Report to Council

Agenda item 7.3

Post travel report by Councillor Ken Ong: 4th Annual Township Development Conference, Singapore, March 2016

31 May 2016

Presenter: Councillor Ken Ong

Purpose and background

1. To report to Council on the travel undertaken by Councillor Ken Ong to Singapore to attend the 4th Annual Township Development Conference (Conference) between 16 and 17 March 2016.

2. On 15 December 2015 Council approved the proposal for Councillor Ong to travel to participate in the Conference.

3. The Conference brought together Asia Pacific region leaders from key sectors to examine challenges, current and emerging, to developing townships and to identify benchmarks for integrated and sustainable township development. Invited to present at the Conference Councillor Ong spoke on ensuring the continued liveability of a city using Melbourne as the example and benchmark.

Key issues

4. Approximately 200 delegates from Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, Australia, Indonesia, East Timor, Qatar and the Netherlands attended the Conference.

5. The program included presentations from Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, and Malaysia with a common theme that the key cities of these countries face high increases in population, density and new developments which need to be managed in a well-planned and sustainable approach. Key learnings from presentations are included in Attachment 2.

6. In his capacity as Planning Portfolio Chair, Councillor Ong attended the conference to participate in discussions and forums on topics such as comprehensive town planning, infrastructure enhancements, government collaboration, affordable housing, senior living, gated communities and smart township.

7. Councillor Ong's presentation to the Conference was well received with delegates keen to learn more about Melbourne's success and achievements. The key messages of his presentation were:

    7.1. Melbourne is a city of people and the infrastructure focus has been on delivering more facilities for people – from libraries to community centres, recreational facilities, bicycle paths and wider footpaths etc.

    7.2. Melbourne has been growing rapidly and more people, means greater demand on the City's infrastructure and services. Planning ahead and delivering them is the only way to ensure a sustainable liveable city moving forward into the future.

Recommendation

8. That the Council notes the report by Councillor Ken Ong on City of Melbourne participation in the 4th Annual Township Development Conference in Singapore between 16 and 17 March 2016.

Attachments:
1. Supporting Attachment   (Page 2 of 8)
2. Key activities, benefits and outcomes   (Page 3 of 8)

Supporting Attachment   1

Finance

1.   Councillor Ong's participation was jointly funded by Trueventus which covered an economy airfare and accommodation for one night. The cost to Council was $441.39 which included accommodation for one night ($324.67) and incidental costs ($116.72).

Conflict of interest

2.   No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Relation to Council policy

3.   The Manager Governance and Legal has confirmed that the travel costs accord with the requirements of the travel guidelines outlined in the Councillor Expenses and Resources Guidelines.

4.   The concept of a well-planned, sustainable and liveable city is embedded in the Council Plan 2013-17 under goal 1 a city for people and goal 5 an eco-city.

Environmental sustainability

5.   The purchase of carbon offsets reduced the carbon emissions impact of the flights.

KEY ACTIVITIES, BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES

4th Annual Township Development Conference, Singapore, March 2016

Petaling Jaya City Council – Malaysia	Originally a satellite town of Kuala Lumpur, with industrial focus, currently has a population of 700,000 and is expected to increase to 2 million by 2035. The limited availability of land means looking at Transit Oriented Development (TOD) which they have in place. However there are lack of clear guidelines and planning rules. Currently only 10 per cent of the population use public transport with a target of 40 per cent is expected by 2035. Working on a Transportation Master Plan and TOD rules they are attempting to increase the plot ratio to 6 (from 4).
Housing Affordability in Singapore	In Singapore, from 2008-2015, the cost of housing per unit had dropped by 10 per cent due to government intervention to increase the level of housing stock for lower and middle income people. The Government Housing Development Board (HDB) builds and supplies over 85 per cent of all housing in Singapore. Income levels during the same period increased by 30 per cent. However, private sector development prices during the same period have increased by per cent due to high cost of private land. A comparison was provided using Sydney's housing data.
Iskandar Seri Austin – new township development, Malaysia	The Iskandar area is Malaysia's largest new development area in the south of Malaysia, across from Singapore. The presentation describes the master planning of the new township, Seri Austin and the changes that had to be made as the new residents' and businesses need changed. It has many community infrastructure built and a high level of open space throughout the township. The approach is similar to some of Melbourne's new suburbs in the urban growth areas.
Singapore's Urban Transport system – bus services	Singapore has two bus service companies which covers the whole of the city state. Currently 67 per cent of all trips in Singapore are by public transport. The Singapore Government has a target for 75 per cent. The Government sets a policy to reduce car travel and ownership and has the Electronic Pricing System in place for the central city zone. This is equivalent to a congestion tax. Singapore's transport strategy is in conjunction with the TOD developments. They include walkways from Mass Rapid Transport (MRT) to the bus terminals.
Cycling in Singapore	Singapore has an objective to integrate their cycling paths into the densely populated city. Currently, 67 per cent of land in Singapore is categorised as Green Wedge. Today, Singapore has 974,000 vehicles, which are made up of 540,000 private cars, 145,000 motorcycles, 27,000 taxis, 17,500 buses, 180,000 commercial vehicles and other categories. Even though cycling is still not wide spread due to the hot and humid weather, Singapore has a Park Connectors Network (PCN) which moves cyclists away from main vehicle routes – cyclists use shared paths between pedestrians and cyclists which is the Singapore Law from Ministry of Transport. The shared footpaths are 3.5m wide. These bicycle connections are not visible as they are built away from the public roads and highways. They do have conflicts in the shared path areas and are managed by education and design.
Other presentations	The other presentations which supported the conference and were worthwhile: 1. Planning and Design Toolkit for Township Master Planning. The presentation by CPG (a Singapore organisation), covered several important aspects of developing new townships to ensure sustainable, economically attractive and memorable as a place to visit, work and live. It covered key aspects of developing a master plan and could be useful for local governments in Australia's growth areas. It also looks at the operations and maintenance aspects for long term sustainability, use of technology and contingency planning.

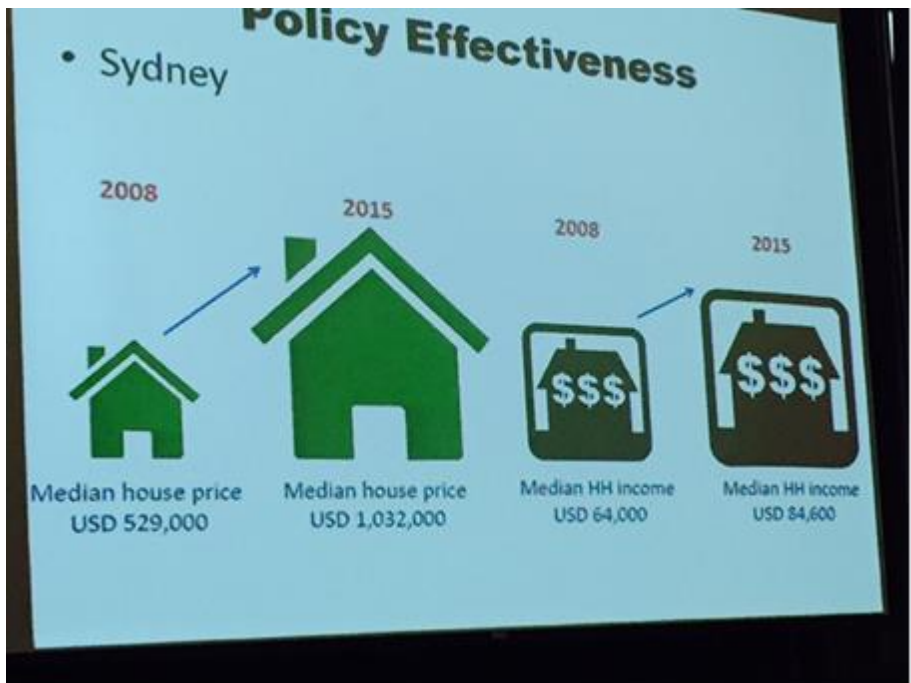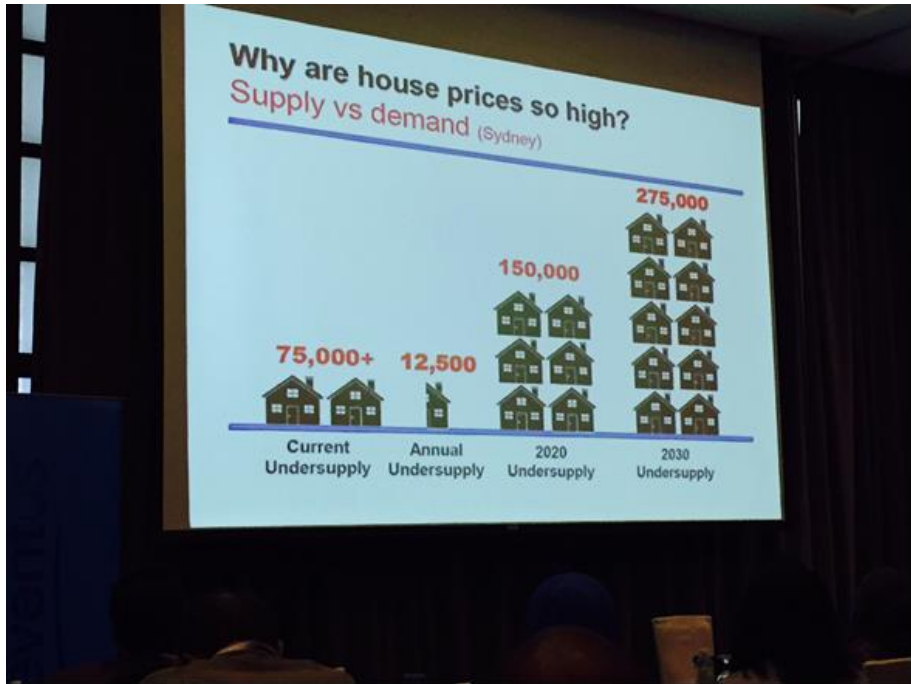|	
	2. The second supporting presentation which was interesting was by Phillips solar LED lighting. The presentation looked at "Sunlight at Night" through off-grid lighting and its many uses. The claim is that the payback is for 5 to 7 years for outdoor lighting and maintenance is done remotely. Some examples d included solar LED lighting of parks and gardens, local streets and renewal areas. The remote management units are operated over wireless networks. City of Melbourne is already starting on this program and all levels of governments in Australia should be supported to implement this. Melbourne of course could do more.
City of Melbourne Presentation	My presentation was aimed at ensuring continued liveability of a city using Melbourne as the example and benchmark. The key message of the presentation is that it is a city of people and the infrastructure that the city has been focussed on, has been done to deliver more facilities for people – from libraries, community centres, recreational facilities, bicycle paths, wider footpaths, etc. The underlying message was that our city has been growing rapidly and with more people, it means greater demands on the City's infrastructure and services. Planning ahead and delivering them is the only way to ensure a sustainable liveable city moving forward into the future. The feedback from attendees was very positive on the Melbourne City presentation. I recommended attendees to visit our city's website to see all the work we are doing and our programs plans.

In summary

It was useful to attend and share our experiences. The reputation of City of Melbourne is well known and many participants were keen to learn more about Melbourne's success and achievements. From my observation of many cities in the neighbouring region, they are all very keen to get better and become more liveable, more sustainable and are willing to embrace new approaches to planning and development of new and existing cities.
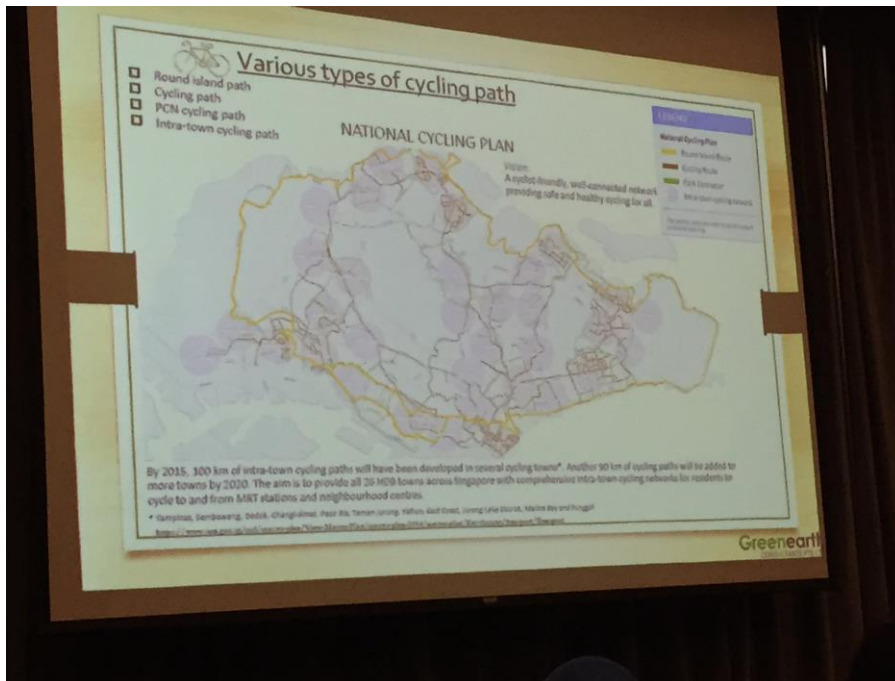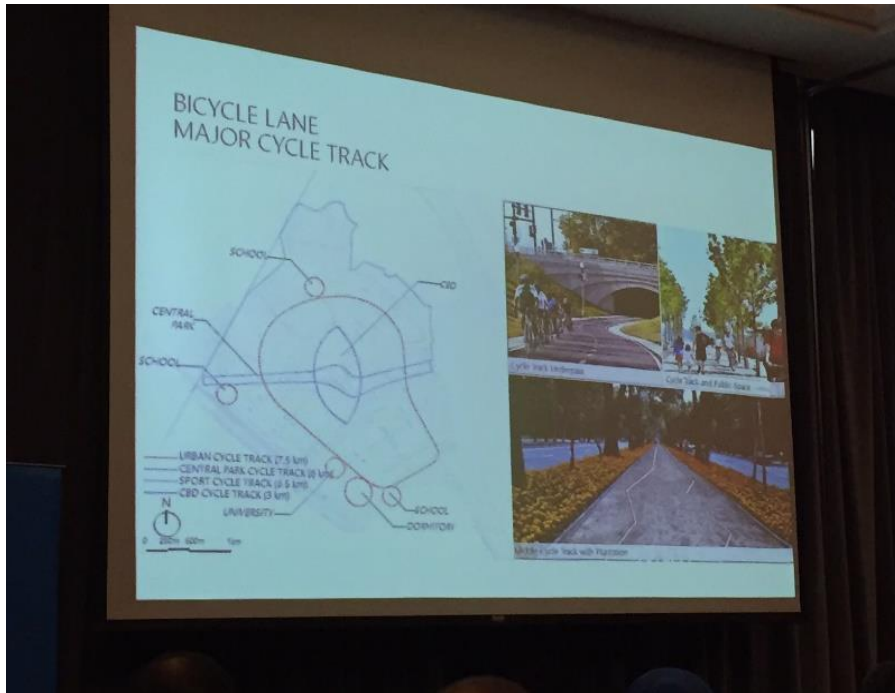
Every city has public transport challenges with Singapore the most advanced. The Transit Oriented Development (TOD) are in all their new plans with mixed use, higher density developments and linkages with connections to other modes of transport.
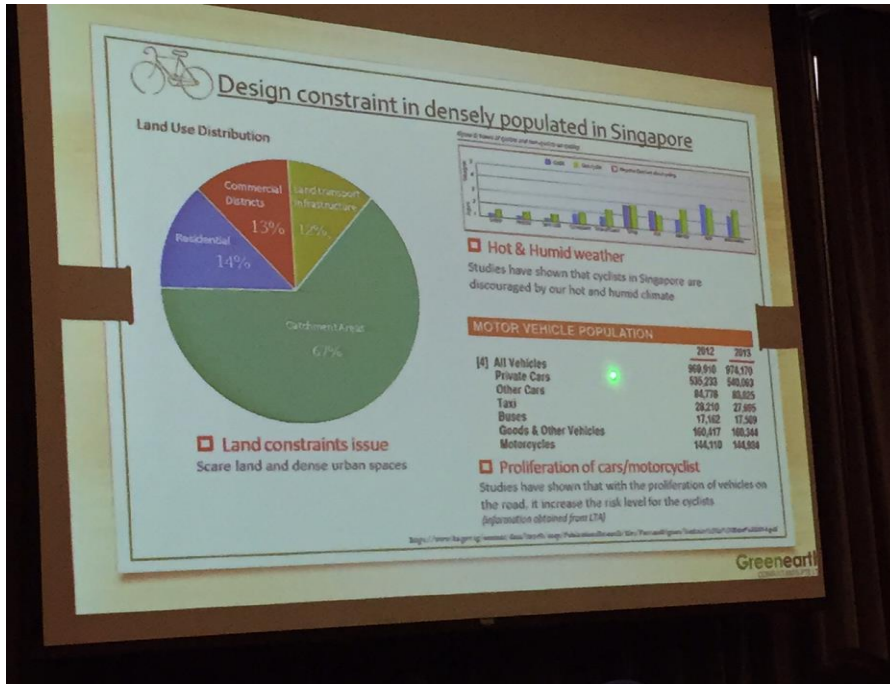
Finally, all the new township planning tries to separate cycling from the main vehicles routes as there are existing conflicts.

A selection of photos from the presentations

3

A selection of photos from the presentations

3

5