

KJA Strategic Communications and Project Management

MACQUARIE PARK POSITIONING PROJECT PHASE ONE CONSULTATION REVIEW

SUMMARY

In April 2008, the City of Ryde Council and the Macquarie Park Landowners Forum commissioned KJA to engage stakeholders to develop a strategic framework to meet the challenges and capitalise on the opportunities to promote Macquarie Park Corridor as a Specialised Centre of national significance.

Project phases

The project is divided into three phases. The first phase aims to identify themes, issues, gaps and opportunities so that the Forum has a clear and succinct picture of stakeholder views and positioning for branding and marketing of the Macquarie Park Corridor. The second phase involves using the results of phase 1 to develop a communications plan and a branding and marketing plan for the Corridor. Phase 3 is the delivery and implementation phase.

Phase 1 was undertaken between April and June 2008 and involved the following consultation activities.

- Initial visioning workshop with the Macquarie Park Landowners Forum (April 2008).
- A workshop with Generation Y (May 2008)
- Ten one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders (May-June 2008).

A total of thirty-five people participated in the consultation process.

Results

Five dominant themes emerged throughout the consultation. Under each of these themes, participants identified key selling points and valued characteristics about the Macquarie Park Corridor and issues and opportunities for the future. The themes are:

- Connectivity and Accessibility
- Vibrancy and Activity
- Desirability and Competitiveness
- Architecture, built form, design, land uses
- Environmental sustainability

Connectivity and accessibility

Under the theme of Connectivity and Accessibility, participants identified Macquarie Park's transport links (including the three new railway stations, its road and motorway access and

bus routes) as key selling points. Another key selling point identified was the area's strategic location, being close to Sydney Airport (via the motorways), the north-west, the City and the West. Issues and opportunities identified included the need to address current traffic congestion issues and take future traffic issues into consideration when planning future growth and development. Whilst the three new railway stations are welcomed, a need was expressed to ensure that adequate service levels are provided. The need for safe, easy pedestrian links between places of work, transport and amenities was also identified as well as providing measure to allow people to easily transverse the area/move within the corridor.

Vibrancy and activity

Macquarie Park's mix of businesses and proximity to an affluent catchment area and 'knowledge economy' (i.e. clients, workers) were key selling points identified under the theme of Vibrancy and Activity. Some of the issues and opportunities identified included the need to provide a range of services and amenities including after hours, the need for convenience-based services and amenities and more vibrancy and activity (e.g lunch time entertainment, people presence on streets). From a planning and design perspective, participants expressed a need for hubs of retail/commercial/entertainment activity to inject life across the corridor making it more convenient for workers. A mix of businesses and finer grain development were also identified for consideration.

Desirability and Competitiveness

Under the theme of Desirability and Competitiveness, the relationship between Macquarie University and the other businesses in the Macquarie Park Corridor was highly valued and a key selling point. The good tenancy mix and large floor plates and the cluster of 'innovative', 'technology', 'R&D' etc businesses were also factors identified to promote. One of the key issues in relation to this theme was the need to change the '1960s suburban feel' of the area. Participants identified a need to aspire to 'world class', 'international HQs', 'corporate', and some think it should be the 'best address in town'.

Architecture, Built form, Design, Land Uses.

The Lane Cove National Park and other green spaces including those in the University are highly valued assets and were identified as key selling points under the theme of Architecture, Built form, Design, Land Uses. Some participants also felt that the newer buildings provided examples of improved architecture. The new DCP and LEP for the area are also highly valued. Some of the issues and opportunities identified were the potential affect of 'corporate silos' on the vibrancy of the area, the desire for Macquarie Park to have the convenience of the CBD without the inconveniences of the CBD, and the need for high standards in architecture and finishes. Some participants also felt that open spaces and places for people to meet and gather should be provided and existing green open spaces should be protected. The potential to add after hours vibrancy through a residential population was recognised by some participants.

Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability is seen as an essential part of the future of Macquarie Park. Encouraging best practice environmentally sustainable design, building showcase buildings with 5-6 star ratings and encouraging transport with environmental objectives e.g free bicycles for travel within the corridor, were suggested as ways to incorporate sustainability into the future of the area.

What happens next

The consultation resulted in the identification of a number of key words and phrases for consideration in the communications strategy and branding and marketing brief. Comment was also sought from participants on whether the area should be named North Ryde or Macquarie Park with Macquarie Park considered slightly more suitable.

The following next steps are identified for consideration:

Phase 1: Analysis & consultation

- Assess results and identify areas for further consultation e.g residents or users
- Undertake further research if necessary
- Review the Vision in light of consultation results

Phase 2: Creative

- Prepare communications strategy and develop marketing and branding brief using results of research

Phase 3: Delivery

- Identify demonstration projects to enhance and promote the process of change in Macquarie Park.
- Prepare a timing schedule for launch of branding – A possible risk of launching too soon is that Macquarie Park does not meet corporation's expectations