

Wilton Growth Area - Wilton North Precinct, Draft Precinct Plan (November 2017)

About WReN

Wollondilly Resilience Network (WReN) Inc. is a not for profit community association based in the Wollondilly Shire. Our aim is to raise awareness of practices that support a strong and resilient community adopting local solutions to achieve environmental and personal wellbeing. We foster care of the planet, care of the people and fair share and are entirely powered by volunteers.

WReN creates opportunities for members of our community to come together to learn skills, share knowledge and support each other in becoming resilient. We host workshops, talks and other community events, and also operate the Fairy Wren Food Hub. We have around 275 members and supporters (both organisations and people), mostly within Wollondilly Shire and surrounding areas.

Our objectives include:

- fostering change through innovation and community initiatives;
- seeking to reduce dependency on fossil fuels;
- facilitating networks with other organisations that have similar aims and objectives;
- demonstrating and modelling sustainable systems for living, housing, energy, waste management, resource recovery and food production;
- fostering public education and dissemination of information;
- identifying and supporting young leaders to initiate and develop programs relating to environmental sustainability;
- identifying, utilising and sharing the expertise of community members;
- acting as an advocate for environmental and sustainability issues to council and other government and non-government agencies.

Comments on Wilton North Precinct Plan

- Like the Wilton South East Draft Precinct Plan, the Wilton North Draft Precinct Plan (the Plan) is lacking any clear **commitment to environmental sustainability**. In line with our previous submissions, WReN would like to see this addressed by including commitments to the following:
 - An overall vision/target for 80% energy used by the precinct being generated onsite from renewable sources eg roof top solar, developer supported community energy generation scheme
 - Road orientations that support use of passive solar
 - Planning provisions for house sites that support use of passive solar (ie ability for houses to be oriented north and east regardless of site/street orientation
 - Use of shade trees, particularly in public spaces and along roadways, noting house sites will mostly be too small unless small appropriate species are provided.
 - In the areas dedicated to medium density housing, provision of community spaces with trees.
 - Land set aside for communal use such as community gardens, men's shed, structured activities (ie not just parks for walking through)

- The Wilton North Precinct is extremely well located with proximity to the freeway junction, town centre, and should the regional road be approved, Douglas Park. The Precinct also benefits from significant environmental conservation areas which will enhance the amenity of the area. For this reason, we do not believe that provision for **medium density housing** made in the Plan is adequate to support the creation of a balanced and diverse community. We propose the following:
 - provision for medium density housing along the full length of the proposed regional road (or the main road through the precinct if the regional road is not built)
 - additional provision for medium density housing in the centre of the precinct adjacent to the East- West road, green space and playing field
- We understand it may not be profitable to build medium density housing in these locations initially, however we believe these provisions are necessary to ensure the precinct is able to accommodate a diverse range of the population as it develops over time. For example, this provides for aging in place through downsizing, family dissolution through death or divorce, and young people wishing to live independently but near the family home.
- While we appreciate the commitment to work with Wollondilly Council on a plan for affordable housing, we would like to see a firmer commitment in the Plan to providing **housing** that meets the needs of a diverse community. In particular, we believe the Plan would be strengthened by commitments to the following:
 - Provision of disability inclusive housing forms
 - Housing that meets to the needs of older people
 - Integration of the affordable housing target within the precinct
 - Proactive provision of housing for low income households, including young families and singles through a 15% affordable housing target. We believe this higher target reflects both the underlying need for provision of housing in the Wollondilly area and the excess profits the developer will make from this precinct development.
 - Neighbourhood diversity - the developer should not be able to use restrictive covenants or other measures to prevent acquisition of housing in the precinct for use as social housing, emergency housing, or disability group homes. Requiring this will not affect initial sales but will ensure the precinct can supply the housing needed to meet community needs as Wilton grows over the next 20 years.
- The Plan in its current form makes insufficient provision for **community uses**. We note and support the proposal for playing fields and schools however the Plan makes limited provision for unstructured open space and no provision for activities such as community sheds, gardens or arts.
- Shopping options should include smaller easy accessible local ‘corner shops’ to encourage walking and reduced car transport. Mall style shops do not allow for creative or fringe businesses.
- There needs to be a committed space suitable for farmers markets and sale of locally made goods.
- With housing lots likely to be on the smaller size, there must be provision for **unstructured open space** (ie local parks) within walking distance of all parts of the precinct. This necessary to support a range of activities such as dog walking, playgrounds, unstructured

play, family and community gatherings and so on. Additionally, even small parks (or pocket parks) create opportunities for trees and other natural vegetation to enhance amenity and provide environmental cooling.

- If built, we are committed to the Wilton Growth Area becoming a diverse and vibrant community integrated with the rest of Wollondilly. A critical step towards this is planning for a range of community activities beyond sport and school attendance. We would like to see a clear provision in the Plan for community facilities such as places to meet, venues for creative activities (community arts, performance, music) and in the medium density areas, community sheds and gardens. The actual use of these facilities will, of course, be determined by the Wilton North community however if provision is not made in the Plan, the Wilton North population will not have this opportunity. Finding land for sheds, gardens and other outdoor activities is extremely difficult once communities are established.
- We are disappointed by the Plan's lack of commitment to **public transport**. We would like to see the following addressed clearly in the Plan:
 - Commitment to developing and releasing a realistic public transport infrastructure strategy for Wilton Growth Area within the next two years – for implementation 'over time'. This strategy must provide viable options to car travel, such as an electrified railway line serviced by an efficient bus or light rail network. It also must consider the needs of people accessing Wilton Growth Area from other parts of Wollondilly for education, employment and services.
 - Information about the locations people will be connected to by the North-South bus service. A bus that runs from the town centre to the local centre and does not connect people to employment and education centres or railway stations outside of Wilton Growth Area is not useful.
 - Provision for on road as well as off road cycling facilities. Off road cycling facilities are usually only suitable for recreational purposes.
- We would like to see a **multi use educational precinct** that enables community use after hours as an integral component of management, this could include vocational training, community activities, meetings and make a greater use of facilities that are usually unused for the majority of the week.
- We have not seen provision of a **high school or TAFE** in any of the Precinct plans released so far.
 - The Wilton Growth Centre will be the largest population centre in Wollondilly and will need at least one high school.
 - If provision is made for non-government high schools, the opportunity to establish schools should not be limited to religious institutions.
 - At present there is no access to TAFE (or similar) between the Southern Highlands and Campbelltown.
 - The establishment of Wilton Growth Area is an opportunity to improve access to TAFE for the whole population of Wollondilly – provided the Growth Area is connected to Wollondilly by viable public transport options.

- We note and support the proposed **conservation areas**. However, we would like to see more clarity in the Plan about how the conservation areas can be used by the community (if at all) and the plans for facilitating this use. For example:
 - Will the conservation areas be accessible for walking or other recreational activities or will they be fenced off, no-go areas?
 - What level of development or infrastructure is permissible within the conservation areas?
- We note the comments in the **water quality** section regarding proposed sewerage treatment and use of waste water. It is important for the community to continue to have visibility of these planning processes and the opportunity to comment on the more detailed proposals as they emerge. We would like to see this articulated as a commitment in the Plan.
- We are disappointed at the general lack of focus on creating viable **employment** opportunities within the Wilton Growth Area through the planning process. It is not clear how the employment strategy developed in 2014 is being progressed or whether this strategy has informed the Wilton North Precinct Plan. There does not appear to have been any serious consideration of infrastructure to support employment, beyond the local shops. We would like to see a commitment in the Plan to progressing, and involving the Wollondilly community in, the Wilton Growth Area employment strategy and reflecting its directions in the final Wilton North Precinct Plan.