



Australia's property industry

Creating for Generations

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16 August 2019

Mr Michael Edgar
The General Manager
Attention: Forward Planning (FP246)
The Hills Shire Council
PO Box 7064
Norwest NSW 2153

Dear Mr Edgar

Hills Future 2036: Local Strategic Planning Statement

The Property Council welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on council's draft Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) currently on exhibition. 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 are pleased to provide the following comments for your consideration.

The Property Council supports the position taken by Council to use the LSPS as a mechanism for achieving the land-use based strategies identified in Council's Community Strategic Plan, *Hills Future 2017-2021*. It has appropriately identified the next steps Council must take in planning for the city's future and respond to the Greater Sydney Commission's *Greater Sydney Regional Plan* and *Central City District Plan*.

Our members look forward to the finalisation of Council's draft LSPS by 30 March 2020 and the subsequent process that will involve Council updating *The Hills Local Environmental Plan 2012* to give effect to the relevant provisions of the regional and district plans.

Comments on specific parts of the draft LSPS are provided below:

Vibrant Community and Prosperous Economy (Planning Priorities 1-5)

The draft LSPS has acknowledged the importance of strategic centres such as Norwest, Castle Hill and Rouse Hill to accommodate growth and deliver more knowledge intensive jobs. An ambitious jobs target of 50,600 additional jobs has been set. We acknowledge that the majority of these can be met under current planning controls and there is potential for additional jobs in other areas currently under review. Actions targeted towards encouraging more jobs compatible with the skills of the local workforce are supported.

The announcement by the State Government to develop a new public hospital at Rouse Hill was welcomed and the Property Council welcomes Council's intention to facilitate a health precinct to support the hospital and encourage job growth.

Shaping Growth (Planning Priorities 6-10)

The Hill's population is expected to grow by approximately 128,000 until 2036. The additional residents coming to The Hills will create need for new housing to accommodate future residents. Council has identified that there is currently land zoned and planned for rezoning capable of accommodating 38,000 new dwellings to 2036. The LSPS states that there is also capacity for a further 38,100 dwellings beyond 2036. Council's efforts to provide a pipeline of housing supply are welcomed.

It is noted that Council expects the majority of new housing will be located in existing urban release areas of Box Hill, North Kellyville and Balmoral Road and defined precincts close to the strategic centres of Castle Hill, Rouse Hill and Norwest. The completion of the Metro rail service to these areas will make these locations very desirable locations for residents to live.

The Property Council supports Council taking steps to provide for a diverse range of housing types, including detached dwellings, medium density and apartments. Council should consider the policy mechanisms that will work towards the delivery of appropriate housing types for singles, couples and families. Consideration should also be given to the way housing is delivered for seniors and persons with a disability. Action 8.1, which seeks to ensure the planning framework effectively provides for a diversity of housing diversity in the right locations is supported.

The Property Council supports affordable housing consistent with the parameters recommended by the Greater Sydney Commission being a target of 5-10% of new residential floor space generated through an upzoning process and subject to viability. It is noted that Council will investigate this issue further.

Delivering and Maintaining Infrastructure (Planning Priorities 11-15)

The LSPS identifies the importance of attractive, safe and well maintained community infrastructure. It places a great deal of importance on the delivery of regional and local infrastructure as a way of meeting the needs of the community.

The key priority identified by Council to establish a mass transit connection between Norwest and Parramatta's CBD. Given the role of Parramatta in the Central River District, and the growth underway between these centres, steps to provide better transport linkages within the region are welcome. Action 11.1, which responds to this need by a combination of planning and advocacy, is supported.

Planning priorities 13 and 15 within the draft LSPS focus on the delivery of community infrastructure open space and active transport within The Hills Shire. These Property Council is supportive of the Council's position regarding of recreational facilities for the community.

Development contributions in the form of Section 7.11 and 7.12 contributions and voluntary planning agreements, are an important means for local councils to fund the delivery of local infrastructure. Property Council members are supportive of infrastructure being provided to support new communities, but the funding mechanisms designed to deliver the infrastructure must be fair and reasonable.

Currently the contributions regime is spread across legislation, regulations, orders, determinations, directions, practice notes, circulars and local contributions plans. A clearer and more easily understood method of planning, funding and delivery of infrastructure by State and local government is needed. This should also improve the management of funds between councils and the State Government to deliver improved outcomes for the delivery of local and regional infrastructure.

Valuing our Surroundings (Planning Priorities 16-20)

Council has identified four planning priorities addressing the environment and sustainability.

The four sustainability priorities will be implemented through the realisation of about nineteen actions to be completed during the short, medium and long-term. Council is congratulated for its vision in this area.

Council will need to undertake more work in respect to many of these actions and there will be some actions that should be given a higher priority than others. The Property Council welcomes the Council's focus on sustainability and environment where it will improve the amenity and lifestyle of residents.

Proactive Leadership (Planning Priorities 21-23)

Council has identified three planning priorities addressing relevant to proactive leadership. The Property Council supports the actions Council has identified to deliver those priorities.

Implementation

The draft LSPS has clearly set out the process for the implementation, ongoing monitoring and reporting of measurable priorities and actions. The strategic direction contained within Council's draft LSPS will give Council a strong basis for future decisions regarding land-use planning.

The Property Council would like to thank Council for the opportunity to contribute to its draft LSPS and have a say about the future planning of the city. We would be grateful if Council can take these matters into consideration prior to the plan's finalisation.

Should you have any questions in respect to this matter, please contact Troy Loveday, Senior Policy Advisor, on (02) 9033 1907 or tloveday@propertycouncil.com.au

Yours sincerely



Jane Fitzgerald
NSW Executive Director
Property Council of Australia