



COMMITTEE FOR GEELONG

SUBMISSION TO INFRASTRUCTURE VICTORIA'S ALL THINGS CONSIDERED – EXPLORING OPTIONS FOR VICTORIA'S 30 YEAR INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

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1. Introduction

The Committee for Geelong (CfG) is pleased to lodge a submission to Infrastructure Victoria's *All Things Considered – Exploring options for Victoria's 30-year infrastructure strategy*.

The CfG is an independent advocate for Geelong that actively looks at ways to solve problems and confront challenges. Our members represent the political spectrum and a breadth of industry both by sector and size. We work with members, leaders, stakeholders and governments to provide strategic leadership and influence to leverage the economic potential of the region to make Geelong a world-class place. The CfG has a history of achieving genuine results for Geelong by influencing policy and challenging the status quo. As a direct result of the tangible outcomes the CfG has achieved, our highly valued opinion is consistently sought by key decision makers.

The CfG welcomes the opportunity to comment on the *All Things Considered* document, which will inform Victoria's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy.

2. Background

This submission builds on the CfG's submission to Infrastructure Victoria's *Laying the Foundation* discussion document.

3. Options Considered

The CfG welcomes Infrastructure Victoria's robust review of the options for Victoria. We are pleased to provide further comments regarding the key themes, specific options and gaps.

It is clear that the 236 options included in the Draft Options book is a considered and comprehensive list. The CfG is pleased that some of the key priorities for our region are included such as Avalon Airport bus and rail connections; Geelong rail upgrades and Geelong rail electrification.

3.1. Address infrastructure demands in areas with high population growth

Geelong is Victoria's second largest city and the CfG supports the development of a strong national second city policy for Australia's largest city economies (outside of the major cities in each State) which will benefit the nation's overall future economic performance. National and state policy agendas must be complemented by whole-of-government policies that formally acknowledge and support the development of Australia's second cities (such as Geelong and Newcastle etc.), including transport infrastructure planning. With the Victorian Government formally recognising Geelong as the State's 'second city' in its recently revised Plan Melbourne Refresh, it is evident that second cities are becoming increasingly important in their role in facilitating future growth.

Geelong's proximity to world-class education, health and lifestyle choices, together with its closeness to Melbourne, makes it an attractive and more affordable option for investors, visitors and residents. Improving access to Melbourne and the surrounding region is expected to have a positive impact on regional growth.

In order to accommodate growth, private and public sector funded infrastructure investment is crucial. The CfG is actively seeking improved transport infrastructure including road and rail connections throughout Victoria, and particularly between Melbourne and Geelong. The CfG supports an integrated transport planning system which delivers a cost effective, efficient and sustainable movement of people and freight in and around the city and across the State.

The CfG's 'Geelong on Track' initiative aims to improve rail services between Melbourne and Geelong, and within Geelong. At present, approximately 12,000 Geelong residents commute to Melbourne for work and this number is expected to rise. Improvements to the road network and the further development of rail services, including the Regional Rail

Link, should be complemented with more incentives for investment and job creation in regional areas, including Geelong. As Geelong and south west Victoria continues to grow – including areas such as the Armstrong Creek growth area to our south which is expected to add 60,000 people to our community – clearly we need appropriate public transport options. The duplication of the rail track – particularly between South Geelong and Waurin Ponds – is critical to support our urban growth in Victoria’s second city.

Currently, the single track between Geelong and Waurin Ponds (15km approximately) is a choke point on the line as trains running in the opposite direction have limited opportunities to pass each other, which places many constraints on the services which can be offered to and from Geelong, Colac and south west Victoria. The duplication of the line between South Geelong and Waurin Ponds will improve the situation but will not completely remedy it. Ultimately, it is essential for the free flow of bi-directional rail services to also duplicate the section of line between South Geelong and Geelong including the existing heritage listed rail tunnel. Given the amount of people currently using the Geelong line – V/Line’s busiest commuter line – the duplication of the Waurin Ponds line is worthy of urgent attention.

In addition, improvements to the bus network in Geelong are also strongly supported.

Investment in the Western Distributor project will ease the traffic, and we encourage the government to continue to focus on long term solutions for connections from western Victoria to eastern Victoria.

Further investment in Avalon Airport will stimulate economic growth in our region. Positioned midway between the state capital and Victoria’s second largest city, which both boast world-class tourism attractions, there is a significant market for international visitors to access an extended airport at Avalon. The southwest Victoria region is also home to major agribusiness interests – dairy, grain and fruit and vegetable industry – supported by port, rail and road infrastructure. The missing link for these exports is an air freight option from Avalon.

Avalon Airport is strategically located in the Wyndham-Geelong corridor, and continued investment in the Airport is expected to stimulate economic and population growth in the region. The designation of a heavy rail spur line, connecting Avalon to the Melbourne-Geelong rail line, is a future option which could be developed when feasible.

Geelong is unquestionably Victoria’s second city and there is a need and a market for an international airport at Avalon. An international airport at Avalon would provide the economic boost that Geelong needs in terms of:

- increased visitor traffic;
- an improved export/import channel; and
- the status and acknowledgement of the importance of our regional population and Victoria’s second city.

Finally, the CfG supports a centralised governance framework which facilitates growth of Geelong, as Victoria’s second city. A new governance framework for significant investment would inject additional resources and expertise to transform our city.

3.2. Address infrastructure challenges in areas with low or negative growth

The CfG believes that infrastructure investment in low growth areas is important to support economic viability of the State and National economies. The agribusiness sector is particularly important to Victoria and a significant economic driver for Geelong. Investment in the Princes Highway, Murray Basin Rail Project and high speed broadband is critical to improving the productivity of our region, and also Geelong. Improving public

transport to Geelong from smaller communities will help foster growth across the region. This is also important for access to education, health and jobs.

As above, Avalon is an important economic and population catalyst for the region.

3.3. Respond to increasing pressure on health care, particularly due to ageing

Investment in health and associated industries is vital to Geelong. The Health sector is the largest employer in Geelong with over 12,000 employees. Continued investment will be required to meet the growing needs of the Geelong community and the region. Barwon Health, St John of God and Epworth are key providers in the region and improved patient access and services is supported by the CfG.

The CfG also supports investment in mental health and rehabilitation clinics. The negative social and economic impacts of drugs in our community are significant, in particular ice, which necessitates continued investment in education and support services to address this growing problem.

3.4. Enable physical activity and participation

The CfG supports greater participation in physical activity to improve the health of our community. We support improvements to public spaces to encourage walking and social interaction, including in Central Geelong. The CfG supports the development of a Cultural and Major Sports Infrastructure Investment Framework (CSM). Investment in cultural and sporting infrastructure, such as GPAC and Simonds Stadium, is crucial to fostering a strong and active community.

It is critical that what has been started at Simonds Stadium is finished. The capital investment to date must be appropriately supported and the project completed to fulfil the strategic vision and long-term potential of this pivotal piece of infrastructure for regional Victoria. The final stage of the redevelopment will support events and activities which are estimated to inject more than \$624 million into the local economy over a decade. As Victoria's second city, we cannot afford to squander the myriad of opportunities that a fully redeveloped Kardinia Park site presents. The establishment by the State Government of the Kardinia Park Stadium Trust provided a clear and deliberate focus on securing more lucrative, major events for regional Victoria. The Trust has been charged with taking a more strategic approach to developing and using the stadium, which is already home to the Cats, Melbourne Victory games and cricket. Having a fully completed stadium is a critical anchor in the Trust's ability to discharge that duty.

A thriving creative heart is also essential for a city to grow and prosper. And it is vital to ensure the commitment to the arts in Victoria's second city is commensurate with the investment in sport and other infrastructure. The arts provide a critical balance to community development and the population of Geelong and the diversity of the regional residential profile demands appropriate cultural investment. The GPAC redevelopment should stand proud as a key civic facility for our region, attracting an expected four million visitors to Geelong over a decade and bringing increased opportunities for artists, and community access to world class productions.

The Library investment is the first step in our enhanced cultural landscape, the redeveloped gallery and performing arts centre complete the trinity of accessible arts options that Geelong deserves. The redeveloped Geelong Performing Arts Centre (GPAC) would also serve as another essential inducement for the increased workforce being sought for key employers who continue to grow their footprint in the Geelong region.

GPAC, as the principal performing arts centre in Geelong, has been pivotal in introducing arts to many generations in the Geelong community. The Victorian State Government has committed funding for the initial stage of the GPAC redevelopment, but further

funding is necessary for Geelong to become a national cultural destination. The CfG believes that *All Things Considered* should have a greater emphasis on the strategic importance the arts has in community and economic development.

Given the importance of these projects, among others, we recommend that Draft objective 2 is amended to also include access to regionally significant sporting infrastructure. The CfG also recommends that this option is expanded to reference creative industries investment in the region.

3.5. Provide spaces where communities can come together

Investment in Central Geelong and implementation of Vision 2 and the City of Greater Geelong's Central Action Plan is a priority for the CfG. Investment in a new convention and exhibition centre, the Geelong Cultural Precinct, the Green Spine and the Geelong waterfront safe harbour precinct project, together with the completion of the final stage of Simonds Stadium will bring people together.

As Victoria's second city, Geelong deserves a venue that has the scale and facilities to host national and international functions and the knowledge exchange that comes from inviting – and welcoming – speakers and visitors from around the country and the world. With a prime waterfront location and easy access to Melbourne, Geelong is ripe to offer sophisticated conference facilities – as a possible extension to the existing Melbourne conference facilities - close to world class tourism and educational offerings.

We should also not ignore the huge opportunities for knowledge sharing for members of our local community, thanks to the speakers and thought leaders who could be attracted to such a facility. Geelong has a growing and valued reputation as a knowledge centre and innovation hub. Enhanced by the presence of world class education and health providers, a diverse range of headquarter operations, agribusiness leaders and innovative businesses and thinkers, there would be no shortage of relevant conference and exhibition linkages for Victoria's second city.

In addition, we believe the Royal Geelong Yacht Club's Geelong waterfront safe harbour precinct (GWSHP) project will be a powerful economic catalyst, igniting the next stage of investment in the waterfront in alignment with the City of Greater Geelong's and the Victorian Government's vision and planning for the area. Most importantly, we believe that by enabling comprehensive public access to the precinct and providing vastly improved waterfront infrastructure, the GWSHP will deliver vital benefits for the visitor economy. These include supporting the continued health and growth of one of the region's most important annual events, the Festival of Sails, and providing the necessary infrastructure to ensure that Geelong attracts the world's best sailing events. The potential to further link the Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race and the Festival of Sails with new lifestyle and cultural events over a ten-day period in late January has particular capacity to benefit the regional economy and attract increasing visitation to one of Australia's great regional destinations.

Increased public access to and through the precinct will create a vibrant facility capable of supporting a very wide range of community use and activity. This will elevate the precincts value, generate new social capital and enhance the community's sense of pride in and ownership of the Waterfront – Geelong's most important public asset. The GWSHP development will also play a critical role in providing appropriate facilities to support the growth of the Victorian Sailing School (VSS) and its crucial role in providing maritime and water safety education programs for thousands of students from schools around Victoria. It will also support the growth of the Royal Geelong Yacht Club's (RGYC) hugely popular Sailability programs, which provide young people with a disability the opportunity to enjoy the excitement of sailing.

3.6. Improve accessibility for people with mobility challenges

The Geelong region is positioning itself as a centre of excellence for social insurance and health services. The successful relocation to Geelong of the Transport Accident Commission and the National Disability Insurance Agency has paved the way for other decentralisation, including the relocation of WorkSafe. While the establishment in Geelong of these professional services organisations has provided a much needed diversification of our local economy, it has also provided greater focus on the needs of people with a disability.

We agree that improved public transport and broader accessibility is required to support the growth of this sector in Geelong, and to meet the needs of people with a disability from our community.

3.7. Provide better access to housing for the most vulnerable Victorians

Reducing disadvantage is a key objective and the CfG is pleased that the draft needs has a focus on improvements to accessibility, as well as addressing housing affordability and social justice. We also agree that there needs to be a focus on this sector and more broadly supporting investment to improve housing affordability and access to services in the most disadvantaged parts of our region.

3.8. Address expanded demand on the justice system

The CfG is pleased that the *All Things Considered* options addresses improvements to the justice system. There is a need to increase justice services to provide a safe environment for all members of the community. This is particularly important in regional areas, and specifically important for Victoria's second largest city.

3.9. Provide access to high quality education infrastructure to support lifelong learning

Access to high quality education at all levels is a key priority. There is no doubt that Geelong offers the widest choice of world-class education opportunities per capita of any city in Australia. These include Deakin University, The Geelong College, Geelong Grammar, The Gordon, Kardinia International College, Belmont High School, Diversitat, Avalon College, North Geelong Secondary College, Marcus Oldham Agricultural College, Christian College, Geelong Lutheran College, Sacred Heart College, St Joseph's College and more.

In February 2016, a pilot was launched at Newcomb Secondary College to create Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH). The P-TECH model, which originated in the USA, provides an industry-supported pathway for students. In the 21st century, technological change is driving the nature of work, yet many employers struggle to find people with the skills they need. The 2016 Migration Regulations are an interesting but stark illustration of the skills shortages in Australia, particularly in the engineering and technology sectors. Governments and businesses world-wide recognise that the primary skills of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) will play a major role in the transition to the new economy and that a new way of overcoming the disconnect between education and career readiness is needed. The P-TECH model is designed to do this.

With financial support from the Australian Government, the Skilling Australia Foundation and partners have adapted the model for local Australian conditions, with the first school being established in Geelong. Over the past year, Geelong businesses and schools have been working together to provide students with a first-hand experience of what the

world of work is like, and to appreciate the importance of STEM subjects and their relevance to making the most of work opportunities.

P-TECH provides senior secondary students with a pathway to a STEM diploma, advanced diploma or associate degree. It includes industry mentoring and support by matching students with mentors and, by providing links to employment, it improves the prospects of employment or further study for school-leavers. Public-private partnerships are essential to ensuring that secondary students have both the academic and workplace skills they need to succeed. While a few suggest that business should not be involved in schools, industry-educator partnerships are essential to a productive economy and tackling skills shortages whilst strengthening young people's prospects for employment. As Geelong transforms, our city should continue to lead the way with the innovative education model of P-TECH.

3.10. Meet growing demand for access to economic activity in central Melbourne

Geelong, as Victoria's second city, has strong links to Melbourne. As mentioned, 12,000 people regularly commute to Melbourne and many Geelong firms do business in Melbourne. Geelong is well-positioned to grow its international competitiveness. Its access to port, air and rail infrastructure ensure the manufacturing, agricultural, service and tourism industries have direct access to markets.

Continued investment in Avalon Airport is a priority for our region. As Melbourne continues to grow, there will be increasing pressure on metropolitan airports, particularly from urban encroachment. Avalon Airport, with its access to port and road infrastructure, and planning for rail, is ready to accommodate significant growth. Improved rail connections such as electrification and a fast train to Melbourne will help address the increased demand in central Melbourne. The CfG also supports strategic policy assistance for the growth of Avalon Airport, for example, passenger flight targets for Avalon and deferral on the third runway at Avalon Airport to encourage better utilisation of Avalon's assets.

3.11. Improve access to middle and other metropolitan major employment centres

Melbourne's west is particularly important to Geelong, however, the CfG prioritises local access to employment. The CfG encourages more employment opportunities to be created in Geelong. Key employment precincts, such as the Geelong Ring Road Employment Precinct (GREP), and central Geelong, should be the primary focus for jobs growth in Geelong.

Increased investment in transport and economic infrastructure, such as the Werribee East Employment Precinct, Bay West and Avalon Airport, will however enhance the economic growth of the Geelong region.

The Avalon Airport Master Plan identifies employment opportunities and the CfG supports employment and investment at Avalon Airport.

3.12. Improve access to jobs and services in regional and rural Victoria

The CfG strongly supports investment in jobs and growth in regional and rural Victoria, particularly the Geelong region. There are many projects in our region that can be a stimulus for jobs and services in our region. For example, the Geelong Ring Road Employment Precinct (GREP) is an important asset in our region, but has struggled to deliver the expected results. If this development was situated in Melbourne, the Victorian State Government would have intervened and assumed responsibility for its development. If Geelong is to truly transform, it is vital that developments such as this are not left to falter.

In addition, industry-led initiatives – such as the Runway project – are crucial for Geelong’s future. The ICT economy in Geelong is poised to explode, with innovation and knowledge-centred development the aspirational focus of future growth in Victoria’s second city. Already home to a number of globally successful startups, Geelong’s future business leaders are already laying the foundations in software development and technology-based solutions. The Federal Government has outlined its vision for ‘supporting productive, accessible, liveable cities that attract talent, encourage innovation and create jobs and growth’ through its Smart Cities Plan and we believe Geelong’s Runway project, ticks all of those boxes. The Government says it is committed to ‘smart investment, smart policy and smart technology’. The Runway project in Victoria’s second city has the potential to deliver all three.

3.13. Improve the efficiency of freight supply chains

The Port of Geelong is Victoria’s largest specialised bulk goods port, trading in both dry and wet cargo including petroleum products, grain, woodchips and fertiliser. Last financial year the port handled more than 13 million tonnes of cargo, worth \$8.4 billion. It is a vital component of Victoria’s transport infrastructure and plays a key role in the economic health of not just the city and surrounding region, but the state as a whole. The draft document needs focus on freight and airports, which are both supported by the CfG.

A recent Victorian Regional Channels Authority (VRCA) commissioned economic impact study forecasts that jobs and trade will grow by 50 per cent in the next two decades. Getting infrastructure right – both on land and water – will play an important part in maximising that growth and lifting port productivity.

Key drivers of infrastructure needs at Geelong’s port include:

- The Geelong Refinery, owned by Viva Energy Australia, produces about half of the state’s petrol and other fuel needs. Pipelines connect the refinery with Viva Energy’s terminal and other customer terminals at Newport, from where the majority of fuels are distributed.
- Terminals Pty Ltd operates a bulk liquid storage facility adjacent to Geelong Refinery, using the Refinery Piers for the movement of product from vessels to shore.
- Geelong’s port provides a vital hub for the movement of bulk goods from Victoria’s agricultural industry.
- Grain is transported to GrainCorp’s terminal at the port via rail and road for export via bulk vessels or packed into containers for export through the port of Melbourne.
- Woodchip exporters use the port, with the loading of woodchips onto vessels possible at two separate berths.
- A number of port users take advantage of Geelong’s proximity to Melbourne to trade through the port with the majority of goods destined for metropolitan Melbourne.
- The port generates a diverse range of workforce skills across many varied businesses and organisations. ICT infrastructure and services also provide opportunities for productivity improvements with port users and for growth of the large service industry supporting the port.

The Geelong Port-City 2050 report aims to establish Geelong as a Port-City. Ports have been the origin of many cities, driving their economic development and forging strong links between the city and port. Over time, as cities grow and their economies diversify, those links can diminish. The City-Port Project considers how ports can be key drivers of urban economic development and how they interact with the urban environment.

Ports are a key link in the overall logistics chain for import and export trade. Any weak links between the port and other components of that supply chain can have a negative impact on the port's competitiveness. This, in turn, can spread ripples right down the line, right across the state.

Careful land use and infrastructure planning solutions are necessary to secure the long term future of the port and its complementary land uses. Encroachment from incompatible uses needs to be managed to ensure port use and development continues to contribute to the economic and social growth of the city. A healthy port and a healthy community are both important for Geelong to prosper.

Promoting responsible funding and financing is a key in the push to improve infrastructure. Geelong's port has a mix of private and public ownership of infrastructure. Significant developments can require support from private and public entities. It is vital that Infrastructure Victoria carefully considers ways to support co-investment from public and private sources to meet future infrastructure funding needs.

When it comes to infrastructure projects, co-ordinating the timing and investment of infrastructure between government organisations and levels of government can be a challenge. Different decision-making processes and criteria can complicate infrastructure development co-ordination.

The Freight Precinct Land Use Plan should be extended to Geelong Port, Avalon Airport and the Geelong Ring Road Employment Precinct (GREP).

All Things Considered provides limited direction regarding the transport requirements of bulk commodities. The CfG recommends further discussions with the relevant stakeholders to identify infrastructure improvements which facilitate further growth in the industry.

The CfG is interested in the proposed Transport Price Regime (TPN) to manage peak and non-peak demand across the network. Potential changes could significantly impact the bulk handling operations, particularly during peak periods. The CfG is also interested in the nexus between TFN income and future port-related transport infrastructure investment.

Strategic opportunities for new transport infrastructure include:

- Melbourne to Brisbane Freight (MBF) Rail Line
- High Productivity Freight Vehicle Network Completion
- Regional Highway Upgrades
- Regional Rail Gauge Standardisation

The CfG supports a direct connection from the Port of Geelong to the Geelong Ring Road, which will be an important economic infrastructure investment for the region.

Future Planning for Victoria's Ports

The CfG calls for an independent report into complementing the Port of Geelong with a new port located in the Bay West area. As noted above, Geelong plays an important role in Victoria's freight and logistic network and offers strong and accessible road, rail, airport and port infrastructure. Since 2006, the CfG has advocated for the establishment of a new port at Point Wilson. While much has since changed regarding this site, Hastings has emerged as the favoured option.

Over the last few years there has been continued debate regarding the location of the next port, and before any further development occurs the CfG calls for a proper independent analysis. The objectives of this analysis should answer:

- Whether Hastings should be the sole new port for Victoria, and assess all subsequent impacts such as environmental impacts, traffic management, cost and industry opinion; or
- Whether the Bay West area should be the sole new port for Victoria, and assess all subsequent impacts such as environmental impacts, traffic management, cost and industry opinion; or
- Whether both the Hastings and Bay West options could complement each other.

The CfG has continuously advocated for the Port of Geelong and was instrumental in the development of the fifty year Port and Land Freight Infrastructure strategy. Over many months, the CfG has been working with its members on the longer term aim to develop the Port of Geelong to become the premier bulk and break bulk port in South East Australia by 2050. In addition, the CfG was a strong advocate for the implementation of a Port Zone for Geelong. Consistent with advice from CfG members, it is clear that there is a proliferation of interest in the port and surrounding area and, on this basis, the Port of Geelong has a solid future.

Victoria is Australia's freight and logistics leader, and the decision regarding long term port infrastructure planning has state and national significance. While the CfG supports sustainable infrastructure that benefits Geelong and leverages the economic prosperity of the region, the location of the port requires a detailed, independent analysis to ensure the right proposal for both the State and Australia proceeds. The CfG believes that Infrastructure Victoria is well placed to oversee this as a priority project.

3.14. Manage threats to water security, particularly in regional and rural areas

The CfG supports investment in water projects which will protect the region's water security. Barwon Water provides water services to businesses and the wider community in the Geelong region. Barwon Water currently owns and operates approximately \$2.3 billion in assets. As the Geelong region grows, a greater provision of water assets will be required to meet future residential and commercial needs. The CfG supports continued investment in the region's water assets combined with sustainable water usage.

The Agribusiness sector is a key part of the Geelong economy which relies heavily on water resources. Infrastructure projects which support the agricultural sector are very much supported by the CfG.

3.15. Manage pressures on landfill and waste recovery facilities

Sustainability and waste management is a key consideration for Victoria's future. Managing water, food security and energy efficiency will be increasingly important. Long term waste management infrastructure planning is crucial. Many communities are vocally opposed to new waste recovery and landfills, but they are - and will continue to be - a crucial part of managing our communities.

3.16. Help preserve natural environments and minimise biodiversity loss

Protecting and enhancing the natural environment is also very important. The CfG supports sustainable development in sensitive environmental locations.

3.17. Improve the health of waterways and coastal areas

The CfG supports improvements to the natural environment including waterways and coastal areas. The natural environment is a key attraction in the region and the protection of the waterways and coastal areas is important to preserve the ecological and

visual amenity of the area. The blue economy also attracts many tourists, which is a key economic driver for the region.

3.18. Transition to low carbon energy supply and use

The CfG supports a transition to a lower carbon energy supply and use in a sustainable manner. Alternative energy should be encouraged in the Geelong region, such as wind and solar technologies.

3.19. Improve resilience of critical infrastructure

The CfG supports protecting key infrastructure and recommends that early planning should commence for key long term infrastructure investment such as major road, rail and port infrastructure. Bay West, for instance, is unlikely to be required for 20 years or more, however the assessment and planning should be undertaken in the short term to avoid issues of urban encroachment. Successful cities have long term infrastructure plans, which may not be funded at present, but are still designated in a strategy or land use planning framework.

4. Conclusion

The CfG welcomes the opportunity to lodge this submission. We look forward to continuing to work with Infrastructure Victoria, and we are pleased to provide feedback on the *All Things Considered* document to leverage the economic prosperity of our region.

5. Contact Details

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