



Response to Gawler East Proposal

Following the public meeting on 4 December Gawler Environment and Heritage Association has some comments in response to Council request for community responses to proposed Gawler East land development.

Project overall

- Broadly GEHA is skeptical about extending urban development further in Gawler and adjacent rural areas rather than increase population density in more inner metro areas.
- If Gawler is to seriously see itself as “Best of Town and Country” then limiting the size of Gawler to about 35,000 with current deferred urban land at Evanston South and Evanston Gardens and Hewett would be a logical goal. The promotion of fast population growth by the State government without adequate consideration of sustainability is not a viable long-term strategy.
- The proposed development appears to be modeled on those at Golden Grove and Mawson Lakes. The model needs to be different to meet Gawler’s “Best of Country” objective. How does the developer plan to do this?
- Gawler is in a position to help with sustainable and affordable housing for SA but the expected 10,000 population increase from southern development and in existing residential zones is more than a fair contribution. Very rapid growth is very disruptive of community and having 2 areas of major growth will greatly diminish the chances of Council being able to manage either in a way which the community would expect.
- Most importantly, Council needs to maintain its opposition to any new development in the Rural Living Zone between the South Para and One Tree Hill Road (Scenic Route)

Timing

- It is apparent from the presentations at the public meeting that the timetable proposed for considering Gawler East issues is not based on good community (or Council) involvement. Council needs to ensure that the reports which are essential for understanding the issues at Gawler East (traffic, water, waste water, hydrology related to site and impacts on South Para and Yaringa Creek waterholes and wetlands, biodiversity impacts, commercial issues) are in the public arena for a reasonable time before decisions on zoning are suggested. Given the possible collapse in economic prospects for the Australian economy in the near future there is every reason to avoid rushing into proposals which were developed on the basis of more dramatic development of mining and housing than will now be achieved.

Governance

- Council needs to develop a strategy that requires the State Government to work closely with Council rather than moving quickly to rezone the land before various reports are available and commitments regarding paying for associated development costs are able to be shown.
- The position with the suggested “Commitment Deed” seems to be problematic. Council needs to be firm in insisting on an effective ability to require agreement on successive stages rather than just an initial stage.
- Council (and the State) should be empowered to update over time environmental and other standards across any new zones.
- Council should also be considering obligations a developer should have to complete various stages and move on in a specified period.

Zoning

- The rural living zone south of the South Para on One Tree Hill Road should be altered but only to include a river/MOSS Conservation component.
- The Minister’s earlier announcement of firm protection of river corridors should be dealt with by creating a scientifically-based wide corridor either side of the South Para taking into account biodiversity, vistas and slope issues and a similar but narrower corridor surrounding Yaringa creek.
- There need to be adequate policies for any proposed town centre, residential or open space/biodiversity/river zones and with emphasis on policies which retain their relevance over time so that sustainability issues for example are automatically adjusted for best practice outcomes.

Transport

- Transport/traffic issues need a lot more detail to understand the implications of transport options. The project should not proceed without prior resolution of transport issues.
- The proposed access road from Gawler East to Main North Road should be directed to connect with Tiver Road - terminating at Potts Road divides the community in that area unnecessarily and Potts Road is not well suited to being a major thoroughfare especially given the impacts that would occur with traffic heading into Evanston. Suggesting that this is a local road rather than a DTEI road seems to fly in the face of logic.
- The proposed access road to cross the South Para should not be allowed close to Dead Mans Pass reserve because of the impact of noise and activity on the biodiversity of the eastern end of the reserve which will inevitably occur.
- What about a North East bypass?
- Reconnection of Calton Road to the Barossa Valley Highway at the CFS station needs to be investigated.
- The developer needs to commit to pay all/part of the cost of upgrading various roads affected by Gawler East development eg Sunnydale, Calton Roads, Bentley, Tiver?
- What information is available about the viability of a public bus service or a new train station as part of development?
- More information is needed about any proposed extension of passenger rail services to the Wheatsheaf or beyond as part of the development.
- To what extent would bikeways and gopherways to be a part of an agreement?

- Footpaths on both sides of roads are important and should be set back from the roadway or designed in other ways to ensure cars don't park on paths adjacent the road surface.

Natural Environment

- Adequate protection should be given to springs which provide permanent water holes/drought refuges in the South Para and soaks on Yaringa Creek. This is a complex question which needs detailed research and modeling to ensure protection. Other springs have been affected by human impacts without any proper understanding of the losses involved
- Sufficiently wide setbacks for roads and houses from the South Para and Yaringa Creek need to be mandated.
- The South Para and Yaringa Creek protected areas need to be restored to better quality native vegetation. Given that very open grassy woodland is appropriate this fits well with biodiversity, fire protection and efficient management of such areas as well as assisting with the Para Woodland restoration work.
- Existing native trees and shrubs should be retained throughout the development site and the area of Eucalyptus porosa woodland on the eastern side kept as a conservation area.
- Remediation of the sand pits should include part retention for nesting holes for the Rainbow Bee Eater & other native birds, and also to indicate the history of the area.

Built Environment

- It is not clear what process will ensure that houses and commercial buildings are built to the highest environmental standards or what Council's role will be.
- Will the standards to be achieved be based on rigorous rating systems beyond very flexible (and not producing high quality outcomes in many case) 5 star rating - CSIRO AccuRate star rating, green star rating or some other measure?
- Appropriate alignment, double-glazing and use of eaves for shading or equivalent design features should be mandatory.
- What other methods will be used to reduce energy consumption? High thermal-inertia buildings with high ceilings would help to reduce the need for air conditioning.
- How will stormwater be managed for recycling or feeding to the South Para and Yaringa Creek? Will wetlands be included in the design? What will be the actual standards required?
- Grey water and black water recycling should be specified.
- Ensuring adequate housing blocks and landscape areas of a size to provide a good coverage of large trees (say 15-20 m plus).
- Flexibility in arrangement of house blocks so that there can be shared "yard" space and small areas of open space to build community interaction

Social Environment

- What sort guidelines are proposed for development to achieve strong local community interaction rather than amorphous suburbia
- Community diversity will depend in part on block sizes. Will the development include sufficient large sites (eg traditional quarter acre) for larger families, "granny flats" and for people with interests like gardening?

- Connectivity and interaction with the rest of Gawler is vital. Design for young, elderly, people without cars etc is important with sufficient sites allocated for churches, kindergartens, schools, meeting halls, clubrooms, community (garden) allotments.
- Support for job creation in the area, including work from home will be important.
- Can the developer ensure the commercial center will include key services such as post office, chemist and newsagent?

Social infrastructure

- What about increased demand for services such as public library. What contribution will this development make?
- Do we need more public or private primary and secondary school facilities in Gawler?
- What sporting facilities are to be provided?
- Could an arts center and commercial accommodation be included in the development?

It is apparent from the meeting that a lot more information is needed for the community to get to grips with the implications about the proposed development. Council has a vital role in promoting informed discussion and we look forward to this occurring and offer assistance with this if appropriate. Council should exercise those powers normally vested in local government throughout the development and implementation phases of the project to ensure that concerns expressed in this and other public submissions be given adequate consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Sue Coldbeck

For Gawler Environment and Heritage Association