



REPORT: Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program

DIVISION: Strategy, Partnerships and Engagement
REPORT DATE: 11 January 2024
TRIM REFERENCE: ID24/57

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose	Seek endorsement	
Issue	Council has the opportunity to submit applications before end of February 2024 under the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program that meet the program guidelines.	
Reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A process has been undertaken to assess potential Council led projects against the funding criteria of the two available streams.• A project is recommended for Stream 1 application and a project is recommended for Stream 2 application. This report seeks Council's endorsement to submit the applications.	
Financial Implications	Budget Area	N/A
	Funding Source	N/A
Policy Implications	Policy Title	There are no policy implications arising from this report.
	Impact on Policy	N/A
Consultation	Senior Leadership Team	Meetings held with relevant Directors and Managers to discuss proposed projects and understand status of proposed projects in context of grant funding criteria.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Towards 2040 Community Strategic Plan is a vision for the development of the region out to the year 2040. The Plan includes six principle themes and a number of objectives and strategies. This report is aligned to:

Theme: 4 Leadership
CSP Objective: 4.2 The resources of Council are sustainably managed
Delivery Program Strategy: 4.2.1 The system of raising revenue is equitable and revenue from grants and other income sources is maximised

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Chief Executive Officer submit an application for Dubbo South West Housing Precinct Plan for Stream one of the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program.
2. That the Chief Executive Officer submit an application for Blueridge Net Zero Business Park for stream two of the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program.
3. That Councillors be advised as to the status of applications as the information becomes available.

Natasha Comber
Director Strategy, Partnership and Engagement

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Executive Officer Strategy
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BACKGROUND

Previous Resolutions of Council

28 September 2023 CCL23/265	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>That the Chief Executive Officer submit an application for the Wellington CBD Precinct Plan for Stream 1 in the September/October 2023 round of the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program.</i>2. <i>That the Chief Executive Officer submit an application for Dubbo North West Precinct delivery for Stream 2 in the September/October 2023 round of the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program.</i>3. <i>That Councillors be advised as to the status of applications as the information becomes available.</i>4. <i>That a further report be provided to Council in January 2024 with recommendations for the March/April 2024 funding round.</i>
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Summary of the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program

The Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program seeks to deliver transformative investment in regional, rural and remote Australia based on the principles of unifying regional places, growing their economies and serving their communities.

The program will run over three years from 2023/2024 to 2025/2026. There are two grant opportunities as part of this program:

- Stream One: Precinct development and planning up to 100 per cent of the eligible expenditure of \$500,000 - \$5 million. The project must be completed 31 March 2026.
- Stream Two: Precinct delivery up to 100 per cent of the eligible expenditure of \$5 million - \$50 million. The project must be completed 31 March 2026.

The programs non-competitive process means applications will be assessed on their individual merit. In essence this means Council's applications are not competing against each other of against any submitted by other eligible applicants from the Dubbo region. There is no specified due date for applications however guidelines identify two assessment rounds for both streams, being September/October 2023 and March/April 2024. With approvals advised in the two months following. Projects must start 3 months after funding is provided.

Links below to the Regional Precincts and Partnership Program, Stream One and Stream Two:

- <https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/regional-precincts-and-partnerships-program-precinct-development-and-planning>
- <https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/regional-precincts-and-partnerships-program-precinct-delivery>

In early November an application was submitted under Stream 1 for the Wellington CBD Precinct Plan and application was submitted under Stream 2 for the North West Precinct. A determination by the funding body has not yet been advised to Council.

REPORT

To identify projects to progress to applications in 2023 for the program an assessment matrix was developed. This assessment process which includes program alignment and readiness for application was again utilised to identify potential projects for 2024.

Given the resourcing required to submit strong applications it is important that priority approach is taken and that only projects that are fully considered in scope, funding, design and consultation progress.

Stream One: Precinct Development and Planning options assessment.

		Option A	Option B	Option C
PROJECT DETAILS				
	Title:	Dubbo Regional Airport Precinct	Dubbo South West Housing Precinct Plan	Dubbo Central Business District Access, Movement and Infrastructure Analysis
	High level description:	Detailed airside and landside precinct plan including commercial and government partnerships and developments. Detailed designs would enable the precinct to be investment ready and would be informed by the (in development) business case for a permanent LAT base and runway lengthening.	Strategic planning activities associated with background constraints review studies, infrastructure planning and master planning for the South-West Dubbo Residential Urban Release Area.	The CBD is undergoing a significant level of development investment with a number of residential and mixed use projects now approved. It is important to ensure that the CBD has appropriate future infrastructure to support growth, access and amenity.
	Partners:	Airport tenants, RFS, RFDS, airlines, aviation and accommodation sector.	Development industry, Department of Planning and Environment.	CBD businesses, infrastructure and service suppliers.
CRITERIA				
INTERNAL CAPACITY AND ALIGNMENT	Capacity to complete application	NO	YES	NO
	IF NO: can another resource be supplied within function	NO		NO
	IF NO: what is the priority weighting of the project; ELT determine other resources			
	Project alignment to Councils Strategic Priorities (external CSP)	YES	YES	YES
CRITERIA				
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	Is the project in an eligible location	YES	YES	YES
	Will the project be completed by 30/03/2026	YES	YES	YES
	Deliver plan for entire precinct (even if only considering investment in one element)	YES	YES	YES
	Shared vision with community and partners tailored to local context	YES	YES	YES
	Have authority for use of the land or infrastructure required to undertake the project at the nominated site	YES	PART	NO
	Can identify the project partner/s that form your partnership supported with a governance structure for precinct	NO	YES	NO
	Can provide evidence that the relevant State or Territory government have been invited to participate in the partnership.	NO	YES	NO
	Can provide evidence that the relevant local government agency or body have been invited to participate in the partnership.	NO	PART	NO
	Can provide evidence that the relevant Regional Development Australia (RDA) support concept.	YES	YES	YES
	Can provide evidence that the relevant Traditional Owner/First Nations groups support concept/or will be consulted.	YES	YES	YES
	Be aimed at meeting the objectives of the grant opportunity, as outlined in Section 2.1	YES	YES	YES
	Have at least \$500,000 - \$5 million in eligible expenditure	YES	YES	YES
Assessment against criteria on current status of project		10/14	13/14	9/14
CRITERIA				
APPLICATION CRITERIA	Project alignment with program objectives and Australian Government priorities (35 points).	MED - 20	MED - 20	MED - 20
	Project Need (35 points).	MED - 20	HIGH 35	MED - 20
	Community engagement, collaboration and partnership (20 points).	LOW - 8	MED - 15	LOW - 8
	Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (10 points).	LOW - 3	HIGH - 10	LOW - 3
Assessment against criteria on current status of project		51/100	90/100	51/100

Stream Two: Precinct Delivery options assessment.

PROJECT DETAILS		Option A	Option B
INTERNAL CAPACITY AND ALIGNMENT	Title:	Blueridge Net Zero Business Park	Green Hub
	High level description:	Request funding for stage 2 of Blueridge Link road to enable stage one and two of this critical connector road to be completed. Development of infrastructure will support broader precinct development and activation including industry led Net Zero initiatives. Access to funding will avoid need for interim haulage route through existing business park precinct.	Aims to substantiate the presence of Green Energy for the region and the Renewable Energy Zone. The hub promises an industry-leading green energy precinct that serves the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWOREZ) enabling manufacturers and industries to operate there.
INTERNAL CAPACITY AND ALIGNMENT	Partners:	Private developers, Department and Education, Department of Transport. MAAS, Renewable Energy Zone proponents, Net Zero development partners, private development: Community Hub	Neighbouring Councils, renewable proponents, circular economy stakeholders and private land holders.
CRITERIA			
INTERNAL CAPACITY AND ALIGNMENT	Capacity to complete application		
	IF NO: can another resource be supplied within function	Yes	No internal capacity. Explored private industry leading application however as for profit businesses they are ineligible to lead an application.
INTERNAL CAPACITY AND ALIGNMENT	IF NO: what is the priority weighting of the project; ELT determine other resources		
	Project alignment to Councils Strategic Priorities (external CSP)	Yes	Part -supports delivery of long term sustainability and economic outcomes, but will not result in delivering an identifies priority infrastructure for community.
CRITERIA			
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	Is the project in an eligible location	Yes	Yes
	Will the project be completed by 30/03/2026	Yes	TBC - reliant on private developments
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	Deliver project/s that form part of a precinct or foundational infrastructure that activates a precinct	Yes	Part - private developments
	Support the delivery of regional precincts that are tailored to their local contexts and based on a shared vision.	Yes	Yes
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	Have a completed business case, a precinct master plan or equivalent and a project design which is part of the master plan or related to an existing precinct development plan, and is ready for delivery	Part	Part
	Have a project budget and funding strategy	Yes	No
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	Have authority for use of the land or infrastructure required to undertake the project at the nominated site (you are required to provide a letter to confirm this authority from the land or infrastructure owner)	Part	No
	Can identify the project partner/s that form your partnership supported with a governance structure outlining the anticipated engagement to carry out a precinct in collaboration	Yes	Part - private developments
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	Can provide evidence that the relevant State or Territory government have been invited to participate in the partnership. If the relevant State or Territory government is not part of the partnership, reasoning should be provided in your application	Yes	Part
	Can provide evidence that the relevant local government agency or body have been invited to participate in the partnership. If the relevant local government agency or body is not part of the partnership, reasoning should be provided in your application	Yes	Yes
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	Can provide evidence that the relevant Regional Development Australia (RDA) committee has been contacted to seek their support	Yes	Part
	Can provide evidence that the relevant Traditional Owner/First Nations groups form part of the partnership or will be consulted on a regular basis throughout the implementation of the precinct in order to ensure their views are considered.	Yes	No
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	Be ready to commence construction with a business case, design and consultation	Yes	No
	Be aimed at meeting the objectives of the grant opportunity, as outlined in Section 2.1	Yes	Yes
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	Have at least \$5M - \$50M in eligible expenditure	Yes	Yes
Assessment against criteria on current status of project		16/17	8/17
CRITERIA			
APPLICATION CRITERIA	Project alignment with program objectives and Australian Government priorities (25 points)	HIGH - 25	HIGH - 25
	Project Need (20 points).	HIGH - 20	HIGH - 20
APPLICATION CRITERIA	Community engagement, collaboration and partnership (20 points).	MEDIUM - 10	MEDIUM - 10
	Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (35 points).	HIGH - 35	LOW - 10
Assessment against criteria on current status of project		90/100	65/100

Council has also engaged with not-for-profit organisations, government agencies and private industry regarding externally led applications to the rPPP. This includes:

- RDA Orana looking for strategic alignment opportunities for an Innovation Hub in partnership with the University of Newcastle.
- Private proponent looking to establish industry operations in proposed green hub precinct in north east Dubbo industrial estates.
- Recently developed 11R not-for-profit organisation looking to attract funding for precinct planning on private property to further inform/develop Community Hub concept for 11R Mitchell Highway.
- Smart Places Policy and Engagement team at Transport for NSW proposed to submit an application in partnership with identified Councils to develop co-design concept plans for targeted precincts to support active transport infrastructure, revitalisation and street improvements and smart infrastructure.

Council has indicated to involved parties' interest and ability to provide data, relevant strategic alignment information and relevant business case content. In regard to co-design concept plan application being led by Transport for NSW, Council has indicated that whilst the 2040 community plan identifies intent to pursue further smart city planning initiatives, Council does not have the internal resources required to provide significant input to the project if the funding application was successful. Such staff are already committed to priority infrastructure project and strategic planning in line with renewable energy zones.

The application for precinct planning funding for 11R Community Hub concept will also provide further weight to the community need for infrastructure delivery of the Blueridge Link Road, as it provides further indication that such infrastructure will be critical for broader precinct development beyond the proposed Net Zero Business Park and will support efficient and safe transport access for community and industry.

Consultation

Initial consultation has been undertaken with relevant private industry contacts for proposed applications. Stakeholders indicated their support for applications including letters of support and relevant technical or economic data.

Consultation has been undertaken with external stakeholders who have expressed interest in making application to the fund.

Resourcing Implications

Completion of two funding applications is able to be undertaken within existing resources. Application for Stream one will be completed in house. External resources will be utilised to complete application for Stream two, this will be funded from the Road Strategy operational budget.

Options Considered

- Option A Stream 1: Dubbo Regional Airport Precincts Plan
- Option B Stream 1: Dubbo South West Housing Precinct Plan
- Option C Stream 1: Dubbo Central Business District Access, Movement and Infrastructure Analysis
- Option A Stream 2: Blueridge Net Zero Business Park
- Option B Stream 2: Green Hub Hydrogen Precinct

Preferred Option

It is proposed that the following applications be made to the March/April 2024 round:

- Stream 1: Dubbo South West Housing Precinct Plan
- Stream 2: Blueridge Net Zero Business Park

Timeframe

Key Date	Explanation
Assessment of applications	March/April 2024
Approval and announcement of successful applicants	May/June 2024
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	1-3 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Earliest start date of project	The date you are notified that your proposal has been successful
Project completion date	31 March 2026
End date of grant commitment	30 June 2026

Next Steps

Aim for applications to be submitted by 29 February 2024.