder groups are:

1. Wentworthville Town Centre is in a state of decay and significant urgent action, policy initiatives and management is required to address this.
2. Though currently in a state of decay, the town centre has a number of attributes and opportunities that can be leveraged and capitalised on. The location near to Parramatta; the railway station and transport connections; nearby investment and employment opportunities from the Westmead Precinct; and amalgamated land holdings such as The Mall.
3. An acceptance that residential development in the town centre, in the form of towers of increased height and FSR are instrumental to any redevelopment and subsequent revitalisation of the town centre.
4. A desire for multiple use (residential, retail, public plaza, through site links) redevelopments that will exhibit design excellence and also contribute to greater activity in the town centre and consequential public safety.

Next Steps and Conclusion

It is apparent from the review of the Business Community Report, the outcomes of the Community Consultation Drop In Sessions and also from the data in the attached Social Impact Assessment that the Planning Proposal as submitted is consistent with the aspirations of the community and will result in social and economic benefits to the community.

It is recommended that Council respond to the requests of the business community and the residents and support the Planning Proposal that all parties hope will be the catalyst to revitalisation of Wentworthville Town Centre and will deliver community benefits such as activated streets; through site links; public plaza; new community buildings and spaces; and improved retail offering.

The Planning Proposal, once through the Gateway, will be subject to a further period of community engagement pursuant to the statutory requirements for consultation in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. However, it is noted that the consultation undertaken to date has been consistent with the requirements of Council’s Social Impact Assessment Policy as the consultation has –

- Sought to understand and consider the concerns and aspirations of the affected community;
- Measures were undertaken to raise awareness of consultation opportunities with both the business and residential community; and
- All stakeholders had an opportunity to engage.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Byrnes".

Adam Byrnes

Director

Think Planners Pty Ltd

BA Town Planning, Grad Dip. Environmental Studies