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Bega Valley Shire Council

Valley Fields Master Plan Review

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recreation
open space
and sport
specialists

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Introduction

Background

In 2016, Bega Valley Shire Council adopted the Bega Sporting Complex Master Plan, including a master plan for the Valley Fields.

Following requests from user groups at the site outlining their growth since 2016 and the subsequent demand for additional facilities, Council employed ROSS Planning to undertake a review of the Valley Fields Master Plan to investigate the site's potential to more appropriately service the existing (and possibly future) users of the site.

2016 Adopted Master Plan

The Valley Fields are known as two distinct areas:

- Keith Mitchell Oval in the western aspect of the site (west of the Princess Highway) that currently accommodate the sports of hockey and softball
- Roy Howard Oval in the eastern aspect of the site (east of the Princess Highway) that currently accommodates the sports of AFL and to a lesser extent, cricket. At the time of developing the 2016 Master Plan, the Bega Bombers AFL Club was not regularly using Roy Howard Oval.

This review of the 2016 Master Plan was necessary as it recommended only very minor improvements to the site due to its significant constraints, principally flooding (discussed later in this review), providing limited facilities for users.

The 2016 master plan included no new amenities or pavilions. It involved minimal improvements to the site, and while it had the advantage of not increasing Council's asset responsibilities such as capital and ongoing maintenance costs and asset depreciation, it does not meet the users' needs or promote increased usage of the site.

Further, the existing amenities on the western aspect of the Princess Highway are not easily accessed from Roy Howard Oval, significantly impacting on the operations of the current club and any future users of the site.

A copy of the 2016 Master Plan is provided in the Option 4 summary on page 9.

Methodology

The process undertaken to date for the review of the 2016 Valley Fields Master Plan has included:

- review of club requests/needs
- site analysis - investigations into the opportunities and constraints of the site
- development of options for the site
- stakeholder and community review of options, and their constraints/implications
- develop preferred option, and its constraints/implications.

It is now proposed that the preferred option outlined in this document be made available to stakeholders and neighbouring residents of the site for their feedback prior to it being the subject of a report to Council seeking direction on whether the project is to proceed.

Club requests/needs

Users have expressed a desire for built structures to host their operations, or at least to improve their ability to erect portable structures when operating on site, particularly on game days.

The AFL club based at Roy Howard Oval (Bega Bombers) lodged a formal request to Council (September 2018) requesting various amendments to the 2016 Master Plan, including the two more major items of a club amenities building and training-level field lighting.

The hockey club (Sapphire Coast) based at Keith Mitchell also lodged a formal request to Council for the location of a storage container adjacent to their playing fields during hockey season (typically April-September) each year. This would allow the club to store various playing and field marking equipment, resulting in less burdens on their volunteers, and also act as a basic kiosk facility for the sale of items such as cold drinks and packaged food.

A workshop was held with the current users and neighbouring residents of the site to discuss possible improvements for the site and the implications of such. These discussions and the following site analysis formed the basis of the options developed for further consideration.

Site analysis

Both areas of the site as outlined above have significant constraints regarding the development of built infrastructure.

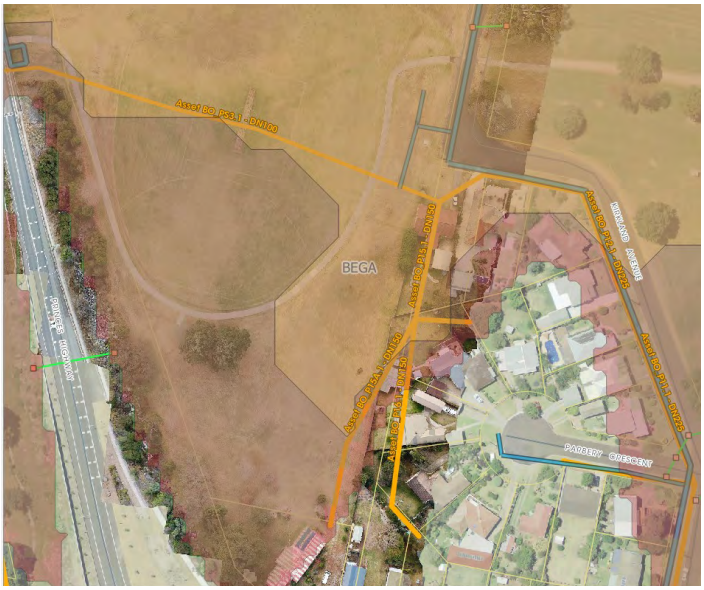
The overwhelmingly prevalent constraint is the site's vulnerability to flooding. As a result, there are very limited areas within the site that can be realistically considered for the placement of built infrastructure.

In fact, the only area that bears consideration of being able to accommodate a built structure is the higher ground to the immediate south of Roy Howard Oval. There is ground in this area that is on a comparable level to that of the existing toilet block that services Keith Mitchell Oval.

Advice from Council's Works and Assets and Planning sections have advised the following in respect to the proposed location of the amenities building.

Flood considerations:

- ☐ the revised location for the club amenities building is more preferable (but still with significant flood constraints) to other options in the north-western aspect of the Roy Howard site as it is generally located within the flood fringe area (lower velocity). The building will need to be sited very carefully, as there are areas of designated floodway here also
- ☐ the site and access road is still inundated in the 10 year event. Depths vary between 0.1m at the southern boundary to 4.6m near the tree (depths above ground level) in the 10 year event. The principal egress at Kirkland Ave is identified within the floodway area for the 10 year event
- ☐ The 100 year event floodway extent (pale orange area in the photo below) is more significant and should be considered in the final siting of the proposed building. The structure should be located outside of the floodway area. The depths again vary greatly from 0.9m at the southern boundary to around 6.9m near the tree (depths above ground level) in the 100 year event.



Planning considerations:

It was noted that some concern was raised by neighbouring residents to a previous (since withdrawn) development application, that structures in the vicinity of the existing residential dwellings could have an impact on neighbours, specifically in relation to view impact, noise and visual amenity.

In this regard, being able to achieve a suitable buffer to the adjoining residential zone will be important, as will building design and operational parameters for any such use of this section of the Reserve.

The constraints of the site were recognised so it is believed that ongoing engagement with neighbouring residents will be vital to consider their concerns regarding any future developments at the site.

From a planning perspective, the following matters would need to be addressed in any design of a facility at the proposed location:

- ☐ the largest possible setback to the adjoining residences
- ☐ modest scale of the proposed structure (not elevated beyond what is absolutely necessary to be clear of the flood impacts)
- ☐ the need for an accessible path of travel from the carpark to the amenities
- ☐ consideration being given to the location of existing services (sewer in particular).

It must be noted however, that if a small amenities block servicing Roy Howard Oval is developed in this area, there would be a need to position it not further than 25-30 metres from the closest residential property boundary.

The proposed structure is intended to be a sports amenities building with basic features such as kiosk and toilets/ changerooms, not a fully-functional club house in the traditional sense (with commercial kitchen, licenced bar and significant spectator areas). It is still important however, to consider any possible impact on adjacent residences.

Option development

Over the past twelve months, four options for the future of the site were developed and they are outlined as follows.

Option 1 - Transportable buildings

This option entailed the placement of permanent concrete slabs as indicated to cater for the placement of transportable buildings to serve the clubs' purposes. This would allow the removal of the structures when floodwaters are imminent.

The obvious advantage is their ability to be loaded onto an appropriate vehicle and moved to a location until the threat of flood water damage is over.

This option could be applied to both Roy Howard Oval and Keith Mitchell Oval, providing user groups with amenities while recognising the flood-prone nature of the overall site. However, it is noted that there are issues associated with this option as follows.

Issues

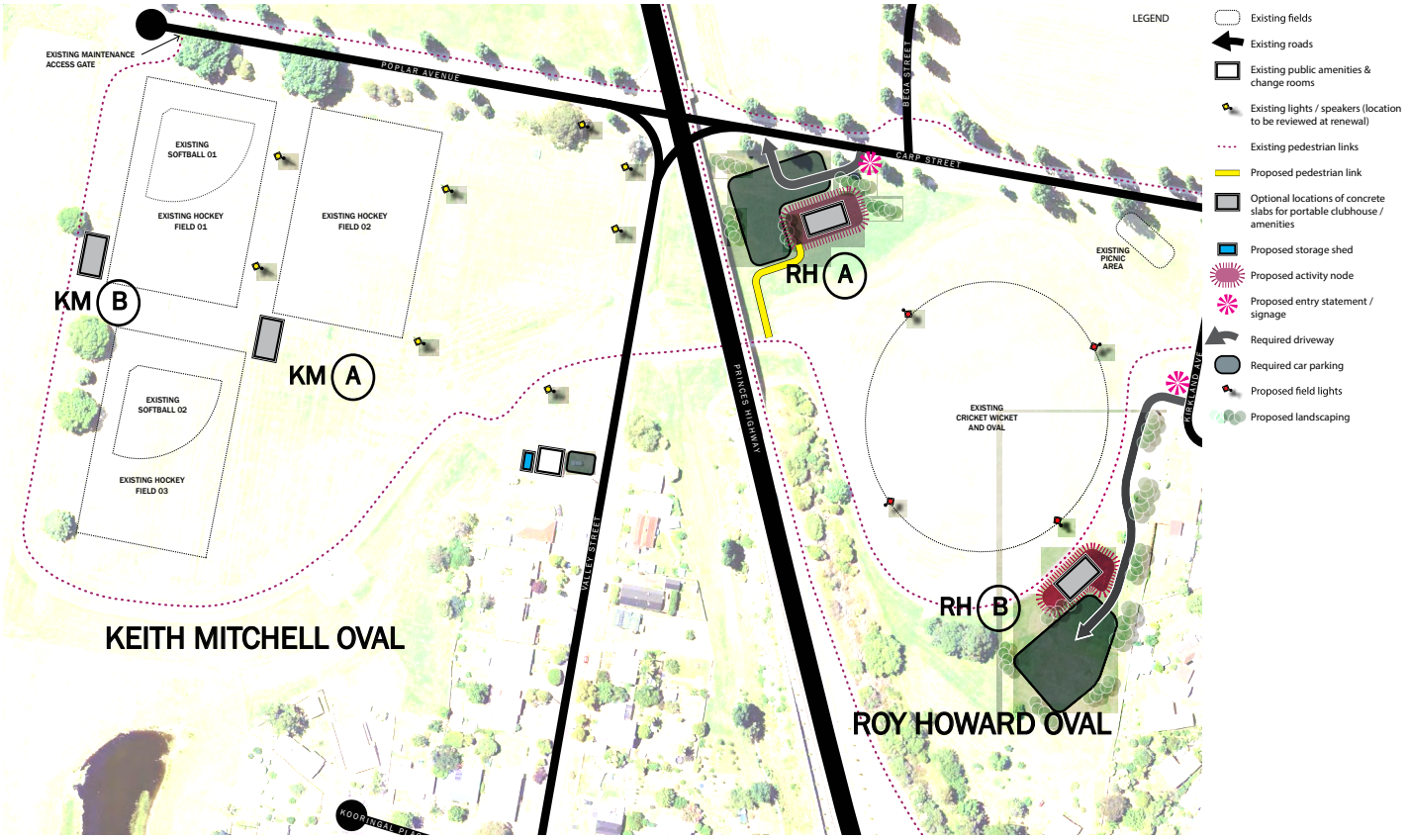
It was believed by the users that it was not realistic to expect that the removal of the transportable buildings would be easily achievable at the time of floods, and that it would also be a costly exercise with significant burdens for volunteers. The northern option for the location of the building at Roy Howard Oval was not considered viable due to its vulnerability to flooding.

Cost estimates

Due to the amount of variables involved in constructing such facilities, cost estimates are a guide only, and further investigations would need to be undertaken if this option proceeded.

Indicative costs of such structures range from $300,000 - $1.2 million, depending on the level and quality of included features.

Option 1 - Transportable buildings



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Option 2 - Raised permanent buildings

This option entailed the development of raised permanent buildings to cater for the clubs' purposes. This may have allowed the floor levels of the built infrastructure to be above flood waters, depending on the level of inundation.

Although more expensive to engineer and construct, these buildings offer the same advantages as any ground-level clubhouse. A major disadvantage however, is the need to provide access to the upper floor, including for people with a disability. To put this in context, if a building is raised only 1m, the required access ramp will need to be 14m (minimum) in length. It is anticipated that any buildings identified in this option would need to be elevated significantly higher than 1m (possibly up to 4-5m).

Further, this option could only realistically be applied to Roy Howard Oval as it is anticipated that the required height for any such structures at Keith Mitchell Oval would be prohibitive. The users of Keith Mitchell Oval would remain restricted to a portable structure for storage and a kiosk located on a permanent concrete slab (as in Option 1) as there are existing change rooms and toilets servicing Keith Mitchell Oval.

There are other issues involved in this option as follows.

Issues

Capital cost of construction was the major issue with this option, in addition to the impact on the visual amenity of the site.

It is also anticipated that meeting the Development and Building Certification requirements (as per the Building Code of Australia) for such raised structures will be difficult, especially those in regard to accessibility.

Cost estimates

An even larger range of variables are involved in constructing facilities of this nature, especially those relating to their height and nature of elevation. Therefore, cost estimates are an approximate guide only, with construction costs of the building only likely to be $1 million - $1.8 million.

Option 2 - Raised permanent buildings



Option 3 - Permanent pavilions

This option included the development of a 'standard' permanent pavilion at Roy Howard Oval and a concrete slab to accommodate a portable structure at Keith Mitchell Oval. It took little consideration of the site's flooding issues, due to the proposed location of the structure.

This option involved locating a club building at the lessor flood affected area within the Roy Howard Oval area and, for the same reasons as those raised in Option 2, a concrete slab at Keith Mitchell oval to accommodate a transportable structure.

The building at Roy Howard Oval would be a low-cost, slightly raised (at least) and with limited habitable areas. Such a structure would contain the elements required for normal club operations such as change rooms, canteen/kiosk and a meeting/ administration room.

Issues

This option did not fully consider the significant risk of flooding of the site and the engineering required for such a structure.

It should be noted that even if raised on an earth platform, the displaced water from the structure and the earth platform would need to catered for elsewhere within the flood zone, and this is not likely to be acceptable to the relevant authorities.

Due to this area being so flood prone, the only possible location for this type of structure would be at the indicated location, again raising the issue of the proximity to residences in that area. And, although this location is considered to be in the flood fringe area, there would still be a requirement to have the structure on a raised platform, which may not be allowable.

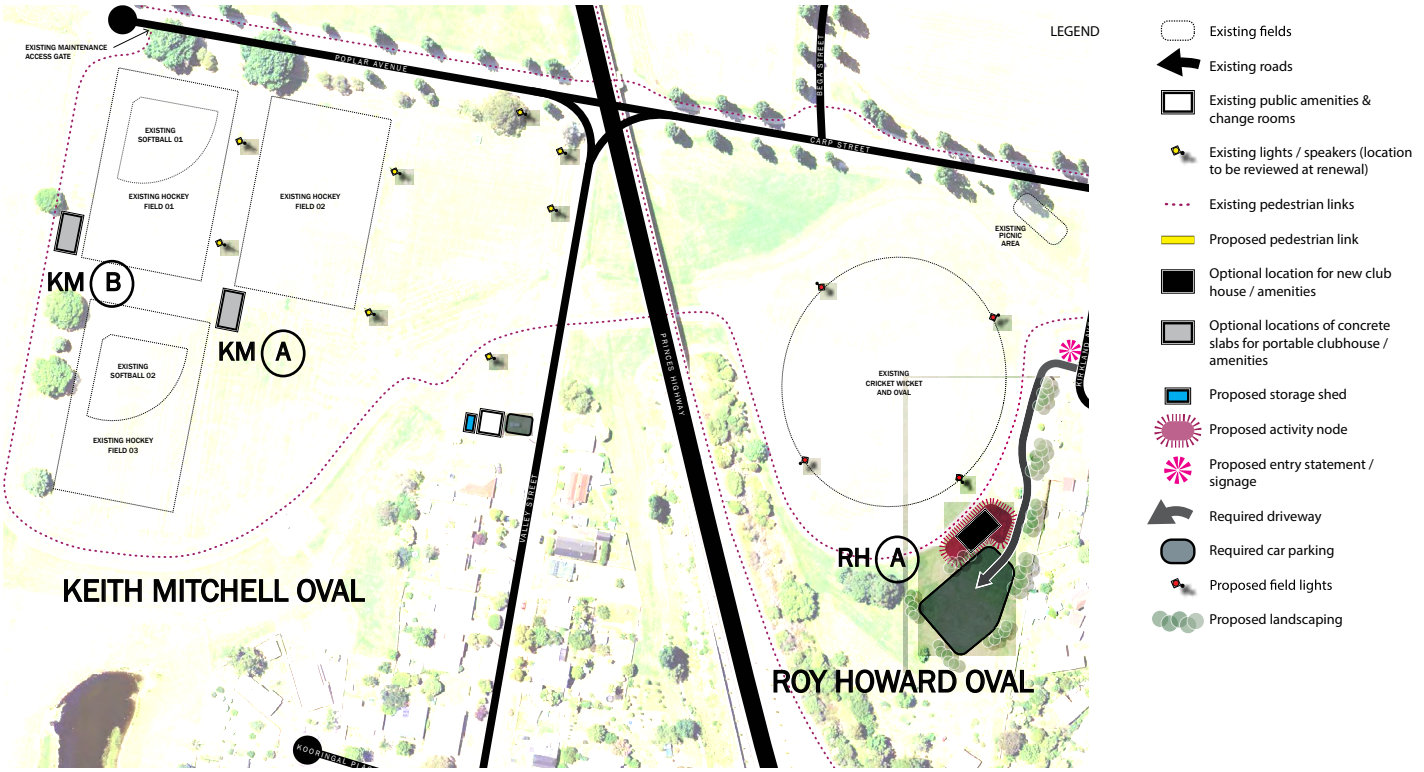
Further, by locating the structure so close to residences, the club's future growth and operations would be heavily constrained due to the likely impacts on these residents.

Cost estimates

Indicative costs for permanent pavilions (including site preparation) are based on square meter rates ranging from $1,750/m^2 - $2,000/m^2 .

Most of the variables involved in such buildings depend on the type and quality of finishings provided, both internally and externally.

Option 3 - Permanent pavilion Roy Howard Oval



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Option 4 - 2016 Master Plan

This option was based on the existing adopted master plan of the site and included no new amenities or pavilions. It involved minimal improvements to the site, and while it had the advantage of not increasing Council's asset responsibilities such as capital and ongoing maintenance costs and asset depreciation, it does not meet the current users' needs or promote increased usage of the site.

Further, the existing amenities are not easily accessed from Roy Howard Oval, significantly impacting on the operations of the current club and any future users of the site.

Issues

This option, while only marginally increasing Council's asset management responsibilities, did little to support increased future use of the site, the reason for undertaking this Review (with the Bega Bombers AFL Club only beginning to regularly use the site in 2016).

Cost estimate

$150,000 - $200,000.

Option 4 - 2016 Master Plan (no change)



Legend

1. Existing cricket wicket and oval
2. Proposed formalised car parking
3. Proposed all weather terraced seating structure
4. Proposed 'home team' players shelter 4 x 4m with tables and chairs
5. Proposed 'away team' players shelter 4 x 4m with tables and chairs
6. Proposed AFL goal posts
7. Existing toilet block
8. Existing outdoor gym (previous location only)
9. Existing hockey fields - maintain and upgrade existing field infrastructure as required
10. Proposed players gathering node with shelter structure for shade

Option review

The 4 options discussed above for the future development of the Valley Fields were focussed on the location and type of built structures to provide amenities for the operations of the user groups.

In addition to these structures, other features have been identified in the concept plans as follows:

Access and parking

This is a key issue for the ongoing viability of any option that is pursued.

Clear and easy access to the structures, especially for the proposed portable structures, will be essential for normal club operations and even more so for the removal of the structures if flooding of the site is imminent.

The cost estimate for this aspect of the proposed developments is $700,000.

Existing amenities block

There is potential to either extend the existing amenities block on Valley Street to include storage and improved change facilities, or to build a storage shed adjacent to it. This feature would then directly service the users of Keith Mitchell Oval.

The cost estimate for this aspect of the proposed developments is $200,000.

Activity nodes

This area, adjacent to proposed club buildings, allows the users to improve the services they offer members and the community in general. They may include features (subject to location/flooding risk) such as shelters, seating, outdoor gathering/spectator areas and picnic tables.

The cost estimate for this aspect of the proposed developments is $150,000.

Sports field lighting

Subject to the final locations of other structures, field lighting may need to be re-designed and/or re-engineered. Lighting is proposed to be training level, with the possibility of increasing Roy Howard Oval lighting to competition standard in the future, but only if a need is demonstrated.

The cost estimate for this aspect of the proposed developments is $350,000.

Review of options

Following the development of the four options outlined previously, feedback was sought from clubs, neighbouring residents and Council staff.

These stakeholders were invited to join a Teams meeting (due to COVID-19 restrictions) to discuss the options. Representatives of the cricket and AFL clubs joined this meeting, with no neighbouring residents accepting the invitation.

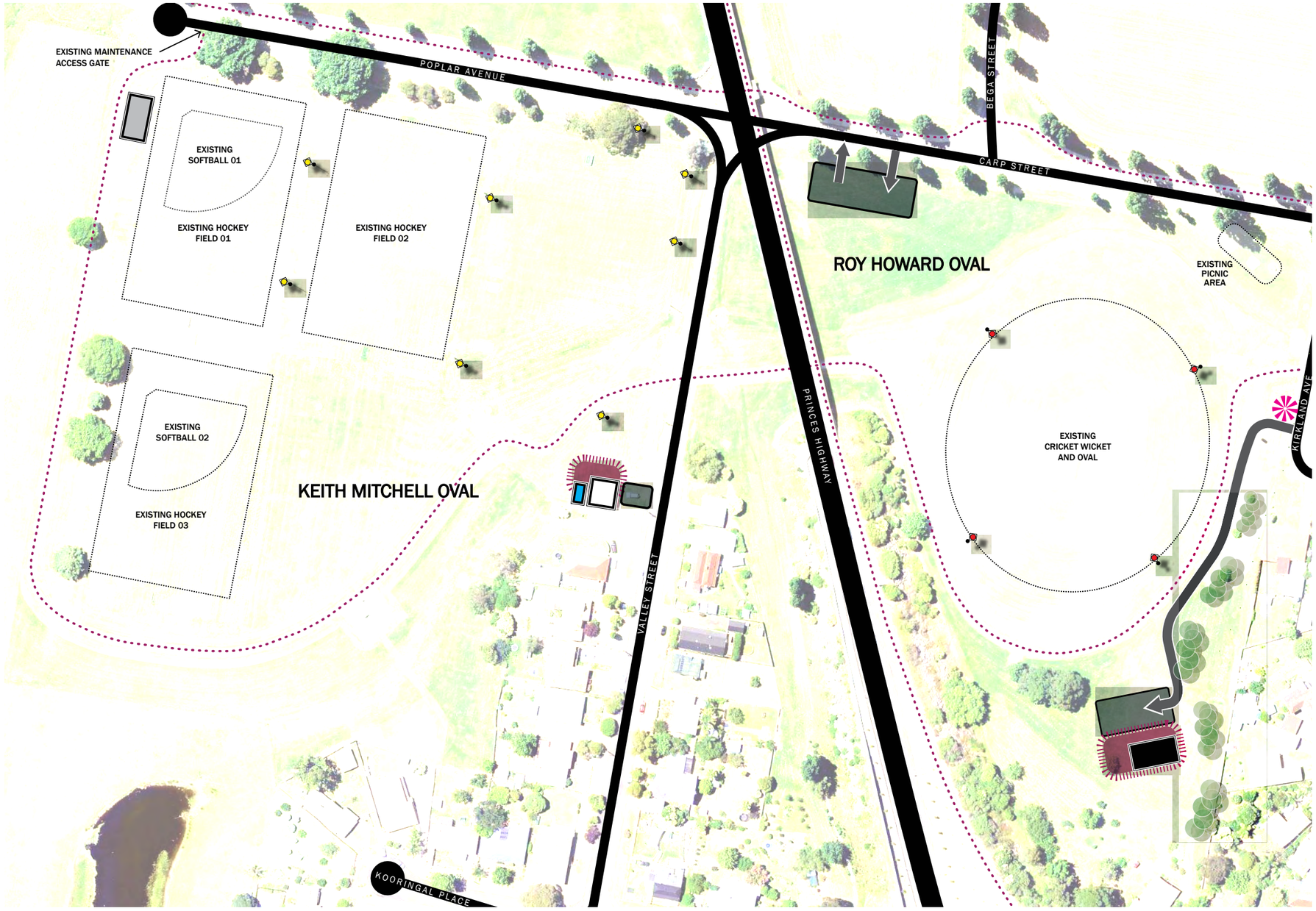
The main outcomes of this meeting were outlined in the 'Issues' sections of each of the options presented previously and are summarised as follows:

- Option 3 was the preferred option, but with a revised location for the proposed club amenities building to the south of Roy Howard Oval
- transportable buildings were not considered a viable option due to the process involved in their relocation and the burden this would place on volunteers and resources
- the proposed building for Roy Howard Oval itself would be a very basic structure with an approximate footprint of 15m x 10m and features limited to toilets/change rooms and a basic kiosk
- improvements to Keith Mitchell Oval would be limited to a concrete slab to accommodate a modified, transportable storage container for club use during the playing season, and possible future lighting upgrades (training standard only)
- the installation of field lighting, designed according to the relevant engineering requirements would allow increased use of Roy Howard Oval
- while the clubs of Keith Mitchell Oval have indicated a preference for the location of the storage container to be in the centre of the site, it is not as easily accessible as the revised location and could also constrain the future use of the site if located in the middle of the current open (and flexible) oval space.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the following option is the proposed revision of the 2016 Valley Fields Master Plan. This is is based on the following main considerations:
   - the likely occurrence of flooding of the site posing significant risks to permanent structures built within the flood zone
   - all applicable developments will need to meet Development and Building Certification requirements (as per the Building Code of Australia (BCA))
   - due to the proposed building's relative proximity to neighbouring residences, further consultation should be undertaken with neighbouring residents of Roy Howard Oval as that project develops.
2. It is recommended that the existing amenities block on Valley Street be extended to include storage areas and improved change facilities.

Proposed Valley Fields Layout & Cost Estimate



LEGEND

- Existing fields
- Existing roads
- Existing public amenities & change rooms
- Existing lights / speakers (location to be reviewed at renewal)
- Existing pedestrian links
- Proposed pedestrian link
- Optional location for new sports amenities building
- Optional location of concrete slab for portable clubhouse / amenities
- Proposed activity node
- Proposed entry statement / signage
- Required driveway
- Required car parking for development
- Proposed field lights
- Proposed landscaping

Cost estimates of main features:

Item	Estimated cost
Amenities building (including site preparation)	$600,000
Access road and parking/delivery areas	$700,000
Activity nodes and Keith Mitchell concrete slab	$150,000
Upgrades to existing amenities block	$200,000
Field lighting	$350,000
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION	$2,000,000
Detailed design/approvals (5%)	$100,000
Project development and management (5%)	$100,000
Contingency (10%)	$200,000
TOTAL COSTS	**$2,400,000**

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