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Opportunity knocks to redefine Subiaco post-football

Placemaking is a term that is often used when new development or urban regeneration in existing areas is being undertaken.

Defined as "a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces which aims to create public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and wellbeing", placemaking is an important aspect of creating a vibrant community for residents and attracting visitors.

Placemaking can include the creation or re-imagining of public open spaces, the design of streetscapes and buildings to promote pedestrian-friendly access and the facilitation of community events and opportunities for people to come together to create that sense of identity that makes an area unique.

There is an opportunity for placemaking to occur in Subiaco, particularly as one of the community's lynchpins, football, is moving to the new Perth Stadium in Burswood from 2018. The timing couldn't be better for Subiaco Council, businesses and residents to re-imagine and redefine the identity of Subiaco without football as the centrepiece for attracting patronage and business, to a more sustainable and long-term vision for the area.

Whilst a factor, the departure of football in 2018 should not be the council's only consideration when planning the future of the area. For some time, Subiaco as a place for people to visit, shop and socialise has been in decline. Local businesses have been saying for years that their revenues are suffering because of a decline in customers visiting the area due to a range of factors.

The council is currently looking at strategies to continue to attract footy fans to Subiaco before and after games at the new stadium, but I think this is too narrow a focus and they should look at broader opportunities.

Subiaco has plenty of potential given its proximity to the CBD, multiple train stations and soon, the redevelopment of Subiaco oval and Princess Margaret Hospital into a mixed-use development incorporating new housing, commercial and retail spaces, as well as public open space and a new secondary school. This development is a fantastic opportunity to add to the fabric of Subiaco and it will be critical that the planning and design works integrate the new with the old so that the redevelopment results in benefits to existing businesses and provides access to enhanced amenity for new and existing residents.

Subiaco should forget about the footy and grab the opportunity to redefine the whole area.