

Bulahdelah Highway Service Centre Planning Agreement Reference Group

Date	17 January 2023	Time	5pm
Venue	Bulahdelah School or Arts Hall – Crawford Street, Bulahdelah	Note-taker	Liam Drinkwater
Present	Cr Paul Sandilands, Cr Kathryn Stinson, Paul De Szell, Arthur Baker, Kevin Carter, Dale Bradshaw, Barbara Gordon, Judy Dixon, Helen Dafter, Aaron Kelly, Liam Drinkwater		
Apologies	Nicola Stockdale, Allan Freihaut, Gary Ekert		

Notes:

1	<p>Introduction and Welcome</p> <p>Cr Kathryn Stinson welcomed everyone and acknowledged county. An extended welcome was given to Cr Paul Sandilands as the newest member of the committee.</p>
2	<p>Name a hidden gem” challenge presented to the team</p> <p>Several sites listed including Bulahdelah Mountain/Alum Mountain trail, The town’s people and community spirit, coffee and cafes, riverfront potential</p>
3	<p>Aaron Kelly, MidCoast Council Land Use Planner, gave a Presentation of the Bulahdelah Highway Service Centre</p> <p><u>Key points</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rezoning completed. Which means that the land is now zoned appropriately if Council receives a Development Application (D.A) for a service centre. No DA has currently been received. • Council cannot control when private landowners lodge Development applications or decide to develop. • The changing nature of highway service centres was discussed, including the future in electric vehicles (EV). • Some projects that have been identified such as installation of shade sail etc. could be eligible for part or full state/federal funding. • The total contribution to be paid is \$500,000 plus CPI increase. Council currently have a \$50,000 security deposit (non-refundable) from the Planning Agreement. This could be used now for a priority improvement idea.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outstanding contribution is only payable on completion of the highway service centre. Note the Reference Groups concern that no completed Service Centre = no remaining contribution funds are payable which risks funding opportunities for the projects identified by the group. <p><u>General Group Discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue raised that the Reference Group was not notified of Council Meeting information regarding the execution of the Planning Agreement and agreement to funding amount therein since last reference group meeting. Concern was noted and it was indicated that the most recent Council resolution and agenda would be provided by email to Reference Group members. • The town's recent popularity as a stopover point adjacent to the highway is a big reason to fund revitalisation projects in town. Large number of visitors stop in from northbound direction. • Council's work in the Open Space and Recreation Plan was discussed. No specific immediate implications for Bulahdelah relating to Reference Group work. • Footpath replacement and widening program underway. High priority for existing paths, despite already limited numbers of paved paths in town, as they receive the majority of foot traffic in town. Certain section of existing path in urgent need of re-grading to alleviate safety concerns was discussed. • Promotion of cultural tours and maintenance done by Karuah Land Council an idea put forward previously. New management has set this back and Forestry Corp will need to step up in order to further cultural tours. • Alum Mountain Trail: need to erect a new sign at base of hiking track and smaller ones at certain intervals along the walking track to guide bushwalkers (with notes about distance to destination). • Many projects may rely on the generosity of volunteers, but volunteer rates are waning. • Skywalk put forward again as major attraction idea. • Idea raised as "Love Bulahdelah Day" involving community/service groups general cleaning of Town Centre • There exists a lack of EV charging stations between Brisbane and Sydney, with long distances between stations, existing stations are often full, with a long wait often encountered for recharging opportunities. May be progressed as a further idea.
4	<p>Round up of works in Bulahdelah since last meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sportsground floodlights installed • NSW Forestry Bullah-delah mountain walk upgrades including signage • New amenities block on south side of River • New footpaths • New Highway Signage
5	<p>Recap of previous ideas raised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public wi-fi • Alum Mountain walking track access, and signage at the base of the track • Sportsground drainage and lighting • Centre Heritage/Historical Walk

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBD Parking • Skywalk/boardwalk • Solar farm • Improved footpaths and cycleways • Outdoor chess set • Playground improvements (including shade sails) • First Nations cultural tours
6	<p>Question for the attendees: would the community prefer projects benefiting the community, or visitors?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A general consensus was gathered on doing it more for the visitors, considering the tourist expenditure and flow-on economic benefits that doing such can bring to the town. • Investments in what visitors will be using e.g. playgrounds and skateparks, etc can be beneficial for both visitors and locals • Towns with skywalks in bypassed towns are an attraction for many highway travellers, and a boom for their economies, including Macksville. This could be key for Bulahdelah, especially in light of its ideal proximity to the bypass relative to other bypassed towns on the north coast.
7	<p>Redundant/irrelevant project proposals agreed to discard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public wi-fi – rarely used as visitors used own data • Community Solar Farm – too expensive, but community solar battery storage farms were raised as alternatives
8	<p>Prioritisation of list of improvements for Bulahdelah using existing \$50,000 security deposit funding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Wade Park</i> Shade sail for the play equipment and/or new play equipment. 2. <i>Town Centre Historical Walk</i> Plaques and/or other options for heritage walks. MidCoast Stories volunteer group can develop interactive heritage walk or other State heritage funding could be sought. 3. <i>Southern entrance beautification</i> Needs maintenance and improvement including repainting, rectification of sign. Safety issues were discussed regarding the space to work in between the guard rail and road. Was discussed that community groups could work together such as in the Gloucester example.
	<p>For next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to investigate costings for preliminary ideas raised for initial spending of \$50,000 security deposit

Next meeting

TBC