

Grand new vision

By Peri Strathearn

THE overall vision presented, of "a river city and a regional heart", produced a constructive atmosphere that readily absorbed the many and varied opinions put forward on Monday and Tuesday nights.

The Murray Bridge Structure Plan, Rural Communities Study and Integrated Transport and Traffic Management Plan set out the lines along which the city will grow over the next decade and beyond.

Ultimately, it is expected that Murray Bridge will need to accommodate an extra 18,700 residents, 8400 homes and 9000 jobs by 2038.

High priority was given to the Gifford Hill residential and equine development south of the freeway, industrial zones to the city's north and west, and sites near the western end of Swanport Bridge that could be suited to tourism.

In the longer term, the plans allow for further development to the south and on the eastern bank of the River Murray.

They also describe the improvements to roads, water and power infrastructure, public transport and bike lanes that will be necessary.

Several common reactions stood out on the evening.

Residents questioned why the

development of the riverfront and the eastern bank of the Murray was not prioritised.

Some suggested the plans should make better use of river views and take a creative approach to styles of waterfront housing that would suit the flood zone.

Residents also argued White Hill's views were wasted on industry and that an over-developed skyline would look unattractive from the town centre.

The other key concern was whether councillors would heed the outcomes of the lengthy consultation process.

Proposals for an improved public transport network met with approval, though one group recommended going a step further and installing passenger rail from Adelaide to Callington, if not further.

This week's forums formed part of a public consultation period that will run until Sunday, May 13.

Village Well director Gilbert Rochecouste said the campaign had been an extraordinary process with a single focus.

"Ultimately we go back to one thing: it's about making Murray Bridge and the region a great place and leaving a great legacy for future generations," he said.

- Details: To get a complete set of the Imagine plans, go to: www.imagemurraybridge.com.au



Amazing attitudes

Planning expert and Village Well director Gilbert Rochecouste said the number of people who attended this week's Imagine Your Rural City 2020 consultation meetings amazed him.

"In terms of my experience during the last 28 years this is the largest turnout I've seen," Mr Rochecouste said.

"You usually only see these numbers where there is public outrage."

Mr Rochecouste has been the face of the past two Imagine consultation rounds.

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