

Cultural Precinct plan should be slowed down: readers

The (registered) Town Park Area Residents Ratepayers Association (TPARRA) has concerns about the Cultural Precinct plan, although we don't disagree with it, but we believe that residents need more time to be fully informed of the high-impact details and significant changes to the area.

Firstly, we were very concerned that our Ratepayers group was not contacted when a Stakeholders Questionnaire was distributed to various parties to contribute to the plan.

Since the southeast quadrant that we represent is directly affected, our residents should have been included during the public outreach stage. Once we learned of the plan from the local newspaper, we contacted the consultants to complete the questionnaire, plus arranged to meet with Councillors to discuss it. (Note: all Council was invited, but only 3 were available.)

Following up from that meeting, our questions were sent by a Councillor to the Director of Parks. Here are some of them:

? Traffic and parking issues have increased for area residents due to inadequate commuter parking at the GO train station. Is there a parking or traffic study for the southeast area? ANSWER: ?I don't believe a parking study is being proposed, however the consultant was given a copy of the two previous studies?. Residents and our group have been asking for traffic and parking studies over the last 10 years, but nothing has been provided. When were these studies done and why have we never received copy after multiple requests? TPARRA anticipates a significant increase in traffic due to the Cultural Precinct and also because of future plans to build two six-storey apartment complexes on the west side of the tracks.

? Why parallel parking instead of the current perpendicular parking - what is the value or rationale behind the change? ANSWER: ?The consultant saw this as a compromise, much of the present parking is occupied by commuters, and if we acquired this park today with 100% road frontage, my recommendation would not be to ring it with parking, the compromise was to reduce the number of spaces instead of removing it all together.?

? Has the Town Park been designated as a heritage site, and if not, why? ANSWER: ?I don't believe it does, however it was proposed as part of the district heritage plan?. Why not designate it now? Is heritage not part of culture?

? Were the Baseball Associations in Aurora informed of the planned removal of the ball diamond at Town Park? ANSWER: ?Ball Diamond user groups were not specifically contacted.?

? Why is a walkway planned to be located through the middle of the Precinct? ANSWER: ?During discussions with focus groups, the consultants heard the need for a pedestrian connection; Mosley still serves that purpose, but also has vehicular access?. We are talking about half-a-block to walk to Mosley from the proposed walkway, and using Mosley would be cheaper and easier to do. Their plan would require the Town to purchase property from Trinity Anglican Church and a private property owner.

TPARRA is also concerned that the consultants are suggesting that trees in front of the rectory be removed to accommodate parking for the walkway, and also indicated that the rectory is a ?potential community amenity?. We'd like to ask Council if any of this been discussed with the Church and private property owner and where would the funds come from to buy this land?

We are not asking for the Cultural Precinct to be stopped - just slowed down ? so that more consideration can be given to area resident concerns.

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TPARRA Committee