

**Kim Wicks**  
**54 Fishburn Crescent,**  
**Castle Hill**  
**NSW 2154**

**Attention:**

Mr Rob Stokes  
Minister for Planning & Environment,  
NSW Government

Dear Minister,

As a resident of 54 Fishburn Crescent in the Showground Precinct, I wish to respond to "Showground Station Precinct Proposal" as proposed by the NSW Government Department of Planning & Environment on the 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2015.

It is with huge apprehension that my family can support the draft "Showground Station Precinct Proposal". We see the current plan as designed to destroy rather than promote development, particularly in the newly proposed R3 areas, to which my residence falls.

The draft "Showground Station Precinct Proposal" does in fact claim that it will deliver more dwellings than required under the 2013 Structure Plans. Whilst this is a noble gesture by the NSW Government, this however is far from the truth, as the proposed dwelling densities in the R3 areas – townhouses/terrace houses will cause the whole strategy to fail on a monumental scale.

The draft "Showground Station Precinct Proposal" needs to be amended and the proposed R3 zoned areas need to be changed to R4 to reflect contemporary and modern land usage and transit orientated development. The current infrastructure planning models fail the Showground Precinct and changes need to be made so that there is the best use of the land in close proximity to transport infrastructure, namely the new Showground Railway Station.

I will address my concerns under the following categories:

- R3 Zoned Area financial unviability to landowners, developers and local/state government
- Property Yield and Proposed Densities
- Inconsistencies in Proposed Densities across the Showground Precinct
- Placement of Proposed Roads
- Land Consolidation versus Fragmentation
- Local Infrastructure Development & a VISION for the Future

All of the information on R3 economic unviability and other issues related to this document is supported by the appendices attached:

- APP Submission
- Showground Station Precinct R3 Economic Viability – A Residents Perspective
- An Opportunity to Renew – A Residents Perspective

## **R3 Zoned Area financial unviability to landowners, developers and local/state government**

The “Showground Station Precinct Proposal” has clearly not addressed the financial and economic feasibility of the planned redevelopment of the Showground Precinct. This is particularly evident in the proposed R3 Zoned Area, where townhouses/terraces houses are **economically unviable** to anyone in the development picture:

- Residents selling land,
- Developers developing the land and
- Local and state governments.

**This economic unviability consequently, affects the ability for the “Showground Station Precinct Proposal” to be successfully realised in its full potential.**

### **Our Response:**

Our proposition is that the existing R3 Zoning and Controls:

- Do not create opportunities that are economically viable for residents or developers, therefore
- Very few land owners will sell, and
- Very little areas of the R3 zoned precinct will be developed

The opportunity to develop master planned precincts with inter-connecting open spaces, liveable areas etc.... will be lost for ever and will never ever be accomplished in my or your lifetimes.

The economic unviability for the R3 zoned areas is just one of the problems with the existing plans of the “Showground Station Precinct Proposal”.

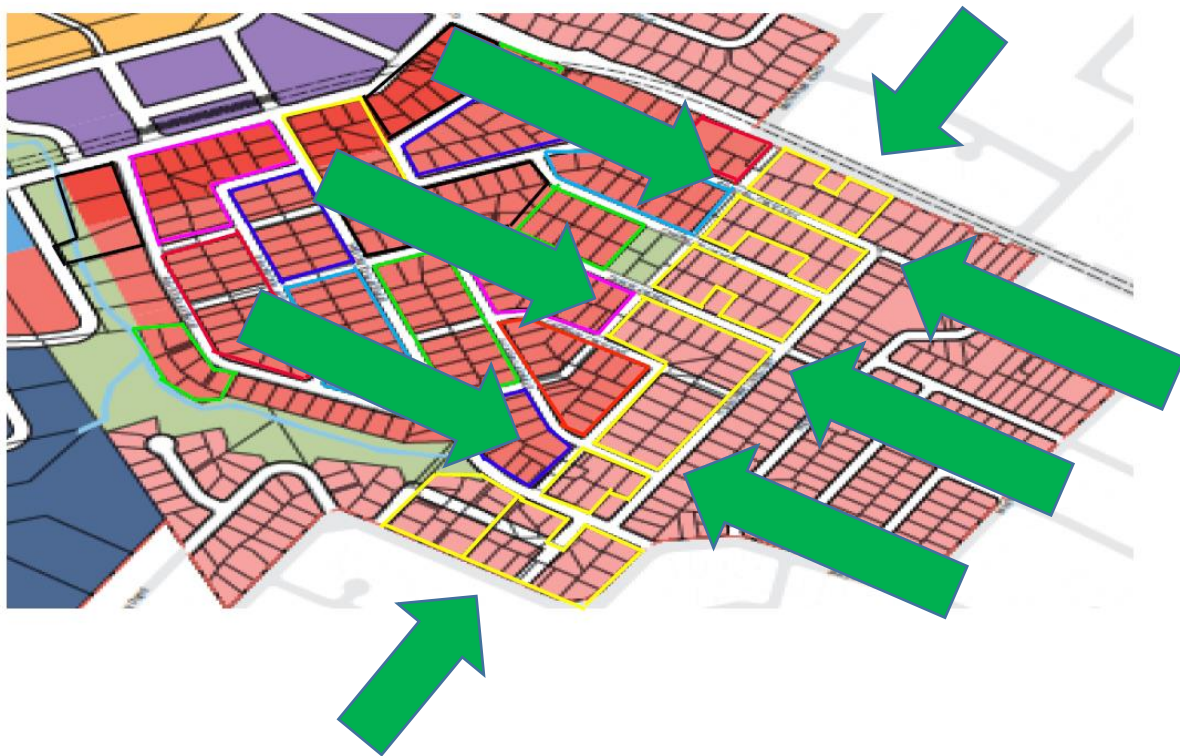
We have 4 simple solutions to the problem:

- 1. Adjust the proposed zoning and controls in the R3 area to make it economically viable and make it R4.**
- 2. Encourage residents and developers to behave in ways that are conducive to master planned outcomes.**
- 3. Create appropriate incentives to all parties: Appropriate margins to get over the 'tipping point' to make it economically viable for all concerned.**

#### 4. Encourage master planned 'connections' across parcels of land across the precinct.

As you can see from the map of the Showground Precinct on the following page, its residents are very well organised, very informed and involved in seeking good planning outcomes for the Showground Precinct.

Residents are amalgamated into large groups and this is evident all across the precinct. There are several groups in the proposed R4 areas that have already gone to market with the amalgamated land parcels. We are part of a group that is **83 households strong in the proposed R3 area** and this is indicated by the yellow outlined properties on the map.



We are part of a group of **83 households (all located in the proposed R3 zoned area)** in the Showground Precinct that have amalgamated together and put forward a submission through the company APP that demonstrates why and how the R3 argument is totally not economically valid in this day and nor will it be valid in the next 20+ years.

This APP report will form part of my submission and is attached as an appendix to this document.

We the residents of the Showground Precinct have in depth knowledge of the land sales in the area. We are aware that the current market average of household sales in the Showground Precinct is currently in excess of \$1.8 million dollars.

The current proposed densities planned by NSW Government are almost **100% unlikely** to result in redevelopment as the land values would be both unattractive to developers and the homeowners alike will simply not sell their properties. **Under the current planning controls**

**for the R3 zoned area, developers can see NO financial viability or incentive to invest their money in the Showground Precinct.**

The current homeowners in the Showground Precinct like ourselves will definitely NOT sell our properties for below what the market is dictating. The R3 zoned area scenarios as proposed by NSW Government would put properties in the precinct at a value which is under the current market averages for Castle Hill. I can tell you that we are not the only residents in the precinct who feel this way.

NO householder is going to sell their property under its current market value and why should we! When we could keep living in the precinct and keep our single residences as it will have a demonstratively higher value as a ¼ acre block than it would, if sold for redevelopment, in line with the government's proposed R3 zoning of townhouses/terrace houses.

In the end, our message is very simple.

In order for there to be redevelopment in the proposed R3 zoned areas, existing properties have to be demolished and new dwellings built on the land they occupy today.

That means that residents need to:

**1. Sell, and then**

**2. Buy an equivalent property somewhere else**

We realise that this could involve several permutations on that theme however the idea of an 'equivalent property' seems to be the fairest way of treating the various options different people will have or would entertain.

**The difference between the Sell Price for their land and their Buy price for an equivalent property elsewhere represents the Incentive to act.**

It is not a quantification of our greed level or anything similar to that which some cynical people might suggest, but it is the level of monetary gain that is needed in order for sufficient people to act together and sell in large enough lots so as to facilitate master planned development. It has to be enough or this will never, ever eventuate.

Even with the very generous assumptions for townhouses and terraces (like packing a maximum number on every block), without regard to good design and other important factors, you simply cannot achieve sufficient incentive; in fact anyone who tried to participate in such an arrangement would incur a loss – **therefore NO one will sell, there will be NO large or super lots, there will be NO master planned developments and any development will fall way short of the kind of Garden Shire environment that people in the Hills value.**

So when discussing any variables, we must firstly visualise that the sell value of a property in the Showground Precinct must exceed the anticipated and future buy value of a new property for residents by at least the minimum amount of \$100, 000.

Let's assume a person purchases a replacement property at a value of \$1.5 million dollars, the table below represents what they will have to pay to move on from the Showground Precinct. This is dead money and can't be replaced.

Stamp Duty (assume a \$1.5m property)	\$68,311
Agents commission (assume, again a \$1.5m property and a NSW average rate of 2.11% - source State Averages for Real Estate Agents Commissions/Fees - <a href="http://www.localagentfinder.com.au/">http://www.localagentfinder.com.au/</a> )	\$31,650
Legal Fees/Conveyancing (could be 50-100% more than this)	\$1,000
Moving costs (will of course depend on how far you move) – plus there are renovations, painting ... may \$10-50,000 more.	\$2,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$103,461.00</b>

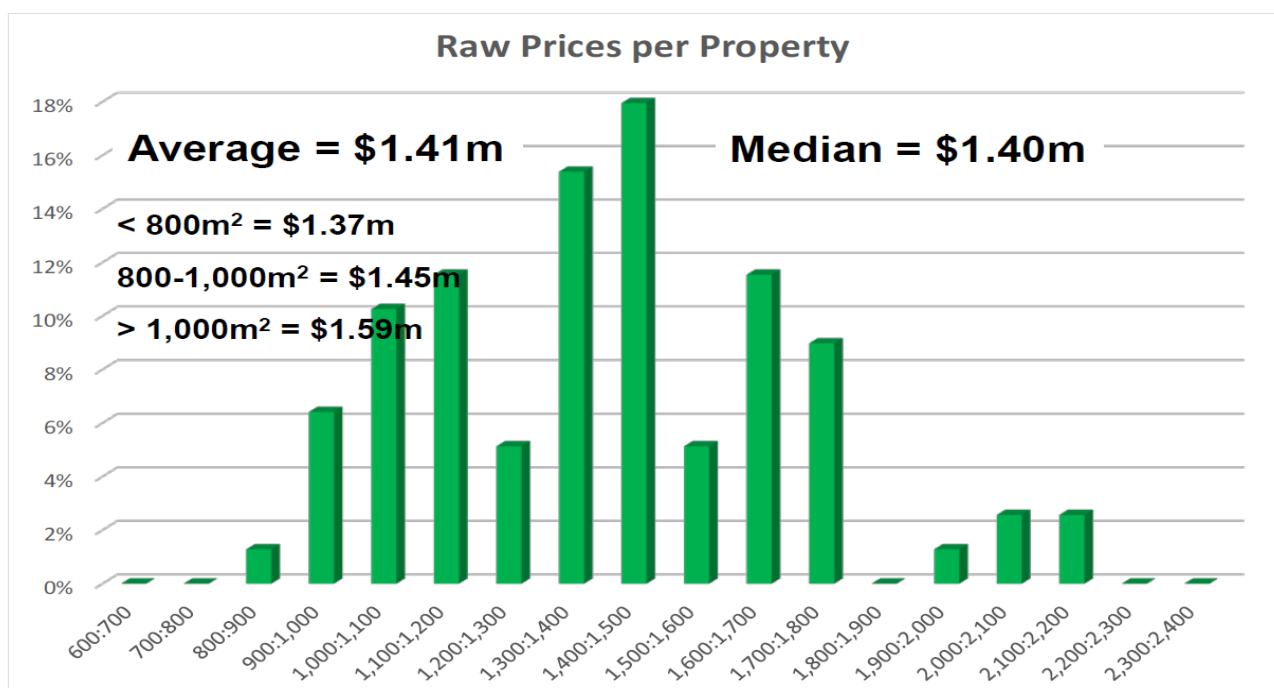
The premise is that people will move for a variety of reasons but a fair way to consider this is that they will move to an equivalent property somewhere in the Hills. To be equivalent the property will need to be:

- 4 bedrooms,
- Have a 2 car garage
- And be on a similar size of land to the existing properties (so about 950m<sup>2</sup>). We looked at possible houses on 700m<sup>2</sup> to 1,100m<sup>2</sup>.

So what is available with these above parameters?

In Castle Hill and nearby suburbs, on 20th January, 2016, 78 ads for these sorts of properties were listed on [www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au).

The graph below demonstrates the prices of properties for sale in Castle Hill and nearby suburbs.

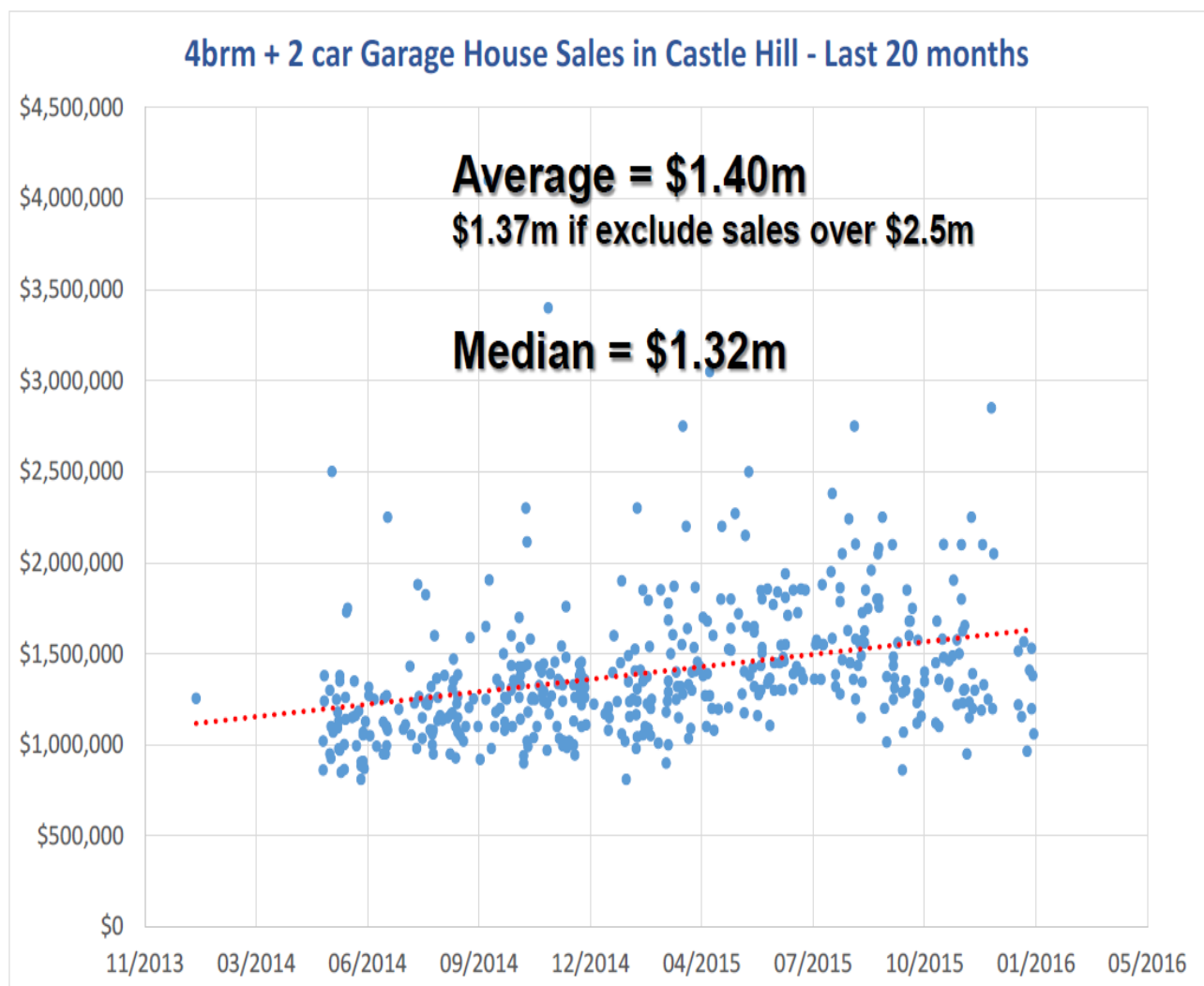


The average size of property examined in Castle Hill and nearby areas was 840m<sup>2</sup> (smaller than the typical size of Showground Precinct properties which average out at 950+m<sup>2</sup>). As can be seen from the graph the average and median prices of properties for sale were about \$1.4m. However, please note that properties in the range of 800-1,000m<sup>2</sup> size of land averaged \$1.45m and properties that are over 1,000m<sup>2</sup> in size were asking nearly \$1.6m.

So buying an 'equivalent' property for about \$1.5m seems a pretty reasonable conclusion.

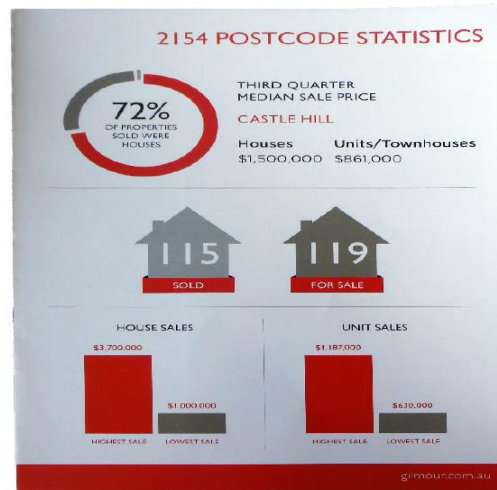
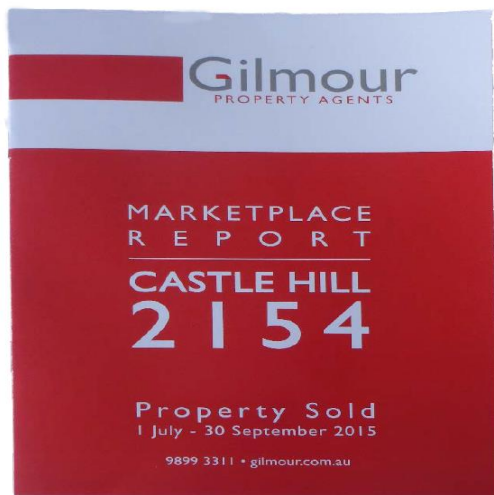
In fact if you normalise all the property prices to a standard 1,000m<sup>2</sup> block, you would be tempted to put the 'buy' figure as high as \$1.75m, but let's ignore that as we want to keep the evaluation conservative.

If you look at [www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au) at the 461 house sale prices in Castle Hill over the last 20 months then you see that property prices in Castle Hill have risen steadily and are certainly in line with the rise of properties across Greater Sydney



We the residents of the Showground Precinct have in depth knowledge of the property market in our area. We are well aware that houses have sold in the Showground Precinct for \$2.3 million, \$2.2 million, \$1.8 million dollars etc...in the last 12 months and there is significant anecdotal evidence to demonstrate this fact.





To make this work economically for everyone involved, there needs to be enough townhouses/terrace houses developed on individual blocks of land and they need to be sold for extravagant prices.

For the purposes of estimating yield, we have used *Table 4* and *Figure 15 Attached Dwellings on minimum 240m<sup>2</sup> Lots* of the DoPE document entitled, "*Appendix B Recommended Development Control Plan Amendments*".

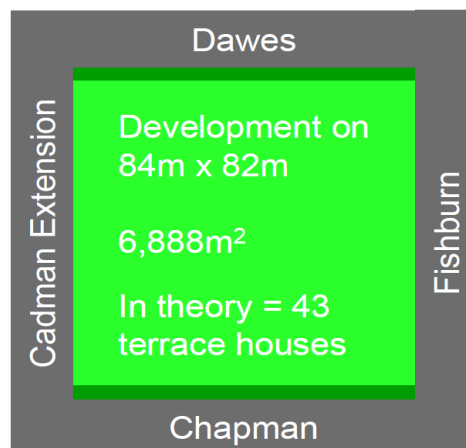


Figure 15 demonstrates the maximum townhouse / terrace density which could be placed on a block of land (if we ignore issues of aesthetics, design etc.). From this we can calculate:

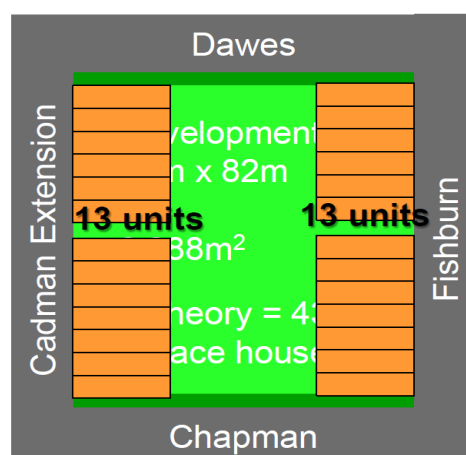
- A 6m frontage and a 24m depth gives a property area of 144m<sup>2</sup> (we understand this is below the minimum for a Torrens title block, and assume that the properties would be configured in a row or terrace house arrangement). With 2-3 stories this would also equate to about 215m<sup>2</sup> of building and probably 3 bedrooms.
- If we assume half of a 6m laneway to provide access to the front or back of such a terrace house this translates to 144m<sup>2</sup> plus  $0.5 \times 6\text{m} \times 6\text{m} = 162\text{m}^2$  for a notional high density block.
- In theory you can fit  $1,000\text{m}^2 / 162\text{m}^2 = 6.17$  dwellings per 1,000m<sup>2</sup> block with these controls.

### How many however can you really fit?

On a block of land that measures 6,888m<sup>2</sup> in theory you could fit 43 town/terrace houses on the measurements and controls plans proposed by the NSW Government.



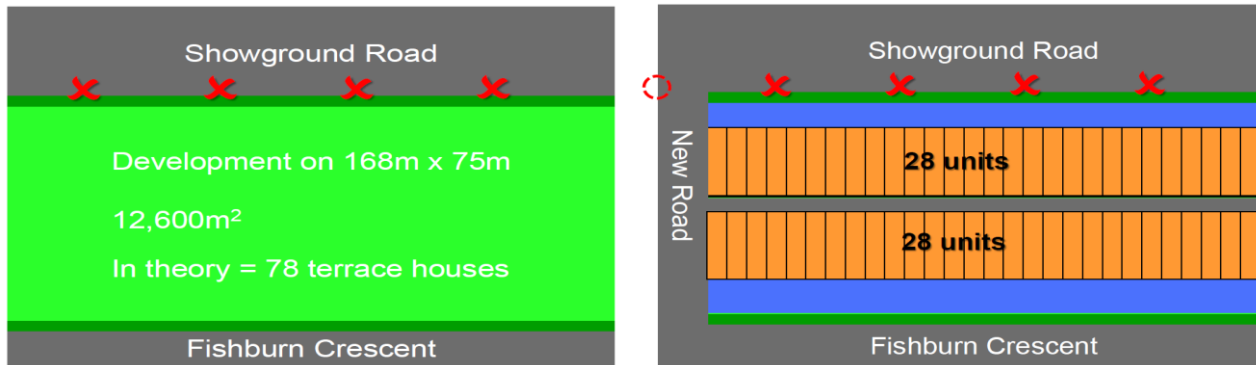
However in reality and best practice you can get just 26 town/terrace houses to work whatever you fit them on the block.



This means you only achieve 60% of the theoretical maximum, or 3.73 dwellings per 1,000m<sup>2</sup>.



In other areas of the precinct like Fishburn & Showground Road the proposed yield is slightly higher and in this configuration you could achieve 56 town/terrace houses out of a possible 78 in theory. This equates to a 72% land use efficiency or 4.43 dwellings per 1,000m<sup>2</sup>.



However **to be conservative, let's assume an absolute maximum yield of 5 town/terrace houses per 1,000m<sup>2</sup>.**

To estimate the likely retail value any town/terrace house property sold in this configuration, we have examined 59 townhouse sales in the Castle Hill suburb in the last 20 months (May 2014 to Jan 2016). [www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au) was again the source.

The overall median and average price of townhouse in Castle Hill were around the \$850,000 mark, and very few townhouses or attached dwellings above \$950,000.

Note that the \$860,000 median in our figures is consistent with the \$861,000 in the Gilmour Real Estate brochure on previous pages.

So now we know:

1. **The cost of replacement property = \$1.5 million**
2. **The cost of town/terrace house once developed = \$850,000**

Now we need to look at what the homeowner will realistically receive once they do the deal with a developer. There are various ways to look at how much the landholder might achieve out of such a sale. One way is to take a third for the building cost, a third for the developer and GST and a third for the landowner.

We have tried to do a more detailed estimate based around a building cost of about \$300,000 and then half each of what is left for the developer (and GST) and the landowner.

GST	\$77,000	
Margin 23%	\$198,000	• Interest charges
Build 35%	\$300,000	• Delays
Land 32%	\$275,000	• Return per site
		• U/G car park + \$50-60k
		• DA fees
		• Builder's Margin
		• Higher cost finishes
		• Assumes zoning
	<hr/>	
	\$850,000	

Remember also that:

- The landowner's share assumes confirmed zoning so no risk taken on that score by the developer
- The building cost could easily be increased through fees and other costs, substantially so if a double garage were included, and higher cost finishes are likely in a row house configuration.
- The developer has to also cover the risks as regards time and any delays. In the end they could be forgiven for feeling that apartment development would offer a better return.

**So the landowner could expect about \$275,000 per dwelling and this is probably at the upper end of expectations.**

Let's work out what the landowner will really receive from a developer.

**Max yield of 5 x \$275,000 = \$1.375 million**

Ok now let's work it all out....

<b>1. Max Yield -</b>	<b>\$1,375,000 – (minus)</b>
<b>2. Replacement property -</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>
<b>3. Stamp Duty etc... -</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Equals money to landholder</b>	<b>– \$225,000 (a loss on any deal)</b>

Now who on earth is going to sell for their property for **a total loss of \$225,000 dollars!!!**

Therefore, you can see that the equation clearly doesn't work, as there is NO incentive for the property owner to sell to developers when they could be taking a massive loss in any deal that is created under the current R3 town/terrace house scenario.

So in summary, for the success of the Showground Precinct to be achieved, there needs to be a significant interest and appetite created in the market that will drive early development and investment into the funding of improved infrastructure and community facilities. We need this to happen if we are going to give the Showground Precinct a vital facelift and take residential living in the Garden Shire into the next 50 years and onwards.

**This is a once in a generation opportunity to get the zoning and planning right. It won't happen again in our lifetimes. There is a golden opportunity with motivated and connected landowners, good ideas and goodwill. Please do not waste this opportunity.**

All of the above information on R3 **economic unviability** is supported by the appendixes items attached to this document:

- APP Submission
- Showground Station Precinct R3 Economic Viability – A Residents Perspective

## **Property Yield and Proposed Densities**

The current "Showground Station Precinct Proposal" has decreased any potential development of the existing residential precinct going easterly of the newly proposed road that clearly cuts the precinct in half going from Showground Rd all the way through to Middleton Ave.

This area of which has been given the provisional zoning of R3, will see LITTLE or NO development because of the proposed townhouse/terrace house style of housing. The "Showground Station Precinct Proposal" has however maintained and increased the overall yield of properties through increasing the yield potential on the Crown Land (State and Local Government Land) that surrounds the Showground Station site.

### **Our Response:**

The current "Showground Station Precinct Proposal" we can see will never improve or even maintain the "The Garden Shire", which is what we the residents and Hills Shire Council want to happen. The issue of maintaining a garden shire can be certainly sustained without being effected by density. From my knowledge of town planning, although limited, it makes logical sense to have higher buildings in the Showground Precinct, therefore reducing the amount of land or building footprint needed for residential buildings and consequently freeing up more land for gardens and public space.

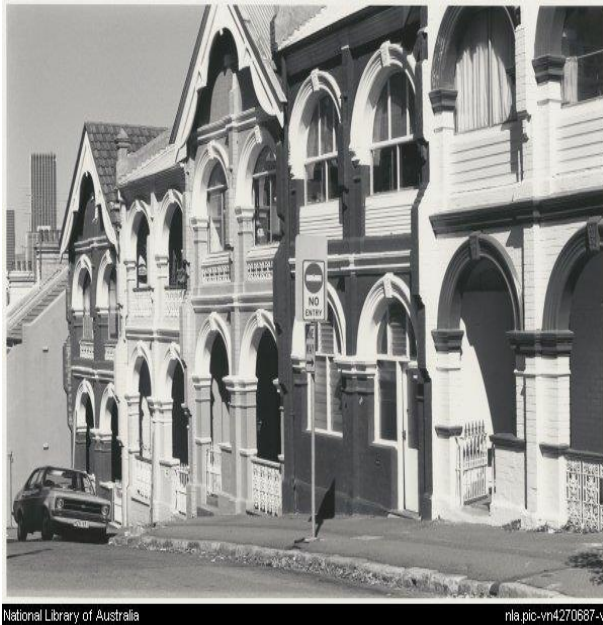
For the Showground Station to achieve maximum usage by residents located in the 800m radius catchment area as outlined by the NSW Government, their needs to be sensible urban design and planning. Again, by having smaller building footprints, we can be creating garden lined walking pathways for residents to make their way to and from Showground Station. Therefore, reducing the need for the resident's reliance on motor vehicles and increasing their patronage of the Sydney Metro Northwest.

So in summary, the current densities proposed in the "Showground Station Precinct Proposal" are not reflective of the objectives of Transport Orientated Development (TOD) and are well, well below the densities proposed in other planned TOD's across the Sydney Region.

The currently proposed R3 area of town/terrace houses for the Showground Precinct are inconsistent with the NSW Government's and Hills Shire Council's vision, which describes the precinct as *"high density residential living with access to employment, limited retail, cultural and **recreational opportunities**."*

How can the NSW Government be realistic with its "Showground Station Precinct Proposal", when it has a vision for more greenspace, parklands and recreational facilities for the Showground precinct and it has come up with this absurd idea of placing townhouses and terrace houses as a viable alternative for residential housing?

**Town/terrace houses DO NOT solve the issue of greenspace and only compound the problem of creating a concrete jungle in the R3 zoned areas.** Townhouses will be crammed in by greedy developers, trying to get as much as they can on the land on offer and the greenspace will completely disappear for ever. **There will be NO tree lined walkways, colourful gardens or nice parks. We would have gone back to the times of early Sydney in the 1800's, which is completely depressing and lacks imagination.** (See images on following page)



National Library of Australia

nlia.pic-vn4270687-v



**Photos:** Courtesy of National Library of Australia

This sort of development is already occurring in many parts of Sydney, with hodge podge townhouse developments popping up everywhere and it looks so unattractive and doesn't meet any form of green space requirements for its residents or the community around the developments.

Let's just take a look at the suburb of Girraween as an example, townhouse development has increased tenfold in the area surrounding Girraween. Developers have been buying up small blocks of land and trying to jam pack these blocks with as many townhouses as will be allowable under the Development Control Plans of the local council. This has resulted in entire streets being developed by a whole assortment of small developers and the end result is a mishmash of townhouses that are all concrete jungles with little greenspace and .....

(See photos below taken of Carinya Rd, Girraween)







**Photos:** Carinya Rd, Girraween

**Is this what the NSW Government really wants to happen to the Showground Precinct??? I don't think so...**

Therefore to the uneducated in town planning and urban development, there is a clear case that Hills Shire Council and NSW Government has got it wrong and there should be higher density development and taller building forms spread out further across the Showground Precinct, as opposed to jam packing everything in as close as possible to the railway station.

## **Inconsistencies in Proposed Densities across the Showground Precinct**

The Wikipedia definition of a **Transit Oriented Development (TOD)** is a **mixed-use residential and commercial area designed to maximize access to public transport, and often incorporates features to encourage transit ridership**. A TOD neighborhood typically has a center with a transit station or stop (train station, metro station, tram stop, or bus stop), surrounded by relatively high-density development with progressively lower-density development spreading outward from the center. TODs generally are located within a radius of one-quarter to one-half mile (400 to 800 m) from a transit stop.

**Source:** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transit-oriented\\_development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transit-oriented_development)

We understand that there needs to be varied densities applied across transit oriented developments and have some questions to ask the NSW government about how these densities have been applied as their appears to be some gross inconsistencies in certain areas of the Showground Precinct.

### **Our Response:**

Can someone please explain me to how the densities and zoning have been applied using the so called 400 – 800 metre radius as was proposed in the original 2013 Structure Plan.

My house is a 550 metre walk to the new Showground Station and has been given a provisional zoning of R3 whilst other areas of the precinct like the area bounded by Cadman Crescent, Middleton and Hughes Avenues (see black arrows) has been given a provisional zoning of R4 and it is over 700 metres walk from the station.

**This doesn't seem fair or just and is certainly not explained by the roads (which we have been told by DoPE planners at the Community Drop in Sessions cut the precinct in half and provide a line to separate the R4 and R3 zoned areas).**



Ok then, if the new road which goes straight through the centre of the precinct and goes directly through my property at 54 Fishburn Crescent is the separation point for the zoned areas, then why has the area bounded by Cadman Crescent, Middleton and Hughes Avenues (see black arrows) got an R4 zoning and not an R3 zoning???

It seems very inconsistent and not logical to the lay personal who is not an urban planner and begs the questions why does this little pocket bounded by Cadman Crescent, Middleton and Hughes Avenues get an R4 zoning when other areas like Cadman Cres (20m directly across the road) and other areas like Fishburn Crescent etc...have been given a R3 zoning???

**Can someone please explain this inconsistency???**

## **Placement of Proposed Roads**

We currently live on Fishburn Crescent, Castle Hill (directly behind Showground Road) and are well aware that it is being upgraded very soon, to become a major arterial road of the North West area of Sydney. It is a very busy road already, however we are realists and understand that with the expansion of Castle Towers Shopping Centre and all the proposed development scheduled for Castle Hill in the coming years it is time to upgrade Showground Road.

We do realise with all the extra dwellings, it is imperative that access be provided to Showground Road in some way. However, we do not see any rational argument for why a proposed road should go through our property at 99 Showground Rd and the neighbouring properties of 97 Showground Road and 54 Fishburn Crescent.

To us, this road network through the Showground Precinct has been illogically thought out and should be planned more extensively if it is to take traffic out of the new Showground Precinct.

### **Our Response:**

We do not believe the current proposed road going through 99 and 97 Showground Rd and 54 Fishburn Crescent is the answer and the preferred option for a number of reasons:

- **It cuts the precinct in two, which means that opportunities like the large 2+ha park simply could not be built.**
- **It limits the opportunities to master plan and to provide flexible building areas.**

Similarly shifting the Ashford Avenue extension to the west to align with Britannia Road might appear attractive but it would suffer from the problems just mentioned, and worse would introduce traffic into the precinct from the north.

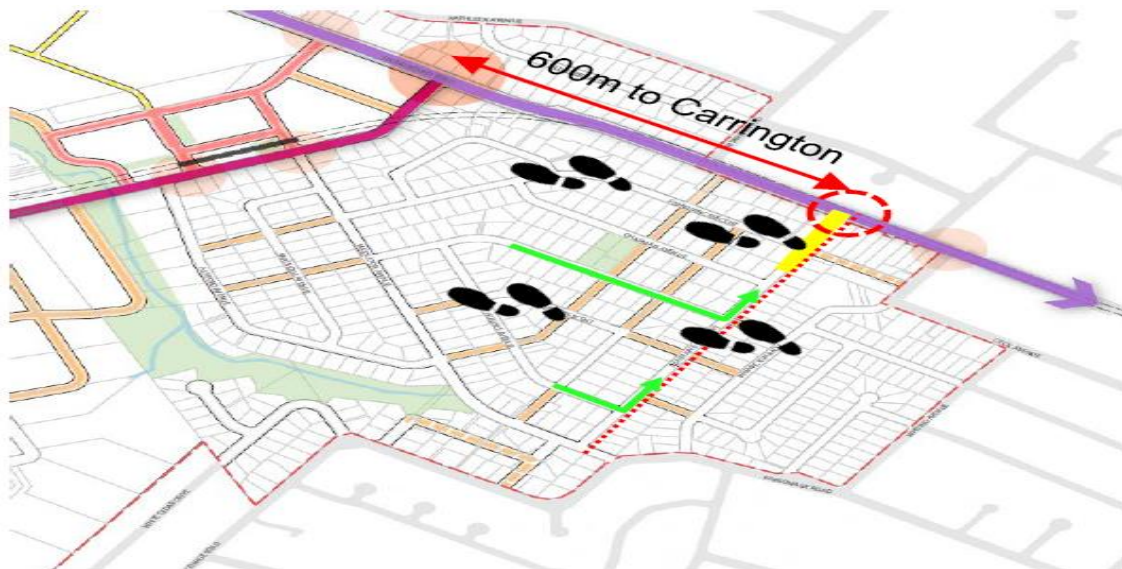
It would be far better to have an appropriately designed intersection, connecting Fishburn Crescent to Showground Road.

Our solution to this road problem is simple:

- 1. Connect Fishburn Crescent with Showground Road via the existing stretch of Fishburn Crescent on the Eastern edge of the Precinct.**

By moving the Fishburn /Showground connection easterly to join up with the existing long stretch of Fishburn Crescent, we would be creating a clear precinct boundary and push all the future traffic to the boundaries of the precinct as opposed to the interior which is currently proposed by the NSW Government. (see diagram on following page).





**Fishburn Crescent would become a very well defined precinct boundary, with traffic funnelled to the precinct edges, keeping it out of areas best kept for people.**

We suggest that the following also ought to be considered in any design of future exit roads in the Showground Precinct:

- Having dual lanes exiting the precinct, as you want minimal interruption to the Showground Road flow. You want cars from the precinct to get onto Showground in numbers and quickly once the lights go green.
- Allow for a small amount of widening of Fishburn Crescent up the hill to facilitate any queuing that might be needed for the lights. Having 80-90m of double lanes however should reduce this requirement somewhat.

## **2. Eliminate the North-South roads that split up the precinct**

The extensions of Ashford Avenue and of Cadman Crescent to link up with Fishburn Crescent and Showground Road simply break up the precinct. There is no evidence that they are needed. Even with apartments, the volumes of traffic in these streets will be relatively light.



Hasn't the NSW government been advocating from the start of the railway proposal that residents who live in the Showground Precinct will walk to station and use public transport and therefore won't have the need for a car. Then why do we have these additional roads planned for the precinct???

All of these connections also only break up the precinct and further put buildings into little boxes. The grid like proposal for blocks of land will holdup opportunities for real master planning.

### **3. Eliminate the connection between Fishburn Crescent and Cecil Ave/Warwick Parade**

We can only see this new road as being problem as it will encourage traffic into the precinct instead of out of the precinct. People will continue to turn off Old Northern Road and drive down Cecil Ave and then into Fishburn Crescent and onto Middleton Avenue and Carrington etc...to avoid getting stuck in traffic snarls on Showground Road. This practise already happens very frequently as Showground Road is often in gridlock many times of the day and night.

Then this again begs the question –

#### **Why are we connecting Cecil Ave to Fishburn Crescent???**

It has been clearly stated by NSW Government that this will improve permeability of the Showground Precinct. However, what it will do is **compromise the safety and amenity** of the Showground Station Precinct. If you do need permeability of some degree put in a couple of walking and cycle paths. And if you must connect Cecil Avenue, only make it one way – going east.

It is time to get this road NSW Government, because we only have one shot at it and it needs to be done correctly from the onset.

## **Land Consolidation versus Fragmentation**

The Hills Shire Council and NSW Government clearly identify in all their proposals for the Showground Precinct that land consolidation will be needed to occur to maximise the development potential. However, we have observed from Hills Shire Council business papers that they are flatly denying the fact that residents are amalgamated and working together to produce large lot sizes in the Showground Precinct. This is totally absurd and demonstrates how out of touch the Hills Shire Council is with residents and the community of the Showground Precinct.

There is significant evidence to refute the Hills Shire Councils claims about land fragmentation and residents not being amalgamated. One just simply has to drive around the streets and look at the signs that are up advertising very large parcels of land for redevelopment. It is also very evident on the internet, with multiple large land holdings advertised for sale on the website [www.realcommercial.com.au](http://www.realcommercial.com.au) (see link below)

<http://m.realcommercial.com.au/for-sale/property-land+development-in-castle+hill,+nsw+2154/list-1>

### **Our Response:**

As a resident of Fishburn Crescent, I can categorically state that I am aware of how much of the Showground Precinct is being currently organised into formal land owner groups. I myself, am part of a group that has a land parcel in excess of 19,500m<sup>2</sup> that comprises 17 properties that front both Showground Road and Fishburn Crescent.

There are to my knowledge at present over 20 large land owner groups that are very well organised with large consolidated land parcels. (see map on following page)



So in summary, by us the residents banding together to present large and significant tracts of land for redevelopment to quality developers there is a greater chance of the Showground Precinct **being a success with achieved higher density master planned development.**

**Land fragmentation cannot be considered a constraint to the development of the Showground Precinct and the appropriate development controls should reflect this. We the residents of the Showground Precinct do not want another Leppington!!!**

We do not want random fragmented developments popping up all over the precinct. We want a master planned community that is attractive to live in and offers the chance to retain the “Garden Shire” characteristics, we all love.

### **Local Infrastructure Development & a VISION for the Future**

The “Showground Station Precinct Proposal “ and the previous “The Hills Corridor Strategy”, clearly identify the need to provide additional community facilities such as playing fields and community centres that will be in demand with increased population.



## Our Response:

We agree with the NSW Government and Hills Shire Council in that additional community facilities will be needed with an increased population.

With the increased extra population and dwellings, there will be a bonus in funding for the development of community facilities. An increase in yield and densities brings along with it additional financial offerings to pay for new and improved community facilities. Under the current planning controls, NSW government and council has the ability to offer incentives to developers to provide these facilities. These provisions should be highly encouraged by council with reference to any future planning documentation.

We have come up with a innovative plan for the Showground Precinct that is both visionary and would suit the needs of a growing community by providing public open space in the form a central type park that runs directly through the precinct.

If we think bigger picture, all types of opportunities can be opened up and explored by both government and developers alike.



See the image above of what a Central Park type configuration could deliver:

- The **same amount of dwellings and GFA** as might have been envisaged with 'micro' thinking.
- A **mix of building products that could be more attractive to the market**, and
- **Amenity and life style opportunities, far beyond those elsewhere** in the Hills or many other parts of Sydney.

Things to consider in this proposal:

1. **A central park that could be of the order of 2-2.5ha.** It could actually have a couple of playing fields (infrastructure issues at least partly addressed), a few netball courts, a hitting wall, a basketball hoop, some playground areas, a performance area, some shady trees and a BBQ or two. If of course you have some sporting fields (probably for younger people) then you will need some more parking, but maybe you could build **underground parking too** (maybe under the park, and of course that will help with off-street **overflow commuter parking during the week** (600-1,000 cars) – after all it is just a short walk to the station). Note too that Chapman Avenue could be eliminated from the network. And of course this would be **public open space**, but available to all the residents as community space. **Impossible – well no, not if the exercise is approached with imagination and on a different scale.**

2. Forget about the Chapman Avenue Reserve. It is the wrong size and not accessible anyway. **Create north south walkways through the parkland.** People can stroll through the park on their return from the bus stop on Showground Road – not everyone can or will use the train.

3. The **buildings on Showground Road could have larger footprints.** They could be of a height and form that would **not shadow the park, but would really cut down the noise from Showground Road.** They would help the park become a tranquil oasis. Also some of the buildings could be **mixed use with some cafes and convenience shops** on the ground floors and some offices for medical and other professionals. The apartments could be of a larger size and help **extend the range of housing possibilities.**

4. The buildings between the old Chapman and Dawes roads would have **road access via Dawes.** Their northern boundary would directly border the park, probably with some landscaping on some private green space.

5. **Diversity in Housing Product can be achieved.** With the right development controls and an R4 zoning, developer(s) will have the opportunity to produce a diverse mixture of housing that will cater to the market's appetite. Developers could market and promote this diverse housing product in such a manner that highlights the Park Avenue ambience and lifestyle.



**Bidadari Park – Singapore**

## See if this can be achieved in Singapore why can't it be achieved in Castle Hill???

I urge you to watch the video of this urban development at Bidadari Park, Singapore to see what really can be done with imagination and vision and creative thinking outside of the box - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EINcA901KBY> (An overview of the upcoming Bidadari estate)

Unfortunately of course there are all too many problems with such a project:

- "You could not get that many people to sell" – well it would not be a walk in the park, but with the **right incentives and the right consultation approaches** you could persuade people of goodwill. As has been conclusively demonstrated in the "Showground Station Precinct R3 Economic Viability - A Residents' Perspective" document, the proposed R3 zonings are demonstrably NOT viable. We also showed that many, many people do care about the area and what it will become – many will want to live here – this is where families and friends are.
- "People aren't going to want a park to be built on their land. They want 8 storey apartments and lots for the superannuation fund." We have to overcome this micro thinking and look at the big picture. The commercial side of the equation has to give equal weight to every part of the package. Every square metre contributes to why such a development could be so attractive, so **rewards shared on a per square metre basis**.
- Apartments cannot be built on the R3 land. Well this one is simple. Convert R3 to R4.
- You cannot create that amount of Public Open Space. You can only extend the Chapman reserve. Why?
- You cannot put parkland and buildings on Chapman Avenue – Why? It would not be needed.

In summary, there also is significant future potential for additional playing fields within the Showground Precinct, inside the actual Showground. The Showground Area has been a totally underutilised area for the 17 years I have lived in the Showground Precinct.

There could be **additional sporting fields** and a sporting precinct planned for the Showground arena and its surrounding areas. We need a vision for the Showground, as in its current state it is not working. There could be **new community centres** built with indoor sporting facilities – swimming pools, gymnasiums, bowling greens, plus additional outdoor sporting fields could be built on the old carparks and inside the Showground arena. We could build multistorey carparks inside the Showground to solve parking issues for the Sydney Metro Northwest and therefore free up more land for outdoor recreation and community facilities.

I believe this because the Showground in Castle Hill is Crown Land (local and state government owned) and that there **should be less residential (high rise buildings)** on that site and more attention should be paid to providing the community the facilities they deserve in an important area such as the Showground Precinct.

There could be the opportunity to provide the community with another **performing arts centre** – like the former Hills Centre that was demolished to make way for the new Showground Station.

Whilst we applaud the vision for the Showground that has been presented in the “Showground Station Precinct Proposal”, it doesn’t go far enough to give back to the community. This is a real opportunity to make the Showground Precinct a precinct of innovation and excellence and needs to be properly thought through with detailed consultation from the community who are going to be utilising these facilities in the future.

### **Conclusion Summary**

We the residents of 54 Fishburn Crescent, Castle Hill can definitely NOT support the “Showground Station Precinct Proposal” in its current format as the proposal is flawed in so many areas and doesn’t take into consideration the needs for the current and future residents of the Showground Precinct.

We understand the need for higher density living in the Showground Precinct and that this is a long term 30 – 50 year plan. The NSW Government needs to get this right the first time so we don’t have hodge podge developments springing up all over the precinct and end up with another Westmead or even worse another Girraween.

The economic viability of R3 in its current form as town/terrace houses is unsustainable and won’t be sustainable for another 20 – 30 years and a new vision and approach is necessary and that includes changing the current R3 zoning for it to be zoned R4.

To provide for “Garden Shire Lifestyle” the footprint of buildings needs to be increased by increasing the vertical heights and FSR’s, thus creating additional and large amounts of both public and private green space for the community to enjoy. The densities for the Showground Precinct need to remain consistent and along the same lines as the already approved developments in the Shire and other areas of Metropolitan Sydney.

**If it doesn’t remain consistent and in line with other developments, there is going to be NO opportunity to improve the provision of quality housing for the future residents and there will NO public domain landscaped spaces and adequate community facilities provided.**

We support the NSW Governments aspiration to improve the Showground Precinct as a **master planned community** and we implore you to re-examine your approach to the densities and get this right from the start.

### **Appendices:**

- APP Submission
- Showground Station Precinct R3 Economic Viability – A Residents Perspective
- An Opportunity to Renew – A Residents Perspective

**Yours sincerely,**

**Kim Wicks**

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