

At any one time the Belmont Council is working on a range of projects designed to improve the health & well-being of its residents. Part of this process involves community consultation. It needs an informed and responsive citizenry to do this effectively. Part of our role is to monitor this process and provide feedback.

Over the fence? At the last City of Belmont Ordinary Council Meeting (OCM) 25 June 2019 a development application for a Community Purpose building (providing support services to vulnerable young people) at Lot 801 (49) Hardey Road was put forward for consideration. The site is at the back of the old Telstra building, 80 m from the Great Eastern Highway (GEH) intersection.

<http://www.belmont.wa.gov.au/Council/Portal/CouncillorMinuteAndMeeting/Minutes%20and%20Agendas%20Documents/Agenda%20-%20Ordinary%20Council%20Meeting%20-%2025%20June%202019.pdf>



Whilst the provision of such a facility for our youth is a welcome addition to Belmont’s infrastructure, its location and bulk has generated much concern among neighbouring residents who believe their amenity will be adversely affected due to issues such as extra noise at night, loss of visual privacy due to potential overlooking,

and loss of winter sunshine due to overshadowing, etc.

The existing old yard over their back fences will be replaced by a 3 storey (11m ht) building (with an undercroft carpark catering for 23 vehicles) which will be used continually from 8am - 9pm, seven days a week by different groups entering and leaving throughout the day.

Whether or not the existing zoning allows this type and scale of development (abutting residential areas), it raises broader concerns for the well-being and amenity of residents into the future. And how our Council balances conflicting claims / demands between developers and residents. The recent surge in petrol stations along this section of GEH and their impact on traffic management and the neighbouring community indicates the difficulties involved.

Generally disability access codes, standards & regulations require a continuous accessible path of travel (accessway) from the main point of pedestrian entry at the allotment boundary to a new premise / building. Exemptions and concessions can be provided. The photo below shows how tight it will be.



One of the Council’s conditions for this development is the provision of 29 bicycle bays. Commendable stuff;

just a pity there isn’t a safe, dedicated bicycle path along Hardey Road or any of the connecting streets!

The Traffic Impact Assessment Report (commissioned by the applicant) provided support for this development application and as a result, “... the traffic and access implications of the proposal are considered conditionally acceptable”, by Council (p 25, OCM minutes, refer link above).

In its Conclusions on p13 (point 7), the Traffic Impact Assessment Report states that, “Roadway width at the subject site is such that there is **sufficient width, approximately 6m, in the eastbound/southbound lane to accommodate a car passing on the right of a left turning car entering the subject site.**”, (refer link below, Attachment 5 of OCM minutes)

<http://www.belmont.wa.gov.au/Council/Portal/CouncillorMinuteAndMeeting/Minutes%20and%20Agendas%20Documents/Attachment%205%20-%20Item%2012.1%20refers%20Traffic%20Impact%20Assessment%20Report.pdf>

However, heading east/southbound along Hardey Road from the GEH intersection entails the merging of 2 lanes of traffic just before where a car might be turning left into the subject site. Or where a bus is pulling into or out from the existing bus stop.

Another reason provided in the Report’s Conclusions in support of the proposal is that, “**The impact of any vehicular movements is reduced on the basis that the patronage of the site is characterised by youth who are under the driving age and will be**

dropped off/picked up”, (p13).

But as anyone who does a school run would know, drop-off / pick-up periods have problematic traffic consequences!

Of major concern is the impact this and other already approved developments, such as the “Chase Apartments” at 239 GEH, will have on traffic flow along Hardey Road.

Then there is the soon to be re-advertised “Golden Gateway Precinct” (GGP) plan where more vehicles will be directed along the proposed upgraded Resolution / Raconteur Drive towards Hardey Road, away from Stoneham Road, which will be downgraded.

According to Flyt Pty Ltd (transport consultants) who prepared a ‘Movement and Access Strategy’ for the GGP Local Structure Plan (LSP) the Hardey Rd (south) / GEH intersection was given a LOS (Level of Service) rating in 2016 of E for **AM** peak hour traffic 8 – 9 am (**where F equates to a bad level of service**) with average delay of 61 sec. Future modelling predicts LOS **F**, average delay 80 sec. in 2031. For **PM** peak hour traffic 4 – 5pm the LOS rating in 2016 was D, av. delay 54 sec. Future modelling (with expected development) predicts LOS **F**, av. delay 82 sec. in 2031.

(Refer OCM minutes 26 February 2019, Item 12.6, p88 (95), **Attachment 19**, p66, in link below)

<http://www.belmont.wa.gov.au/Council/Portal/CouncillorMinuteAndMeeting/Minutes%20and%20Agendas%20Documents/26%20February%202019%20OCM%20Minutes.pdf>

All this means longer waiting times at lights for commuters and increased likelihood of accidents in the future. It will also adversely impact on pedestrian, cycling and public transport services along Hardey Road. These services were addressed in Flyt’s Transport Strategy for the “Great Eastern Highway - Corridor Plan” commissioned by Council, (p29, refer link below).

Hardey Road was given a Walkscore of 41% meaning most errands require a car (Car-dependent). 100% equates to a walkers paradise! In terms of public transport it rated 48% meaning a few public transportation options. Try walking to a bus stop in summer round here with no tree canopy shade.

<http://www.belmont.wa.gov.au/Services/Planning/Documents/Great%20Eastern%20Highway%20Urban%20Corridor%20Strategy%20-%20Appendix%202%20-%20Transport%20Strategy.pdf>

Hardey Road is a Distributor ‘B’ Road, which ... “are often older roads with a traffic demand in excess of that originally intended. They are managed by local government and typically carry between **6000-8000** vehicles per day.” (Flyt’s Transport Strategy, p14/15.) According to Main Road’s traffic map Hardey Road is carrying an average of **8,260** vehicles per day, Mon – Fri, @ 2018/19.

<https://trafficmap.mainroads.wa.gov.au/map>

Anyway ... back to the application for 49 Hardey Road ... a community youth centre such as that proposed would be a wonderful asset and place activator if it was adjoined to one of our many parks. The “Wilson Park Precinct”, next to the Surrey Road

Bike Boulevard, comes to mind, where its incorporation would enhance the community and economic life of the area. And the youth would be surrounded by a more nurturing environment.



While we’re over this side of town ...

Main Roads has been looking at upgrading Orrong Road between Leach Highway and Great Eastern Highway. They have released some options and a preferred concept to address the worsening traffic congestion on this picturesque, tree-lined approach to the city of Perth.

These can be viewed on this site, <https://www.mysaytransport.wa.gov.au/orrong-road-planning-study> and there is an online survey available for your feedback.

Its preference is to build a below ground expressway (open to the sky) which would improve travel times along Orrong Road and more importantly, for Belmont residents, improve connectivity across it to Lathlain and beyond.

Unfortunately all those lovely trees will have to go. I guess the option of tunnelling underneath them was too expensive or not technically feasible. Hopefully our Council and the town of Victoria Park can come to an arrangement where they could be transplanted over to our side of the border.

Recommended reading:

Basic Income: And How We Can Make It Happen. Guy Standing, Pelican Books, 2017.

Your feedback. If you would like to submit an article that is relevant to the residents of Belmont, or you would like to join our group, refer contact details below.