

# **MAGILL VILLAGE PARTNERSHIP**

## **Creating A Destination - An Australian Government Pilot Project**

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### **Abstract**

This South Australian project is a national pilot initiative being delivered through a consortium of leading government, education and industry sector expertise, funded under the Australian Government's Liveable Cities Program. It seeks to support the National Urban Policy Agenda, supporting local government innovation in developing urban environments that support future anticipated community growth, more sustainable and desirable living choice models and improved quality of life sought for local residents, workers and visitors.

The Magill Urban Village precinct, like most urban communities in Australia, is dominated by road and adhoc carparking infrastructure with little consideration for other street users. The precinct lacks a vibrant urban character, has a struggling local economy, poor physical connections, poor design quality and a disjointed relationship between precinct activities.

The project commenced in October 2012 and the Masterplanning component will be delivered by August 2013. A compelling vision and road map will guide future development in a manner that is integrated and sustainable, reflecting the needs, identity and culture of the local community. Most importantly, the project demonstrates the importance of partnership – across sectors, across professional disciplines and most importantly with local business stakeholders and the wider community.

**Key Words:** Urban design; urban regeneration; placemaking, national pilot initiative, partnership

### **Introduction**

In May 2012, a joint press release by the Hon Anthony Albanese MP and Senator Anne McEwan announced that the Australian Government would grant \$100,000 from the Liveable Cities program for the development of a national pilot project to be known as the Magill Village Partnership. It is intended that this project serve as a nationally replicable model for other Council's to build upon.

It is intended that the Magill Village Partnership be a showcase project that aligns with the State Governments 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide and the Federal Government's National Urban Policy objectives. The project outcomes will guide future development and investment decisions for the precinct, seeking to better co-ordinate both private and government investment towards

realising improved social, economic and built outcomes.

As one of only three projects in South Australia to receive support under the program, it provides local government with a profound opportunity to demonstrate leadership in governance, planning, partnership and urban design excellence.

The project involves Campbelltown City Council in joint partnership with City of Burnside Council, along with various faculties of the University of South Australia working alongside local businesses in support of research and pilot implementation outcomes as part of the project.

COMPLETE Urban Pty Ltd and their team of specialist sub-consultants, following a competitive tender process, were appointed in

September 2012 to assist both Councils' in delivering the project.

### **The Precinct**

The Magill Village precinct is a compact centre that has a unique mix of residential, commercial, retail, industrial, sporting, recreation and education facilities. The precinct also encompasses 3<sup>rd</sup> Creek and its associated open space network, providing a unique natural appeal and character to the area. Magill Road, the main retail street of the village, shares its boundary with both Campbelltown and Burnside Councils'.

The Magill Village precinct is generally of a poor design quality and lacks a vibrant urban character. Coordination is lacking between the diverse range of stakeholder/land owner interests, resulting in poor physical connection and relationship between precinct activities. Like most town centres in Australia, the precinct is dominated by road and adhoc carparking infrastructure, serving a predominantly car dependant community with little consideration for pedestrian, cyclist and public transit users.

The known changes proposed to the Magill Village precinct over the next 10 years are unprecedented and will result in a complete physical, social and economic renewal of the area. Due to its close proximity to Adelaide City, the precinct and its immediate environs represent a key development area for concentrated growth and intensified density under the State Government's 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide (30-Year Plan). This intended future growth will see the introduction of more diverse and higher density living choices, supporting a significant increase to resident population, as well as a transit mode shift away from car dependency to more sustainable transit options. This less car dependant community will, like the present community, rely increasingly on Magill Village for daily social, recreational, education and retail needs.

### **Delivering Place Identity**

The first stage for the project was the critical need to identify and develop a clear identity and brand for the precinct. At present, the place seems unremarkable, with few defining or

appealing elements that stand out. To commence this process, a comprehensive understanding of the social history for the precinct was needed. With the help of historian Peter Donovan, along with a detailed precinct audit and subsequent place mapping by COMPLETE Urban, a significant number of compelling strengths and qualities (past and present) became more apparent.

The project firstly sought to understand the existing place strengths and then sought ways to better communicate these strengths to form a more coherent local identity, reflecting more strongly the existing activities within the precinct, building upon the things that make the precinct unique and that can help set it apart.

The project team is cognisant that the end outcomes must support the existing local businesses that ultimately deliver the precinct experience - they create the unique point of difference for locals and visitors to enjoy. The project has not sought to invent a new identity or something manufactured.

What the project seeks to do is assist in bringing a greater clarity to the existing unique features – a greater sense that all of these qualities fit together and form a cohesive "village" and community. The present attributes of arts, handcrafted goods, regional food and produce – this is the experience you can get nowhere else – reflecting local talent and local culture. None of these are new discoveries, but they do form the bones of Magill Village that has been developing since 1838 when it was founded as part of the "Makgill Estate".

Elevate Graphic Design is currently developing concept ideas around a precinct brand and graphic identity. Better communicating the brand will assist in better defining Magill Village. The intent is that these works assist the traders and enhance the local economy, making the place more appealing as a regional destination for a range of activities.

### **Delivering Best Practice**

It is readily accepted that having a healthy creative class is key in gaining a competitive economic advantage in what is now a global economy. Magill is as good a location as

anywhere to nurture creative class clusters. It already has a strong education base and a good proximity to the city and a strong manufacturing base.

In November 2012, as part of informing the Vision and Guiding Principles for the project, Gehl Architects visited from Copenhagen. Gehl Architects are considered one of the world's leading urban quality experts and they spent time with the project team assessing and mapping the precinct. They also spoke at an event for local businesses and stakeholders about world's best practice in building resilient communities that are attractive and desirable to nurturing creative class. Gehl shared examples of best practice approaches that could be applied in Magill and this input was subsequently reflected in the Vision and Guiding Principles for the project.

### **Delivering a Vision and Guiding Principles**

With an understanding of the Magill Village history, its existing elements mapped, existing strengths and desired brand identified and input into world's best practice frameworks, a clear Vision and Guiding Principles for Magill Village emerged.

The Vision and Guiding Principles state very clearly what is trying to be achieved for precinct, before commencing design and masterplanning. The Vision and Guiding Principles were refined through many discussions with the local community and Council staff and elected members. They embody positive directions that will benefit everyone. Reference images were included with the Guiding Principles, to assist people to understand the character outcome or qualities of experience that could be achieved for Magill Village.

The Vision and Guiding Principles were adopted by both Councils' in May 2013 and are undergoing community consultation until mid-June 2013. The Vision and Guiding Principles form the brief for the Masterplan design.

### **Delivering a Masterplan**

The Masterplan design is currently under development and will be completed by August 2013, along with a clear implementation framework. Informed by the Vision and Guiding

Principles, the Masterplan will see the main street of Magill Village support more of a relaxing lifestyle – a space with plenty of shade, less traffic noise (less speed) and supporting a greater diversity of shops.

A clear and unified brand/identity will soon be available to consult with traders, helping the precinct to become more defined as a destination.

Important will be making the precinct more accessible to everyone, including better bike access, level footpaths, better off street car parking solutions. Gaining a stronger link from the main street to the University Campus and its Third Creek will help create a point of difference.

Catering for the needs of the community is also key. Ensuring there are great playgrounds as part of the Third Creek experience, will encourage families to spend time there, whilst also inviting more use of the shops, cafes and restaurants in the main street.

Presently in the main street of Magill Village, every business has its own carpark to the rear. The Masterplan will be seeking to combine and consolidate these carparks to improve parking efficiencies and more importantly, to release all of the driveways no longer needed off Magill Road, enabling their conversion into landscaped courtyards or new retail shops, further activating the main street.

Whilst many of the initiatives create new opportunity, to succeed, the project relies on partnerships being formed, recognition that every stakeholder has to work with others in order to achieve the vision.

### **Delivering Business Improvement Strategies**

From August 2013, the University of South Australia, through its MatchStudio initiative, will assist to deliver tangible outcomes through its multi-disciplinary student teams working with local businesses to develop concepts and proposals around business improvement strategies based upon the Masterplan directions.

This research and design work is intended to provide business owners with different ideas and

opportunities to consider and possibly pursue, whilst at the same time grounding students involved in real project and client issues.

## **Conclusion**

The Magill Village Partnership initiative is critical in achieving desired integrated outcomes in this precinct for both Campbelltown and Burnside Councils. This project represents a generational opportunity to bring a range of otherwise disparate developments and planned investments together, with the aim of exploring opportunities for creating a more integrated, innovative and sustainable precinct outcome.

It is intended that this Magill Village Partnership support procurement innovation and provide a compelling basis to direct and shape future planning policy, design and investment decisions (public & private) planned for this precinct over the next decade and align these with the National Urban Policy objectives.