



SHIRE OF
MERREDIN
INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT

MINUTES

Ordinary Council Meeting

Held in Council Chambers
Corner King & Barrack Street's, Merredin
Tuesday, 14 September 2021
Commencing 4.00pm



Common Acronyms Used in this Document	
CBP	Corporate Business Plan
CEACA	Central East Accommodation & Care Alliance Inc
CSP	Community Strategic Plan
CWVC	Central Wheatbelt Visitors Centre
DCEO	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
EA	Executive Assistant to CEO
EMCS	Executive Manager of Corporate Services
EMDS	Executive Manager of Development Services
EMES	Executive Manager of Engineering Services
GECZ	Great Eastern Country Zone
LGIS	Local Government Insurance Services
LPS	Local Planning Scheme
MCO	Media and Communications Officer
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRCLC	Merredin Regional Community and Leisure Centre
SRP	Strategic Resource Plan
T/CEO	Temporary Chief Executive Officer
WALGA	Western Australian Local Government Association
WEROC	Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils



Shire of Merredin September Ordinary Council Meeting

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Shire of Merredin
Ordinary Council Meeting
4:00pm Tuesday, 14 September 2021



1. Official Opening

The President acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today and paid her respects to the Elders past, present and emerging. The President then welcomed those in attendance and declared the meeting open at 4:02pm.

2. Record of Attendance / Apologies and Leave of Absence

Councillors:

Cr JR Flockart	President
Cr MD Willis	Deputy President
Cr RA Billing	
Cr LN Boehme	
Cr AR Butler	
Cr RM Manning	
Cr MJ McKenzie	
Cr PR Patroni	
Cr PM Van Der Merwe	

Staff:

M Dacombe	T/CEO
A Prnich	DCEO
G Garside	EMCS
L Mellor	EMES
P Zenni	EMDS
A Brice	EA

Members of the Public: 2

Apologies: Nil

Approved Leave of Absence: Nil

3. Public Question Time

Nil

4. Disclosure of Interest

Cr Billing declared an Impartiality Interest Item 14.3.

5. Applications of Leave of Absence

Cr Boehme requested a Leave of Absence for the 5 October 2021.
Cr Manning requested a Leave of Absence for the 5 October 2021.

Resolution

Moved: Cr Patroni **Seconded:** Cr McKenzie

82789 That Councillor Boehme be granted a Leave of Absence for 5 October 2021.

CARRIED 8/o

Moved: Cr McKenzie **Seconded:** Cr Billing

82790 That Councillor Manning be granted a Leave of Absence for 5 October 2021.

CARRIED 8/o

6. Petitions and Presentations

Nil

7. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meetings

- 7.1 Ordinary Council Meeting held on 17 August 2021
Attachment 7.1A
- 7.2 Special Council Meeting held on 31 August 2021
Attachment 7.2A

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority Absolute Majority

Resolution

Moved: Cr Willis **Seconded:** Cr Boehme

82791 That the following Minutes be confirmed as true and accurate records of proceedings;

- Ordinary Council Meeting held on 17 August 2021; and
- Special Council Meeting held 31 August 2021.

CARRIED 9/o

8. Announcements by the Person Presiding without Discussion

The Shire President spoke to Council regarding her activities since the Ordinary Council Meeting on 17 August 2021.

- 17 August Australian Citizenship Ceremony
- 18 August Long Tan Service Ceremony
- 23 August Meeting with Minister of Local Government and Housing, Hon John Carey
- 23 August Great Eastern Country Zone Meeting
- 23 August CEACA Meeting

31 August	Australian Golden Outback meeting with AGO board members
31 August	Special Council Meeting
7 September	BBQ breakfast in Nokanning hosted by Cr Willis. Attended with T/CEO and new EMES
7 September	Shire Briefing session
9 September	Meeting with T/CEO
9 September	Local Government Election Ballot draw
10 September	2021/2022 State Budget Breakfast with Hon Sue Ellery, Minister of Education, Northam
10 September	Infrastructure WA meeting, Foundations for a stronger tomorrow strategy release discussion, Northam

I would like to now take a moment to reflect on our journey together over the past 2 years, given that we have Local Government elections prior to our next Ordinary Council meeting in October.

It has been a very interesting time - and as we know, for most of this journey an unprecedented one.

Immediately after our first ordinary meeting in October 2019 we faced our first public meeting regarding the community's wish to save the iconic Railway water tank. The process since has been a slow one but has produced a successful outcome, whereby restitution to the tank will be made by the Public Transport Authority; and the iconic structure will remain as an important reference to the Merredin railway story.

At this time also our CEO Mr Powell had extended personal leave, and ultimately chose to resign from this position after ten years of service to our community.

With the appointment of Mr Mark Dacombe, as our Temporary CEO in January 2020, we have been fortunate to have had the stability of leadership whilst we commenced the CEO recruitment process. Mr Dacombe, through his steady and professional manner, has been able to assist us through these unprecedented and continuing times of COVID-19.

With the successful appointment of Ms Lisa Clack as our CEO, commencement date 1st November, I would like to extend a sincere Thankyou to Mr Dacombe for his invaluable guidance and support to myself and Council over the past 21 months.

During this time, as Council, we have had to deal with the unknown effects of covid 19. Through strong and adaptable leadership we immediately put measures in place to support our community, and were able to roll out a successful "business as usual" model. As Council we met more regularly, and also for the first time held regular meetings via instantaneous communication.

I would like to thank all councillors and staff for their support during these initial and continuing covid 19 times.

Whilst continuing to focus on the day-to-day operations and annual repairs, reconstruction, and construction of roads and footpaths, we have also held successful

RESET RECOVER REGENERATE community engagement sessions to assist us in our long term planning; introduced our community to the possibility of a CBD Piazza and park lets; have moved forward with the planning processes to accommodate our community's requests for a revitalised Apex Park and a refreshed and vibrant Central Business District precinct.

Some of our achievements, over the past two years, have included the commencement of the first stage of the \$5 million Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Route network Merredin to Narembeen road infrastructure program; the successful completion of stage one of the Central Eastern Aged and Care Alliance project, whereby 71 units were built in the immediate region, 27 of these being built in Merredin; and through Local Roads and Community Infrastructure funding created a ring road on Woolgar Avenue; updated the toilet block at the reserve; and constructed footpaths, kerbing and beautification of South Avenue so that Main Roads Department can repair and resurface their road infrastructure.

It has been a very busy and productive two years.

Finally, thank you to all councillors but most especially Councillor Mal Willis, who has chosen not to renominate. His support, guidance, enthusiasm and commitment to the Shire of Merredin over the past 8 years - and for his extra time given to the role of Deputy President - has not gone unnoticed.

Thankyou also - and best of luck to those who have nominated for council. We look forward to a bigger, bolder and brighter Merredin together.

9. Matters for Which the Meeting may be Closed to the Public

Nil

10. Receipt of Minutes of Committee Meetings

- 10.1 Wheatbelt North Regional Road Group Meeting held 26 July 2021
Attachment 10.1A
- 10.2 Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils Meeting held 11 August 2021
Attachment 10.2A
- 10.2 Great Eastern Country Zone Meeting held 23 August 2021
Attachment 10.3A

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Resolution

Moved: Cr Billing

Seconded: Cr Butler

82792

That the Minutes of the following committee meetings be received;

- **Wheatbelt North Regional Road Group Meeting held 26 July 2021;**

- **Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils Meeting held 11 August 2021; and**
- **Great Eastern Country Zone Meeting held 23 August 2021.**

CARRIED 9/o

11. Recommendations from Committee Meetings for Council Consideration

Nil

12. Officers' Reports - Development Services

12.1 Lot 461 (No 1) Throssell Road Reserve 22564 – Request for Existing Vesting Order to be Revoked and Expression of Interest for the Freehold Purchase of the Property by the Shire of Merredin

<h2>Development Services</h2> 	
Responsible Officer:	Peter Zenni, EMDS
Author:	Peter Zenni, EMDS
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>Land Administration Act 1997</i> Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme No 6.
File Reference:	A325
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 12.1A – Reserve Vesting and Associated Documentation

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

Background

Lot 461 (No 1) Throssell Road, Merredin is designated a Public Purposes “Kindergarten” Reserve (Reserve No 22564) under the Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme No. 6 (LPS).

The property is owned by the State of Western Australia with a Vesting Order to the Shire of Merredin. The Shire of Merredin under the terms of the Vesting Order manages the property with the ability to lease the property for a period of up to 21 years, with consent of the Minister for Lands.

Reserve 22564 was created from the excision of Lot 461 from Reserve 13381. The Reserve was initially proposed to be vested to Trustees for the Local Kindergarten Committee which had to wait until the Committee was in a position to use the land and erect a building. In November 1946 the then Merredin Road Board wrote to the Department of Lands advising that the Reserve would be best vested in the Merredin Road Board. The Kindergarten Committee raised no objection to the proposal. Reserve 22564 was then vested in the Merredin Road Board pursuant to Section 33 of the Land Act 1933-46 for the purpose of a “School Site (Kindergarten)” in March 1947.

The Vesting Order was superseded in July 1979, now including the power to lease the Reserve.

The Shire of Merredin last leased the property to the Merredin Playgroup Pty Ltd as part of a lease agreement that expired on the 30th of June 2019, and which was not renewed as the Merredin Playgroup relocated to the North Merredin Primary School (NMPS) premises.

Following the relocation of the Merredin Playgroup to the NMPS, the property remained vacant for some time and experienced deterioration of internal and external asbestos cement wall sheeting.

Shires Executive Manager Development Services (EMDS) was requested by the then Deputy CEO to arrange for the handing back of the property to the State of WA.

Enquires undertaken in relation to this identified that the State of WA was not prepared to take the property back from the Shire of Merredin with the existing buildings (and associated liabilities) in place requesting that all buildings be removed at the expense of the Shire of Merredin before the property was handed back to the State of WA.

In November 2020, the Shire of Merredin issued a demolition permit to a local demolition contractor resulting in the removal of all structures from the site.

	Comment
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Strategic

Lot 461 (No 1) Throssell Road, Merredin consists of an area of 1800m², has availability of mains sewer, is located directly opposite the Merredin Regional Swimming Pool and is surrounded by properties zoned “Residential” under the LPS.

The Shire of Merredin is currently preparing to undertake a review of the LPS, as such there is an opportunity for the Shire of Merredin to approach the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage with an expression of interest in the freehold purchase of Lot 461 (No 1) Throssell Road, Merredin. The Shire would then be able to rezone the lot in question from Public Purposes “Kindergarten” Reserve to “Residential”.

The proposed rezoning to a residential zone would most likely be supported by the Minister for Planning given that the proposed new zoning would complement the residential zoning of the adjoining lots.

As the property has main sewer availability it would be suitable for grouped housing development, including the provision of a house for a swimming pool manager.

The Shire of Merredin has obtained a property valuation for Lot 461 (No 1) Throssell Road, Merredin, which indicates that given the current zoning restrictions the property has been valued at \$10,000.

The Shire of Merredin has as part of its recently adopted annual budget made a provision of \$12,500 towards the purchase of Lot 461 (No 1) Throssell Road, Merredin.

Following the purchase of the Lot in question and the subsequent rezoning, the size and location of the Lot will be a strategic asset to the Shire of Merredin.

Statutory

Lot 461 (No 1) Throssell Road, Merredin is designated a Public Purposes “Kindergarten” Reserve under the Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme No. 6 (LPS).

The property is owned by the State of Western Australia with a vesting Order to the Shire of Merredin. The Shire of Merredin under the terms of the Vesting Order manages the property with the ability to lease the property for a period of up to 21 years, with consent of the Minister for Lands.

The property in its current state is supplementary to the operational needs of the Shire of Merredin and poses an inherent liability with respect to maintenance requirements.

The Shire of Merredin has the ability via a formal approach to the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage to request that the Vesting Order for Reserve on Lot 461 (No 1) Throssell Road, Merredin be revoked and submit an expression of interest in the freehold purchase of the lot in question.

The EMDS has made initial enquiries with representatives of DPLH in relation to this matter and has received the following advice;

- The request for the revocation of a Vesting Order is a simple procedural matter that can be dealt with by a delegate of the Minister for Lands. In most cases additional delays associated with the revocation of Vesting Orders are associated with formal objections to the proposed revocation of a Vesting Order by the body that the Vesting Order is issued to. In this case, as it is the Shire of Merredin that is the recipient of the Vesting Order and would be requesting its revocation, there should be no delays in processing the request.
- Prior to considering the request for a revocation of a Vesting Order the Shire of Merredin would be required to submit a statutory declaration that the property in question is cleared of any contaminants that would require a declaration under the Contaminated Sites Act. Given that the property in question was subject to a recent demolition activity relating to a building containing asbestos materials, there may be some residual site contamination. However, if the Shire of Merredin is prepared to seek the freehold purchase of the property from the State of WA, this would obviate the need for the submission of a statutory declaration.

Policy Implications

Nil

Statutory Implications

Compliance with the Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme No.6

Strategic Implications

➤ Strategic Community Plan

Theme: 5. Places and Spaces

Service Area Objective: 5.4. Town Planning and Building Control
5.4.2. The Shire has a current local planning scheme and associated strategy which is flexible and able to suitably guide future residential and industrial growth

Priorities and Strategies for Change: N/A

➤ Corporate Business Plan

Key Action: 4.1.1 Continue to upgrade the Integrated Planning Framework, meet statutory requirements of the Local Government Act and regulations and regulatory obligations required under other regulations

Directorate: Development Services

Timeline: Ongoing

Sustainability Implications

➤ Strategic Resource Plan

Nil

➤ Workforce Plan

Directorate: Nil

Activity: Nil

Current Staff: Nil

Focus Area: Nil

Strategy Code: Nil

Strategy: Nil

Implications: Nil

Risk Implications

Nil

Financial Implications

The Shire of Merredin has as part of its recently adopted annual budget made a provision of \$12,500 towards the purchase of Lot 461 (No 1) Throssell Road, Merredin.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Absolute Majority

Resolution

Moved: Cr Boehme

Seconded: Cr Patroni

82793 That Council;

- 1. Advise the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, that it formally requests that the Vesting Order vested in and held by the Shire of Merredin over Reserve 22564, located on Lot 461 (No 1) Throssell Road, Merredin be revoked; and**
- 2. Advise the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage that it wishes to freehold purchase the property located on Lot 461 (No 1) Throssell Road, Merredin.**

CARRIED 9/o

13. Officers' Reports - Engineering Services

Nil

14. Officers' Reports – Corporate and Community Services

14.1 List of Accounts Paid

<h2>Corporate Services</h2>		 SHIRE OF MERREDIN INNOVATING THE WHEATBELT
Responsible Officer:	Geoff Garside, EMCS	
Author:	Geoff Garside, EMCS	
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995, Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996</i>	
File Reference:	Nil	
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil	
Attachments:	Attachment 14.1A - List of Accounts Paid	

Purpose of Report

Executive Decision

Legislative Requirement

Background

The attached list of Accounts Paid during the Month of August 2021 under delegated Authority is provided for Council's information and endorsement.

Comment

The attachment provided is an interim listing for August. Whilst it includes all payments made by EFT and cheque, credit card transactions and bank charges have not yet been processed due to illness in the Finance team. An updated listing will be provided prior to the meeting.

Policy Implications

Nil

Statutory Implications

As outlined in *the Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*.

Strategic Implications

➤ Strategic Community Plan

Theme: N/A

Service Area Objective:

Priorities and Strategies
for Change:

➤ Corporate Business Plan

Key Action: Deliver long term financial planning for asset replacement and new capital projects

Directorate: 2

Timeline: Continue to provide prudent financial controls and compliance systems

Sustainability Implications

➤ Strategic Resource Plan

Compliance with the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* and to also give Council some direction regarding its management of finance over an extended period of time.

➤ Workforce Plan

Directorate: Nil

Activity: Nil

Current Staff: Nil

Focus Area: Nil

Strategy Code: Nil

Strategy: Nil

Implications: Nil

Risk Implications

Council would be contravening the *Local Government Act 1995* and *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* should this item not be presented to Council.

Financial Implications

All liabilities settled have been in accordance with the Annual Budget provisions.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Resolution

Moved: Cr Butler

Seconded: Cr Van Der Merwe

82794

That the schedule of accounts paid during August 2021 as listed, covering cheques, EFT's, bank charges, directly debited payments and wages, as numbered and totaling \$1,059,968.15 from Council's Municipal Fund Bank Account and \$4,175.67, from Council's Trust Account be endorsed by Council.

CARRIED 9/0

14.2 Statement of Financial Activity (July 2021)

<h1>Corporate Services</h1> 	
Responsible Officer:	Geoff Garside, EMCS
Author:	Geoff Garside, EMCS
Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1995, Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996</i>
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 14.2A – Statement of Financial Activity Attachment 14.2B – Investment Statement

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

Background

The Statement of Financial Activity and Investment Register are attached for Council's information.

Comment

Regulation 34 of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations requires the Shire to prepare a monthly statement of financial activity for consideration by Council within 2 months after the end of the month of the report.

The financial reports for August 2021 are not included in this agenda as the Council meeting is one week earlier than usual and the end of month figures are being finalised. The August reports will be submitted to the Special Council meeting to be held on 5 October 2021. The September reports will be submitted to the Ordinary Council meeting to be held on 19 October 2021 and thereafter the monthly reports will be submitted to the Council at the Ordinary Meeting following the subject month.

Please note: the figures in the July 2021 financial reports as presented in the attachments are provisional. There are still year-end transactions and adjustments that need to be completed before the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2021 can be finalised for audit. These adjustments may have an impact on the reported figures for the 2021-22 year. In addition, some functions like depreciation are unable to be run before the prior-year is finalised; and detailed capital reporting is also restricted.

Policy Implications

Nil

Statutory Implications

As outlined in *the Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996*.

Strategic Implications

➤ Strategic Community Plan

Theme: N/A

Theme Statement:

Service Area Objective:

➤ Corporate Business Plan

Key Action: Deliver long term financial planning for asset replacement and new capital projects

Directorate: 2

Timeline: Continue to provide prudent financial controls and compliance systems

Sustainability Implications

➤ Strategic Resource Plan

Compliance with the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* and to also give Council some direction regarding its management of finance over an extended period of time.

➤ Workforce Plan

Directorate: Nil

Activity: Nil

Current Staff: Nil

Focus Area: Nil

Strategy Code: Nil

Strategy: Nil

Implications: Nil

Risk Implications

The Financial Activity report is presented monthly and provides a retrospective picture of the activities at the Shire. Contained within the report is information pertaining to the financial cost and delivery of strategic initiatives and key projects.

To mitigate the risk of budget over-runs or non-delivery of projects, the Chief Executive Officer has implemented internal control measures such as regular Council and management reporting and a quarterly process to monitor financial

performance against budget estimates. Materiality reporting thresholds have been established at half the adopted Council levels, which equate to \$10,000 for operating budget line items and \$10,000 for capital items, to alert management prior to there being irreversible impacts.

It should also be noted that there is an inherent level of risk of misrepresentation of the financials through either human error or potential fraud. The establishment of control measures through a series of efficient systems, policies and procedures, which fall under the responsibility of the CEO as laid out in the Local Government (Financial Management Regulations) 1996 regulation 5, seek to mitigate the possibility of this occurring. These controls are set in place to provide daily, weekly, and monthly checks to ensure that the integrity of the data provided is reasonably assured.

Financial Implications

The adoption on the Monthly Financial Report is retrospective. Accordingly, the financial implications associated with adopting the Monthly Financial Report are nil.

Voting Requirements



Simple Majority



Absolute Majority

Resolution

Moved: Cr Patroni

Seconded: Cr Willis


82795

That in accordance with Regulation 34 of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996, the Statement of Financial Activity and the Investment Report for the period ending 31 July 2021 be received.

CARRIED 9/0

14.3 CBD Redevelopment – Summary of Public Consultation Exercises

Cr Billing declared an Impartiality Interest in this Item 14.3.

<h2>Community Services</h2> 	
Responsible Officer:	Andrina Prnich, DCEO
Author:	Andrina Prnich, DCEO
Legislation:	Local Government Act 1995
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 14.3A – Public Piazza Evaluation and Monitoring Report Attachment 14.3B – CBD Stage One Consultation Schedule of Submissions Attachment 14.3C – Apex Park Consultation Schedule of Submissions

Purpose of Report



Executive Decision



Legislative Requirement

Background

Previous Decisions of Council:

Item	Month	Year
Proposed Public Piazza Pilot Project	Oct	2020
CBD Revitalisation – Building Better Regions Fund	Feb	2021
Apex Park Redevelopment	July	2021

Strategic Community Plan 2020-2024, Priorities and Strategies for Change

In the Shire of Merredin Strategic Community Plan 2020-2024, the key priorities and strategies for change in Theme 5: Place and Spaces is outlined as follows:

Priorities	Strategies for Change
Revitalise the Merredin CBD	Develop a shovel ready CBD revitalisation plan in partnership with businesses and residents and actively pursue funding
	Create more compelling and welcoming town entrances
Improve public open space	Revitalise Apex Park

Also relevant to this project is Theme 3: Environment and Sustainability which outlines the following:

Priorities	Strategies for Change
The Shire leading by example	Institute exemplary practices in energy and water efficiency and waste minimisation

Comment

The Merredin CBD revitalisation project has been desired by the community since at least 2008. The project was a key priority in the 2012 – 2023 Strategic Community Plan (SCP). Due to lack of funding, the Merredin CBD has seen some, less ambitious, improvements as budgets have allowed. The project has again come into prominence in the 2020-2024 SCP and the Shire applied to the Round 5 Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF) in March 2021 which, at time of writing, is yet to be announced.

In supporting the submission of the BBRF application in February 2021, Council acknowledged the need to:

1. further resolve the public open space and playground function and hierarchy across the various CBD spaces to be revitalised;
2. make modifications to the proposed staging plan, which would see the timing of Apex Park being brought forward; and
3. progress concept drawings, community and stakeholder consultation along with detailed designs and documentation, endorsing the CEO to progress the work required.

While the Merredin Town Centre Concept Plan Review and Stage One concept plan development was underway, the Shire was actively testing the success of its Public Piazza Pilot Project, funded by the RAC Reconnect WA program. This pilot was endorsed by Council in October 2020 and the trial period ran from 17 December 2020 – 31 March 2021. The comments received from this pilot were seen to be a key component of the feedback required for the detailed design phase of the CBD revitalisation plans.

Since the February endorsement of the Merredin Town Centre Concept Plan Review, Council have met on several occasions to progress the designs of Apex Park including a briefing on the feedback received from the July 2021 Apex Park community consultation.

This report provides a summary of the three consultation exercises undertaken on the CBD since December 2020. Also provided within, is a general assessment of the success of the three key objectives of the public piazza pilot project.

Public Piazza Pilot Project

There were three key objectives which the Shire set out to achieve through this trial project.

1. Create an active, community space.
2. Encourage increased social interaction and community cohesion.
3. Support local economy through flow of pedestrians along Barrack Street.

The Project Team monitored the Project at regular intervals, collecting:

- Feedback from local businesses including a comparison of revenue before and during the Pilot period.

- Feedback from the community via a public survey (which ran the entirety of the trial period).
- Number of events and community initiatives held in the Piazza, recorded by the Project Team.
- Photographs of people utilising the Piazza space.
- The number of new activities and events that occur at the Piazza that haven't previously occurred in Merredin.

A general assessment of the success of the three key objectives of the project is provided below:

1. Create an active, community space.

General feedback received suggested that many members of the community felt that the space was attractive, bright and created a space that people could congregate over food or for a specific event. Parents of young children appreciated the safer traffic environment and the children would enjoy stopping to engage in the play elements introduced within the precinct. The surveys and general monitoring of daily usage indicated that the space was suited to major events and didn't draw naturally organic gatherings on a daily basis. This was of course impacted by the peak summer heat which also created a barrier to usage.

2. Encourage increased social interaction and community cohesion.

As indicated above, social interaction typically occurred when an event activation was arranged. On the odd occasion, groups would be observed to organically gather for a meal from the local pizza shop or food truck on some evenings. The project created a social divide amongst many in the community, with strong opinions for and against the project quickly emerging. That said, even some of the most opposed community members were still observed to attend and thoroughly enjoy themselves at several of the planned activations, verbalising their support for the use of this type of embellishment in the town (in a different location, particularly away from the local IGA) or to be brought out for community events.

3. Support local economy through flow of pedestrians along Barrack Street.

In the first month of this project, the local business community reported neutral/positive commentary around the project and impact on economy however, the feedback became increasingly negative over the course of the trial period. Most businesses indicated a reduced expenditure and some general observations about people not wanting to stop and shop if they couldn't park directly outside of their store. General anecdotal community feedback also indicated that they felt the caravan community were using digital communications to recommend bypassing town due to the road closure and that other towns from the north/east, were avoiding the town and heading straight for Northam for their service needs.

Progress against milestones

Evaluation and Monitoring Plan	Delivery date: 13 November 2020
---------------------------------------	---------------------------------

	Monthly survey snapshot provided to RAC team from January onwards.
Final design	Delivery date: 13 November 2020 Final design circulated January 2021 (though ongoing consultation provided to RAC team as project delivery progressed).
Project implementation	Delivery date: 17 December 2020 While the project was substantially progressed and had its official launch on schedule for 17 December 2020, initial delays to ordering of materials resulted in some pre-Christmas cut-offs thus final implementation did not occur until January 2021. Parklet construction experience delays due to fire bans incurred during the peak ‘construction’ period.
Evaluation Report	Delivery date: 30 June 2021 Submitted in August 2021, with prior consent from RAC who provided their report criteria in July 2021.

Final project costs (including RAC and Shire of Merredin)

Item	Anticipated Cost	RAC	Shire	Actuals
Local Artist (inc. source paint and stakeholder engagement)	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$520.00	\$3,520.00
Landscaping (Dirt, herbs, edible plants and succulents)	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$810.00	\$4,810.00
Umbrellas (8 x 650 kg weighted umbrellas with 118km/hr wind rating)	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$ 25,550.00
Artificial Turf (600m2 @ \$30per linear 1.83m)	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$6,510.00	\$6,510.00
Lighting (16 x 11m strands festoon lighting and trade installation)	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,850.00	\$2,850.00
Signage	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$950.00	\$1,950.00
Parklet base structures (Repurposed Sea Containers)	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$4,160.00	\$24,160.00
Ribbon Shelters to Parklets	\$550.00	\$550.00	\$155.00	\$655.00
Nature Play	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bench Seating and Tables	\$5,000.00	\$4,645.00	\$0.00	\$4,645.00
Contingency (5%)	\$4,952.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	\$79,002.00	\$58,195.00	\$15,955.00	\$74,650.00

Evaluation and Monitoring

The project was monitored and evaluated through a number of channels, namely an ongoing public survey; business surveys, class surveys at Merredin College and daily usage logs taken by Shire staff. A summary of each exercise is provided below, with a full summary of the results provided in Attachment 14.1a – Public Piazza Evaluation and Monitoring Report.

Public Survey

The public survey– made easy and accessible via digital channels and also via QR codes displayed on all precinct signage. A total of 618 surveys were received. With 88% of respondents residing within the Shire of Merredin, this was approximately 17% of the local government’s population, being one of the Shire’s most highly represented surveys.

Business Survey

A survey was circulated with the business community twice through the duration of the trial period, with an overall total of 11 responses received across both surveys.

School Survey

In consideration of the lack of representation in the under 18's age bracket, the Shire decided to conduct a separate survey with school aged students, just prior to the completion of the trial. A survey was conducted with a range of year 4 and 5 students aged between 9 and 11.

Daily Monitoring

Shire staff conducted a daily monitor of the general usage of the piazza. Logging was limited to once a day, due to resourcing. Although ad hoc, the logs captured usage at various times of the day. The log captured a total of 57 weekdays. The following chart indicates usage correlation to daily temperatures (number of people observed v temperature range).

It was evident that general usage was limited during the hot summer days, but as the temperature cooled off, usage became more frequent. The trial commenced at the end of the school year and across the quiet month of January, many residents leave the area to head for cooler coastal temperature. It was also observed that as school returned, many teenagers would frequent the space after school – as an opportunity to hang out with a milkshake or snack from the local café.

Community sentiment and general project outcomes

The general community sentiment was positive with many using social media to voice their affirmation in seeing colour, vibrancy and new ideas being brought into the town centre. Despite the inconveniences caused and clear expression around the time of year and location – many were supportive of the type of initiative i.e. Encouraging people to come together, reconnect and to create vibrancy once again in the streets of Merredin.

The infrastructure is still well used, some months after the trial period has closed – indicating a need for better seating and outdoor infrastructure to connect locals and visitors in the CBD.

The exercise indicated that the regional community members, such as those in Merredin, value the convenience of being able to pull up outside local stores and go about their business – they are not interested in big box shopping centres or having to walk large distances with their shopping. Many farming families shop in bulk as they are located remotely. These shoppers appreciate not having to cart large shopping loads for long distances and the temperatures over a long summer period did not assist the sentiment of this project.

The local CRC embraced the space and chose to run their community markets within the precinct. They were excited and enthusiastic to use the space however, the feedback received was that it was a difficult market to run. Many typical stallholders declined as they felt the community feedback / sentiment around the project would have a negative impact on their business.

The local police came on board with a regular Three Point Friday program which was well attended by youth and local businesses supported the initiative by providing power etc. Again, having people in the space with high level of activity brought vibrance into the centre – another type of activity that the Shire would like to replicate in the future.

The high attendance at community events held within the precinct indicated that the community enjoyed the ability to come together in a safe space for their children

to roam freely. Community members of all ages were seen to enjoy relaxing, wondering and even dancing in the streets! The Merredin community embrace special times to come together and this exercise has indicated the desire to see aesthetically pleasing, vibrant spaces where they can do this. The use of colour and most importantly spaces to gather in small or large groups, will be considered a key element for future CBD projects.

Post-implementation

Whilst the piazza was dissembled at the end of the trial period, most items have been re-purposed for continued use by the Merredin community and visitors.

The parklets continue to be used by the public, located in front of various eateries in town. These are well used and embraced by visitors and locals. The umbrellas and landscaping have been relocated to various sites around town. Some seating and umbrellas have been co-located with a local food truck and are regularly used. Others are on the town square lawn and are also used by visitors and CBD employees on their lunch breaks.

Lighting and other elements have been retained for use during future community activations.

The lectern signage is now a familiarised ‘community noticeboard’ with various consultations since being displayed on this infrastructure.

To memorialise this project, the small magnetic strip signs purchased for information about the project during the duration of the trial are now to be used to identify that the infrastructure was kindly granted to the Shire of Merredin by RAC as part of the RAC Reconnect - 2020 Pop-Up Piazza Project (wording and artwork to be finalised and confirmed by RAC team).

Noting the community’s desire to retain the parklets, these will be used and maintained for the foreseeable future – with the possible addition of more parklets in coming years. In consideration of the community’s support for the colour and vibrancy that the project brought and that the infrastructure created as a place to come together for formal activations/gatherings, opportunities will be sought in future CBD public open space upgrades.

Lessons learned

This section provides consideration of a number of key lessons and learned insights from being a project partner of Reconnect WA from project planning, design, delivery and implementation (and post-implementation, i.e. deinstallation).

If this project were to proceed again, the Shire would look to outsource more components than it did for this project. As a small regional team, this was a major undertaking for all staff involved. The project brought a sense of pride to many of the staff members, so the Shire would look to actively and meaningfully engage staff where possible – however, with more outsourced assistance on design, construction and installation aspects.

A number of factors impacted the timing of the project however, following the project completion, it was noted that many people used the parklets and other seating while the weather remained pleasant in the Autumn months. If repeated, the Shire would look to conduct such an activity during an Autumn or Spring season.

The colourful and vibrant additions to the town centre were well regarded by many and, the opportunity to meet and eat together was embraced when events were activated. The creation of more vibrant, formalised spaces for the community to come together will be explored in future years. This would not be in an existing road reserve (or where full access is restricted).

CBD Redevelopment Stage One

The Council has been working on plans for the revitalisation of the Central Business District (CBD) since at least 2008. The community was first engaged in designing the future of the CBD in early 2009 and after extensive input, the first concept plan was well accepted. In April 2021, the Shire published the February 2021 concept plan for public comment, on its website, via social media channels and also via prominently placed community noticeboards around town. The comment period closed in July 2021 and 10 comments were received in this time. Seven of the 10 submissions were generally in support of the concept plan. Some of the feedback received included:

- Include more rubbish bins,
- Ensure the space considers RV/Caravan parking, and
- Ensure the design considers safety for children/young families and seniors.

A full schedule of submissions is provided in Attachment 14.1b – CBD Stage One Consultation Schedule of Submissions.

Apex Park Redevelopment

Since 2019, there have been three notable rounds of community engagement, tailored to inform the design of the park, with the most recent exercise undertaken in July 2021.

The engagement program included a two-week advertising period on Shire website (promoted through social media) and a Coffee with a Councillor (July session).

During this round of consultation, Council received 50 submissions. A summary is provided below with a full copy of the schedule of submissions provided in Attachment 14.1c – Apex Park Consultation Schedule of Submissions.

Whilst the feedback was generally positive, some clear themes emerged from the consultation including:

- Retain park fencing
- Include water fountain/refill stations
- Include water play
- Ensure safe access from Great Eastern Highway
- Include a pump track
- Include bigger or more skate equipment

There were various other miscellaneous elements raised for consideration in the detailed design. While most were actually depicted in the finer detail of the concept plan, some items for further resolution during detailed design included:

- Parking for caravans
- Themed garden
- Concrete track for scooters
- Benches for parents including in the skate park area
- Merredin Information boards
- Soccer kick wall

Policy Implications

Nil

Statutory Implications

Local Government Act 1995

Strategic Implications

➤ Strategic Community Plan

Theme:	3. Environment and Sustainability
Service Area Objective:	3.1. Environmental Management 3.1.1. The Shire of Merredin observes a number of sustainable water and energy harvesting, conservation and usage practices
Service Area Objective:	3.3. Environmental Planning 3.3.1. Land use planning respects our natural assets and ensures limited impact on climate change
Theme:	4. Communication and Leadership
Service Area Objective:	4.1. Community Engagement 4.1.1. The Shire regularly engages with its community and, in return, communicates the information gathered in a clear and transparent manner
Theme:	5. Places and Spaces
Service Area Objective:	5.1. Streetscapes 5.1.1. The Merredin CBD has been significantly upgraded and is well maintained and representative of the regional status that it holds
Service Area Objective:	5.2. Parks and Gardens 5.2.1. Parks within the Shire are maintained to a high standard, with adequate facilities for community members of all ages and abilities
Priorities and Strategies for Change:	N/A

➤ Corporate Business Plan

Key Action: N/A

Directorate:

Timeline:

Sustainability Implications

➤ Strategic Resource Plan

N/A

➤ Workforce Plan

Directorate: Nil
 Activity: Nil
 Current Staff: Nil
 Focus Area: Nil
 Strategy Code: Nil
 Strategy: Nil
 Implications: Nil

Risk Implications

A summary of risks and proposed mitigation strategies are outlined below:

No.	Risk	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Score	Strategies on Risk
1.	Failure to secure adequate funding	Possible	Major	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure demonstrated consultation to funding bodies when seeking external funds
2.	Reputational Damage if project costs and timelines are increased/lengthened	Possible	Major	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to openly communicate on project progress/delays with community
3.	Reputational Damage if facility does not meet community expectations	Possible	Minor	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a range of communication strategies to ensure community is informed and consulted on project designs and staging

Financial Implications

N/A

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority Absolute Majority

Resolution

Moved: Cr Manning **Seconded:** Cr Van Der Merwe

82796

That Council;

- 1. Receives the submissions made by members of the public on the Public Piazza Pilot Project; Town Centre Concept Plan; and the Apex Park Redevelopment; and**

- 2. Note that the Chief Executive Officer will continue to progress the detailed designs for the Town Centre Stage One plan with consideration of the following design elements:**
 - a. Inclusion of more rubbish bins;**
 - b. RV/Caravan parking; and**
 - c. Safety for children/young families and seniors.**
- 3. Note that the Chief Executive Officer will continue to progress the detailed designs for the Apex Park Redevelopment with consideration of the following design elements:**
 - a. Retention of park fencing;**
 - b. Skate Park facilities (including targeted consultation);**
 - c. RV/Caravan parking;**
 - d. Themed garden;**
 - e. Concrete track for scooters;**
 - f. Benches for parents including in the skate park area;**
 - g. Merredin Information boards; and**
 - h. Soccer kick wall.**

CARRIED 8/1

15. Officer's Reports - Administration

Nil

16. Motions of which Previous Notice has been given

Nil

17. Questions by Members of which Due Notice has been given

Nil

18. Urgent Business Approved by the Person Presiding or by Decision

Nil

19. Matters Behind Closed Doors

Nil

20. Closure

There being no further business, the President thanked those in attendance and declared the meeting closed at 4:24pm.

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