

SWD15/13176



Health
South Western Sydney
Local Health District

Ms Carolyn McNally
Secretary
NSW Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Attention: Director Urban Renewal



Dear Ms McNally

In regard to the Glenfield to Macarthur Urban Renewal Corridor Strategy (the Strategy). The Strategy has been examined by officers of the South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD), the local health district in which the Corridor lies.

SWSLHD aims to protect and promote the health of the local population and recognises that many local and global factors affect health and illness. One of our strategic directions is to develop our capacity to work with other agencies to develop healthy environments.

Together with NSW Health, we have developed the NSW Healthy Urban Development Checklist as a guide for health services when commenting on development policies, plans and proposals. A pdf and an interactive copy of the Checklist can be found at: http://www.swsldh.nsw.gov.au/populationhealth/PH_environments/resources.html

The Strategy is a high level and aspirational plan which draws clear links to the lower and more detailed levels of planning to follow. The opportunity to engage with this planning process at this early stage is welcomed.

The Strategy incorporates many of the principles of healthy urban development planning. Some of the key features that are supported are:

- Providing higher density housing within a comfortable walking distance from railway stations (800-1000m) is supported to facilitate use of public transport, reduce reliance on motor vehicles and promote physical activity.
- There is a major shift away from single dwelling type of housing down to 54% (previously 94%) while medium density and high rise increase to 29% and 17% respectively. This is generally supported in the areas proposed.
- Mixed retail and commercial areas intermingled with higher density housing provides opportunities for local employment in these areas and is supported.
- The aims of the proposed transport network specified on page 8 of the Strategy (Transport and Movement) are supported.
- Providing active transport networks/links between residential areas, employment centres/industrial areas, and transport nodes (e.g. rail stations) is encouraged to promote physical activity and reduce reliance on motor vehicles.
- The new regional cycleway is an excellent proposal and long overdue. It will contribute to increased active travel options for residents in the south west to travel to employment in other regions of Sydney.
- The extensive proposed cycling infrastructure, that will connect people to the regional cycleway and into the CBD precincts, is also supported for its role in enabling residents to increase their physical activity through both active travel and recreational cycling.

South Western Sydney Local Health District acknowledges the traditional owners of the land.

- The overall commitment to increase journeys made using public transport and active travel is highly commended. Increasing rail services and improving the bus networks will be important to achieve this.
- The measures outlined to consult with communities and promote community discussion and to monitor and report on implementation of the Strategy are commended.

The Strategy may benefit from an early high level Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and/or more specific HIAs for particular more detailed levels of plans. These assessments would allow for consideration of the potential health impacts of various aspects of the plans and for incorporating measures into plans to minimise negative impacts and promote positive impacts.

The following suggestions are made regarding the current Strategy document:

Purpose of the Strategy (page 4)

There is strong evidence that the built environment has a significant influence on people's health and that environments that are planned and built with this in mind can lead to better population health. It would strengthen the Corridor's potential to improve population health if this were an explicit aim of the Strategy. For instance an additional aim could be included similar to:

- Identify overarching principles and specific actions that will promote the health of people living in and using the corridor.

Ecologically Sustainable Development (page 5)

SWSLHD strongly supports the application of ecologically sustainable development to the Strategy and the subsequent planning. The principles could be augmented by reference to, for example:

- The use of low carbon building materials and methods and the creation of low carbon environments;
- Water recycling (see later section);
- Waste minimisation, re-use and recycling;
- Creation of environments and communities that are resilient to acute shocks (e.g. heatwaves, bushfires and floods) and stresses (e.g. droughts).

Precinct Visions

The individual precinct visions are generally supported. To create vibrant, safe, well-used, commercially viable yet distinctive public spaces we recommend that the principles of placemaking (see for instance www.pps.org) be applied to each of the precincts when detailed planning occurs.

Active Travel

It will be important to ensure that infrastructure for supporting active travel is available before the density increases in these precincts. People establish their travel behaviours when they are purchasing and moving into new housing, so providing public transport, cycleways and good pedestrian access are vital early on to support and encourage these modes over car use. High levels of car ownership are likely to cause problems in the town centres with the traffic volumes and parking required as the populations increase.

Consideration needs to be given to cyclists' access to the new cycleways from the eastern side of the railway line to the proposed cycleway/s on western side. The majority of residential housing is on the eastern side of the railway line all the way south from Glenfield, but the proposed cycleways are all on the western side. Cyclists will need practical ways of getting across the railway to access the cycleways.

Currently the only places for crossing the railway line are via the few road crossings over the railway line (there is only one road crossing between Glenfield and Minto) or via the Railway Stations where cyclists must either catch a lift or carry their bikes up stairs and over concourses. Neither option is practical or safe when mixed with train commuters in peak hour.

It would be preferred that the cycleway is on the eastern side of the railway line from Glenfield to Macarthur and that there is a smooth transition for cyclists over the railway line from the west to the east side at Casula-Glenfield where it is currently on the western side.

Provision of a cycleway on the western side along the canals will also provide cycle access to the proposed business parks and employment precincts on the western side.

Active transport networks and links for cyclists and pedestrians should provide for moderately graded pathways with room for separation of cyclists and pedestrians if possible, and should be provided with adequate lighting and signposting.

With regards to the Ingleburn Vision (page 14), the "new" town centre needs to be more accommodating of pedestrians and cyclists to encourage and prioritise these modes of travel over cars. Outlined measures such as pedestrian refuges, footpaths, tree planting, bicycle storage facilities and lighting are supported. Oxford Rd and other main CBD roads need to have designated/protected cycle lanes, which will be vital for cyclists accessing trains and the new cycleway along the rail corridor.

With regards to the Campbelltown Vision (page 20), separated cycleways need to be provided on main routes into and through the CBD, including main routes to the train station. The Queen St plan needs to include a separated cycling path along Queen St to encourage cycling to the busy roads of the CBD. One option could be to remove the proposed parallel parking in Queen St, and replacing this with a two-way cycle lane.

Housing

Although 15,000 new dwellings are proposed, provision of affordable housing has not been specifically mentioned. It is suggested that the intention to provide for development of affordable housing is included in the Strategy.

While the increase in medium density and high rise housing is generally supported in the areas proposed, the impact of wind tunnel effects and shadowing from high rise buildings and zonings should be considered to minimise their impact on amenity.

Open Space

One of the main assets of the corridor is the amount of open space, much of which is, as the plan notes, underutilised. This is a common issue across much of outer South Western Sydney.

We strongly support a comprehensive review of this open space, with extensive community consultation about how to develop it in the best way to ensure maximum use by the most people. This should include separate consultations for young people, using methods, locations and formats to maximise their participation. It is particularly important to provide a range of destinations in public spaces, to encourage their use, by providing a range of facilities including informal meeting places, 'contained' areas with seating and barbeques, a range of play equipment to suit different ages, and public gym equipment.

Just as the town centre developments are conceived as a series of distinct 'villages' with unique features, the open space development could follow this pattern, by providing a variety of distinctive activities that could encourage families to venture further afield on the linked cycleways.

There is also a good opportunity to develop a network of community gardens in the open spaces. These have been shown to be particularly beneficial in areas of medium to high density, and can assist in providing access to fresh food. In addition, community gardens can play an important role in bringing community members together.

Better use of open space will bring a number of health benefits, through increased physical activity, increased opportunities for community connectivity, and improved mental health. This will be increasingly important as the density of the area intensifies, and must be integral to overall planning. It is also important to provide non-commercial meeting, social and active spaces for local residents, many of whom may not be able to afford commercial gyms or sports centres, or to rely on restaurants and cafes as places to meet.

Building 'a distinctive Campbelltown sense of place' is part of the vision but there is no mention of how the history of the area and the communities will be valued and preserved. Public art is a way of involving the community with professional artists in planning, designing and implementing public art works that are relevant to the community. These can enhance community connectedness, present ideas, stimulate debate, interpret and communicate values, messages, issues and aspirations and celebrate creativity and participation. Areas could also be set aside for buskers e.g. musicians, performance artists.

Healthy Eating

It is widely recognised that many outer suburban areas have more takeaway food outlets than fresh food outlets. The extensive development of retail provides a good opportunity for council to consider options to ensure that all local residents have access to fresh foods within their local neighbourhood.

Preserving and enhancing local food production on unused land will become increasingly important and should be integrated into planning. Urban organic agriculture, including in small spaces could be encouraged and supported, e.g. backyard and balcony gardens, fruit trees in the street, footpath gardens, community gardens, aquaculture, bee-keeping and community farms and farmers markets. These land uses could be included in the consideration of alternative uses for under-utilised land referred to on page 9 of the Strategy.

Road Traffic

Although the main emphasis for planning is on public transport there is no discussion on private vehicles other than parking studies for each precinct. Somewhere in the suite of support documents, there should be some analysis of private vehicles and potential impacts e.g. local traffic, congestion, environment and air pollution.

Utilities

There is no mention of recycled water in the strategy. Increased water recycling is a key element of the 2010 Metropolitan Water Plan. Recycling initiatives will produce 70 billion litres a year by 2015 – equivalent to about 12 percent of greater Sydney's current water needs. There should be some mention and target of what percent of water will be recycled in this strategy and support documents.

Employment

An official strategy to support local employment and training including apprenticeships in the high level of construction work that will take place would assist in utilising local skills (e.g. older unemployed workers), and providing jobs and skills, (e.g. especially for young people). Partnerships to do this could be developed between local/state governments, developers, TAFEs and relevant trade unions. Community housing associations could also be involved and specified quantities of low-cost housing earmarked for construction (see earlier section).

Intermodal Facilities

Further details of the identification and preservation of land for the intermodal terminal and the Minto Intermodal Facility referred to on page 27 should be elaborated in support documents.

SWSLHD appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Strategy and are keen to continue to work in partnership in the continued planning and implementation of the strategy. If you would like to discuss this further, please feel free to contact Peter Sainsbury, Director Population Health, SWSLHD, on 8738 5718.

Regards

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Amanda Larkin', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Amanda Larkin
Chief Executive

Date: 18/2/15