

REF: CM196/09

**WEST DAPTO INITIAL ACCESS STRATEGY SUPPORTING STAGES 1 AND 2**

**Report of Manager Infrastructure (MM) 20/10/09**

**SU22399**

**PRECIS**

This report sets out an affordable and deliverable access strategy to address existing issues confronting the residents of Horsley and to enable development of Stages 1 and 2 in the West Dapto Urban Release Area.

The report sets out the initial access strategy components, priorities, estimated costs, implementation programme and actions currently underway to increase funding to enable accelerated implementation.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Council -**

- 1 Endorse the initial access strategy and include the strategy in the capital works planning process and the West Dapto Section 94 Development Contributions Plan.**
- 2 Undertake a community engagement process to inform the community and the development industry about the strategy.**

**BACKGROUND**

The West Dapto Urban Release Area is located 12km south of Wollongong and covers an area of approximately 4,700ha. The release area will provide an additional 15,296 dwellings and 175 ha of employment land, in addition to the existing 2,300 dwellings and 51 ha of industrial land, when fully developed.

Planning for West Dapto has been a challenge due to the environmental, access and flooding constraints. These constraints result in a high per dwelling cost of providing the necessary supporting infrastructure and development in Stages 1 and 2 face a large increase in infrastructure costs to service the new development.

The development of Horsley has largely resulted in the primary access road (Bong Bong Road) approaching its capacity limits (currently 16,380 vehicles per day) impacting on the daily lives of the 7,000 residents. There has been little substantive improvement to access capacity achieved to date due to the restricted income from the development contributions plan (approximately 10% of estimated costs) to fund the planned grade separated (bridges) access routes, with the necessary improvements being beyond Council's financial capacity.

A draft Wollongong Local Environmental Plan – West Dapto 2009 (LEP) was publicly exhibited in 2007/08. As a result of significant issues being identified during the finalisation and exhibition of the draft LEP, the Growth Centres Commission was engaged to review the precinct planning and infrastructure needs and recommended the development of a new infrastructure strategy, draft LEP and draft West Dapto Section 94 Plan.

Key outcomes from the precinct planning endorsed by Council in November 2008 include:

1. Development staging to commence from the north with only Stages 1 and 2 to be zoned for development (refer Attachment 1).
2. A reduction in the amount of infrastructure to be funded by Council through a development contributions plan.
3. A reduction in the planned number of dwellings to be developed.

- That the Fowlers Road Bridge was not required to service development in Stages 1 and 2 and possibly not required to support the future Stages 3 and 4 and should be removed from the infrastructure plan, pending final traffic modelling.

The resulting LEP for Stages 1 and 2 of the West Dapto is expected to be gazetted in late 2009 with initial development applications expected to be lodged in early 2010.

Access to Horsley and Stages 1 and 2 of the WDRA is currently restricted to three roads, all with two lane level crossings over the southern rail line and all being flood affected for events less than a 1 in 5 Average Recurrence Interval (ARI). The provision of upfront infrastructure to ensure adequate road access is essential to the successful development of West Dapto.

### PROPOSAL

The initial access strategy includes significant improvements to a number of existing roads and the construction of new roads which will provide greater connection between Horsley and Dapto as well as to the wider road network. The strategy, as set out in the table below, will:

- Deliver affordable improvements in access to West Dapto.
- Address the access issues confronting the 7,000 residents of Horsley.
- Support the planned development in Stages 1 and 2 of West Dapto.
- Be the starting point for the expansion of the road network for the long term development of West Dapto.

**Table 1 - West Dapto Initial Access Strategy**

|                      | Road Link  | Improvement   | Estimated Cost * | Programme #        |
|----------------------|--|---|------------------|--------------------|
| 1                    | Bong Bong Road                                   | Widen the level crossing and improve connections to the Princes Highway to increase traffic capacity and reduce congestion  | \$3.77 m         | 2009/10 to 2013/14 |
| 2                    | West Dapto Road                                  | Realign the intersection with the Princes Highway and install traffic signals to improve safety and traffic capacity  | \$1.10 m         | 2009/10 to 2010/11 |
| 3                    | Shone Avenue                                     | Replace the single lane bridge and realign the intersection with West Dapto Road to improve safety and traffic capacity   | \$5.80 m         | 2009/10 to 2012/13 |
| 4                    | Fairwater Drive (east)                           | Construct extension to Cleveland Road to connect to the current rail over pass and the highway  | \$16.86 m        | 2013/14 to 2017/18 |
| 5                    | Cleveland Road                                   | Replace Mullet Creek Bridge and improve access to Dapto High School to improve safety, traffic capacity   | \$5.11 m         | 2011/12 to 2013/14 |
|                      |  | Widen road from Fairwater Drive to Mullet Creek and widen intersection with Princes Highway to improve safety, traffic capacity and decrease flood affectation                                      | \$12.58 m        | 2017/18 to 2021/22 |
| 6                    | Fairwater Drive (west)                           | Construct extension from Highcroft Boulevard to Bong Bong Road to increase traffic capacity and complete the road network   | \$0.9 m          | 2014/15            |
| 7                    | West Dapto Road, Shone Avenue and Bong Bong Road | Staged widening of West Dapto Road and Shone Avenue including construction of new bridges. Drainage improvements on Bong Bong Road to improve safety, traffic capacity and reduce flood affectation | \$32.37 m        | 2013/14 to 2023/24 |
| Total estimated cost |  |   | \$78.46 m        |                    |

\* Estimate costs are expressed in future terms, based on conceptual designs only and subject to refinement during design development and any required changes to implementation programmes

# Programme based on current development projections and estimates of available capital. Capital to be confirmed through the budget planning process

## Benefits of the Access Strategy

In addition to addressing the immediate access issues confronting the residents of Horsley, the strategy also:

- Provides affordable and adequate road access to Stages 1 and 2 of the development area maximising the use of existing roads
- Will be incorporated into the West Dapto Infrastructure and Servicing Plan and Section 94 Plan, to enable implementation of the ultimate access improvements including construction of the flood access route via the Northcliffe Drive/West Dapto Road realignment, construction of grade separated connection of Darkes Road to Kanahooka Road and potentially a grade separated access route adjacent to Bong Bong Road.
- Enable residential development to commence to deliver 6,600 dwelling lots, an additional 175 ha of employment land and the flow on jobs that will service the additional 15,296 dwellings
- Provide safe heavy vehicle access to the Kembla Grange employment precinct to provide capacity for growth in employment generating industries.
- Improve access to existing facilities e.g. Dapto High School and Dapto Primary School
- Maintain Wollongong City Council's financial capacity to deliver the estimated \$420 million of infrastructure required to support the total development.
- Maintain Council's financial capacity to continue delivering infrastructure and services to the existing 198,000 residents and the current employment base in the City of Wollongong.
- Supports the revitalisation of the Dapto CBD as the emerging sub-regional centre and increases its marketability for the planned growth in retail and commercial jobs.
- Enables Council to continue to fund the implementation of other adopted economic revitalisation strategies supporting the growth of the Wollongong City Centre as the regional centre (e.g. Crown Street Mall refurbishment, implementation of the Blue Mile Master Plan, infrastructure supporting the growth of the Innovation Campus).
- Allows for flexibility in implementation programming should any one component be delayed or should development progress be below projections, funding can be reallocated to accelerate the implementation of the next component in the strategy.

## Funding Sources

The funding for the implementation of the strategy will primarily be drawn from future Section 94 revenues and the use of the current Horsley Section 94 Plan balance (\$2.89 m). However, due to the nexus and apportionment requirements for Section 94 Plans and the time delay between construction and receipt of Section 94 levies, the strategy will have to be partially funded from Council's revenue.

Over the first nine years of the implementation programme, an average of \$1.5 m per annum would be required to be allocated from Council's revenue to fully fund the strategy.

In order to minimise the overall budget impact, applications for grants and subsidies will be submitted to State and Federal agencies as opportunities arise. Recently, Council has applied for significant financial contributions under two State Government initiatives as set out below:

- The Department of Planning's NSW Local Infrastructure Fund: application for a \$26 million interest free loan with a 10 year repayment period to part fund an accelerated implementation programme.

If the loan application is successful, the implementation of the strategy will be accelerated to deliver the infrastructure sooner.

- The Department of State and Regional Development's Local Infrastructure Support Fund: application for a \$549,000 grant to part fund access improvements to the Kembla Grange industrial area.

#### CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Consultation to date has included Director Planning + Environment, Manager Environmental Strategy + Planning, Land Use Planning Manager, NSW Department of Planning, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Roads and Traffic Authority, RailCorp and the Member for Shellharbour.

The outcomes of this report will be communicated to the community by publishing a communications brochure outlining the strategy and attending the November Dapto Neighbourhood Forum to explain the strategy.

#### PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

The access strategy supporting development in Stages 1 and 2 of West Dapto is consistent with 2009/12 Management Plan, the draft Wollongong Local Environmental Plan – West Dapto 2009 and supports the Illawarra Regional Strategy (2007).

#### CONCLUSION

The provision of adequate and affordable road access to West Dapto is critical to alleviating the access issues currently impacting on the residents of Horsley and supporting the planned residential and industrial development in Stages 1 and 2 of the development area.

The access strategy provides an adaptable and affordable means of providing the initial road access improvements for West Dapto that can be brought into the capital budget planning process and West Dapto Section 94 Development Contributions Plan for implementation.

| Name                  | Position Title                         |
|-----------------------|--|
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#### ATTACHMENTS

1. Plan of the West Dapto Initial Access Strategy supporting Stages 1 and 2

