



AGENDA APPENDIX
Council Meeting
Wednesday 18 December 2013

AGENDA ITEM FOR SEPARATE DISTRIBUTION TO COUNCILLORS AND
EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM DUE TO DOCUMENT SIZE.

THE ITEM IS ACCESSIBLE VIA THE COUNCIL WEBSITE OR BY
CONTACTING COUNCIL ON 03 5662 9200.

**E.7 – PROPOSAL FOR SOUTH-WEST GIPPSLAND INTEGRATED
TRANSPORT STRATEGY**

Appendix 1 – South Gippsland Shire Council Priority Projects 2013
booklet



South Gippsland
Shire Council

Come for the beauty, Stay for the lifestyle



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PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR SUPPORT

Working together to improve our safety, our community, and our future

JUNE 2013



South Gippsland
Shire Council

Come for the beauty, Stay for the lifestyle

Photos by Ken Fraser

Detail contained within this publication was accurate at the time of printing and subject to change

OUR PROJECTS

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND where we are



SOUTH GIPPSLAND who we are

With a population of over 27,000 living among 3300km² of rolling green hills, mountains and beaches, South Gippsland is a rural, residential and holiday area which includes the renown coastal areas of Wilsons Promontory and the Corner Inlet.

Much of the rural area is used for agriculture, with dairy, beef and snow pea farming being the primary production pursuits.

South Gippslanders enjoy an enviable lifestyle with all the pleasures of country living and Melbourne just a 90 minute drive away. The country-city-coastal link makes Tourism a key industry for South Gippsland. With over 300km of coastline, visitors come for the beauty and stay for the lifestyle.

SOUTH GIPPSLAND what we desire

This document puts forward projects and initiatives identified as community priorities, where funding and support are sought from other levels of government.

A Priority Project is one that is key to the immediate or longer term betterment of our community and for which Council is not always the only responsible authority nor has the financial resources to address.

At the May 2013 Council Meeting, Councillors unanimously agreed on these key projects asking Council to focus our funding pursuits towards their progression over the year ahead. Over \$2m in funds have been committed to support, progress and prepare the projects to request assistance from other levels of government.

This document presents South Gippsland Shire Council's request for advocacy, funding and focus from other levels of government to progress these significant projects.

Mayor Kieran Kennedy

CORNER INLET TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT



The Corner Inlet Tourism Development Project comprises five separate initiatives that combined will stimulate major economic development in the Corner Inlet area.

Corner Inlet includes the communities of Foster, Toora, Welshpool, Port Welshpool and Port Franklin in the south east corner of the Shire.

These initiatives support and enhance Council's desire to make Corner Inlet a 'coastal destination' leveraging off the strength and proximity to Wilsons Promontory National Park and the location of Corner Inlet on the popular touring route — the Sydney to Melbourne Coastal Drive.

1. Restoration of the Port Welshpool Long Jetty
2. Feasibility Study/Detailed Design for a Port Welshpool Marina Development
3. Dredging of the Toora Channel for Boating and Recreational Activities
4. Development Agnes Falls Scenic Reserve
5. Extension of the Great Southern Rail Trail
 - a) Foster to Welshpool: FUNDED
 - b) Black Spur Missing Link: UNFUNDED

In November 2011, Council committed to support the Corner Inlet Tourism Development Project by allocating funding up to \$2.1m to assist in progressing the Project as a whole.

RESTORATION PORT WELSHPOOL LONG JETTY

Status

Assistance was sought for the restoration of the Long Jetty as part of the Regional Development Australia Funding (RDAF) Program (Federal), unfortunately Council's EOI was not supported. Upon advice, Council submitted the Corner Inlet Tourism Development Project as a whole to Round 3 of the RDAF program - again our application did not progress.

This project has not commenced as it is not fully funded. Initial consultation and design work for options has been undertaken to clarify cost options. This project has an estimated overall cost of \$11m.

Financial commitments of \$5m by the State Government and \$1m by South Gippsland Shire Council have been made to see this project completed. The remaining \$5m needs to be secured.

OUR REQUEST FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Council seeks financial support to the value of \$5m which remains unfunded in our bid to complete the restoration of Port Welshpool Long Jetty.



PORT WELSHPOOL MARINA DEVELOPMENT

OUR REQUEST FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Support and participation in developing a Detailed Design for the Marina is required.

Status A Marina at Port Welshpool would be the only Marina between Western Port and the Gippsland Lakes. The port has direct access to the ocean without the need to cross a bar and has significant tourism potential.

Council has funded an Economic and Design Assessment of the proposed Port Welshpool Marina at a cost of \$90k as the key first step towards the potential realisation of a Marina at Port Welshpool.

Development of the Marina would enhance marine berthing capability at Port Welshpool and improve boat ramp access. It is our aim to provide a regional marine recreation facility and along with the rearrangement of docks and associated infrastructure, a more efficient use of the Port by commercial operators.

DREDGING OF THE TOORA CHANNEL

OUR REQUEST FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Financial support for the cost of dredging once the survey and design are complete.

Status The access channel between Toora and Port Albert requires maintenance dredging to enable the continuance of boat launching and retrieval. At present, the boat ramp is only usable by small boats approximately 1 hour either side of high tide, thus limiting its effectiveness in providing all tide access to Corner Inlet and impacted on the area considerably in lost tourism expenditure.

Many years of planning and preparatory work has progressed the project to a position where formal agreement has been sought from the owner of the nominated spoil site to utilise the land for this purpose.

Furthermore, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (D.S.E.W.P.C) has confirmed that Council has undertaken all required studies relating to the impact of the spoil site on the native orange bellied parrot, a concern that was considerably impacting progress.

To progress the project, survey and design of the pipeline and trench route to the spoil site is required.

AGNES FALLS SCENIC RESERVE

Hidden within the rolling green hills of the Strzelecki Ranges, the meandering Agnes River cascades over rocks into a deep picturesque gorge. At 59 metres, Agnes Falls are the highest single span falls in Victoria.

Managed by Parks Victoria, Agnes Falls is classified as a Scenic Reserve, not a State or National Park. Through promotion efforts, it remains a popular attraction for visitors discovering the destinations of Wilsons Promontory and other coastal sites. Despite its recognition, Agnes Falls is looking tired and overdue for a face lift.

Status

The Reserve in its current state has:

- poor directional signage
- inadequate and confusing car and caravan parking/turning circles
- inadequately maintained picnic grounds
- walking track and visibility of falls poor due to erosion and overgrown vegetation
- toilet facilities requiring renewal/replacement

Community members passionate to see Agnes Falls put 'back on the map' have developed a 'Friends of Agnes Falls' group and regularly meet with Council and Parks Victoria to discuss the current state of the area and the improvements required.

Parks Victoria are currently investigating options for reconstructing a new toilet block and undertaking a Site Plan for the Reserve.

Council and VicRoads have undertaken minor signage improvements from the South Gippsland Highway.

A Landscape Plan and Economic Analysis Study are currently being developed to ensure the improvement of Agnes Falls Scenic Reserve.



OUR REQUEST FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We seek your financial support to undertake the improvement recommendations identified within the Agnes Falls Scenic Reserve Site Plan anticipated to cost \$300,000 to \$500,000.

Benefits

The Shire and wider region would benefit from a commitment of tourism improvements to Agnes Falls which may include:

- improved and welcoming walking tracks.
- additional viewing platforms
- improved toilets, amenity and picnic facilities.
- ancillary walking and interpretive track with a 'swing bridge' (similar to that at Tarra Bulga National Park).
- nature-based adventure tourism activities including 'tree top walks' and 'zip line adventure trails'.
- a method to display recognition to the traditional owners of the land.

GREAT SOUTHERN RAIL TRAIL black spur missing link

An unmade section of the Great Southern Rail Trail called the 'Black Spur' creates a 2.5 kilometre gap in the trail between Koonwarra and Meeniyan.

Absence of a seamless trail means users must leave the track at Koonwarra and compromise their safety by continuing along the narrow shoulder of the busy South Gippsland Highway to rejoin the trail opposite the Minns Road intersection.

\$2.9m of works are currently being undertaken to extend the Trail from Foster to Welshpool - completion of the missing link would ultimately create a seamless 69.21km Trail from Leongatha to Port Welshpool.

Benefits

Completion of this project will capture the economic and social benefits outlined in a report commissioned by Council in 2011 by consultants SGS Economics and Planning. The report shows the additional annual visitor expenditure and benefit to the district flowing from linking this section would be almost \$2m per annum, giving a payback period of 1.2 years for an asset life of 20 years.

Achievement of this project will provide an incentive for private investment in accommodation and services to meet increased visitor activity and improve the sustainability and profitability of existing businesses within the district.

Completion of the Trail will enhance visitor activity to the area directly and benefit other surrounding attractions. Tourists from Melbourne and the wider Gippsland region select other continuous rail trails for weekend use therefore the South Gippsland trail is currently not meeting its full potential as a major attraction. Bicycle Victoria publicise the absence of the link on websites and in newsletters.



Current Status

Construction of the Black Spur missing link has strong community, Council and state support and has been endorsed by the Advancing Country Towns program as a strategic investment for the Tarwin Valley region, with funding of over \$340,000 already committed.

Further funding from Council and DPCDs 'Putting Locals First' program totalling \$40,000 has been invested in an investigation into the integrity of existing trestle bridges along the rail line. It is hoped that the findings may result in the retention of historic infrastructure and a reduction in total project costs.

The extension of the Great Southern Rail Trail from Foster to Welshpool has been fully funded in a partnership approach between state government and Council. The construction will be completed in three stages so as to progressively extend the Trail southeast from Foster. Stage 1 will be completed by June 2013 and the remaining stages are expected to be completed by 2015.

OUR REQUEST FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We seek your financial support to meet the shortfall in project funding committed by local and state government. It is estimated that the total cost to replace the existing trestle bridges with new steel bridges and complete the link is \$2.3m with \$1m sought from Federal assistance.

OUR REQUEST FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Council seeks financial support to progress the Corner Inlet Tourism Development Project as a whole or in part, to see a major economic development in the Corner Inlet area of the Shire.

- Restoration of the Port Welshpool Long Jetty \$11m project with \$5m unfunded.
- Feasibility Study/Detailed Design for a Port Welshpool Marina \$200k project.
- Dredging of the Toora Channel \$400k project.
- Development Agnes Falls Scenic Reserve \$500k project.
- Great Southern Rail Trail Black Spur Missing Link \$2.3m project with \$1m unfunded.



Benefits

An Economic Impacts Study was externally conducted to estimate the overall economic benefit this suite of projects will deliver South Gippsland. It is estimated that the Corner Inlet Tourism Development Project as a whole will generate the economic output of \$65m spread over a three year construction phase and create an additional \$26m in regional economic flow on, including 240 full time jobs.

	Direct Impacts	
	Construction Phase	Annual Operations
Output (Total)	\$35m	\$4m
Value-Added/GRP (Total)	\$12m	\$2m
Employment (FTE job years)	121	28

	Total Impacts (Direct + Flow-on)	
	Construction Phase	Annual Operations
Output (Total)	\$65m	\$6m
Value-Added/GRP (Total)	\$26m	\$3m
Employment (FTE job years)	240	40

The Study identified that the Development will:

- Deliver Regional Economic Output.
- Create Employment.
- Sustain Existing Growth.
- Diversify the Region's Industry Base.
- Mitigate the Impacts of a Declining Industry.
- Promote New Investment in the Region.
- Increase Productivity.
- Encourage Events and Tourism Investment.

Support

Supported by the:

- South Gippsland Shire Council Economic Development & Tourism Strategy.
- Port Welshpool Long Jetty Business Case.
- Recreational Boating Coastal Action Plan.
- Corner Inlet Tourism Development Project Economic Impact Study.

KORUMBURRA INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S CENTRE

The Integrated Children's Centre is planned to meet a critical need for families in Korumburra for child care, kindergarten, out of school hours care, maternal & childhood services and specialist children's services. The concept has been developed by South Gippsland Shire Council in response to requests by the community over the past 5 years.

There are currently waiting lists for child care in Korumburra with some parents having to travel to Leongatha to access service. The Korumburra kindergarten is operating at full capacity through innovative and flexible session times, but has no ability to meet increased demand. Universal Access reforms will result in further pressures, with children being denied access to kindergarten due to ageing infrastructure being unable to respond to new regulations.

The size of the facility has been based on population statistics, growth projections, new regulations of staff to child ratio, compliance and best practice. Consideration has been given to the predicted growth of young families moving to the western region of the Shire, including Korumburra, Poowong, Bena, Jumbunna, Loch and Nyora. The new 120 place facility will meet the needs of today and into the future.

This project has been thoroughly investigated and planned with ongoing community involvement. In addition to the land, South Gippsland Shire Council will contribute \$2.045 million to the development of the centre. Parents of the existing child care centre and kindergarten have contributed \$100,000 and a funding contribution of a total of \$3 million is being sought from other sources including Commonwealth and State Government.

Status A site, 19a Mair Crescent Korumburra has been selected. Architects have been engaged to complete detailed designs and costings for the construction of the facility.

Council is seeking funding assistance through several avenues and was unfortunately unsuccessful in its pursuits through the Regional Development Australia Fund. Council will submit an application for Capital Grants with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development when the next funding round opens.

Council is actively seeking funding from other levels of government and via corporate sponsorship to complete the project. In addition a sponsorship prospectus has been developed.

Council has committed funding to strengthen our future grant applications and reconfirm our desire for this facility to be built at the earliest possible date.



Concept Design

Estimated Costs

Cost estimates for the project are \$5.2 million.

Council has contributed the land at 19a Mair Crescent and committed \$2.045 million towards the design and construction of the centre. A contribution of \$100,000 has been committed by the existing child care and kindergarten committees.

Commonwealth and State Government funding of \$3million is being sought.



Benefits

Our children are the next generation of leaders, workers, parents, consumers and members of communities. Their ability to participate fully in society as adults will be largely shaped by their childhood experiences. Children who have a good start in life are more likely to develop the capabilities that will better equip Australia to compete in a global society.

The children and families of Korumburra and the surrounding townships will directly benefit from the construction of this centre. Economic modelling indicates an annual economic flow on effect of \$1.3 million to the South Gippsland economy when the centre is in operation.

While South Gippsland Shire has low unemployment, Korumburra is a socio-economically disadvantaged area. The provision of affordable child care will reduce barriers for women to re-enter the workforce or pursue educational opportunities, enabling them to contribute financially to household finances. This will contribute to additional workforce capacity for local businesses and improve the local economy.

The centre will provide a 'best practice' training and observation centre for child educators across the Gippsland region.

Support

Supported by the:

- Australian Government National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education.
- South Gippsland Shire Council Municipal Early Years Plan 2012-16.
- Capacity Report for Delivery of Preschool Programs 2011.

OUR REQUEST FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Financial assistance to the value of \$3m is sought from the Commonwealth and State Government for the construction of the Integrated Children's Centre in Korumburra. This facility will ensure delivery of Federal Government reform and improved community access to child care, kindergarten and early childhood specialist services.

COAL CREEK DEVELOPMENT

education camp, restaurant and son et lumiere

Coal Creek Heritage Park and Museum is a significant cultural, community, tourist, event and education asset on Crown Land in Korumburra.

In the last five years, Council has increased visitation from 11,000 to 62,000 through a solid commitment to improving viability of the site. Coal Creek still remains a burden on ratepayers and Council has therefore adopted a Strategy to achieve cost neutrality within the next five years.

The Strategy proposes to undertake three exciting initiatives:

1. Site Rationalisation and creation of three distinct precincts: HERITAGE (including a core visitor route using interactive mobile technology to enhance the visitor experience), MULTIPURPOSE and EDUCATIONAL.
2. Construction of an Educational Camp for overnight school accommodation.
3. Construction of a Restaurant and Son et Lumiere (Sound and light show) to increase the visitor and educational offering.

Development Proposal

Council has committed to fund the site rationalisation project (\$180,000) and contribute to the funding of the Core Visitor Route in the heritage precinct (\$309,000), but requires investment assistance in funding the Restaurant and Educational Camp. A summary of these two proposals is as follows:

- 1. Education Camp (\$2.8m)**
 - Accommodation for 220 students.
 - Overnight educational facility offering 10-20 adventure activities.
 - Utilise the present Education Program delivered by Coal Creek.
 - Alternative source of accommodation for weekends and school holidays.
- 2. Restaurant/ Function Centre and Son et Lumiere (\$2.8m)**
 - An independent building to deliver a restaurant and function centre with 120 seat venue for Son et Lumiere.
 - By Day: A food and beverage service for visitors and meetings/functions.
 - By Night: A packaged dinner and Son et Lumiere with two suitably themed meals and a two act Son et Lumiere (to interpret the history of the early settlement of Gippsland).
 - The Son et Lumiere will be a mixture of pyrotechnics and sound & light show.



Benefits

The adopted Strategy has established a clear path for Coal Creek to become cost neutral through expansion and improved community usage by 2018.

Investment in the required infrastructure will facilitate:

- A Landmark tourist and education precinct for Eastern Victoria.
- Efficient use of Crown land to bring about significant cultural and community benefit.
- Economic opportunities and enhance community engagement and job creation.

Estimated Costs

The estimated infrastructure costs associated with the construction of the education camp is \$2.8m and the restaurant/function centre and son et lumiere is \$2.8m.

OUR REQUEST FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We seek your financial support to develop the site through the construction of an education camp, restaurant/function centre and son et lumiere. Complete project cost of \$5.6m.

LEONGATHA HEAVY VEHICLE ALTERNATE ROUTE

This project will see the construction of a Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route for the Leongatha Town Centre using Hughes Street and Long Street.

The alternate route will remove heavy vehicles from Bair Street and McCartin Street - improving the amenity and safety of the town centre, while increasing the accessibility of these vehicles to the industrial estate and other key destinations including Murray Goulburn.

Assistance is sought to ensure the final design is complete, that it adequately addresses the needs of the community and that construction commenced at the earliest possible time.

Status

Considerable preparatory and planning work has occurred over many years. The location of the route has been agreed and endorsed by Council and VicRoads Regional Office. Construction of this route is a key focus of the Leongatha and wider community including business groups.

There are two key stages:

Stage 1: Funded - Completion of Detailed Design Work

Funding of \$270,000 has been secured from the Victorian Government for a detailed and comprehensive VicRoads planning study and design to be completed. Regional Development Victoria has funded an Economic Benefits Study to support the project.

Stage 2: Unfunded - Construction of the Route, Landscaping and Traffic Calming

Support is required to ensure funding is available for VicRoads to implement the agreed final design at the earliest possible date.

OUR REQUEST FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We seek funding for the construction of the Leongatha Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route upon completion of and agreement on the final design.

Benefits

Construction will open up social and retail infrastructure opportunities on the current thoroughfare roads of Bair Street and McCartin Street, improving amenity and access for pedestrians.

Economic efficiencies will be achieved through improved access to Murray Goulburn and the Industrial Estate.

Immediate road user and community safety improvements with the removal of heavy vehicles from busy CBD roads.

Support

Supported by the:

- South Gippsland Shire Council Economic Development Strategy
- Gippsland Freight Action Plan
- South Eastern Australia Transport Strategy (SEATS) Priority Project



SEWERAGE SCHEME FOR LOCH, NYORA & POOWONG

South Gippsland Water (SGW) have plans to introduce a much needed reticulated sewerage scheme for the towns of Loch, Nyora and Poowong, to address the public health and environmental risks that ageing and inefficient septic systems and grey water discharge to storm water drains currently poses to the community.

The provision of reticulated sewerage to these three towns is also a prerequisite to the release of suitable areas of residential land, especially at Nyora, for urban growth. With its proximity to Melbourne, Council has identified that Nyora will be the fastest growing town in the Shire should reticulated sewerage be provided.

The need for a reticulated sewerage scheme was recognised by the State Government in 2005 when it directed SGW to prepare a sewerage scheme for Loch, Nyora and Poowong. Eight years has only intensified the need for the scheme.

Status In recognition of the need for the sewer, the scheme is supported by the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program, which will offset connection costs for property owners. Nyora, Loch and Poowong are the last towns in SGW's area of responsibility, and among the last in the state, to benefit from this program.

Design work has been developed and Ministerial Approval has been requested. A delay was created when the Essential Services Commission raised concern regarding the capital required to implement the scheme as part of SGW's Water Plan. A proposal to explore alternative cost options for the provision of reticulated sewerage will take until late 2013 delaying the construction of the scheme even further.

The scheme has overwhelming community support with 84% of potentially affected landowners voting in its favour when surveyed by SGW.



OUR REQUEST FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Assistance is sought to bring about the speedy construction of the Loch, Nyora and Poowong Sewerage Scheme.

There is an immediate need for government to assist the communities by minimising further delays in the service construction and operation.

RETURN OF RAIL

developing & connecting our shire

Council seeks the return of rail services to Leongatha for passenger and freight purposes. The first key step will be a detailed study into the route and requirements of the rail return.

The reintroduction of rail to South Gippsland offers the opportunity improve transport connections, reduce congestion, ease population pressures on Melbourne and provide new freight opportunities.

South Gippsland is a growing Shire on the edge of one of Melbourne's fastest growing residential and business corridors. It is also a food production centre of national significance requiring excellent access to ports and distribution centres of Melbourne. The planning for and ultimate return of rail will allow for the continued sustainable growth of the area.

Status The South Gippsland Railway was closed in 1994. Since then the section from Nyora to Leongatha has continued to operate as a tourist railway.

The Brack's Government made a commitment to restore the rail line but later decided not to proceed with the project. Since that time both freight and passenger traffic have increased substantially along the South Gippsland Highway, the Shire's main arterial and connection to Melbourne. There has been a considerable degradation of the highway and with projections of strong population and business growth there is a strong need for an improvement in transport services.

As Melbourne's population increases, the congestion of key outer eastern arterials will become even more pronounced leading to significant freight delays. A returned rail service will have a major impact on reducing these issues and increase the regions strength as a destination for new residents. This would in-turn also improve and create new opportunities for local businesses to support this growth.

The rail line to other neighbouring growth areas such as Wonthaggi is beyond restoration. Leongatha, Korumburra and Nyora would be able to act as regional transport hubs to these areas that also have significantly ageing populations.

OUR REQUEST FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Council requires funding assistance of \$150,000 to undertake a technical route study and business freight requirement study.

Key Steps

A multifaceted and staged approach will be required. This would include:

- Retention of the rail corridor in any long term planning.
- Improvement of linkages of current coach services to either the metro service via Pakenham or the Traralgon V/Line service.
- A detailed study to ascertain the technical requirements and costings for return of rail. This would include analysis of innovative and cost effective technical solutions, suitability of the current alignment, the requirements for rolling stock and an understanding of issues with interfaces with the existing road network.
- A business study is also required to understand how current and future businesses would best access the network for freight purposes.



DEVELOPMENT OF LEONGATHA RAIL YARD

Over the years, there has been much community speculation regarding developing the railway land in Leongatha. It is seen by the community as a strategically important land parcel and there is a clear desire to see it put to its best use. Council is taking a lead role in facilitating a practical development option for the site.

A parking study of the Leongatha CBD was recently completed. Based on the recommendations of this study, Council is keen to secure a lease of part of the railway land (the Bair street side) to address public car parking needs and improve the overall appearance and amenity at this location.

The development of this site is a key goal of the current Council Plan.

OUR REQUEST FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Council seeks your support to secure this strategically important site for the provision of much needed Leongatha CBD car parking and to improve its amenity.

Based on the successful lease of the site, funding of approximately \$60k would be required to undertake design and landscaping of the area with the future aim of a complete master plan and purchase.

Key Steps

There are several key stages to progress the development of this site.

Stage 1: Council are negotiating with the current lease holder of the site - South Gippsland Tourist Railway. They have agreed in principle to relinquish part of the site to Council and approach the land owners VicTrack to enact this agreement.

Stage 2: Enter into discussions with VicTrack for lease of the site.

Stage 3: Apply for state government funding for consultancy costs to attend to a design solution to improve the car parking configuration and landscaping at the site.

Stage 4: In future years, and subject to economic demand, consider a master plan of the site for development purposes and a potential purchase of the site.