

TOWN SQUARE & STEPHEN ST CONCEPT DESIGN

Community Engagement Summary Report

Revision A

29 March 2022



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01 INTRODUCTION

An extensive engagement was undertaken on the town square and Stephen Street upgrade that also encompassed the whole of site masterplan.

The buy in and level of interaction from the community was high, with an unprecedented level of responses. Whilst the engagement unearthed valuable feedback for the town square, it also garnered a significant level of response around attitudes to growth and current concerns around the township and region. This report focuses on the feedback that is specific to the public realm component of the project, Town Square and Stephen Street.

It is worth noting that the majority of the feedback focused on the Town Square rather than Stephen Street, however the themes of the town square feedback apply to Stephen Street and will be used to inform that design through detailed design.

02 KEY THEMES AND CONCERNS

2.1 Desired Usage

- A survey was undertaken with a key question being around how people would use the square, a large number of the top responses were focused around gathering and community activities, which overall supports the need for a centralized civic space.
- The survey responses tell us that the community want to be able to use this space for a variety of activities:
 - In order of importance, the top responses were;
 - Socialising / meeting place
 - Dining / shopping
 - Community events / performances
 - Lunch break / sit quietly
 - Recreation with children
- The responses also indicate that the square needs to successfully operate as both an event space to support civic gatherings and as an everyday space that will be comfortable for smaller groups, families and individuals.

2.2 Key Concerns

- There are concerns about the size of the square and the capacity to host events here.
- The community loves green space, trees and grass and want to see more of it.
- The design needs to be unique to Mount Barker
- That the space gives year round comfort that suits the climate.
- This space needs to be comfortable, with seating options, shelter, technology and play
- There are worries about the safety of users at the interface of the road and the square

03 DISCUSSION

There are concerns about the size of the square and the capacity to host events here.

The scale of the square is intentional, it is designed to work with the proposed edge conditions of retail and hospitality, the precinct and as a complementary part of the broader open space network.

The size of 2000m² is designed to create a dense and intense space for community connection. There is the ability to expand the square for larger events through the central spine and into the roadway.

The town square is part of a broader open space network, it is important that the square is considered in relationship to the district context of other open spaces. This is not the only event space in the district, there are two major reserves that are used to host large scale events within ten minutes' walk of the site. The town square is designed to be a complementary piece of the network, it will fill a gap for a central civic space that can host small to mid-sized events.

The space is purposefully designed to support events and the everyday. Embedded event infrastructure, including power, water and toilets supports community led and professional events. The embedded infrastructure will be reducing overheads and the skills required to host an event allowing for a greater range of events and ease of use.

The feedback does hint at the demand that exists in the community for activation and opens up a larger discussion about how events can be better supported across the broader open space network through promotion and infrastructure upgrades.

Everyday usage is equally as important as event usage, the design needs to support comfortable use by the everyday user such as people eating lunch, small groups and families.

The community loves green space, trees and grass and want to see more of it.

'Green' is core to the identity of the region, it is well documented that lifestyle, trees, open space and the environment are very important to the community and forms a key part of the region's identity. This feedback supports the approach of incorporating a central turfed area bordered by trees that provide opportunities for sun and shade when so desired. As a hard-wearing urban space, a balance between paving and turf has been struck, with an overhead tree canopy creating opportunities to seek shade if required and to further aid in softening the space.

The design needs to be unique to Mount Barker

In creating a space that **is unique to Mount Barker**, the core identity of the community needs to be expressed in physical design and use.

One of the core ways the identity is expressed is in the representation of the 'green' landscape and lifestyle as discussed in the previous paragraph. The design proposes a mixed approach to trees, with two arcs of deciduous trees framing the square with an iconic native at the apex. This approach whilst broadly supported will need to be further explored in design to ensure tree section reflects the unique identity of Mount Barker, but also achieves microclimate objectives.

Another focus of the design is local materiality, the feedback supports this theme and the expression of local materials in the design should continue to be pursued.

Another way to express identity is through **storytelling** in public art. The use of the Peramangk shield and the water themes are supported and will continue to be pursued in the detailed design. A key recommendation is to seek further external funding to engage local artists to create significant public artworks for the space that would range from ephemeral and digital to permanent pieces.

The square as a stage, **community** as the actor. A significant portion of the feedback focused on the ways the community want to use the space. One of the success measures of the town square will be how the design supports the activation strategy to be delivered by the development partner over the first three years of use.

The activation strategy and teaching the community how to use this space is equally as important as the design and must be considered as a key driver behind the design resolution.

That the space gives year-round comfort that suits the climate. This space needs to be comfortable, with seating options, shelter, technology, and play

The comfort of the space has been a strong theme, and can be divided into two categories, microclimate or thermal comfort and amenity comfort.

The concern regarding the microclimate of the square reflects the extremes of temperature faced by Mount Barker, with wet and cold winters and very hot summers the space will need to cater to both extremes. The current design addresses solar access in the layout of the space and the use of deciduous trees. Going forward the design will need to consider hard canopy shelter from the rain for users in winter and assess the detailed locations of seating to cater to extremes of the climate.

Amenity comfort is also reflective of the communities strong desire to be able to use the space year round for a range of activities, requests for areas of play, a variety of seating and charging capacity will be included in the detailed design phase.

There are concerns about the safety of users at the interface of the road and the square

The square has a deliberate orientation to open onto Morphett Street to create a permeable and linked space that encourages flow of users between Gawler Street, other shopping centres and the site.

It is acknowledged that with this sense of openness comes risk in the interface of vehicle traffic and pedestrians and users.

Going forward the design will need to consider the zoning of activities within the site to minimize the interaction of users and vehicles, particularly young children. A range of physical barriers, such as bollards, landscaping and trees will be considered to provide an edge between vehicles and the square.

At a district scale, the broader traffic plan will need to consider the prioritisation of pedestrians and vehicles and targeted slow streets at key places in the township.

04 DESIGN RESOLUTIONS

4.1 Summary

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- Overall, the feedback broadly supported the layout and intent of the concept design presented. The large amount of feedback relating to desired uses and character has provided valuable information on the focus areas and additions to the design as a part of the detailed design process. The following chapters summarise the key design focus areas to inform the detailed design of the town square.
- The majority of feedback focused on the town square rather than Stephen Street concept, however the Stephen Street design will be progressed using the broader themes of identity and comfort to continue the development of the design, with a focus on pedestrian safety, placemaking and character and linking the Gawler Street precinct to the proposed development.
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4.2 Size and Events

- The proposed size of square to be retained. Further research required into how to facilitate events through embedded infrastructure to include in the detailed design, this will include
- Access to public restrooms
- Power requirements
- Lighting
- Accessible water and drainage
- Data points/public access wifi
- Further research and collaboration with community on the type and scale of events that could be held here is required to ensure the design supports intended usage.

4.3 Safety

Detailed design will need to consider the use of moveable and fixed barriers along the Morphett Street interface, consideration will be given to;

- Bollards
- Planters
- Level Changes
- Changes in materials
- Trees and planting

Zone activities by locating areas likely to be used for play into the heart of the site to minimise risk.

A broader approach to traffic movement may consider a slow zone adjacent the site, or road treatments that promote slower movement of vehicles and awareness of pedestrians.

4.4 Identity

Landscape

Trees and planting

- The landscape and 'green' nature of the design is supported and reflects the regions' identity.

The selection of tree species needs further investigation. The design will retain the use of 2 different scaled deciduous trees around the edges to create a warm in winter, cool in summer space. The final selection needs to support a year-round comfortable microclimate but also reflect the iconic autumnal treescapes of the hills.

The central 'icon tree' at the apex of the shield will be a native that is representative of the area, there is some debate of the suitability of the mountain gum so further research is needed. This tree needs to have significant scale and form to anchor the central space.

Morphett Street tree planting provides further opportunity to bring contrast to the trees within the square and will be critical in defining the entry experience for pedestrians.

Materials

The proposals intention to use local materials; stone, bricks, timber, that reflect the local character will be continued in the detailed design. High priority will be given to using materials that are consistent with and reflect the built form and landscapes of the hills.

Stories and Public Art

The use of the Peramangk shield and the rivers is supported and will continue to be used in the design. Further recommendation is to seek external funding to engage local artists to create significant public artworks for the space that would range from ephemeral and digital to permanent pieces.

Community

- The events and activation program by delivered by project development partner needs to be further detailed to inform the design.
- Embedded event infrastructure is supported and will be included in the detailed design as per item 4.1.

4.5 Comfort

- Thermal comfort
- The use of deciduous trees to control solar access across the seasons is supported. Further work on species selection is required to tie into responses related to identity and uniqueness.
- Solar mapping and sun shading analysis needs to be undertaken in collaboration with the development of the adjacent buildings to ensure solar access to the public realm and inform the locations of trees, seating and activities.
- Hard canopy shelters need to be introduced into the design to allow for wet weather usage.
- Amenity Comfort
- Day to Day comfort is important to the community, the detailed design needs to include:
 - Tables and chairs, a variety of seating configurations that suit a range of interactions
 - Shade and shelter – seasonal comfort is critical
 - Charging points for electronics
 - Accessible footpaths that facilitate movement between tenancies
 - A mix of outdoor dining areas supporting the adjacent tenancies
 - Embedded event infrastructure; lighting, power, water, toilets, data points
 - Space to move, grassed areas
 - Sculptural/ artistic items that encourage play
 - Water fountains
 - Public toilets and change facilities
 - Feature lighting