

Committee for Ballarat Position Statement: Civic Hall Site

9th October 2013

BACKGROUND

Committee for Ballarat is a visionary membership body that has a proud history of championing social and economic growth in our region.

We advocate for responsible and dynamic development that encourages innovation, provides sustainable employment opportunities and improves the quality of life for all in our community. Our members want to live in a region where all residents can enjoy a prosperous social and economic future because our leaders of today had great vision and strength to act on that vision.

The thing that best defines the work of the Committee is that we work with our members (over 100 local and regional businesses and organisations) as well as local, state and federal governments to look beyond the horizon to achieve economic prosperity and sustainability for this region.

PREVIOUS REPRESENTATIONS

Committee for Ballarat has made a series of representations to council as part of the Community consultation process on the future of the Civic Hall site. In our submission dated the 9th May 2012, we confirmed our position of supporting the City of Ballarat's strategic aspiration for "Revitalising the CBD" and delivering a vision that aims to see Ballarat develop into a vibrant and exciting city.

In addition, we stated that Committee continues to strongly support Option Z as the preferred option for the redevelopment of the Civic Hall site. Option Z was also preferred by the majority of councillors when it was voted on in 2011.¹

We recommended the following for the site:

- It must incorporate an iconic building that will act as a magnet for both residents and visitors and as a centrepiece for the CBD precinct. The current Civic Hall must be demolished to make way for a more contemporary structure that is not only iconic but features modern and energy efficient design.
- It must be respectful of our cultural heritage and be a place that future generations and new residents will be justifiably proud of.
- It must feature enclosed and open spaces designated for public use
- It should provide easy and attractive access from the library to Mair Street.
- It must provide for commercial activity that will deliver services to a growing population and provide valuable income to the City. This could be incorporated within the iconic centrepiece building as well as in separate, sympathetically designed buildings.

MEMBER SURVEY & FEEDBACK

A survey of our members was conducted in August 2013 with 55 respondents (54%) completing the survey out of a total membership base of 101.

The result of this survey re-affirmed previous representations made by Committee with 98% of respondents calling for the activation of the City Hall precinct, including demolition of the Civic Hall, to unlock its full potential, create a sense of place indicative of a major regional city, which is progressive and forward thinking.

The findings of this survey was endorsed by the Committee Board on the 5th August 2013 and re-affirmed this position at its 8th October 2013 Board meeting following Resolution R356/13 on the Ballarat Civic Hall passed at the Council meeting held on 25th September 2013.

¹ City of Ballarat – Civic Hall Master Plan options prepared November 2010 and assessed by Urban Design were designed to meet the following selection criteria:

- (i) The master plan must incorporate the preferred land uses.
- (ii) Built form must have regard to the surrounding streets and retention of views.
- (iii) A new corporate precinct should be established incorporating outstanding urban design.
- (iv) Adequate car parking should be provided on site to support development and public parking should also be provided.
- (v) The site master plan should address interface with the existing library.
- (vi) A substantial public plaza should be provided.

POSITION STATEMENT

Committee for Ballarat supports the City of Ballarat's strategic aspiration for the Civic Hall Precinct ^{2 (Attached)} for delivering a vision that aims to see Ballarat develop into a vibrant and exciting city.

This vision for Ballarat's CBD embraces our proud cultural heritage. Equally, it aspires to deliver a thriving retail, commercial, educational, cultural and recreational precinct that, when complete, will mean that Ballarat can truly lay claim to the title of Victoria's Capital of the West.

There is a unique opportunity to develop the former Civic Hall site in a way that portrays Ballarat as a vibrant, progressive and exciting regional city. A place respectful of its cultural heritage but where this does not become a "barrier for change". A place where its' potential is not compromised and a place that we can be truly proud to live, work and recreate.

Plans for the Civic Hall site cannot be looked upon in isolation and its future must be considered in conjunction with master plans for the Ballarat Railway, Ballarat Hospital & ACU University precincts, together with the SMB Campus, Armstrong Street upgrade and also plans for a major exhibition & events precinct at Eureka Stadium.

Strong and visionary leadership is required by council to realise a vision for future generations. The arguments for activation of the Civic Hall precinct are strong.

- Ballarat's Population is projected to grow to 128,000 by 2026³
- Projected shortage of commercial floor space which will see Ballarat require an additional 51,000m² of commercial floor space minimum by 2030⁴
- Projected 1,731 professional jobs growth in Ballarat by 2026⁵
- Opportunity to capture \$372 million per annum of escape expenditure from professional services⁵
- The increase in jobs will contribute to increased CBD activation⁶

Our members agree with public opinion that the Civic Hall site is of historical and social significance. However, we also note the heritage appraisal of the Civic Hall site conducted by Lovell Chen (Aug 2010) states under sections 4.5 & 5.2.

.... The Ballarat Civic Hall lacks a strong relationship to the surrounding built form of the heritage precinct in particular. Being a large purpose-built municipal function facility of the 1950s, on a very substantial site, the Civic Hall clearly does not fit the pattern of the nearby Fine-grained historical retail and commercial development of inner Ballarat, as captured within the Lydiard Street Precinct.

.... The assessment undertaken for this report confirms that the Civic Hall is of local historical and social significance.

.... Turning to the architectural value of the Civic Hall, the more detailed analysis and comparison undertaken for this assessment highlights the comparatively poor architectural merit of the building, and its unsatisfactory urban design outcome. The Civic Hall, although competently executed, belongs to an earlier generation of building design and is markedly outmoded for a building completed in 1956.

We now have the opportunity to create unique Regional Australian Space. A Community Hub providing a healthy environment, with arts, culture, entertainment and green space. A space that will deliver considerable economic benefit, with funding likely to involve a mix of private and public investment.

Committee strongly encourages the City of Ballarat to act quickly, decisively, with strong conviction and with vision to restore the site to its rightful position as a place of community pride.

If that process is delayed, the site will continue to languish as it has for the past 11 years, and risk becoming a missed opportunity and contributing to even greater public tension, division and discontent.

John Kilgour
Chief Executive Officer
Committee for Ballarat

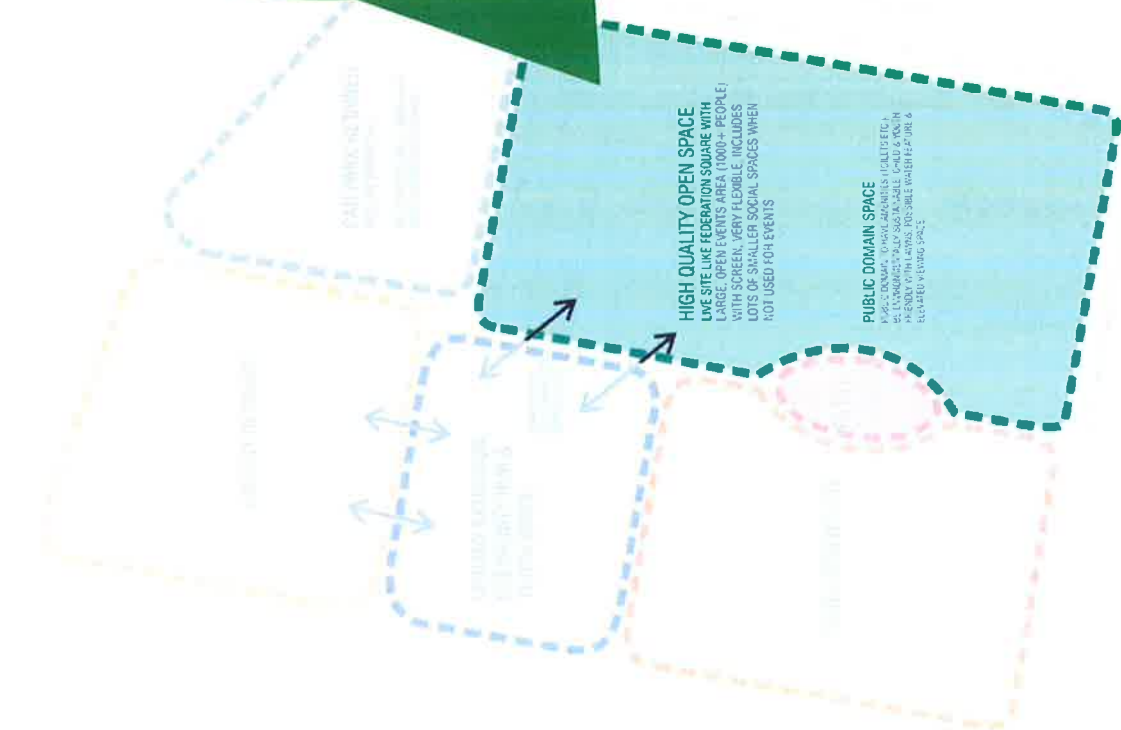
² City of Ballarat – Councillor Aspirations and Strategic Drivers for the Civic Hall Site

³ Victoria in Futures

⁴ City of Ballarat – Activity Centre Strategy

⁵ City of Ballarat – Economic Development Strategy

⁶ City of Ballarat – Ballarat CBD Strategy



Links to key city spaces
Arts, culture and program spaces
Usable green space
Events space

STRATEGIC DRIVERS

A flexible Community space
(Civic Hall Community Engagement Process)

Places for rest and relaxation
(Civic Hall Community Engagement Process)

Place for entertainment
(Civic Hall Community Engagement Process)

Place for large numbers of people to gather in the Heart of the City
(Civic Hall Community Engagement Process)

Pop-up opportunities
(Civic Hall Community Engagement Process)

Legacy for future
(Civic Hall Community Engagement Process)

Generate \$231k into the local economy for every 1000 overnight stays for events
(Remplan)

Incorporates a range of public event opportunities
(Civic Hall Community Engagement Process)





**Office Space for Businesses
Development Opportunity
Mix of funding**

STRATEGIC DRIVERS

Population Growth 128,000 by 2026
(Victoria in Futures)

Projected shortage of commercial floor space. Ballarat will require an additional 51,000m² of commercial floor space minimum by 2030.
(Activity Centre Strategy)

Projected 1,731 professional jobs growth projected in Ballarat by 2026
(Economic Development Strategy)

Capture \$372 million per annum of escape expenditure from professional services
(Economic Development Strategy)

Increase in jobs will contribute to increased CBD activation
(Ballarat CBD Strategy)

Offices and Commercial opportunities
(Civic Hall Community Engagement Process)



LIBRARY EXPANSION / COMMUNITY HUB / YOUTH SPACE

Appendix 1
ASPIRATION

Attachment 4

STRATEGIC DRIVERS

- Library needs expansion (double the existing floor plate required) to meet current and future user requirements. *(People Places 2012)*
- Community and learning connection helps to build builds community belonging and benefits lifelong learning. *(People Places 2012)*
- 18,000 people aged 12-24 live in Ballarat. *(ABS 2011)*
- Create new and diverse early year's engagement opportunities as there is currently a gap in Ballarat *(Children's Services/MEYP)*
- Gateway location for all ages to try new activities *(People Places 2012)*
- Collaborative, Hi Tech learning hub for all community. *(People Places 2012/Youth Strategy 2013-2017)*
- Ballarat has a higher percentage of 12-24 year old people living in the city than the state average *(Profile: Young people living in the City of Ballarat - Informing the Youth Strategy 2013-2017)*
- Good practice for site to be within a short walking distance to service providers. *(Profile: Young people living in the City of Ballarat - Informing the Youth Strategy 2013-2017)*
- Adaptive youth spaces that can change *(Profile: Young people living in the City of Ballarat - Informing the Youth Strategy 2013-2017)*
- Integrated youth friendly space is important for young people to actively engage in the community *(Profile: Young people living in the City of Ballarat - Informing the Youth Strategy 2013-2017)*
- Increasingly important for young people to have a third safe place (1 –Home, 2 – School) for community interaction. Community Hub can offer this alternative. *(Profile: Young people living in the City of Ballarat - Informing the Youth Strategy 2013-2017)*



STRATEGIC DRIVERS

- Opportunity to develop a multi deck cost effectively without procuring an additional site
- Increased activation at the site will require more car parking
- Provision of car parking in the CBD is constraining growth
- Provide future capability to expand car parking to meet increasing population growth

