

1.1 CLAYTON COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING PROJECT

(COM86: JP)

Responsible Director: Carolyn McClean

RECOMMENDATION*That Council:*

1. *Note the report.*
2. *Consider a Community Action Plan for Clayton later this year.*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of community strengthening work that has commenced with the Clayton community. The report will outline what has already been achieved and what is planned for the remainder of the project.

It should be noted that this project will operate in partnership with the Clayton community as well as other key stakeholders in the area with a focus on the strengths and the assets within the community.

BACKGROUND

With the opening of the Clayton Community Centre in March of 2008 it was considered timely to investigate what the Clayton community's needs and aspirations were beyond new infrastructure. The new Clayton Community Centre is considered an excellent opportunity to focus on the 'social' issues in Clayton and abutting suburbs.

1. Community Strengthening Project Outcomes as at December 2008

The outcomes and achievements delivered in 2008 include:

May	A demographic profile for the catchment area of the Clayton Community Centre.
June to September	Individual conversations with (twenty-two) key stakeholder organisations located in and delivering services to the catchment regarding issues and strengths of the Clayton community.
August	Preparation of a funding application for a planning grant to the Department of Planning and Community Development.
October	A Public meeting with key stakeholder organisations and members of the community and key themes as listed in Attachment A were recorded.

November	Notification that Council has been successful in its application to the Department of Planning and Community Development for a \$30,000 planning grant.
December	Appointment of consultants to conduct focus groups and surveys (door to door, at the Clayton Festival and on location at the Clayton Community Centre).

It should be noted that while many key stakeholders have been contacted and are actively involved (e.g. City of Kingston, MonashLink Community Health, Monash University, Southern Health, Clayton Traders Association, and the New Hope MRC to name just a few), there are many still who have yet to be engaged. Consequently, this process is open to any new stakeholder to be involved at any stage with a resource commitment that suits their organisation.

2. *Project Plan for 2009*

Ultimately the plan for 2009 is to ‘drill’ down and find out the views of the residents of the Clayton community and to develop a Community Action Plan for Clayton with the aid of community volunteers (expressions of interest to be community volunteers will be done as part of the survey and focus group work). This will then lead to another application to the Department of Planning and Community Development to facilitate the implementation of the Community Action Plan. The following milestones have been programmed:

February	Survey work to be completed (individuals will be canvassed to ascertain their interest in becoming community volunteers).
March/April	Focus groups to be conducted (individuals will be canvassed to ascertain their interest in becoming community volunteers).
April	Final reports on outcomes of surveys and focus groups.
April	Public meeting to (i) communicate to stakeholders outcomes of surveys and focus groups, and (ii) introduce community volunteers, and discuss the next steps.
April	Training for community volunteers in governance, working with their community networks and preparing a Community Action Plan.
May	Development of Community Action Plan with community volunteers and other key stakeholders.
June	Public meeting to present draft community action plan.
July	Seek endorsement of the Community Action Plan at ordinary Council Meeting.

August Preparation of application to the Department of Planning and Community Development (Community Support Fund) to facilitate implementation of Community Action Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The overall budget to complete all the actions outlined above is \$53,000. Of this \$53,000, the Department Planning and Community Development are contributing \$30,000. The remaining \$23,000 is made up of both a cash and in-kind contribution from Council. This \$23,000 will be covered by existing allocations in the 08/09 budget.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The project outlined above is consistent with Council Plan Strategic Objective One “An inclusive and connected community”(in particular Community Participation and Strengthening Links between Individuals and the Community).

IMPLEMENTATION

As already indicated, implementation of the Clayton Community Strengthening Project is well underway. The funding from the Planning Grant from the Department of Planning and Community Development will facilitate the implementation of activities leading up to the completion of the Community Action Plan. The timeframe for the implementation of the Community Action Plan is wholly dependent on attracting additional funding from the Department of Planning and Community Development.

CONCLUSION

The Clayton Community Strengthening Project is a unique and exciting project that will empower Clayton residents to develop a vision for Clayton by articulating their aspirations for Clayton. This will be done by the development of a Community Action Plan with community volunteers and other key stakeholders. These same community volunteers and key stakeholders will potentially form a steering committee that will oversee the implementation of the Community Action Plan.

CLAYTON COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING PROJECT

PUBLIC MEETING ON 29 OCTOBER 2008

KEY THEMES ARTICULATED BY ATTENDEES

Preamble

A public meeting was held at the Clayton Community Centre theatrette on the evening of Wednesday 29 October 2008. There were 35 people in attendance, some representing local community organisations and other local residents representing themselves. All attendees first gathered in the theatrette where a summary of the demographic profile and the outcomes of the unilateral consultations were presented. Attendees then broke into three smaller groups (facilitated by Council Officers) to discuss strengths, issues and the way forward for Clayton.

Key Themes

Strengths

- Clayton Community Centre
- Cultural diversity
- Public transport
- Monash University
- Religious communities
- Clayton festival
- Pride of place
- Family ties
- Good shopping
- Excellent health services
- Active community members
- Significant industry
- Excellent community services
- Committed local police

Issues

- Lack of open spaces
- Community safety (perception?)
- Affordable housing
- Bored young people
- Cleanliness of shopping strip
- Social exclusion of some groups
- Traffic
- Disengaged international students
- Support for new migrants
- Need more bike paths

Planning for the future: Considerations

- Community education programs
- Community volunteer training
- Program to engage new migrants and international students
- Lobbying for changes in transport infrastructure
- Community garden
- Strengthening partnerships
- Opportunities for passive recreation
- Community arts projects

Conclusion

These key themes will be used to inform the consultants developing the community survey and questions for the focus groups.