

FAQs: Civic Precinct redevelopment



CIVIC PRECINCT AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

What is the Civic Precinct and what is it used for?

The City of Subiaco's Civic Precinct, located in the mid-section of Rokeby Road, is a historically significant local landmark, having served a variety of community functions for over a century.

Today, it forms the heart of the City, encompassing key community facilities such as the E H Parker Library, Subiaco Museum, the old Council Chambers and Administration Centre, as well as the Rankin Gardens, the Fallen Soldiers' Memorial Clock Tower, and a number of heritage trees and open green spaces. Together, these elements form an integral part of Subiaco's cultural, civic, and environmental identity.

The Civic Precinct provides an important place for the community to come together for key community events such as the City's ANZAC and Remembrance Day services, along with outdoor Library and Museum programs like Storytime and Rhymetime.

Why do we need this new civic building?

The City's population is growing. With this growth comes a greater demand for accessible, high-quality community spaces where residents can connect, learn and celebrate. Community feedback indicates a strong desire for more spaces that support local activities, programs, and events.

The City requires a purpose-built facility to accommodate staff and deliver essential services efficiently. A new civic building will provide a secure, long-term location, eliminating the uncertainty that comes with leased premises and ensuring that staff have a suitable, well-equipped workplace to serve the community effectively.

Together, these needs make the new civic building a sound investment in the City's future - supporting both a growing population and a stronger, more connected community.

What happened to the existing Council Chambers and Administration Centre at 241 Rokeby Road?

In February 2021, Council endorsed the investigation of a potential refurbishment or redevelopment of the Council Chambers and Administration Centre (the civic building at 241 Rokeby Road) within the context of the broader Civic Precinct and surrounds. The building was originally constructed in the 1960s.

Following this decision, Council resolved in December 2022 to demolish the old civic building at 241 Rokeby Road, which was nearing the end of its serviceable life and had been further compromised by a fire in September 2022.

Are there risks with building on Crown land?

When Crown land is allocated, there is an expectation that it would be used for its given purpose. By building on and using Crown land for its intended purpose, it supports its continued use for local community and civic purposes.

While the State Government is able to resume ownership of land, whether Crown or Freehold, if the land is being put to productive community use, it is much less likely to do so.

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If ownership is resumed, the State Government is required to provide compensation for the current value of any improvements on the land (e.g. buildings), in accordance with the Land Administration Act 1997.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

How much will the new civic building and gardens cost?

Inclusive of design, demolition, construction, and landscaping, the new civic building and gardens are estimated to cost \$64 million. A breakdown of the estimate is available [here](#).

More than half of the estimated project cost is dedicated to spaces for the community.

The cost of the new civic building and gardens is comparable to what the City would need to spend if this project did not proceed – particularly given that the City would still require office space for our staff elsewhere in Subiaco. The project brings additional benefits like new community spaces and long-term stability for office accommodation and Council Chambers, which is critical for the City to effectively support our growing community.

This is the biggest development project the City has ever undertaken, and the first significant capital investment it has made since 1971 when the Evelyn H Parker Library was built.

How will costs be managed to ensure that they don't 'blow out'?

The cost estimate includes buffers to account for rising prices and any unexpected issues that may arise. We are working with our expert design team to keep costs down where possible, while providing for a build that will stand the test of time. A quality build will mitigate the need for excessive maintenance and renovation costs down the track.

The tender for construction will likely be on a fixed price basis, helping Council to be confident on the financial outcomes when a builder is recommended. For extra assurance the City has appointed an independent cost planner to advise on value management opportunities and ensure that the project remains financially on track.

Will my rates be increased to fund the redevelopment?

No, the project is not expected to have an impact on rates. The City has sufficient funds to meet the costs of this project.

CONCEPT DESIGN AND DESIGN BRIEF

What was included in the design brief?

The preliminary design brief can be viewed on the [City's website](#). It was shaped by extensive community feedback, including commentary received in previous community engagement projects. These include:

- 2025-2035 Council Plan
- 2024 MARKYT Community Scorecard
- 2025 Shenton Park Community Centre review
- 2025 Shenton Park streetscape design review
- 2020-21 Social Infrastructure Plan.

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The City's vision for the Civic Precinct, within the design brief, is as follows:

“An inspiring building which is fitting and harmonious in its garden setting.

Its thoughtfully designed, inclusive spaces are adaptable to meet evolving civic, staff and community needs.

It sets the benchmark for sustainability and amenity, capturing Subiaco's evolution from working-class roots to its cosmopolitan present.”

Where can I view the concept design of the Civic Precinct?

Renderings from the concept design can be viewed on the [City's website](#).

You can also view an [interactive map](#) of the Civic Precinct design, which includes an overview of planned community spaces, outdoor spaces, and other facilities within the Precinct.

How has heritage been considered in the concept design?

The Civic Precinct has served a variety of community functions for over a century, including a post office, fire station, croquet club and bandstand. It has always been a place for the community to come together, connect and celebrate. This project honours that history by ensuring the Precinct continues to be used for the same purposes.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND USE

How was community feedback reflected in the design brief?

The preliminary design brief for the Civic Precinct was shaped by extensive community feedback, including commentary received in previous community engagement projects. These include:

- 2025-2035 Council Plan
- 2024 MARKYT Community Scorecard
- 2025 Shenton Park Community Centre review
- 2025 Shenton Park streetscape design review
- 2020-21 Social Infrastructure Plan.

What indoor and outdoor facilities can the community use within the Precinct?

There will be multiple spaces for the community to use and enjoy, including:

- A community hub
- An outdoor pavilion
- A flexible exhibition space
- A festival lawn space for major community events, with plenty of terrace seating
- Bookable meeting rooms and boardrooms (including the Council Chambers) within the Civic Building space
- Public toilets, including an accessible toilet and baby change facilities

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View the [interactive map](#) to explore these spaces (and more) in more detail.

Will there be gardens and green space that the community can use within the Precinct?

Yes, as part of the redevelopment, there will be an abundance of green space for the community to use and enjoy, including:

- A botanic arc garden
- A terrace, incorporating existing pine trees, on the side of the community hub
- A community lawn in front of the community hub
- A 'festival lawn' gathering space
- A wetland landscape weaving from the botanic garden to the rear of the new civic building
- Several seating options within the gardens.

View the [interactive map](#) to explore these outdoor spaces in more detail.

Will trees be impacted?

The design concept for the Civic Building adopts a 'landscape-first' approach to minimise impact on the Precinct's existing green spaces and tree canopy. Sustainable design is a core principle of the project and will be further explored as the design phase progresses.

All mature Norfolk Island Pines will be retained, as well as a number of palm trees, rubber trees and native frangipani trees. Several ceremonial plantings will be retained or relocated.

A small number of unsuitable trees that are not native, or endemic to Western Australia, will be removed to facilitate the design.

The roses will be sensitively relocated to another appropriate location within Subiaco.

Will the gardens be dog-friendly?

Due to the limited size of the lawn, and proximity to the traffic on Rokeby Road, a dog park is not considered suitable for this space.

What will happen to the other community centres in Subiaco?

The existing community spaces owned by the City are not being considered as part of this project.

Council regularly reviews City assets to ensure they are still fit for purpose and meeting community needs. Any potential changes to community spaces will be managed through the usual Council decision-making process.

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COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Can I provide feedback on the concept design?

Absolutely. The City is excited to invite input to capture valuable community knowledge and passion. In particular, the City is keen to hear from the community about the indoor and outdoor community spaces they would find most useful, and what they would like to see within the garden area in front of the Civic Building.

To have your say, please visit Have Your Say Subiaco to complete our [short online survey](#), provide your feedback in-person at Postal Walk from 10am to 2pm on Wednesday 19 November, at the Subi Farmers Market at Subiaco Primary School from 8am to 12pm on Saturday 29 November, at the Daghish Tennis Club from 3.30pm to 5.30pm on Thursday 4 December, or at the Shenton Park Community Centre from 8.30am to 10.30am on Tuesday 9 December, or reach out to our Project team via city@subiaco.wa.gov.au.

There will also be information stands with feedback postcards located at the City's Customer Service counter at Level 2, 388 Hay Street, Subiaco Library (237 Rokeby Road), and Lords Recreation Centre (5 Wembley Court).

Community consultation on the concept design will take place from **Friday 14 November 2025 to Friday 27 February 2026**.

CIVIC BUILDING AND COUNCIL CHAMBERS

How big will the new civic building be?

The footprint of the new civic building will be very similar to the original Council Chambers and Administration Centre building at 241 Rokeby Road.

The building will contain undercroft parking and sit three storeys above ground – the same height as the Subiaco Arts Centre west of the Civic Precinct site.

Has the City considered refurbishing the existing building?

Yes. Council's decision to pursue demolition and rebuild in 2022 was informed by an engineering assessment which identified significant issues with the existing building (built in 1967). This included issues with the roof, drainage, window frames, fit-out condition, occupancy capacity, and air quality. Ongoing water leaks had also caused internal damage.

Other factors include the need to bring the building up to the current National Construction Code, which would require further extensive works and upgrades. This would include installation of new emergency exit staircases (particularly at the rear of the building, where there is currently no emergency exit); installation of a lift, which would likely require excavation works; and installation of a new fire system including panel, sprinklers, booster, tanks, hoses, lighting and alarms. Selected fire rated walls, floors and columns may also need to be upgraded, and the roof would likely need replacing, along with the ceiling and insulation, carpet, glazing, toilets and showers, plumbing, drainage, waterproofing, air conditioning and ventilation. Selected doorways would also need to be widened.

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Council's decision was also informed by architect advice that, given the ad-hoc evolution of the building, and its building's limitations and inefficiencies, refurbishing the building would be unlikely to greatly extend the useful life of the building. This means that the building would likely need costly ongoing maintenance, repairs and capital investment beyond the cost of starting with a new building.

Overall it was determined that, while a refurbishment would temporarily improve the usability of the building, it would be better value over the long term to demolish and build new.

Has the City considered a more modest building design?

In August 2025, following the two-stage tender process, Council approved the appointment of Lyons. Lyons' concept design, which is currently out for community consultation, was endorsed by an independent expert jury panel for its balance of design quality, community needs, and tree retention.

Other submissions, two of which are available on the City's website, proposed larger footprints and greater tree removal. The Lyons design has the smallest footprint and prioritises tree retention across the precinct.

Following community consultation, all feedback will be assessed and may inform revisions as part of the concept verification stage.

How much of the building is allocated to staff accommodation, and how has the City considered hybrid work arrangements and future technological changes, such as AI, in determining space requirements?

The existing Council Chambers and Administration Centre, originally built in the 1960s, has been extended and modified multiple times to accommodate the City's workforce growth, to the point that much of the building's original design is no longer evident.

The new civic building concept locates staff accommodation on levels one and two and includes 158 workstations. This meets current indoor staff needs and allows for future growth, reflecting expected population increases.

The City supports hybrid working for eligible roles, allowing up to two days per week working from home. However, many roles are community-facing, and most staff choose to work from the office. Having staff based in Subiaco supports local knowledge, community connection, and the daytime economy.

While digital transformation and emerging technologies, including AI, are delivering efficiencies, collaboration and human input remain essential. The City requires fit-for-purpose spaces to support staff and maintain high-quality service delivery.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Will the civic building be sustainable and energy efficient?

Yes. The current design incorporates 5-star Australian Excellence. The building design optimises solar orientation, utilising the building's façade with integrated sunshades to minimise energy use. The building's

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position between the treetops also means the roof can harvest significant solar energy using photovoltaic panels.

The design concept for the civic building adopts a 'landscape-first' approach to minimise impact to the Precinct's existing green spaces and tree canopy.

PARKING

Will parking be available at the new Civic Precinct?

Yes, the new civic building will include undercroft parking, with a mixture of public, staff, and ACROD bays, and direct lift access to ground floor amenities, in close proximity to the library and museum.

There will be more car bays available than there are today. More detailed information on parking will become available during detailed design phase.

The relocation of the crossover from Rokeby Road to Hamersley Road is also expected to result in more on-street parking bays.

AREAS AROUND THE CIVIC PRECINCT

How is the City communicating with Subiaco Primary School?

The City is in communication with Subiaco Primary School as its close neighbour and met with the School Board in early November 2025 to walk through the concept design. Through the project, there is an opportunity to create benefits for the School through improved pedestrian safety for school access and egress, improved traffic flows at school drop-off and pick-up times, and increased amenity for the school community.

The City has leased 138 Hamersley Road (the Rose Fuhrmann Centre) to the Department of Education until 2027. The building is approaching the end of its useful life - the City has been working with the Department of Education for a number of years and understands that planning for an alternative space in consultation with the Subiaco Primary School has commenced. The City will continue to work with both the Department and Subiaco Primary School to ensure a mutually beneficial outcome.

The City will also work with the school to ensure any impact during the construction phase is appropriately managed.

Will Subiaco Library, Subiaco Museum, or the Fallen Soldiers Memorial be affected?

No changes are anticipated to any of these buildings as part of this project. Car bays adjacent to the Museum and behind the Library will be removed, but there will be alternative parking available within the Precinct.

During construction, there may be temporary access changes to the Museum and after-hours book returns at the Library, with prior notice given to the community.

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ARCHITECT AND DESIGN TEAM SELECTION

How was an architecture firm chosen?

In 2024, there was a two-stage tender process for the selection of an architect to work on a concept design for the Civic Precinct redevelopment project. The tender was based on a [design brief](#) that was informed by several years of community feedback obtained over multiple engagement projects.

26 firms expressed interest in the tender, which was streamlined by an expert jury panel to three submissions, led by [ARM](#), [Lyons](#), and [JCB](#). Following jury evaluations, Lyons were appointed as lead architect firm for the project in May 2025.

Who is the design team behind the concept design?

The concept design was developed by a multidisciplinary team selected through a two-stage tender process. The team comprises [Lyons](#), [Officer Woods Architects](#), and landscape architects [GLAS](#) and [Super Natural](#). The concept design released for public consultation is the design that they submitted as part of the tender process, and Council is keen to hear from the community to help shape thinking and inform decisions about the design.

Lyons, based in Melbourne, is an architectural firm with extensive, award-winning experience across Australia. Notable projects here in Perth include the new ECU City Campus in Yagan Square and Curtin University's Midland Campus, and notable national projects include the Queensland Children's Hospital, the Melbourne Brain Centre and the Bankstown City Campus in Western Sydney.

Officer Woods Architects are a Fremantle-based architectural firm with state and national-level experience, including the Boola Katitjn building at Murdoch University and the East Pilbara Arts Centre.

Super Natural, also Fremantle-based, is a collaborative environmental and landscape practice that creates opportunities for nature – in particular, the rich biodiversity of Western Australia's south-west.

GLAS Landscape Architects, based in Melbourne, is a studio specialising in ecological and climate-positive landscape design.

Who was on the jury responsible for selecting the successful tender?

The Council was supported in its decision-making by a jury of architectural industry leaders.

The jury was comprised of:

- Government Architect for Western Australia, Emma Williamson
- Professor of Architecture (Urbanism) Industry Fellow at RMIT University, Mark Jacques
- Emeritus Professor of Architecture at the University of Western Australia and professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne, Geoffrey London;
- Melbourne-based architect experienced in strategic architecture and urban design for public places across government and private sectors, Shelley Penn AO.

Can I view the other two concept designs that were part of the tender process?

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Yes, you can view the other two concept designs on the [City's website](#).

PROJECT CONTACT

Who can I contact for more information?

If you have a question about this project that is not covered in the project FAQs, you can contact the City at city@subiaco.wa.gov.au (with Civic Precinct as the subject heading), or call 9237 9222 with your query.

Alternatively, you can address correspondence to:

Chief Executive Officer

City of Subiaco

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