

Questions for Councillors of Town of Cambridge regarding Development-Strategic-Plan

at Council meeting 26 April 2017

The era when the Town of Cambridge suburbs originally were planned was very different from today and the objectives were suitable at the time of planning. Times have changed and continue to change, but now very rapidly. This means that we need to be more visionary in our approach to where infill can best occur, because we cannot treat this planning strategy as a business as usual scenario.

Question : *Is it possible for the Town to put all major developments on hold, since we are ahead of out infill target, till the Planning Strategy has been finalised?*

In the Post (8 April 2017) mayor Shannon states that "Cambridge is well ahead of density targets for Directions 2031". In that case we should make use of this opportunity and put all major developments on hold till a well thought out community supported Planning Strategy is approved.

Question : *Currently in the public consultation process there is no easy way to submit alternative views. How is Council going to change this and maybe a good time to review the procedures?*

The proposed Cambridge Planning Strategy (CPS) ¹ maps, as presented for public comment, are too similar and appear to be presented as a choice. With basically all increases of density is dumped on West Leederville. The Coast Ward Ratepayers Association recent circular indicates that they see the scenarios as a choice. However, Mayor Shannon says in the Post (8 April 2017) that "the three scenarios are not options, but methods that can be used to guide good density in the town". But in the public consultations process there is no straightforward way to submit a totally different opinion or are they not wanted? I believe the current process also denies councillors to be presented with interesting alternatives to what is produced by the consultants. So, it would be a good time to review the procedures.

Question : *Why is most of infill strategy dumped on West Leederville?*

1 The recent documentation talks about Local Planning Strategy (LPS) that will form the basis of the Local Planning Scheme (LPS). Because "Local Planning Strategy" and "Local Planning Scheme", both abbreviated to LPS which will cause confusion I renamed the first "Cambridge Planning Strategy (CPS)" and kept "Local Planning Scheme (LPS)".

As mentioned before the proposed three scenarios have all their major infill focus on West Leederville. More innovative alternative scenarios should have been included from the start. My scenario-HB below is an example that shows it is possible to get the required infill outside West Leederville².

Question : *There is a wealth of innovative ideas amongst residents of the town of which many are not fully explored. Could the Town create a possibly more interactive process to capture those ideas?*

Initial scenarios presented should be bold concepts that make people think and comment. There is a wealth of ideas amongst the residents and it is a waste not to make use of them. A good start would be a more interactive way of capturing public ideas is needed. Make more processes that involve “deliberate democracy”.

Now people select a scenario that has the least impact on them. That means likely not the best but the least bad is chosen.

Also the strategic scenarios look too much like a Local Planning Scheme where we are planning for the next few years. The aim of the Cambridge Planning Strategy should be laying a framework for the coming decades with a vision. It took only 13 years, from 1900 to 1913, for horses to disappear from the streets in New York and to be replaced by cars (Tony Seba, 2016). If change in technology could modify society so quickly a 100 years ago, then we have to think even more visionary now, since technology changes much faster now.

Question : *Can the Town change the Planning Scheme now in order to preserve the “Garden Suburbs”?*

If we as a community want to keep our “Garden Suburbs”, which I totally agree with, then there needs to be a change in planning strategy. As the current policies turn our suburbs in two-storey structures surrounded with fence-2-fence paving, resulting in the only “garden” to be the council’s verge. The CPS is a great opportunity to provide a framework to maintain the “Garden Suburbs” we like and in the meantime to have the Town Planning Scheme amended to save our “Garden Suburbs”. By the way they would be more environmentally sustainable than the current developments.

² Full details in my submission.

Question : *Why does the traffic and transport scenario look only at next few years instead of decades ahead?*

The traffic and transport scenario seems to be based on current levels of vehicle use and linear projections in to the future as has been the practice in the past. Throw current thinking about traffic and transport out of the window. The Stephenson Highway plan is a concept of the 1950s which is irrelevant now. Parking and transport requirements will be reduced because autonomous-driving (share)-cars will be the norm in 10 years. These comments are probably seen as 'pie in the sky', but to show it is not, I recommend watching the video of Tony Seba's address at the Nordic Energy Summit, Oslo (2016, in the 1st minute and at around 35 min into video a section dealing with transport etc.). Throughout the video he shows many examples of the current rapid rate of change, then it will become clear that we cannot continue with current thinking in planning.

The traffic and transport strategy should be *people* focussed, not car focussed. That would increase the walkability in the town and especially at the activity centres.

Question : *Can the terms of reference to the consultants be included in the documents for public comment, so we know we are on the right track?*

Transparency and accountability are commonly used terms in government and business. In light of this having the terms of reference for the consultants that are doing the Strategic Plan should be easily available to the public, ideally as part of the documents like "Full Posters Package". Then it would also be available for public comment.

Question : *What stops the Town to make use of world reknown academic expertise in Perth to review the Planning Strategy Draft?*

In WA we are fortunate that we could make use of a reviewer of the draft Cambridge Planning Strategy by locally based worldwide known urban planner Prof. Peter Newman. I realise in suggesting this, toes maybe stepped upon and egos bruised, however the only aim of the Cambridge Planning Strategy is to ensure that future development in Town of Cambridge are part of the best possible practices; or are we afraid of a grown up conversation?

Tony Seba (2016) : *Clean Disruption - Why Energy & Transportation will be Obsolete by 2030* ;
 Nordic Energy Summit, Oslo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kxryv2XrnqM> .

