

WEBSITE UPDATE 20 March 2012

SUPERTOWNS UPDATE

The Shire submitted its Interim SuperTown Growth Plan and funding requests to the Department of Regional Development and Lands on 6 March 2012.

We are competing with the other eight SuperTowns for the \$77.5 million on offer in May/June this year. A Business Case was prepared for each of six projects, to justify the need for the project funding. The highest six priority projects are:

1. Ranford Water Capacity	\$1.25m
2. Boddington Recreation and Leisure Centre	\$7.3m
3. Economic Development Implementation in Boddington	\$1.465m
4. Affordable Land in Boddington	\$5.5m
5. Retirement Village	\$1.25m
6. Key-Worker Housing	\$1.52m

These projects were selected after an exhaustive process, involving numerous people. They were selected based primarily on the objective of the whole program – that is, to increase the population of the Boddington District (which includes for this purpose the Shires of Wandering and Williams) at a faster rate than it would otherwise increase. The SuperTowns are expected to take some pressure off Perth in accommodating the expected doubling of WA's population in the next 40 years.

Council considers that one of the most significant barriers to achieving an increased rate of growth is an insufficient supply of land coming onto the market. It is therefore important that there is a good choice of both the size and location of land available for purchase. Council will facilitate, as far as it can, a steady supply of land to the market. Consequently, two of the high-priority projects address this subject.

Increased population requires more jobs. The two mines are not likely to increase their workforce, so new jobs need to be created. Council therefore has decided to take the role of stimulating economic development, including tourism development, which it is thought has very strong potential on the back of the planned commencement of gold mine tours by Newmont Boddington Gold.

With those two critically important boxes ticked, we will have a district that has the capacity to grow and a driver of that growth ... and that's the only way that the needs of the community can be satisfied – needs such as a better retail choice, an academic year 11/12 stream at the high school, better facilities such as a Recreation & Leisure Centre. Nobody

can *make* businesses start up in the district – it is an investor’s decision to take that risk. However, Council can help to make it easier for such people to make that decision.

PROJECTS

Whilst Business Cases were prepared for six projects, only four could be submitted for funding. We have requested a total of \$15,515,000 from SuperTowns; whilst we don’t expect to receive such a large share of the cake, it was considered important to have the mix of projects that were selected, so that the government had a choice of project types to consider. A brief outline of the four projects appears below:

- **Ranford Water Capacity**

Sub division of land in Ranford, and along Crossman Road to Ranford, cannot occur due to insufficient water capacity. This project is to pay the \$1.25m cost of a second water supply pipe from Farmer’s Avenue to Ranford. Water Corporation require the private sector to pay for the pipe, and the WC then refund the amount, possibly two years after the work is finished.

It is possible that no single developer will make this payment, so Council will do so if the project is approved, thus increasing the likelihood of more land coming onto the market from sub divisions.

This project has the benefit of the Council being able to re-invest the \$1.25m in SuperTowns projects when it is paid to it by Water Corporation

- **Boddington Recreation and Leisure Centre**

The need for this facility is well-known and its selection is based on the importance placed on it by the great majority of the community. Much planning has been undertaken and we will be in a position to start building in early 2013, subject to funding being obtained. This ‘project readiness’ was also an important factor. This facility will play a significant part in being able to attract new residents to the district ... and in retaining those that are already here.

Funds of \$7.3m have been requested from SuperTowns, with the balance of \$3.0m to be sourced by Council from other grant funds such as Lotterywest, from the Department of Education, from corporate support and from a loan that the Council will obtain.

- **Economic Development Implementation**

The Shire has had an Economic Development Strategy prepared as a part of its SuperTowns planning. (This comprehensive document can be viewed/downloaded on Council’s website, in the SuperTowns tab).

The future needs of business and industry for high technology, the need to ensure labour force skills keep pace with technological change, provision for 500-1,500 new, home-based, micro and small enterprises, the need to fulfil demand for lifelong learning and establish and grow the emerging tourism industry in national and international ‘real

time', will require additional resources, information and expertise. This project is to fund approximately 2.5 people to drive economic (including tourism) development, which is critical to creating jobs for new residents. We have requested \$1,465,000 in year 1, but as this task is on-going for several years, a request for similar sums has been made for years 2 and 3 (noting, however, that the government has not yet committed to further years of the program).

- **Affordable Land in Boddington**

The only viable option to ensure a steady supply of R20/30/40 zoned affordable land (that is, lot sizes suitable for unit development and lots of 500m²) in the Shire in the short and medium terms is on land known as Devx Lot 8016. This is the land immediately to the east of town, going up and over the hill. It is going to be sold by Devx' receivers in the near future and represents a good opportunity for the Council to facilitate increased land supply. The concept involves Council obtaining \$5.5m from SuperTowns funds to purchase the land and to construct and market the first stage of the sub division.

Involvement of the Shire of Boddington in the delivery of residential land will help to ensure a steady and responsive supply of lots. This is necessary to overcome two elements of market failure in Boddington. One is the overhang of a local property boom in 2006 which has left a legacy of high property prices, sluggish development activity and an impending property shortage; the other is the current difficulty of obtaining development finance generally and in regional locations in particular. These factors result in increased risk premiums and therefore increased finance and holding costs for developers, thus increasing development costs to un-economic levels and making private sector land development less viable, and less likely, in the short term.

The development of lot 8016 is a critical element in achieving the population and economic targets for the Boddington SuperTown.

The Growth Plan and the Economic Development Strategy are the cornerstones of the growth of the Boddington district. The whole community will be invited to comment on the Growth Plan in coming weeks/months, as it is an interim document.

That consultation will focus on matters such as what character the main street should have, including the future development of retail and commercial premises (including the Shire's building) and linkages to other parts of town, including the river.

If you wish to read the Growth Plan, see SuperTowns index.

It is expected that the government will announce the successful projects in May 2012. The Shire and the project team have worked extremely hard to comply with the relatively short timeframe - work that was in addition to everybody's usual work, so we all trust that it will pay dividends for the Boddington, Wandering and Williams communities. Many people contributed, including members of the Local Project Team and the community-based Community Reference Group. The Shire sincerely thanks all participants for their time and energy.