

SUBMISSION FROM SALLY BLOCK RE. PETITION NO.54 – GIDGEGANNUP URBAN PRECINCT

We confirm that we have not taken our complaint to the Parliamentary Commission for Administrative Investigations. We urge the Committee to investigate this matter further. This development is unique in Western Australia and has the potential to change the nature and amenity of the Perth Hills. There are significant complex issues and a high level of inter-governmental coordination and private sector clarity is necessary. Further enquiry could contribute to this process greatly.

The North Eastern Hills Settlement Pattern Plan (NEHSPP) was workshopped over a lengthy period encompassing both the community and Government to ensure that the recommendations would preserve the "Hills Lifestyle". To this end the recommendation was made that three small Townsites would appear the most appropriate developments in the North Eastern Hills, with total populations in the order of 4000 people. A large townsite was deemed unsuitable given the potential of such a townsite to impact on the "Hills Lifestyle". The Gidgegannup townsite area was just over 200 ha. The proposed area has now expanded to 296.6 ha with a possible second stage to increase the area to 429 ha. The number of lots has been set at 1500 or more dependent on what is needed to fund infrastructure requirements. The impact of the water pipeline to service this proposed development could also have a significant effect on the Hills villages through which it passes in terms of development that is not currently planned.

The community does in fact welcome development of our Townsite, just that it should be appropriate development conforming to our planning documents that have been in place for many years and have had considerable input from the community. Any development should also take place when solutions to infrastructure problems have been found.

Unresolved impediments and no firm plans for the provision of basic infrastructure including water, sewerage, electricity and telecommunications:

Water/Sewerage: Gidgegannup has no scheme water. Currently residents have their own water tanks or dams and septic sewage. The development would require the construction of a pipeline to connect to the metropolitan water supply. However, the Water Corporation is not sure it can supply water to this development. Future scheme connection is dependent on further development in the Hills that is currently not planned.¹

There are currently no conclusive plans for how sewage will be disposed of or treated, and the topography and geology of the district limits options. Water and sewerage are basic human requirements. These issues must have some resolution prior to approval and it is indicated that there is no certainty that these issues will be resolved.²

Electricity: Whilst there has been improvement in the electricity supply to the Hills, there are still significant capacity problems (particularly for new connections). Western Power indicates a new substation is required just to deal with capacity for the current population and any urbanisation will require a significant upgrade.

Telecommunications: Land lines in the area are inadequate and subject to continual failure. Mobile phone coverage is intermittent for many people in the area as the present tower does not have the band width to cope with the existing population and when the band width is near capacity people on the fringes of coverage (many in extreme fire risk areas) have no coverage at all. There are significant emergency implications resulting from this poor coverage.

The Community is extremely concerned that the provision of these services has not been identified or funded and this may become a burden on Local and State Government. There will also need to be provision for medical services, another school/s and employment opportunities.

Need for significant upgrade to Toodyay Road and local roads, as yet unplanned and not funded and no plans for improvements to public transport:

Main Roads has major concerns that if this land was rezoned to Urban then it is likely that development would proceed in the short to medium term. This will result in a significant increase in traffic along Toodyay Road which is already at

¹ Water Corporation Submission 19 to the Amendment Report, MRSA 1239/41. WA Planning Commission

² Water Corporation Submission 19 to the Amendment Report, MRSA 1239/41 WA Planning Commission

capacity and currently experiences traffic safety and efficiency issues. They also would not support any development of this land until the Perth-Adelaide Highway is constructed which is considered a long term proposal costing in excess of \$1.5bn.³

The Minister states that in the interim the amendment area will be accessed by other major roads such as Toodyay Road and the nearby Great Eastern Highway.⁴ This would necessitate significant upgrading of local roads and junctions with the Great Eastern Highway with no indication as to how this upgrading or maintenance of those roads would be funded.

Toodyay Road has had an increasing number of accidents over the past 24 months including several fatalities. Main Roads estimate 10 traffic movements a day per residence. The proposed development could result in well over 10000 traffic movements a day especially as there is little local employment and no High School. This will add significantly to traffic problems in the area especially when noting the increase of commuter traffic from settlements further out, Mining traffic, Refuse sites and Agricultural traffic resulting from rail closures.

Significant inconsistencies between the development proposal and local planning documents and strategy:

NEHSPP: As yet we do not have details of the Masterplan, should there be one. What is clear is that the Amendment Report indicates 1500 lots or more, if more are required for infrastructure costs. It is clear that the infrastructure costs are going to be significant and that there appears to be no clear idea of how much they could be. The North Eastern Hills Settlement Pattern Plan (NEHSPP) cited a small townsite of 4000 people.

Directions 2031: states that it supports the NEHSPP and its aims. It also states that it supports development along key public transport corridors, urban corridors and transit oriented developments to accommodate increased housing needs and encourage reduced vehicle usage. Gidgegannup does not comply with these aims. It also states that it supports ensuring that economic development and accessibility to employment informs urban expansion. There is no provision for an employment node in Gidgegannup. Another objective is "maximising essential service infrastructure efficiency and equity and identifying and prioritising the coordination of projects to support future growth. A stand-alone urban development does not comply with this. In fact this proposal complies with very few of Directions 2031 objectives.

Gidgegannup Rural Strategy: The projected urban area has grown from 240 ha under the NEHSPP, to 296.6 ha now, extending beyond the designated townsite boundary to encompass Landscape zoned land, with a projected 429 ha. This is completely outside the Gidgegannup Rural Strategy guidelines.

No community consultation has been undertaken on the proposed Masterplan: We are not even certain that there is a Masterplan, although one has been referred to in submissions, but what has been discussed is inconsistent with all other significant planning documents over the last 10 years. There also appears to be a lack of coordination across Government departments that will be necessary for any development to go ahead.

The community feels that should Urban Deferred zoning be approved for this land it will be many years, if not decades before this is rezoned Urban.

Summary:

The Perth Hills is a unique area which needs to be conserved. It is also an extremely complex area to develop. There has been a lack of coordination and consultation on the proposed Amendment. We ask the Committee to further investigate the matters raised in our submission in order to further elucidate these and to hear from the various individuals and organisations interested.

³ Main Roads Submission 10 to the Amendment Report, MRSA 1239/41. WA Planning Commission

⁴ Correspondence Minister Day to Gidgegannup Progress Association Inc. (GPA) 10 July 2014.