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2020-2021 Business Plan and Budget
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Response to City of Adelaide 2020-21 Business Plan and Budget

SECRA welcomes the opportunity to respond to the City of Adelaide Draft 2020-2021 Business Plan and Budget, which includes the Recovery Principals that underpin the Council's response to COVID 19. SECRA would like Council to consider an additional Recovery Principal "to develop strong, inclusive, united, and resilient city communities" to reflect the impact of COVID 19 upon city residents.

The South East City Residents Association (SECRA) speaks for some 100 members and has the following objectives:

- Promotion of interests of residents of the south-east precinct of the City of Adelaide and adjoining areas.
- Preserve and enhance the inherent character and heritage of the neighbourhood including the adjacent area of the Park Lands, and in particular, Victoria Park.
- Support the provision of local retail and service facilities while retaining the "village atmosphere" of Hutt Street.

SECRA also encourages our members to make individual responses to formal consultation processes.

COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES FOR 2020-21

Question 1: Do you support the draft Key Activities as the Council's priorities for 2020-21?

SECRA strongly supports the following Key Activities:

1.03 Continue support for the Adelaide Zero Project and other initiatives to achieve functional zero homelessness. There is a shortage of emergency accommodation which impacts upon our community. SECRA believes that the Council, as an advocate, should require the State Government to provide a range of suitable accommodation for the homeless.

1.08 Implement City Access projects (walking, cycling and public transport) in partnership with the State Government, including the North-South and East-West city bikeways. SECRA supports the completion of the two significant bikeways due to the financial commitments made by both state and local governments. SECRA also supports the inclusion of the Park Land Trail through Lot 14 that was recommended by the State Planning Commission and adopted by the Minister for Planning in April 2020.

2.09 Activate main streets and develop unique precincts to support a diverse range of businesses and communities. SECRA is an active participant on the *South Ward Streets and Movement Study* and seeks the funding of initiatives raised through this process, including:

- remove unsafe U-turns on Hutt Street near Carrington Street where pedestrians cross.
- restore the pedestrian lights on Hutt Street to COVID 19 cycles to allow east-west travel.
- retain the current route of the City Connector Bus for across city transport.

- reduce traffic speed on Hutt Street to a 40 km/h speed limit.
- implement a program to educate users in the multi-use of footpaths, particularly by cycles and scooters.

4.01 Increase street tree canopies and green infrastructure in city hot spots and public spaces. For instance, SECRA suggests accessing funding from Green Adelaide to develop landscape corridors allowing East-West movement and a North-South corridor linking the city and Park Lands.

4.02 Implement improvements to city-wide waste and recycling services to support the transition to the circular economy. SECRA members are strong supporters of initiatives which minimises our environmental impact and prepares for and responds to a changing climate.

4.05 Enhance biodiversity in the Park Lands and connect our community to nature. SECRA looks forward to the *Brown Hill and Keswick Creek Stormwater Management Project*, which will introduce a wetland environment and interpretative centre into Victoria Park.

5.01 Review and improve the way we collect and present data to share insights with the community. SECRA thinks that the Council needs to review its meeting procedures to reflect its role as the custodian of good local governance in the interests of a safe, accessible and well-planned city. SECRA also believes that the Council should endeavour to employ a diverse, multicultural workforce, including indigenous people who reflect the make-up of our community to reveal the full diversity within the city.

COUNCIL SERVICES

Question 2: Which service categories are most important to you?

As our objectives show SECRA's members:

- care deeply about the Adelaide Park Lands we would rate those service categories that support and enhance the Park Lands, in particular horticultural services, as essential.
- value Council services that strengthen our community, such as the Hutt Street library and the Box Factory Community Centre.
- rate highly safe streets and regularly use active transport such as walking and cycling, and public transport, including the City Connector bus.
- appreciate Hutt Street businesses and services, including the post office and the one remaining bank, Bank SA, and our heritage buildings and streetscapes, and
- environmental services are also essential, given the declared climate emergency.

These objectives lead SECRA to acknowledge the importance of the following services (in no order)

- Policy and planning services
- Waste, natural resources and environmental services
- Arts community development and civic services
- Infrastructure and asset management and
- Regulatory and statutory services.

In particular, SECRA would like to acknowledge:

The importance of the Adelaide Park Lands though the following:

1.01 Leverage the Adelaide Park Lands to promote health, wellbeing and lifestyle experience. SECRA notes the increased use of the Park Lands during and since COVID 19 restrictions.

3.02 Pursue world and State heritage listing for the Adelaide Park Lands and city layout. SECRA believes that it is not enough to list a layout; there must be protection for the built and natural heritage within the Adelaide Park Lands. SECRA is disappointed that the Park Lands are continually viewed as seen as a source of land for public and commercial developments including the O-Bahn City Access Project and the construction of an office tower and casino extension on Festival Plaza. SECRA was also disappointed that the Council, as custodian of the Park Lands, was prepared to consider the unsolicited proposal from the Adelaide Football Club to establish its headquarters in the Park Lands at the Adelaide Aquatic Centre site.

3.09 Connect City users to place through curated city experiences. SECRA believes that the Park Land Trail provides an opportunity to introduce visitors and new residents to the city.

Importance of Asset Maintenance.

3.06 Develop asset management plans to provide for future generations SECRA encourages the Council to consider the cost of future maintenance in developing infrastructure projects. An example is the new plantings along the Frome Road cycle paths that were not factored into the horticultural budget. SECRA is concerned about the management and development of the Adelaide Park Lands as a critical asset of the city in times of financial crisis. Moreover, the Park Lands can buffer residents against the realities of climate change such as high temperatures, reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality.

3.07 Deliver diverse parks and play spaces SECRA believes that the Park Lands require more money and resources in the asset maintenance budget to maintain existing paths, pedestrian bridges, gardens, trees, fitness circuits (in Victoria Park and elsewhere) given the increasing use of the Park Lands for health and wellbeing through individual fitness and recreational activities.

5.08 Protect and conserve heritage-listed Adelaide Park Lands A threat to the Park Lands is allowing unsolicited bids for development on the Park Lands. The community needs to be consulted before concept plans are prepared with a high degree of secrecy by both the administration and the elected body. SECRA believes that the Adelaide Park Lands, which is first and foremost a (managed) natural system, must remain open, accessible, 'green', public space.

Value of regulatory and Statutory Services

5.01 Review and improve the way we collect and present data to share insights with the community SECRA's supports the work of the Council in responding to the State Governments reform of the Planning and Design Code, and SECRA is seeking to:

- restore properties lost from heritage protections,
- strengthen the criteria for the demolition of buildings, and
- support community consultation processes for significant developments.

Acknowledging climate change and waste, natural resources and environmental services

4.02 Implement improvements to city-wide waste and recycling services to support the transition to the circular economy. SECRA notes the conflict between car parking as a significant income stream for Council and the waste, natural resource and environmental services objectives responding to climate change. Further SECRA believes that the Council should withdraw its support for Adelaide 500 as it not congruent with the Council's environmental goals, is losing supporters and its cultural significance is lost now that there is no car making in Adelaide, and there is an alternative purpose-built facility at the Bend.

Importance of arts community development and civic services

2.09 Activate main streets and develop unique precincts to support a diverse range of business and communities

SECRA is represented on the Lord Mayor's Hutt Street Round Table established to address challenges and identify opportunities to improve the amenity of Hutt Street for businesses, residents and city users. SECRA is pleased to note the funding for this project, as well as the establishment of a cultural and recreational hub, and improvements to the built environment.

SECRA notes and supports other key activities such as public art, cultural and civic infrastructure, promoting cultural diversity and preeminence in music.

Policy and Planning Services.

The title doesn't do justice to how essential this category is to the liveability within the city. In addition to those objectives already mentioned, SECRA supports the following:

- 1.07 Develop plans to improve mobility and physical and digital access and connectedness.
- 2.07 Develop spatial plans to support the growth in the city.
- 2.08 Facilitate creative uses of the public realm and underutilised city buildings.

3.03 Encourage smart, creative, adaptive reuse of heritage assets, including through incentives and promotion, and

5.08 Implement new approaches to engaging the community in Council decision-making.

Question 3 Which services are least important to you?

SECRA does not wish to respond to this question.

Question 4. Which service categories is Council performing best in?

In terms of customer service, SECRA has appreciated the advice provided by:

- *Asset Maintenance*: SECRA acknowledges that the horticultural services group maintain and improve the south-east of the city's urban environment to a high standard.
- *Arts Community Development and Civic Services*: Council staff in this service category are helpful, dedicated and approachable, and SECRA finds they have a model of community consultation that works.
- *Policy and Planning Services*: SECRA finds planning staff very approachable, and they have provided outstanding assistance on heritage matters and the complex issues raised by the new Planning and Design Code.

Question 5. Which service categories is Council performing worst in?

SECRA briefly outlines some issues it has confronted recently:

- *Commercial Operations* - The consultation processes around the establishment of the corporate headquarters of the Adelaide Football Club in the Park Lands were inadequate, resulting in considerable reputational damage for the Council and substantial resident disquiet.
- *Economic growth* – SECRA believes the response to COVID 19 will be defining for Adelaide, and we note the Council's response.
- *Infrastructure and Asset Management* - SECRA notes that increasingly infrastructure project management is being undertaken by outside contractors rather than by Council staff.
- *Property management* - Given the lack of information on two major projects, SECRA will adopt a wait and see approach to the developments at 88 O'Connell Street and the Adelaide Central Market. However, SECRA is concerned at the impact upon ratepayers should these projects not return the benefits proposed.

COUNCIL'S BUDGET

Question 6. In which service categories would you prioritise Council investment?

SECRA refers to the response to Question 1. SECRA notes that with the impact of COVID 19 still unknown we value the maintenance of Adelaide Park Lands and its assets, a systemic reaction to climate change, the reinvigoration of Hutt Street and activities that strengthen our community including the care of the homeless.

Questions 7 and 8. In which service categories would you like to see less Council investment What other levers would you prefer Council to use to improve the Council's financial position

To improve Council's financial position, SECRA suggests the following micro activities:

- Council should re-examine the policy of allowing bodies such as educational and church organisations and developments such as Lot 14 that are currently exempt from rates and occupy land that could otherwise be ratable.
- Additionally, the Council should financially discourage empty buildings and vacant lots, which change the social fabric of an area.

- SECRA believes that the Council will continue to investigate areas of its operation which are not appropriate to the current environment such as payment to consultants, areas of wastage, and the identification and support of core activities.
- Increased fees for commercial activities in Council owned or managed facilities including the Adelaide Park Lands should be examined along with reduced fees for community groups.
- SECRA suggests that the Council should require the state government to transfer the appropriate share of the Planning and Development Fund to support its commitment to the greening of Adelaide and the maintenance of the Adelaide Park Land system.
- SECRA does not support the immediate unfreezing the rate in the dollar, and then only after all the options have been fully considered. We note that if actual CPI increases are not applied, then any new growth is being serviced at the expense of overall reduced service levels to the rest of the city. Already it is evident that essential road and footpath infrastructure is not being maintained to a desirable standard.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the City of Adelaide's Business Plan and Budget and SECRA would endorse the Council demonstrating "bold governance leadership" within the coming year.

Yours sincerely,



Elizabeth Rushbrook
Chair
SECRA