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Australia's property industry

Creating for Generations

25 August 2021

Department of Planning, Industry & Environment
Draft Macquarie Park Place Strategy
Locked Bag 5022
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Draft Macquarie Park Place Strategy

The Property Council welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department) on the Draft Macquarie Park Place Strategy (the Draft Strategy).

As Australia's peak representative of the property and construction industry, the Property Council's members include investors, owners, managers, and developers of property across all asset classes.

We note that the Draft Strategy is intended to guide the transformation of Macquarie Park over the next 20 years, and comprises the Draft Strategy and supporting technical reports, comprising:

- Draft Macquarie Park Strategic Infrastructure and Service Assessment,
- Macquarie Park Strategic Masterplan,
- Macquarie Park Placemaking Strategy,
- Macquarie Park Economic Development Study,
- Macquarie Park Innovation District Study and
- Macquarie Park Strategic Master Plan – Integrated Transport Plan.

The Property Council provides in-principle support for the Draft Strategy and its objectives. Our detailed comments are provided below for your consideration.

The Draft Strategy should be flexible where needed

The Draft Strategy should seek to establish a broad pathway forward for the development of the Macquarie Park precinct, with clear principles for future growth and development. Clearly defined development and built form controls is not necessary at this stage. A set timetable for staged growth is also not needed.

Flexibility is necessary to allow a developer-led response to the Draft Strategy, with owners and developers of sites proceeding through to detailed master planning for individual sites or neighbourhoods when market settings are appropriate. Strict development timelines will only hinder the delivery of the objectives of the Draft Strategy and potentially deter investment as developers who find the designated timeframe for the delivery of their site does not align with demand for product or positive market conditions.

This flexibility to innovate and respond quickly to economic and regulatory changes is critical and will continue to be particularly important in an economically uncertain post-COVID environment leading in the future.

Recommendation: The Draft Strategy should be adjusted to allow more flexibility in timing and built form. Land uses and building controls and a set timetable for development is unnecessary at this stage of planning and should be removed.

Existing approvals must be acknowledged

The Structure Plan should be amended to reflect recent existing approvals that are already in place for key sites. We note in particular, that the open space network, pedestrian infrastructure and roads do not align many of the recently approved and delivered roads, open space and pedestrian pathways, and does not reflect the details in the Ryde Development Control Plan – Access and Open Space map.

Recommendation: The Draft Masterplan should be updated to reflect all recently approved and delivered infrastructure in the precinct to ensure it is accurate and relevant.

The Draft Structure Plan should be considered as ‘indicative only’

The Draft Structure Plan does not provide lot-by-lot level of detail and it should be clarified within the Draft Strategy that this Plan should be considered ‘indicative only’ in relation to land use, fine grain activation and built form guidance.

The Draft Strategy should also include a clear statement of Principles that must be addressed where a site specific or neighbourhood master plan departs from the precise location of elements within the Structure, to guide development of plans for these areas.

Recommendation: Clarify within the Draft Strategy that the Draft Structure Plan is considered ‘indicative only’ and provide a statement of ‘principles to be addressed’ where a site specific or neighbourhood master plan does not precisely align with the location of elements within the Draft Structure Plan.

Consistency and clarity in the application of contributions plans is required

The Draft Strategy includes *Action 2.2 ‘Develop an infrastructure priority list for Macquarie Park to shortlist the projects that will deliver the greatest economic impact.’*

To provide transparency, consistency and certainty to government, landowners, property developers and the community, a holistic regional and local infrastructure contributions plan is required. A simple contributions pathway is needed to facilitate the ability for landowners to meet place-based infrastructure plans if required, to avoid inconsistency in the manner that contributions are developed and agreed upon, and delays created by site-specific

negotiations with infrastructure agencies. Uncertainty around infrastructure delivery and sequencing creates difficulties in planning for individual sub-precinct delivery.

Recommendation: A clear, transparent and consistent approach to local and regional infrastructure should be established.

The Draft Strategy has the potential to deliver significantly more housing

The Macquarie Park precinct is benefits from an exceptional location, well serviced by transport, services and infrastructure.

The Draft Strategy states that the precinct is:

- The fourth largest employment centre Greater Sydney with more than floor space for more than 47,000 jobs,
- Serviced by three Sydney Metro Northwest stations and 30 bus routes,
- In close proximity to public health facilities including hospitals at Ryde, Royal North Shore and Macquarie,
- Benefits from Macquarie University, a world-class education facility, and
- Located near Macquarie Centre, a large shopping facility providing an extensive offering of services, cultural experiences and retail stores.

The precinct is ideal for residential and mixed-use development. In this regard, we believe the housing target identified in the Draft Strategy of 7,650 new dwellings over 20 years, could be significantly increased.

We note that the North District Plan produced by the Greater Sydney Commission includes an overall housing target of 25,950 new homes to be delivered by 2021, with an individual target for the Ryde Local Government Area of 7,600 new homes by 2021. According to analysis conducted by GYDE Consulting (formerly CityPlan) (Attachment 1), Ryde is anticipated to achieve the 0-5 year housing target (homes to be delivered by 2021), however, it is very unlikely to achieve the 6-10 year housing targets set out in the Ryde Local Strategy Planning Statement Letter of Support of 8,400-8,900 dwellings from 2021/22-2025/26.

In addition, local government areas in the Northern District fail to meet **both** their 0-5 year and 6-10 year housing targets (Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Mosman, North Sydney, Northern Beaches and Willoughby). Lane Cove Council will meet its 0-5 year target but is also anticipated to fail to meet their 6-10 year housing target. This will result in a significant and worrying undersupply of housing in the North District. We urge the Department to consider this when establishing housing targets for in the Draft Strategy.

Recommendation: We urge the Department to consider the significant undersupply in housing in the North District and increase the housing target for the Macquarie Park precinct identified in the Draft Strategy.

The housing target has been broken down for the individual 'neighbourhoods' identified in the Draft Strategy as follows:

- North Park/ Ngalawala: no residential

- Waterloo Park/ Butbut: no new residential
- Shrimptons Quarter / Waragal Birrung: 2,100-2,600 new homes
- Macquarie Living Station / Gari Nawi: 350-450 new homes
- Porters Creek/ Burbigal: 400-600 new homes
- Wicks Roads South/ Garungul: 1,500-2,000 new homes
- North Ryde Riverside/ Narrami Badu-Gumada: 1,500-2,000 new homes.

The number of homes provided in each of these neighbourhoods could be increased, particularly for development on larger sites. These dwelling targets outlined above should be considered 'minimum' targets. The ability to exceed these dwelling targets should be informed by infrastructure capacity and developers should be encouraged to deliver high quality-mixed use precincts with significant residential development.

In order to encourage a mix of uses across the precinct while maximising residential activation across the precinct, a minimum requirement of 60-70% floor space requirement for residential could be established, with the ability for flexibility in the remaining 30-40%.

Residential development should also be dispersed more evenly throughout the precinct rather than focused upon small, isolated pockets or limited to 'activity hubs'.

Not only does the precinct have the capability and capacity to support additional residential development, but more housing is also needed to:

- Boost the precinct's competitiveness alongside more developed urban centres,
- Encourage the development of a viable '18-hour city' and cultural and night-time economy,
- Stimulate alternative employment uses, beyond commercial, including retail, restaurants, bars, etc,
- Provide sufficient patronage to the pedestrian, bike and open space network proposed in the Draft Strategy to provide 'passive surveillance', without this these networks may become deserted and dangerous for users, and
- Deter 'car dependency' by providing more housing options for workers in the area, who can then walk or cycle to their workplace rather than driving from further away.

Recommendation: The Draft Strategy should be revised in the following ways:

- Housing targets identified in the Draft Place Strategy should be increased substantially, and these should be 'minimum' targets with additional housing to be delivered depending on infrastructure capacity
- Residential development should be dispersed more evenly throughout the precinct, rather than focused solely on 'activity hubs'

A regular review process is needed

The Department should commit to a five yearly review and update of the Macquarie Park Place Strategy, to track progress against its objectives and make adjustments and changes to reflect current market conditions, changes in supply and demand, and make improvements where required.

Recommendation: The Draft Strategy should include a five-year review mechanism to ensure the Strategy is regularly updated and remains relevant and responsive to changing market and regulatory conditions.

Should you wish to discuss these issues further, please contact Annie Manson, NSW Policy Manager on email at amanson@propertycouncil.com.au or phone on 0422131741.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Luke Achterstraat', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Luke Achterstraat
NSW Executive Director
Property Council of Australia



Scorecard on Sydney's housing supply

