The Development Application (DA) lodged with Council is for the ‘Mega Worship Centre’ being funded and built by Mega Worship, a private religious group who follow the ‘Mega Worship’ religion (a fictitious internationally recognized religion). The proposed Centre will feature a:

- 5,000 seat auditorium;
- administrative offices;
- shopping centre (including a 24 hour bottle shop);
- fast food outlets;
- safe injecting room;
- cinemas;
- bulk billing medical services;
- a small homeless hostel (up to 30 people);
- 7,500 car space multi-level car park;
- public transport hub; and,
- other amenities and facilities including limited parklands

The facility is planned for the Western suburbs of your city on a site that previously had a factory and warehouse and is currently zoned industrial (although the current zoning is conducive with the ‘Mega Worship Centre’ and doesn’t need to be changed). The former site also had a small portion of open grassland nature reserve. The area once occupied by light industry is gradually moving back to residential housing.

The application complies with all Council ordinances for new developments.

Section 27 of the Imaginary Council Development Control Plan (DCP) states:

“A resident of Imaginary Shire Council or other interested person may make a request to address Imaginary Shire Council regarding a development application for any of the following issues that the resident or interested person believes the Council has not properly considered whether:

1. the scale and design of the proposed development is compatible with surrounding development;
2. the development fits with the objective to protect and enhance the natural environment;
3. the development contributes to the common good of the community; and,
4. the development breaches any freedoms enjoyed by the community.”

Imaginary Shire Council has a highly factionalised set of five councillors. The Mayor (your tutor) is the Chair of Council meetings and does not have a vote on resolutions before the Council. Your councillors are evenly aligned over this development application with the following five lobby groups (ie, one councillor supports each of the following five lobby groups):

- “Supporters of Mega Worship” who are supporters of the DA.
- “Residents Against Mega Worship” who are against the DA.
- “Imaginary Chamber of Commerce” who are supporters of the DA.
- “Sustainable Development Action Group” who are against the DA.
- “Imaginary Residents Action Group” who have some members for and some members against the DA.

Mega Worship is a religious group who are pacifists and have a world-wide following of over three million people in 56 different countries. In Australia, they boast membership of about 100,000 with Imaginary Shire having about 30,000 of those. Their current premises is grossly inadequate and they outgrew it a couple of years ago hence the purchase of this site and the DA to build new premises as quickly as possible.

They are keen to provide a modern and safe home for their members and respect the community residents and their desire to not be disturbed, particularly during peak worship days and times (which is mostly the weekends but also weeknights when they host various events). In showing their
commitment to the local community they are planning parklands, a shopping centre, cinemas, car parking and other community amenities all open to be used by the local community.

- They are keen to build and open this new site knowing that Australia is a place where freedom of religion thrives and everyone is given a ‘fair go’. Their congregation is not fanatical but they just want the chance to peacefully pursue their religious beliefs. They believe that they have done nothing wrong and have complied with the letter of the law in preparing their development application.

- The following picture is an artist’s impression of the development based upon the plans annexed to the development application lodged with Imaginary Shire Council.

(Image upload from Bing.com from the ‘free to share and use’ menu available at, http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=Commercial+Building+Plans&view=detailv2&qft=+filterui%3alicense-L2_L3_L4_L5_L6_L7&isrc=6382537597/E14C3C1CFED2C508D61201041A513203&selectedIndex=32&ccid=L3YG6zul&imid=668000135225707/369&hpr=ofamp;MBiy551ba5931d62cdff2659b741635x0&ajw=1, accessed 8/12/15)

**Information about “Imaginary Residents Action Group” who have some members for and some members against the DA**

(not for general distribution)

- The “Imaginary Shire Residents Action Group” (ISRAG) claims to be the only true representative body of the Shire in relation to this and other matters. They are comprised of a wide variety of residents that have a wide variety of interests. They tend to focus their activities around supporting Council (and other) projects that are for the common good of the community. This DA is one where there are arguments on both sides that is, a huge environmentally unfriendly development promoting a particular religious view (with some possible unseemly baggage) versus a group that supports the local community merely exercising their right to practice their religion in peace and harmony in a community that gives them a large amount of support. Where does the common good lie in this debate?

- The ISRAG do not necessarily speak with one voice and on previous occasions when addressing Council they have presented a variety of views from their members. They clearly conduct research, discuss the issues and allow their members to form their own view which is then presented to Council and other stakeholder groups.

**Important Note for Students:**

- This role play is about bringing together the issues discussed throughout this subject. Therefore do not get bogged down in technical issues when presenting your case rather primarily engage in the issues raised in the subject about freedoms, notions of self & community and the common good.

- Further, this is a role play. You are playing a role or a character with a certain point of view. The character that you play is no reflection on your own beliefs and nobody is to judge anybody personally based on the character you are playing.