HAVE YOUR SAY ON FUTURE LANDSCAPING AT THE NORTHERN ROUNDABOUT, ALBANY HIGHWAY

Public submissions are sought for design ideas for the roundabout at the junction of Albany Highway and Woogenellup Road, Mount Barker.

The Council has not been happy with the state of the roundabout and is interested in hearing from the public about what could be installed there.

The design will need to meet certain guidelines to ensure public safety and so that it is relatively low maintenance. The following principles should be considered by members of the public when making a submission:

• The roundabout is intended to be low maintenance. Any vegetation should be minimal or ‘water wise’;
• Any non-frangible objects should be greater than 1.5m from kerb lines (clear zones);
• Sightlines should be maintained for motorists using the roundabout; and
• Workers maintaining any vegetation or objects within the roundabout should not be exposed to hazards from traffic.

The Shire President Cr Chris Pavlovich, said he was ‘extremely pleased at the public interest shown in the northern roundabout’s rejuvenation. The roundabout is a major point of contact for motorists coming into Mount Barker when travelling south along Albany Highway and it should be seen as a welcoming landmark for the town.’

Submissions will be received until 4.00pm on Friday 18 May 2018. For more information on how to make a submission and to receive detailed guidelines, please contact the Shire on (08) 9892 1111. Alternatively you can visit the Shire of Plantagenet website at www.plantagenet.wa.gov.au for information.

John Fathers
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

FUTURE TREATMENTS AT THE NORTHERN ROUNDBOUDT, ALBANY HIGHWAY

Thank you for taking the time to make a submission on the future design features for the roundabout at the junction of Albany Highway and Woogenellup Road, Mount Barker.

Submissions will be received until **4.00pm on Friday 18 May 2018**.

All submissions will be considered on their individual merit and will be presented to the Council at the earliest opportunity. The Council reserves the right to make the final decision on what features (or not) are considered appropriate, with Main Roads WA (MRWA) being the ultimate approval body.

This document aims to provide some background information on the roundabout, and the restrictions that must be taken into account when putting forward a submission.

The northern roundabout in Mount Barker is primarily designed as a traffic treatment to allow the safe passage and smooth flow of vehicles ranging from passenger vehicles up to AMMS 6.3 on Muir Highway / Woogenellup Road, and AMMS 7.3 on Albany Highway.

Albany Highway carries the greatest burden of traffic with the most recent MRWA counts having 3400 – 5100 Vehicles Per Day (VPD) with 11% of those on average being heavy vehicles. Counts on Muir Hwy are lower with 630 – 1000 VPD (19.3 % heavy) and Woogenellup Road 700 – 800 VPD (18.6% heavy).

The roundabout was originally installed with a series of mounds set in a designed pattern surrounded by ground level treatments consisting of coloured stones and planted beds of native vegetation. The Shire’s Parks and Gardens team found it almost impossible to keep up the maintenance of the area given the heavy weed burdens originating often from windblown (ryegrass, bromes) or traffic borne seeds (canola, wheat, barley, oats). These weeds would germinate within the low growing plants and had to be either hand pulled or sprayed. The latter exacerbated the situation by killing off portions of the planted material, allowing further soil exposure to the ingress of weeds. Furthermore the irrigation installed had become brittle with UV exposure and prone to breaking and leaking.

Given the volume of bad publicity the state of the treatment was receiving, the Shire decided that the most practical and aesthetic solution in the short term would be the removal of the vegetation and gravel mounds. The original design has not been altered but made into a 2D landscape: a ‘Blank Canvas’.
The summation of all available policy guidelines and advice comes down to ensuring the safety of road users and workers utilising or maintaining a road verge or roundabout. In turn these principles are:

- Ensuring that non-frangible objects are greater than 1.5m from kerb lines (clear zones) in a 60 km/hr speed zone;
- No advertising or similar;
- Minimal signage basically confined to Directional and Regulatory Signage;
- That an errant vehicle has a safe path of travel across the roundabout if required depending upon pre-deflection of approaches;
- That workers maintaining any vegetation or objects within the roundabout area are not exposed to hazards from traffic and not interfere with traffic flow; and
- That any treatments within the roundabout precinct do not provide a distraction for motorists.

Of these principles, the first must be adhered to for the sound reason of not providing an immediate danger to motorists. The other principles require careful thought but are not difficult to achieve provided that common sense is applied.

The pre-deflection path at each entry point is sufficient for the posted speed limit. As with most designs an additional safety factor is built into the design so the deflections would still be achievable at higher speeds (possibly up to 80 km/hr). That said, the approaches and internal kerbing are semi-movable and do not provide a real barrier to an errant vehicle. It is not difficult to imagine a speeding vehicle clipping one of approach islands and ending up travelling across the island, through the traffic lane and into the roundabout proper. To the best of our knowledge this has not happened but remains a possibility. The flag poles within the roundabout are designed to be ‘frangible’ to some extent with this in mind.

One issue that was raised consistently internally was the safety of the Parks and Gardens team when working on the roundabout. Once within the confines of the roundabout they felt safe to some degree but approaching the roundabout with the aim of having to drive onto it, and egressing from it, was regarded as hazardous due to the very poor sightlines afforded by the blockage of view by the mounds.

The issue of what constitutes a distraction to drivers is more difficult to define. Roundabouts and their approaches require a greater driver concentration than travelling in a straight line down a highway, even at the lower posted speeds. The Manager Works and Services suggests that the following would fall into that category:

- Any highly reflective sign or object;
- Any object light by flashing or rotating lights at night; and
- Any other object that would immediately attract attention and interest and potentially divert a driver’s attention away from the prime business of safely negotiating the roundabout.

Additionally, any plantings of vegetation must be very low maintenance and water wise.

Now that all the ‘Do Nots’ have been spelt out give some serious thought to the ‘Can Dos’.

The roundabout is in a good position to capture people’s (passengers only!) attention and is therefore a great place to do something that will make visitors remember our town and tell others, provide a means of expressing who we are and what we value or represent.
Whether it is nice trees or gardens, sculptures, artworks or even garden ornaments representing vertically challenged persons with funny hats, we welcome any and all to have a say.

There is no particular format required for submissions. Please feel free to make a list of suggestions or draw a plan of the roundabout, incorporating pictures or written notations.

Submissions may be sent to the Shire in the following ways:

(a) By hand to the front counter at the Shire of Plantagenet Administration Building, Lowood Road, Mount Barker, WA 6324; or

(b) By post to the Shire of Plantagenet, PO Box 48, Mount Barker, WA 6324; or

(c) By email to the Shire of Plantagenet, at email address info@sop.wa.gov.au.

Submissions will be received until 4.00pm on Friday 18 May 2018. Late submissions will not be accepted.

If you have any general queries about the technical bits in this document, or what services (water/power) are available please ring the Works and Services Department on (08)9892 1111.