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Content:
Wilton North VPA Submission

As a community, we are looking for evidence-based, appropriate and accountable VPAs. The VPA needs to have considered the needs of the local community, the service providers, other stakeholders and the potential new residents.

I do not support the Wilton North VPA due to the following reasons:

Roads

The Wilton North VPA outlines roadworks including an on-ramp, as well as the construction of a new bridge over the Hume Highway. This has not taken into account the considerable feedback given during the community consultation process, at which several problems with the proposed roads have been identified. The increase in traffic that will be funnelled through the quiet streets of Bingara Gorge by the proposed bridge and north facing ramps as designed has not been adequately addressed. The community, the council, and Lend Lease have all highlighted this in their feedback. The provision of a direct link from Wilton North to Picton road has not been detailed for the early stages of the development. This connection should be provided to ensure that a more appropriate entrance and exit to the development in the early stages is provided that does not unduly impact upon existing residents. The reason that such a connection does not exist appears to be due to a breakdown in cooperation between the developers, Bradcorp and Governors Hill. It is not acceptable that Wilton North proceeds upon this basis, as there may also be other as yet unknown impacts of this breakdown in cooperation, considering the high level of integration required between the Bradcorp Wilton North area and the Governors Hill city centre.

Wastewater & the Lake

The uncertainty around the viability of the 11 hectare wastewater lake was also highlighted in the consultation process, and yet it has also been included in this VPA. At the community consultation, Sydney Water representatives clearly stated that they did not support the lake proposal. The department of planning staff also indicated that the lake would not form part of the final plan due to the problems associated with its upkeep, amongst other concerns. The community also does not want a lake that is a potential public health risk, and unsuitable for swimming. It is not acceptable to create a lake that will burden the community with problems, odour impacts, public health alerts and high maintenance costs in perpetuity.

River and the Environment

The wastewater produced by this development needs to be addressed. Additional studies are required for the riparian corridors and watercourses, and groundwater assessments. Hydrology needs to be assessed across the whole of the Wilton Junction development area. This needs to be consistent across the zones to ensure adequate protection of the Hawkesbury Nepean River System. The disjointed nature of how the developers are now behaving separately instead of as a team will lead to greater environmental impacts and less desirable community outcomes, such as multiple wastewater treatment plants and excess discharges to the environment with potential pollution events. Koala habitat has been identified in this area, along the river and creek lines, but also the trees in the open paddocks in the middle of the development. Care should be taken to preserve potential corridors of movement for such a critical disease-free population so that they can recover and disperse further into the southern highlands. These concerns are as yet inadequately addressed.

Mine Subsidence

The Wilton North land is subject to future long wall mining, despite the Developer having an

arrangement (details of which have yet to be disclosed) with South32, there is no evidence that the coal resource under the subject land has been permanently sterilised. Therefore, all infrastructure and building works should be made to comply with mine subsidence (assurance is sought that the developer provided roads and infrastructure is built in accordance with mine subsidence standards), and correspondingly, the cost of housing will be affected by this requirement, compromising the NSW Government objective for affordable housing.

Planning & Costs

The Urban Development Institute of Australia in its response to the Greater Macarthur Land Release stated that “in 2011 the phrase “at no additional cost to government” was born. Four years on and there is still no definitive explanation as to what this means! Clarification on this issue is required as at present the definition is highly ambiguous.... Further, there is currently no review process for “no additional cost to government”.

Full understanding of the actual costs that will be incurred by government on the Wilton Junction Development, including the Wilton North development are unclear, as outlined above in the UDIA comment. Clarity around this should be sought prior to any further approvals.

Local infrastructure, future proofing, and master planning have been missing in the coordination of the exhibition and release of the Wilton Junction area. This is entirely due to developers now competing against each other, and the only outcome that the community will be left with is a poorly planned city. Take the time to resolve these issues prior to any further agreements being issued, to ensure that a great new town is the result. Many generations of people will end up living here. A poor result is disrespectful of the opportunity presented by this greenfield site. The Wilton North development has too many unanswered questions, and too many potential problems that will unduly burden the community with an ongoing legacy of costs, and social and environmental impacts, and therefore should not be supported at this time.

How can a VPA be finalised when, as discussed above, the Wilton North Development proposal has not adequately addressed so many areas of basic planning. It is not fair on the community to proceed at this point in time.