

6.2 OAKLEIGH COMMUNITY HUB SCOPING PROJECT

Submitting Councillor: Cr Stuart James

MOTION

That Council considers allocating funding in the 2019/2020 budget to undertake a holistic scoping study that will investigate opportunities to improve community infrastructure and service provisions within Oakleigh and the potential for a Community Hub in the area.

INTRODUCTION

Oakleigh is a diverse and vibrant community that provides its residents with access to a range of community activities and services, however, there is a sense of disconnect with the current assets in this area. Oakleigh residents have expressed their need to have a 'hub' in their own backyard without having to travel to reach similar facilities in neighbouring suburbs. I believe that a community hub would provide the broader Oakleigh community with access to a range of services that meet the needs and expectations of both Council and the local community. I am seeking Council's support to undertake a scoping study to explore potential opportunities to improve the disconnect of current assets and investigate the feasibility and viability of a proposed Oakleigh Community Hub.

DISCUSSION

Council's Community Infrastructure Study (CIS) in 2015, identified Oakleigh as an area that required improvement in terms of its ageing community infrastructure. Many of the buildings in Oakleigh are more than 50 years old, single use and in need of modernisation and refurbishment.

The site at 38-40 Haughton Rd, Oakleigh was identified as having potential to locate a purpose built, community hub. The community hub could be as simple as a large hall and meeting rooms or as complex as offering Oakleigh residents their very first neighbourhood house style facility with meeting rooms, early childhood facilities, community information and support services and a range of other community options.

The Haughton Road site is currently occupied by 3 buildings; the Oakleigh Youth Club, Don Bosco Hall and the Haughton Road Scout Hall (See Attachment 1). The Don Bosco Hall, whilst providing adequately for the groups that meet there, is limited with its ability to meet community needs due to its size and external aesthetics. The Oakleigh Youth Club is an underutilized single use facility and not aesthetically welcoming to the broader community given its primary function as a boxing club. The Scout Hall in Haughton Road is currently used for storage only and is in very poor condition; discussions are underway with Scouts Victoria in relation to its demolition. Furthermore, the opportunities for better integration of the Oakleigh Library, Oakleigh Hall and Oakleigh Seniors Centre across Oakleigh and surrounds should be investigated.

There have been many conversations that the community have had with myself, other Councillors and Council Officers (particularly during the development of the Oakleigh

Community Plan) seeking the appropriate space to establish a neighbourhood house or similar facility that would encompass learning, arts and community connections. Council Officers have previously indicated their support of the establishment of a Neighbourhood House within Oakleigh, however have been unable to find suitable accommodation to facilitate this request.

In light of the proposed demolition of the Haughton Road Scout Hall, it is timely that Council look at the Community infrastructure in Oakleigh holistically and make informed decisions that will benefit the broader Oakleigh community. I encourage my fellow Councillors to support a strategic approach to Community infrastructure planning.

This study would consider the Haughton Rd site, the Oakleigh Hall, Oakleigh Library, Oakleigh Seniors Centre, the Federation Centre and other community facilities in Oakleigh to see how this area can be improved and the best use of community space be achieved. I firmly believe that it is important that these spaces are looked at holistically to ensure that service provision, community needs and accessibility are all considered.

Engaging a specialist with strong community engagement skills to undertake this work will ensure that the sites are looked at holistically and with a community focus.

A strategic and planned approach to community infrastructure benefits Council by ensuring that financially viable options are considered and expectations are realistic and with merit. The outcome of a planned approach will ensure that the broader Oakleigh community have access to high quality, purpose built community infrastructure in the right location.

Any progression of the potential hub, post-feasibility stage, will be subject to a range of funding sources yet to be identified.

The cost of this scoping project is estimated to be approximately \$50,000. Once the project has been completed, an options paper will be brought before Council where it can be determined what is appropriate for this site and the financial commitment required.

CONCLUSION

Supporting this motion shows a commitment to strategic planning within Oakleigh, with the view to provide the broader Oakleigh community with access to high quality, purpose built community infrastructure in the right location. I urge my fellow Councillors to support this opportunity to investigate the opportunities to potentially transform community infrastructure and service delivery for the Oakleigh community.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1: Map of the site at 38-40 Haughton Rd, Oakleigh & Map of Oakleigh Hall, Library Building, 142-146 Drummond St, Oakleigh

38-40 Haughton Rd, Oakleigh



142-146 Drummond St, Oakleigh

