

# ST LEONARDS AND CROWS NEST STATION PRECINCT

## INTERIM STATEMENT SUBMISSION

As an architect and long-term local home-owner, living within the Crows Nest Holtermann Estate Conservation Areas, I write in strong support of North Sydney Council's "Crows Nest Placemaking and Principles Study" and Interim Statement submission dated 4 September 2017.

Further to Council's study and submission please consider the following comments based on my long-term observations.

### **The Conservation Areas:**

The need for urban development around transport infrastructure nodes such as St Leonards and Crows Nest to provide for inevitable future growth is without question however its implementation cannot be permitted at the cost of our local character and heritage. Therefore the three conservation areas (Naremburn and Holtermann A & B) within the Precinct zone should be excluded from the Precinct if they are to be protected.

### **Mixed use developments:**

The Precinct planning requirements should require mixed-use developments to provide quiet off-street public open space and pedestrian through-routes at ground level – similar in concept to Stocklands Cammeray Square. Commercial use should be included in addition to retail and community use - not developed in isolation.

### **Transport considerations:**

The Interim Statement's accompanying traffic planning documents acknowledge the area's existing vehicular & pedestrian bottle-necks created by the combination of rail line, freeway and local topography. However the report fails to fully acknowledge the effect of local constraints.

Cycle routes through the local area have developed over time, particularly for commuters to and from North Sydney and the city. Despite data provided for the Pacific Highway route there seems to be a poor understanding of the preference for cycle traffic from Lane Cove and beyond using circuitous routes to the West Street corridor. North Sydney Council has plans to provide formal bike paths on West Street, however an integrated broader cycle route study as part of the Precinct proposal should provide a cycling network across the region addressing the inherent challenge of local topography and the dangers of the Pacific Highway.

North-south movement through the local area has been unchanged for decades, particularly to the east of the rail line. The detrimental impact of recently approved multi-storey development in St Leonards/Crows Nest, and the proposed large-scale residential and business development to be located east of the rail line near the Crows Nest Metro station, will only exacerbate the current difficulties. There are currently only 3 north-south roadway links between the Pacific Highway and Military Road, two of which are ill-suited for cycle and pedestrian traffic – Willoughby Road, Brook Street and Miller Street. Our local area benefits from the natural open space of the Flat Rock Creek & Tunks Park valley which cannot be compromised. Future development must not be allowed to over-burden the current north-bound roadway network.

Free local access to the Gore Hill expressway is restricted by the lack of north/west-bound on-ramps. The introduction of the Falcon St toll-ramp does not serve our area equitably. On-ramps at Willoughby Road, Brook Street and Miller Street are south/east bound only. This omission should be addressed in co-ordination with any future development plans.

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Crows Nest traffic bottlenecks worsen yearly as large multi-residential developments have markedly increased local road use. The recent re-opening of a larger Crows Nest Woolworths supermarket attracts people from beyond the local area. This effect will be exacerbated when the Crows Nest Coles supermarket (now under construction) is completed.

Pedestrian safety is compromised particularly at the Alexander/Burlington Street intersection. The Albany/Alexander/Ernest Street east-west through-route alternative to Pacific Highway/Falcon Street is severely affected by the new Woolworths supermarket traffic particularly at week day peak and weekends. The Albany/Alexander/Ernest Street secondary route and Chandos Street already carry markedly increased local traffic from recent large-scale developments. Further approved developments must not be exacerbated by excessive development proposed in the Interim Statement.

The Crows Nest Metro station is a positive transport initiative. The Metro operation must be planned to provide the future needs of the Precinct as proposed such as: 24-hour Metro and main rail service linked with 24-hour bus services; 24-hour kiss and drop at both St Leonards and Crows Nest railway stations; bicycles accommodated on Metro rail carriages; adequate secure bicycle storage.

North Sydney Council encourages car-share systems (such as Go-get) and this should be made compulsory for all future Precinct developments as part of the approval process in all 3 Council areas.

#### **Open space:**

The Lower North Shore has been under-served for sport fields in particular for over a decade. Further large-scale residential development will exacerbate this situation. Opportunities to provide increased sports fields by local Councils are severely limited and must be addressed by the NSW Government within the Precinct's planning.

The area over the rail line north of St Leonards station has potential as a location for open space such as sports fields and other community use. The site is ideal for elevated open space with northerly aspect, opportunity to integrate with improved east-west pedestrian access, proximity to North Shore Hospital health precinct and nearby apartments as well as St Leonards Station. An elevated open space would also serve to reduce train noise for nearby residents and provide fully sheltered railway platforms.

#### **Conclusion:**

The Precinct Interim Statement requires a more considered, realistic approach if it is to provide a desirable precinct for people to live and work within a healthy, sustainable environment.