

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B: Communications and Engagement Activities Gilbert Rd Corridor Built Form Guidelines Project May 2014

1. Introduction

The Gilbert Road Corridor Built Form Guidelines are being prepared in response to a perceived need for more specific design controls for the corridor as per Council resolution on 20 August 2012. The work seeks to take a proactive approach to emerging development trends and will deliver a more localised approach to assessment of development applications with the creation of specific planning controls for commercial areas, including a Design and Development Overlay (DDO).

The Gilbert Road project involves a two-phase community engagement process:

1. Generating key themes and future design criteria with local communities (completed)
2. A Public exhibition period (timing unknown)

The first phase of community engagement is now complete and community feedback has helped to drive the assessment of built form in the centres. This appendix provides an overview of the communications and engagement activities delivered as part of phase 1 of the engagement process. It also provides details of who got involved and key areas of community interest.



2. Our engagement approach

The Strategic Planning Unit (SPU) continues to apply Council's *Community Engagement Framework (2012 – 2017)* in a land use planning context via various engagement approaches at different stages of the planning process. The initial phase of the planning process 'project commencement' is an opportune time to partner with our communities to co-create planning solutions through an agile and inclusive approach. Research attests that engagement at project commencement is a powerful way to build an organisation's reputation in the area of ethical decision making and helps to minimise risks associated with policies created in isolation from end users.

2.1. Gilbert Road Engagement Aims and Principles

The Gilbert Rd Corridor Built Form Guidelines project presented an excellent opportunity to engage at project commencement to co-create planning solutions with end users. By collaborating closely with our local communities, we felt we could better capture planning solutions which reflect local conditions, needs and aspirations within the context of policy imperatives. The aim for phase 1 of the engagement process was to embrace the community wisdom regarding new built form and design and then test the input for policy and market viability and feasibility.

Our engagement was also underpinned by our desire to build the communities' capacity to understand what can and cannot be influenced as part of the planning process so that we might work together more constructively through the second phase of the planning process (public exhibition period). The following practice principles informed our engagement planning and delivery:

- go to local communities to engage directly at a non-threatening grass roots level;
- facilitate a process which values the needs of end users;
- tap into local wisdom through street based mapping, drawing and documentation exercises to gather local values;
- provide activities which allow people to hear and understand each other as a way of building community understanding;
- collaborate with local communities through a series of design workshops to directly feed into the production of design criteria for new types of development;
- design communications with the needs of end users in mind;
- use graphic communications to promote inclusion and hold meaningful conversations across diversity; and
- enhance our online consultation offer.

3. Who we engaged with

The Gilbert Road Corridor Built Form Guidelines project is a small planning project which involved engaging with a relatively discrete catchment of stakeholders, including just over 800 landowners, renters, businesses and investors. In centre users were also engaged.

In-depth conversations with approximately 70 people occurred. Given the small catchment, this is a good sample of the local community.

The catchment of people engaged as part of phase 1 of the engagement process will also be notified as part of phase 2 which will involve the public exhibition of the guidelines and the DDO.

4. What we delivered

Given the relatively small scale of the project, the relatively limited propensity for change within each of the centres, and the emergence of a creative community along the corridor, the SPU has sought to trial a range of innovative engagement activities to build on our recent learning's with human centred design methodologies.

Human centred design is a collaborative project methodology which emphasises co-designing and co-creating projects in diverse groups by building listening skills and running workshops which maximise empathy, participation and community activation. The HCD methodology places the needs of the community at the centre of the design process and tools are used to respond to questions about *what people desire; what can be feasibly achieved* and *what is fiscally viable*.

Several HCD tools were used for the phase 1 engagement process including self-documentation tool kits and co-design workshops. These tools were selected given their strength to empower and include local communities who are not trained as designers to use creative tools to address technical planning problems in their local neighbourhoods. We had overwhelmingly positive feedback about our communications and co-design workshops. See table 1 for further details about our activities.



Table 1: Communications and engagement activities

| GILBERT RD CORRIDOR BUILT FORM PROJECT ENGAGEMENT PROCESS | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Communications and Engagement | No. of Events | Target Groups | Outcome (hrs to deliver) | Details |
| STAGE 1: CO-CREATING FUTURE DESIGN CRITERIA | | | | |
| <i>Purpose: to work with the local communities to inform the design process and subsequent built form guidelines</i> | | | | |
| Media and Communications | | | | |
| Media release | X1 | ALL. | Completed (4hrs with the assistance of our Communications and Marketing Unit) | Our targeted media messages were an effective way of encouraging people to get involved in the engagement process and build understanding about the project aims and parameters. |
| Posters / Postcards | 1000 | Distributed in all local businesses in each of the 4 centres. | Completed (8hrs + external assistance to achieve quirky and friendly graphics) | The posters and postcards formed a unifying element for the engagement process by detailing the engagement activities across each of the 4 centres. Feedback was overwhelming positive on the look and feel for the project and set a positive tone for our co-design workshops. |
| Letter 1 | X800 approx (across all 4 centres) | Businesses and community groups within each of the centres. Adjoining residents and residents which may be visually affected by new buildings. | Completed (6hrs) | This letter introduced the project and formed a personal invitation to the co- design workshops. This letter also included the brochure and self- documentation tool kit and encouraged people to complete the tool kit as preparation for the co- design workshops. All participants at our co- design workshops attended in response to this letter. |
| Letter 2 | 71 | People registered with the project. | Completed (2hrs) | This letter thanked people for their involvement in the co-creation phase of the project. The letter outlined the rationale for delays with the project. |
| Community Information Brochure 1 | X1000 | Distributed with letter 1 and available on our interactive website. | Completed (8hrs + external assistance to achieve quirky and friendly graphics) | The brochure described the engagement process and how community ideas and designs would shape the draft Built Form Guidelines and subsequent planning |

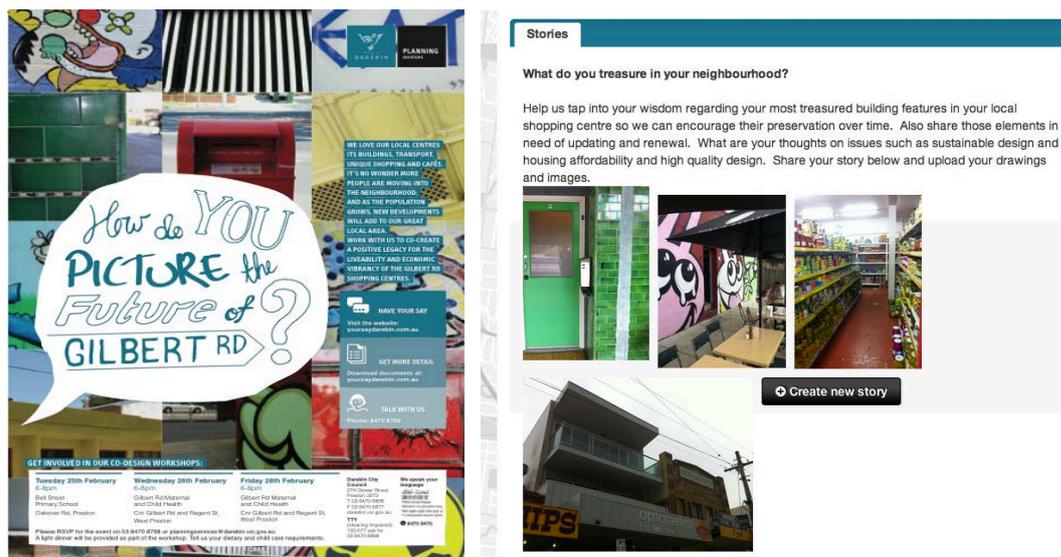
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|-----------------------------|--------------|--|-------------------|--|
| | | | | controls |
| Engagement | | | | |
| Phone and email enquiries | X20 | | Ongoing (8hrs) | Responding to customer enquiries. |
| Interactive website | N/A | ALL | Ongoing | This project presented an excellent opportunity to prototype our web-based story tool on our consultation website. There was limited uptake with the story tool and feedback suggested that this new technology requires some capacity building to maximise uptake. Our website formed a key contact point for the engagement process. |
| Self documentation tool kit | See letter 1 | See letter 1 We had 4 residents complete this tool | Completed (4hrs) | As an alternative to a written survey, we prepared a 'tool kit' as an interactive product for participants to record their own observations and aspirations as part of the design process. Complete with key questions, the tool kit was designed to be used by people from a diversity of backgrounds and ages. The 'tool kit' has proven a powerful tool on other projects however, uptake was minimal on this project. Further investigation is required to understand why. |
| Walking the beat | X1 | As part of this exercise we met with 20 businesses across the 4 centres | Completed (6hrs) | This activity was useful to promote the co-design workshops. It also enabled in depth conversations about the propensity for change and to tease out the possible timelines for future development. |
| Co-design workshops | X3 | Bell St Primary School Session – 21 participants Gilbert Rd Maternal and | Completed (16hrs) | The workshops were a valuable tool in the way they promoted discussion among diverse groups towards strategic thinking about future possibilities. Graphic tools were used to |

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| | Child Health – 3 residents Gilbert Rd Maternal and Child Health – 13 residents | generate ideas. A new tool used was the empathy map which enabled us to capture observations from the user perspective and to draw out fresh insights. |
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4.1 Getting our communications right

For the last couple of years, the SPU has been grappling with the challenge of translating technical information and processes into language that non-planning professionals can engage with. As part of this project, we sought external assistance from a local graphic designer who produced quirky and appealing collateral that would be highly accessible to the local community.

We had very positive feedback on our collateral with people really enjoying the colourful friendly ‘tone’. Our collateral was not only successful in terms of encouraging people to attend our events, but they came with a positive and creative mindset.

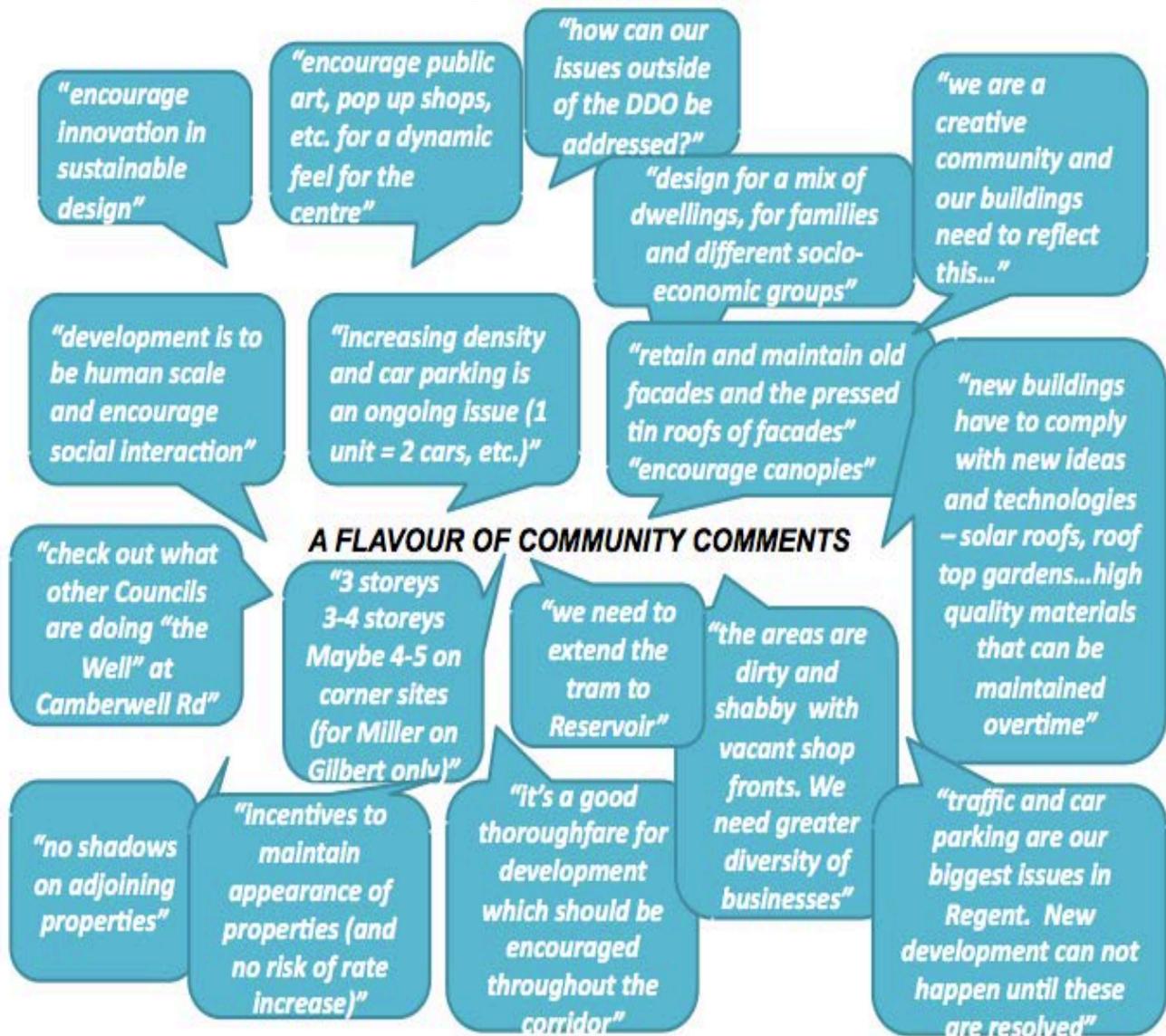


5. What we heard

Our initial conversations with our communities highlighted the need for a more localised approach to the assessment of new development in their centres, and a desire for future built form to distinguish the local character. Community interests formed a key driver for our urban design analysis and; will underpin our guidelines and subsequent DDO.

Importantly, our community again encouraged us to act as ‘one Council’, to address local needs and change processes by using a place-making approach. This involves considering a centre’s issues holistically, including aspects such as economics, buildings, streets and traffic management as part of one project. This is something for Council to consider in terms of our future project delivery.

Below is a flavour of community comments:



5.1 Key areas of community interest

Table 2: Key areas of community interest

| Theme | Community Comments |
|---------------------------|---|
| GLOBAL COMMENTS | |
| Engagement process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need integrated solutions for our neighbourhoods • Busy invite • Council is inconsistent in it's decision making – we feel Council is pro development and it doesn't matter what we say • There is a lack of integration of the issues • We need more opportunity to get involved in decision making • Council notification is often poorly timed. Such as planning permit applications advertised during the Christmas break |
| Street character | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be nice to have more leafy areas • We need more street art – like Jackson Dodds and the building near • Graffiti streetscapes should be maintained • Slow traffic to 40km per hour |
| Built form | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development provides an opportunity to renew the corridor • Keep the historical, period look and add contemporary feel • There needs to be integration of the new development with what is existing to the rear, such as the Californian bungalows • 3 storeys will be excessive in this area. There will be overlooking and excessive noise • New buildings should be required to use materials that age well • Development to be at human scale and encourage social interaction |
| Design elements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressed metal • I want to see old features retained and required • We need ESD features • We are a creative community and we need to design for this demographic • New buildings have to comply with new ideas and technologies / solar, roof top gardens • Ceramic pavements – elements that create a point of difference |
| PRECINCT COMMENTS | |
| Murray and Gilbert | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development will help attract more activity, safety, make the areas more vibrant • We need more street art • The intersection of Murray and Gilbert is dangerous • A 'point of difference' is needed for the centre • Elderly residents aren't able to move around easily • Are there businesses we can attract without improving the quality of streetscape? • Businesses need to be supported to thrive • We need renewal, but we're concerned that new development will not deliver on these needs • |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <p>Regent and Gilbert</p> | <p><i>“Our centre has too many issues to invite more development at this stage. We cannot cope with more people and cars, particularly because of the lack of on street car parking and the location of the tram terminus which is creating a traffic sewer of the centre. Also, people park in our side streets to use the tram. Too many problems”.</i></p> <p><i>Economic performance:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • businesses go bankrupt in our area, there is a consistent turn over of shops • cafes are the only stable tenants • there is an appetite for people to experience something different than big box shopping centres • we feel like the project is a fait accompli • we need more services in our centre • we need somewhere to buy fresh food • the kodak development will affect this centre - Woolworths will open up • this was a shopping hub before Northland and Northcote • a VCAT decision talked about the need for more fresh food places in the centre (it’s possible that Woolworths in Coburg Hill has delivered on this need) • Council has a role to keep the shops in our area <p><i>Transport, traffic and car parking:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are parking restrictions in place but they need more policing • gilbert rd is a thoroughfare • people park in Union St to use the tram • we need to improve the parking to ensure that the trams • we can learn from case studies about what might be possible in terms alternative forms of car-parking such as multiple uses of carparking • cafes create car parking problems • there are already over 50 cars using the laneway to the rear of the existing shops • traders are moving on because of a lack of parking • can we have more angled parking to squeeze more parking in? <p><i>Streetscapes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we need street trees and greenery • tiling features on the pavement – intricate / mosaics • more artwork (street art “tasteful” stencils) <p><i>Public housing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new development in the shopping centre was not commercially viable which resulted in the stock being purchased by the department of human services • Drug dealers, anti social behaviour, assaults, language, screaming in the streets “unbearable”, bins on fire and robberies • Law to provide 10% public housing • Management issue in public housing – traders are having problems as well • Low monitoring of pubic housing and selection of people <p><i>New buildings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let’s attract cutting edge ESD |
| <p>Miller on Gilbert</p> | <p><i>Economic performance:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentive parking needs to be available for visitors to our centre |

6. Next Steps

The second phase of engagement will form the public exhibition of the guidelines and the planning controls. The timing of this phase of work is unknown as it relies on the adoption of the planning panel report for C136, C137 and C138.