

<b>AGENDA REFERENCE:</b>	<b>08/03492</b>
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	<b>S Lancaster, Senior Strategic Planner &amp; P Melling, Director Development Services</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE:</b>	<b>P Melling, Director Development Services</b>
<b>DATE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>1 July 2008</b>
<b>FILE REFERENCE:</b>	<b>TT/0028</b>
<b>APPLICANT / PROPONENT:</b>	<b>Wonthella Progress Association</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**SUMMARY:**

The Wonthella Progress Association are proposing that the former (now removed) railway alignment that runs alongside Flores Road be developed as a recreational/heritage trail and are seeking Council's assurance on the future of this alignment in relation to the North-South Road and support for the trail.

**BACKGROUND:**

The former railway alignment remains under the control of the Public Transport Authority and is currently subject to assessment by the Heritage Council of WA for possible entry onto the permanent State Register of Heritage Places.

The former railway alignment was identified upon the Greater Geraldton Structure Plan (released by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure in 1999) as a 'Primary Distributor Road' alignment. The Webberton Road alignment was identified as a 'District Distributor Road' on the Plan but with a notation between the two routes identifying that a final decision on the "road alignment to be determined".

The issue of whether the former rail alignment or Webberton Road was the preferred alignment for the future highway realignment was discussed by the Geraldton Primary North-South Steering Committee. This Committee resolved in relation to this matter:

*"To support Webberton Road – Alignment Option 3 subject to a number of conditions:*

- i) A freight network review to consider the management of heavy vehicles through Geraldton including a critical review of the rail and services corridor between Oakajee and Narngulu as a potential eastern bypass;*

- ii) *The Shire of Greenough to investigate the future local road network that is necessary to provide access for local traffic between the localities of Waggrakine, Forester Park and Moresby Heights and the centre of Geraldton;*
- iii) *Traffic on North West Coastal Highway between its intersection with Webberton Road and Chapman Valley Road should not be allowed to get to the stage where a six lane highway is required. If either traffic volumes or traffic mix are leading to that requirement, an alternative bypass route will need to be constructed. Traffic modelling suggests that this is unlikely to be required before 2026 at the earliest.*
- iv) *Similarly with the intersection of Webberton Road and the North West Coastal Highway, a trigger for the construction of an alternative bypass will be when traffic volumes and levels of service are such that a grade separated intersection is being contemplated.”*

A copy of the correspondence from the Wonthella Progress Association and a map illustrating the subject area and both alignments has been included as Attachment No. DS207.

The overall concept of the Wonthella Progress Association has merit and is worthy of support.

The plan proposed would provide for a good access link for users from the Wonthella Sporting Precinct and Wonthella suburb to the northern areas of Bluff Point, Spalding and the foreshore dual use path network.

The use of local indigenous plant species to enhance the trail is also a positive outcome and is proposed as a community project by the Wonthella Progress Association.

The retaining of a linear link such as the old Rail Corridor is an important one from a regional planning perspective. Its retention provides for possible use in the future for access and infrastructure.

The Local Member for the Legislative Assembly, Mr Shane Hill, has been liaising with the Wonthella Progress Association and advises:

*“I met again yesterday with the association and I believe that they now have a better understanding on planning for future needs of the City of Geraldton-Greenough. They informed me that the City was fully supportive of taking control of the reserve and developing it for Public Open Space. I support this approach, but with caution that no major structures are built on the old reserve*

*such as club houses etc. The construction of a bike path and planting of trees and general beautification of the area would not be a major issue.”*

*“My reasoning for this approach is that this is a very important parcel of land that could be used for future infrastructure needs such as power or even a future road reserve. Too often Governments dispose of land and then five years later need to identify a service corridor. I believe the community would support the City in developing this parcel of land for public open space but with the State Government holding the vesting of the land.”*

The executive supports the approach proposed by Mr Hill and it will give some security of tenure for the land in the interim until its long term future is decided. Only one portion of land should be excluded and that is the land outside the defined corridor at Bluff Point which is part of a future subdivision.

#### **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:**

The Greater Geraldton Structure Plan was a key component of the Geraldton Region Plan that was subject to public and stakeholder consultation from 1996 to its release in 1999. The Geraldton Primary North-South Road Study was subject to extensive community consultation in 2002.

The Wonthella Progress Association has been liaising with the Councillors, City officers and local Members of Parliament.

#### **COUNCILLOR/OFFICER CONSULTATION:**

The Steering Committee for the Geraldton Primary North-South Road Study included the City of Geraldton Mayor and Shire of Greenough President and the Directors of both the City and Shire's Engineering and Town Planning Departments.

#### **STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS:**

The former railway alignment is zoned 'Community and Public Purpose—Railway' under the City of Geraldton-Greenough Town Planning Scheme No.3 (Geraldton). The Webberton Road alignment is zoned 'District Distributor Road' under the Scheme.

The rezoning of the former rail alignment to reflect its future role can be considered following the outcome of the negotiations between the Public Transport Authority, the Heritage Council of WA, and the Department for Planning & Infrastructure either through a Scheme Amendment or during a Scheme Review.

#### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

The former rail alignment is not addressed through a local planning policy as this issue remains to be resolved by two state government agencies.

## **FINANCIAL AND BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

Depending on the final outcome on the former rail alignment at a state government level, Council may be approached by the Wonthella Progress Association to design and contribute towards the development of a heritage/recreational trail. Should the former rail alignment be listed within the State Register of Heritage Places then this would be an avenue for grant applications.

## **STRATEGIC & REGIONAL OUTCOMES:**

### **Strategic & Plan for the Future Outcomes:**

A reaffirmation of the previous stance of the City of Geraldton and the Shire of Greenough on the issue of Webberton Road would be in keeping with Strategy 3.2.5 of the City of Geraldton-Greenough Plan for the Future which identifies that Council should:

*“Work collaboratively with surrounding local governments and government agencies to maintain major transport linkages at a standard to carry traffic and freight safely and efficiently throughout region.”*

### **Regional Outcomes:**

The Geraldton Region Plan seeks to provide a framework for the future management, protection and coordination of regional planning in the region. The Region Plan incorporates a Structure Plan for the Greater Geraldton area which identifies the former rail alignment and Webberton Road as potential transport routes.

## **ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL & CULTURAL ISSUES:**

### **Economic:**

The economic impacts of the proposal are not a relevant planning consideration.

### **Social:**

The Wonthella Progress Association are seeking Council's assurance that the former railway alignment alongside Flores Road will not be considered as the future Primary Distributor Road alignment and support for development and interpretation of a trail recognising the history of the former railway.

### **Environmental:**

Main Roads WA will be required to meet with all requirements of the Department of Environment and Conservation in the construction of the Webberton Road alignment.

**Cultural & Heritage:**

On 9 May 2006 the Heritage Council of WA advised that the Geraldton to Walkaway Railway Precinct had been entered in the State's Register of Heritage Places, pursuant to the *Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990*, on an interim basis. The precinct which includes the former railway alignment, the existing Narngulu-Walkaway railway line, the Walkaway Railway Station Museum and 5 associated gatekeeper's cottages is now being considered by the HCWA for permanent entry on the Register.

The Council of the former Shire of Greenough resolved at its 28 June 2006 meeting not to support the inclusion of the decommissioned section of railway within the State Register. The Council of the Shire of Greenough further resolved at its 30 August 2006 meeting not to support the inclusion of the operational portion of the Geraldton to Walkaway railway within the State Register (although no objection was given to inclusion of the Walkaway Railway Station Museum). The Council also advised the Heritage Council of WA and the Public Transport Authority that it would be prepared to support the individual listing of the 3 gatekeeper's cottages within its local government area providing that the owners were consulted regarding the listing.

- The Council of the former City of Geraldton resolved the following at its 27<sup>th</sup> June 2006 meeting not to support the proposed permanent entry onto *the* Register of Heritage Places of the Bluff Point to Walkaway Railway Precinct.

The Webberton Road alignment contains no places listed upon the City's Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places.

**RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:**

The former City of Geraldton and Shire of Greenough through their representatives on the Geraldton Primary North-South Steering Committee established their preference for the Webberton Road alignment rather than the former rail alignment as the future Primary Distributor Road alignment.

**DELEGATED AUTHORITY:**

Nil.

**VOTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Simple majority required.

**OPTIONS:****Option 1:**

As per the Executive Recommendation in this report.

**Option 2:**

That Council refuses the proposal put forward by the Wonthella Progress Association but confirms that Webberton Road is the preferred option for the future proposed Primary Distributor Road alignment. Refusal is on the basis of the uncertainty to the long term use of the corridor.

**Option 3:**

That Council defers a resolution pending the outcome of the Heritage Council of WA's assessment concerning the former rail alignment.

**CONCLUSION:**

It is recommended that the City of Geraldton-Greenough provide the requested assurance to the Wonthella Progress Association that Webberton Road remains the preferred alignment for the future Primary Distributor Road alignment.

**EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council:

1. advise the Wonthella Progress Association and Main Roads WA that it reaffirms the previous stance of both the City of Geraldton and Shire of Greenough through the Geraldton Primary North-South Steering Committee that Webberton Road is the preferred option for the future Primary Distributor Road alignment rather than the former railway alignment;
2. advise the Wonthella Progress Association of its support for their concept on the use of the former Rail Corridor from Ross Ariti Road, Utaakarra, to Chapman Road, Bluff Point, with the exception of that area of land outside the defined corridor at Bluff Point; and
3. progress the allocation and use of the former Rail Corridor in point 2., above, with the Department for Planning & Infrastructure to facilitate the Wonthella Progress Association proposal.

## **COUNCIL DECISION**

### **MOVED CR ASHPLANT, SECONDED CR MCILWAINE**

**That Council:**

1. advise the Wonthella Progress Association and Main Roads WA that it reaffirms the previous stance of both the City of Geraldton and Shire of Greenough through the Geraldton Primary North-South Steering Committee that Webberton Road is the preferred option for the future Primary Distributor Road alignment rather than the former railway alignment;
2. advise the Wonthella Progress Association of its support for their concept on the use of the former Rail Corridor from Ross Ariti Road, Utakarra, to Chapman Road, Bluff Point, with the exception of that area of land outside the defined corridor at Bluff Point; and
3. progress the allocation and use of the former Rail Corridor in point 2., above, with the Department for Planning & Infrastructure to facilitate the Wonthella Progress Association proposal.
4. advise the Wonthella Progress Association that upon land tenure/management issues being resolved, the City of Geraldton-Greenough in consultation with the Wonthella Progress Association will further investigate detailed planning and management issues.

**CARRIED 11/0**

**REASON FOR VARIATION TO THE OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION:**  
Additional conditions added to recommendation as requested by Cr Ashplant.