

To Department of Planning and Environment

7th February, 2019

RE RESPONSE TO ST. LEONARDS AND CROWS NEST 2036 Draft Plan. 2018-2036.

INTRODUCTION AND COMMENT ON VISION

This submission has been completed by looking at the Masterplan AS A WHOLE- as many of the areas of discussion overlap and cannot be looked at in isolation.

This draft concentrates development and tall towers around the two stations and along the Pacific Highway which will increase the noise and dirt pollution in the area and the health problems of residents enormously – especially with respiratory problems. Many of the decisions allowing these tall towers are made with one off planning decisions creating precedents and then used by developers to gain continually escalating FSR and heights that exceed the LEPs.

As St. Leonards is under the administration of 3 Councils this is an ongoing problem to residents as the various community groups of each Council area seek a Masterplan for ALL OF THE ST. LEONARDS AREA– (as shown on the map on page 3 of the DoPE Draft Plan OCT. 2018).

The community groups became anxious about the one off spot planning that was occurring in St. Leonards 4 – 5 years ago and requested applications for all one off spot development be put on hold until a MASTERPLAN FOR ALL OF ST. LEONARDS could be completed by the Department of Planning.

This idea was slow to gather momentum but as each area began to be overwhelmed with the developers “good suggestions” for ever higher towers and residential FSRs, without the accompanying infrastructure, concern about overshadowing of other buildings or reduced amenity of residents created the increasing groundswell of opinion.

The goal posts seem to keep moving on this issue as the masterplan was firstly the ST. LEONARDS MASTERPLAN but now we have gone back to square one where this draft is the ST.LEONARDS/CROWS NEST MASTERPLAN. It appears that Lane Cove Council and DoPE have done a deal to isolate St. Leonards South from ANY overall masterplan with the aim of having decisions on St. Leonards South made by an “independent” group.

This doesn't however eliminate the draft Masterplan using the numbers on green space, population and number of units, production of jobs etc. in the South St. Leonards and Willoughby Council areas whilst not being included in the draft Masterplan.

St, Leonards south seems to refer to the residential area south east of the railway line but not the large commercial area between Hume Street, Pacific Highway, Railway Line and River Road, which although is shown in the map of the area does not feature in the Masterplan - seemingly left to the zealous planners of Lane Cove Council to “plan and expand” this area without due regard for residents living in other Council areas or the surrounding buildings with emphasis on increasing population by raising the residential FSR/s and little regard is given to creation of new jobs with decreasing FSR's.

Many of the people in South St. Leonards have sold and moved on after being paid huge amounts for their properties. This is fine for those who have left the area but it seems that the developers have been given great expectations for what development will occur in the

immediate area. Lane Cove Council made a huge mistake by increasing the Loftex building from an initial 10 storeys to 19 storeys and then at the last minute approval was given for RL166.8 or 29 storeys with no regard for resident opposition. This building is on top of the hill/slope and already overshadows and overlooks the one and two storey homes in South St. Leonards. Lane Cove Council and developers, as stated in the draft Masterplan want tower heights of up to 19 storeys , in South St. Leonards . Even at 18 storeys the building would be considered as a tall tower which seems to allow consideration for unlimited height - but if history repeats itself Lane Cove Council will keep on using spot development approval to allow developers the height and FSR they want. This situation is viewed as unfair by the community thereby making it very hard for them to have any confidence in the planning system.

There are 5 State Significant sites shown in the draft Masterplan -2 in Lane Cove Council LGA and 3 in the North Sydney LGA.

None of these sites should be considered as Significant Sites as any “planning” done in conjunction with an unknown developer is done in secret discussions behind closed doors bringing uncertainty and nervousness to the community. Why should they be Significant Sites and why isn’t the community consulted early in the process.

There is no greenery in Marshall Lane and when the application for the tower was put in place there were plans for greenery (which was impossible) and an activated lane- however the strip of shops fronting the Pacific Highway and backing onto Marshall Lane was not re-zoned at the same time and is not included in this Masterplan or the South St. Leonards Masterplan either. What is going to happen there? One would hope that it would remain as commercial and be the same as the buildings positioned opposite to them on the Pacific Highway, with similar heights, wide pavements, reverse setbacks and a matching avenue of plane trees planted on the Lane Cove side of the Highway. The residential portion of this area should not be spot planned without inclusion of this commercial strip ensuring that any change to the LEP does not increase the present height or change the commercial zoning.

It is difficult for community groups to quote projected numbers on population , jobs etc. as they are not sure whether the numbers quoted by the Councils are for its own LGA or for the St. Leonards plan area and I feel that St. Leonards is being unfairly used to swell each LGA’s government quotas for population and projected jobs numbers. The area surrounding St. Leonards station is being used as a “dumping ground” for Lane Cove and North Sydney Councils in the name of whichever State plan they wish to choose. These predominantly residential towers are replacing commercial towers and are thereby greatly reducing job numbers in the area. The community told you that they wanted the village atmosphere and strong sense of community of Willoughby Road and Ernest Place to remain. We wanted the Heritage Conservation Areas of Holtermann and Naremburn to remain. We want sunny and bright public spaces as well as streets that are sunny and bright and well lit and safe to walk at night.

We do not want an increase in wind tunnels.

DoPe is now removing the Crows Nest Metro site from the plan which will possibly negate any plans for the area that North Sydney Council has previously put in place – it also makes a mockery of the plan that we have been asked to comment on. Surely this could not be considered to be good planning as the height and scale of this development will surely create a precedent that will give developers reason to push for larger developments in Crows Nest to the detriment of the “villagey” feel wanted by the community.

THE PLAN

The coloured information on the local character wheel (page 8) states that the longer spokes represent those elements that are most valued by the community based on consultation undertaken to date.

It does not, however, give an indication of whether they are positive or negative values e.g. high density and height which are generally viewed negatively by the community but most of the other spokes on the wheel are valued as positives. I do not think that cycling is valued as highly as this plan assumes and there is little connectivity for pedestrians.

DESIGN

There is little mention of design in this Masterplan, however design is an important element in good planning.

With the approval of the high towers there should be an accompanying pursuit of world class design. I have heard it argued that St. Leonards is not a city and prices don't allow top design, however I disagree.

These towers will be viewed from the harbour, the Parramatta River, the city, the area around Balmain and from the surrounding areas on the North Shore (Neutral Bay, Willoughby, Chatswood etc.) The community does not want a series of overcrowded square, rectangular or triangular steel and glass boxes and consider that the developers are making large profits that would support first rate/world class design.

The Air building in Atchison Street (approved by DoPE) and the Loftex building in Marshall Street approved by Lane Cove Council/Planning Panel) are examples of unattractive buildings that are viewed from the surrounding district.

The community is waiting with bated breath to see the Mirvac, Landmark and 88 Christie Street finished buildings (approved by Lane Cove Council/Planning Panel) will look like. Every effort should be made in future planning to save St. Leonards from looking like an overcrowded Asian city with no green space, ever decreasing apartment sizes with poorly designed exteriors and few community facilities.

PLACE, MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE/DOMAIN

The protection of the village atmosphere of Willoughby Road, the maintenance of the Heritage Conservation areas, keeping the heritage look and feel of the five way intersection, ensuring that public spaces are sunny and bright are most important.

So saying thought should be given to the amenity of the residents of St. Leonards (around the station). This area is on the "rubbish edge" of the 3 Councils, which although providing them with large amounts of money from rates receives very little sympathetic planning from them or nibbys of other areas. With the amount of new development and possibility of good planning in this area - instead of widening footpaths, keeping heights at a sensible level, increasing setbacks and separations there is no consideration for the residents of the area having decreasing amenity caused by problems with solar access, light, views, property value, breeze, increased through traffic, lack of schools, increasing pollution and noise. We would like better consideration but also feel for anyone now living around the Metro site as this area WILL in the future suffer the same fate as greed takes over. The

strategic planning of this site encourages overdevelopment, unless community opposition to Council and State succeeds.

The lighting of major pedestrian routes for safety is important, but maybe visitors/staff entering the hospital at night should do so via the main entry which is well lit.

I believe that it would be nearly impossible to ensure safety for passage on the footpath from Talus Reserve to St. Leonards station, across Gore Hill Cemetery and in the back lanes of the hospital at night and all should be encouraged to use the well lit main routes.

Yes it would be wonderful if wind impacts could be considered before rezoning an area.

The establishment of ATCHISON STREET as an active retail strip is not working very well on the WESTERN side of the hill although planning has encouraged people to use this street. There is bad or no tree planting and as the street is very steep the shop frontages are on different levels and basically unappealing. At the road edge the pavement is tiered and although there is some seating it is unappealing and therefore little used. There is little shade and it is often too windy to sit there as Atchison Street West is a wind tunnel. Pavement width on the northern side of the street is good but the pavements on the southern side of the street with the two developments (617-621 and 601 Pacific Highway) will be narrower than the rest of the St. Leonards area with fewer street trees, if any, as the driveways for entry and exit of the two huge developments will take up most of the street.

The width of the one way road has been reduced for the installation of a bike lane which moves in the opposite direction (and is used very little) – could this bring danger for cyclists and pedestrians.

I should imagine that without a good tree canopy (as in the rest of North Sydney LGA) there will be a feeling of walking through a concrete tunnel and an associated increase in the wind tunnel effect.

In comparison the southern side of CHANDOS STREET has a lot of overhead awnings and deciduous trees which provide an attractive overhead canopy, is not a wind tunnel and I find it much shorter, flatter, and a more pleasant experience to walk from St. Leonards station to Crows Nest via Chandos Street, Oxley Street, which I cross before the dangerous roundabout at Albany Street, turn left into Albany Street and then progress to Willoughby Road rather than via hilly, windy, hot (in summer), cold (in winter) Atchison Street. Probably because Chandos Street is reasonably flat the building frontages and shops seem more active and engaging. The most unsafe area is the Christie Street/Chandos Street roundabout.

This danger has been acknowledged in the Masterplan but gives no solution – however before there is approval for any further developments or this draft Masterplan a solution should be provided for movement on this roundabout to better cater for the flow of traffic and safe crossing for pedestrians.

This roundabout is used by hundreds of vehicles per day, including large double-bogey trucks accessing the South St. Leonards building sites e.g. Mirvac, Landmark and 88 Christie Street which often do not make the turn on this relatively small roundabout and need to back into the traffic to complete the turn. It is extremely dangerous.

It is agreed that new development “offers opportunities for improvements to public places including plazas, activated laneways and safe and well-designed pedestrian links”. Full advantage of this is not being taken at present as INSUFFICIENT WIDTH is being given to pavements on the pedestrian main streets, the garage entries/exits, telephone, water equipment, outlets for ventilation and energy all face into the lanes thereby leaving little room to activate them with retail shops and is also unappealing. There is one shop for lease in Atchison Lane which is behind a wall and a post and will be very hard to let as it has limited visibility and there is little pedestrian traffic as it is a service laneway for vehicles to enter buildings on both sides.

The pavements on the north side of Atchison Street will be wider than those on the southern side and the northern side has already been planted with evergreen native trees with limited canopy that will not provide summer shade and will add to the shade of the shady side of the street in winter. Why isn't the avenue of plane trees and wide pavements that are on the eastern side of the Atchison Street hill not replicated on the western side of the hill?

Figure 4 on page 14 shows ground floor setback, with podiums providing an awning and then further upper level setbacks which would be wonderful, but this is not occurring with most buildings in the St. Leonards area not only having the building alignments in one line, but in the case of 88 Christie Street the building actually overhangs Christie Street and the Plaza on the Lithgow Street side.

617-621 Pacific Highway will cover nearly the entire block and from memory there are no street awnings and no reverse setbacks over the podiums.

Clarke Lane is noted as being a shared space, however I believe Clarke Lane was shown on the Metro plans as being a vehicle only lane between Oxley Street and Hume Street (and possibly further) as all the deliveries and vehicle entries and exits for all 4 Metro Developments are from Clarke Lane. The pavements in Clarke Lane are not wide enough for significant pedestrian traffic anyway – the lane would need re-configuring.

Oxley Street has varying width pavements as there is a significant drop in levels in some places and the Northside Church building has been built with narrow pavements. This will make it difficult for pedestrians to access the Metro from the Willoughby Road side and the residential area north of it and use of the Pacific Highway should be encouraged.

The problem with this is that the pavements outside the Metro are noted as being only 3 metres wide to the building alignment. This, of course, is ridiculous as there is also plans for the bus stop to be situated outside the Metro on the Pacific Highway. This would require far larger setbacks than 3m and should also incorporate a bus lay-by one road- lane wide (the same as that outside St. Leonards station). As many plane trees as possible should be planted along the Pacific Highway to continue the avenues of plane trees already planted on the Highway and keep the same ambiance as that experienced by the North Sydney community. The Metro buildings should not only be set well back but also have reverse setbacks to shop fronts to provide efficient pedestrian movement.

Wide pavements should also be constructed in Oxley and Hume Streets and there should be allowance for a taxi rank.. If pedestrians are encouraged to use Clarke Lane then this shared lane should have pavements that are at least 3.8m wide on one side of the Lane.

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPING

It is agreed as reflected by the NSW Government Architect's Greener Places Policy that tree canopy is critical to comfort in the public domain. These trees should be deciduous so they provide shade to the public domain and streets in summer and let the sun shine through in winter into these areas in winter.

MORE AND BETTER public open space is very important.

Around St. Leonards station there is little GREEN open space. The park on cnr of Christie Street, Chandos and Sergeants Lane is at present part of the 100 Christie Street development proposal, but also under lease to North Sydney Council. This park is to be donated to North Sydney Council in perpetuity as part of the re-development of 100 Christie Street. There appears to be a few concepts for this development, but it is hoped that the park will remain grassed and that the existing mature plane trees which are on the 3 surrounding streets be retained as the community makes much use of the shade of these trees at lunchtime in summer and enjoy the light and sunlight in winter. People also stand or sit beneath these trees waiting for pick up from the station.

There is controversy over re-development of Sergeants Lane and 100 Christie Street as the planned building setbacks and separations in the development proposal are not wide enough to improve the existing shared space. There should actually be reverse setbacks to allow for passage of pedestrians and one lane of traffic with division of pedestrians and traffic, with use of bollards, as a safety measure. A good example of this is Kensington Street, Broadway.

This reverse setback at ground level would enable retail shops to have the (questionable) planned outdoor seating, (much of the time the southern end can be a wind tunnel and shaded) and still allow space for pedestrians and vehicles.

I feel completely safe moving around the majority of St. Leonards, but the one place that I feel unsafe during the day and would not venture there at night is Evans Lane and the walkway to Talus Reserve.

TALUS RESERVE could hardly be called public open space when the area is administered by private enterprise and even though I think that I heard that the community is now allowed to move through this area the approach from St. Leonards is steep and difficult to access and could hardly be called good public recreational space as it is a drainage area.

Naremburn Park is outside the Masterplan area and is mainly a sporting oval for the Naremburn area and cannot be counted as open green space in the Masterplan - this park will also be affected by the unfiltered emissions from the smoke stack from the Northern Beaches/Harbour Tunnel Road.

Gore Hill Oval is artificially green and is to be used by various sporting bodies. There is to be a children's playground and a concrete walking track (which I hope will be covered in a type of regupol substance, but a LOT OF TREES AND PARKING SPACES have been REMOVED in the re-development and Willoughby Council has future plans TO REMOVE MANY of the beautiful trees along the Highway for the erection of basketball courts and a new clubhouse. I consider with more considered planning this building could be re-sited so that the avenue of gleditsia trees + others remain.

There will be little space for the quiet enjoyment of the local community.. Funds should also be allocated for the re-development of Gore Hill Cemetery which has been allowed to have trees and shrubs seeded by birds, is full of noxious weeds and trees and has in the past

been vandalised. With the beautiful grave headstones, wrought iron, the grand central road/walkway that is used by tech. students, hospital visitors and local community- with retention of the old palms and other APPROPRIATE mature trees this cemetery could be made into a very attractive recreational park E.g. St. Thomas Rest Park with the use of Commonwealth Government funding.

Hume Street Park is to be expanded by North Sydney Council to create a "village green" by closing off Hume Lane and acquiring 3 shops facing Hume Lane and one facing Willoughby Road, presumably as a walkway connection to both areas.

I believe that there is intention to raze the netball courts and parking station and place both facilities underground or are they to disappear or perhaps be transferred to Gore Hill Oval.

All of these plans seem great, but one wonders if there is funding for this or is North Sydney Council dependant upon developer contributions to achieve this as it seems that the State Government may be keeping all monies received from developers of the OSD for SICs. There should also be concern that with the activation of the area around the OSD and considerable development on the site of the Council acquired shops (concept image on page 21) trade could move from parts of Willoughby Road to the walkway, edges of the park and up into the OSD and leave many Willoughby Road shops empty or leased by "dollar" shops.

In reality the Metro OSD should not proceed as detailed. At Crows Nest the State Government or Metro should build a building similar to those over the stations to the west of Chatswood which are one storey, modern and surrounded by landscaped areas. North Sydney is a city and North Sydney Council wants as much high rise as it can get – but the Crows Nest and St. Leonards community does not want high rise on this site- instead please give us the same single storey modern building sitting in landscaped gardens as with those stations already built in Chatswood and west of Chatswood.

I was told by a State employee when asked why there was to be such over development in Crows Nest the answer was - "well we have to finance the Metro some way"

The photographs on page 18 of the draft plan show one photo of open space along the railway line, however the only place that I think that this photo would have been taken is Newlands Park which is on the western side of the railway line.

The Green Link north of the Pacific Highway moves through the Forum?, Evans Lane?, Talus Reserve (which is already treed and on toward Ella Street (also treed)).

The proposed green link is also shown on the south/eastern side of the railway line south of the 88 Christie Street development. This strip of land is already planted with an "unfortunate" mix of trees, is untidy and badly maintained, very close to the railway line and certainly not wide enough for recreational leisure. To make this strip wide enough to possibly call it open space would require the removal of 100+ long day parking spaces. As 88 Christie Street owners are going to remove a huge amount of trees in Lithgow Street for the development and these should be replaced with trees that have a spreading canopy and re existing long day parking spaces should be retained.

Lithgow Street will become busy with traffic from people shopping at the supermarket, visiting the library, large delivery trucks and many resident vehicles entering and exiting the 88 Christie Street, Northmark and Southmark developments.

This strip of land will be about 2 storey below the Plaza level of the 88 Christie Street development and is not open space – only a green link. This strip should still be grassed,

planted with a spreading canopy of trees whilst retaining the existing long day parking spaces and keeping the strip well maintained.

This “green link” would not be used and would not be money well spent..

If Lane Cove Council does NOT proceed with St. Leonards Plaza then there should be alternative plans for attractive landscaping of the areas immediately east and west of the rail line commencing from the Pacific Highway and the remainder of the VPAs already collected be spent in the St. Leonards area.

ST. LEONARDS PLAZA and 88 Christie Street Plaza will be OVERSHADOWED BY TOWERS on the northern side of the Highway for most of the day in winter.

As State Rail has NOT GIVEN PERMISSION for a plaza to be built over the rail line it is quite possible that St. Leonards Plaza will never be built and therefore should not be included in the open green space calculations.. There has been approval for 88 Christie Street to proceed and the walkway through the centre is supposed to be part of the construction of St. Leonards Plaza- but if one stands on the highway and looks towards the site the levels are completely wrong as the integration of the 88 Christie Street walkway/plaza, the over rail Plaza and a bus interchange will be IMPOSSIBLE because of the difference in height needed for the Plaza to clear the stanchions on the rail line and the entry and exit point to and from the Pacific Highway for a bus interchange.. The original prizewinning concept design integrated 88 Christie Street and the Plaza with a bus interchange on the Highway – there was also to be a new pedestrian tunnel beneath the Pacific Highway – somehow this seems to have been “lost” in the series of sales of the development and the community will get a very watered down version of the original concept.

NEWLANDS PARK is a lovely park which only needs maintenance and upgrading.. As the park is shaded and damp in winter the removal of some evergreen trees and replacement with deciduous trees would be a positive move. It is also quite steep with little open space for recreational pursuits

The park at the intersection of Oxley Street and the SOUTHERN END OF CHRISTIE STREET is very attractive with its avenue of plane trees and is well utilised as a walkway and as a place for workers to have lunch- but the ambiance is under great threat from overshadowing from surrounding towers and those on the northern side of the Highway.

MITCHELL STREET ‘PARK’ has recently been completed by North Sydney Council and although it is an attractive walkway with a “living wall” and a small amount of artificial grass it has lots of hard surfaces and could not be considered to be a park.

If 601 Pacific Highway is permitted to proceed as a Significant Site the increased footprint of the proposed building will require the removal of much of the work done in Mitchell Street “Park” – perhaps adjustment of the living wall and will close the whole area in.

As State Rail has not given permission for a plaza to be built over the rail line it is quite possible that St. Leonards Plaza will never be built. There has been approval for 88 Christie Street to proceed and the walkway through the centre is supposed to be part of the construction of St. Leonards Plaza – but if one stands on the highway and looks towards the site the levels are completely wrong as the integration of the 88 Christie Street

walkway/plaza, the over rail Plaza and a bus interchange will be impossible because of difference in heights needed for the Plaza to clear the stanchions on the rail line and the entry and exits points to and from the Pacific Highway for a bus interchange .

The North Sydney Council report CiS03 dated 19/11/18 states that by 2036 the government proposals give an expectation of increase of workers and residents in the precinct from 63,000 to a possible 94,000. There is very little green open space for this number of people and if provision is not made now for open green space it will be too late.

DENSITY AND JOBS

It states that “to achieve the GSC’s vision for St. Leonards to be a growing office market in the future, the draft Plan proposes a cluster of high density mixed-use development between St. Leonards and Crows Nest station. This is a logical place for increased density from a transit-oriented development perspective and the accessibility of this location is attractive to businesses.”

This statement seems to fly in the face of what is actually happening. With the razing of each commercial building for the erection of a B4 mixed use building the proponent whinges on in each application stating that they need to reduce the FSR on the commercial/retail portion of the building and increase the FSR on the residential portion as it is (according to them) nearly impossible to rent commercial/retail sites in St. Leonards. This has been so in the past as one by one these commercial buildings become empty as developers buy them and then do not maintain them or are not willing to give long leases or lower rents. They state that businesses would prefer to go to Chatswood, Macquarie or North Sydney where the rentable spaces are larger, there is more parking for staff, the community facilities and shopping is superior and rents lower (I’m not sure that the last one is correct).

The new buildings around the two stations have a small amount of commercial/retail in the small podiums. Rentable floor spaces are small, no views for any upmarket companies, little parking and poor community infrastructure and services and I do not see any future improvement planned in this draft.

The repurposing of these commercial buildings to basically residential will do nothing to replace lost jobs let alone increase them. As each commercial building is pulled down there are then zero jobs on that site.. The proponent and Councils then state that any job produced in the new development is an additional job but It is actually a reduction of jobs for that site.

In the North Sydney Council report to Council 10/12/18 CiS02 referring to jobs it states “Relevant actions of the North District Plan(District Plan) focus on long term employment.. These are to “leverage the new Sydney Metro Station at Crows Nest to deliver additional employment capacity” and “grow jobs in the centre”.. It sets an employment target range of between 6,900 (base) - 16,500 (high) new jobs in the centre by 2036.

Given the relative ease with which the District Plan’s residential targets will be met within the local government area, a high proportion of commercially-focused development should be prioritised within comfortable walking distance of the new Metro station” and then goes on to say that “There is concern that the Draft 2036 Plan does not adequately leverage enough employment capacity from the Metro site. Proposed minimum non-residential FSR/s of 2:1 and 3:1 on the Metro site are low compared to land around St. Leonards station that generally supports full commercial development or non-residential FSR’s of between

4:1 and 6:1. So whilst the rezoning proposal is consistent with the Draft 2036 Plan, it represents a lost opportunity for local workers”.

4:1 and 6:1 for commercial FSR is still too low with regard to the huge number of residential apartments in these buildings and should be further increased. B4 mixed use does not produce a happy community

The daytime economy around St. Leonards station is good and is supported by large numbers of people with local jobs. The night time economy is very quiet and residents would prefer it to remain so and do not encourage an 18 hour economy.. Good quality restaurants/cafes and hotels are always welcome, but I think that business owners and patrons of the restaurant and cafes are generally happy with a 10pm closing because St. Leonards is not a city but is a suburb.

Willoughby Road is close by for all to access.

HEIGHT, TRANSITION AND INTERFACES

The draft plan states (page 25) that there is “a height “expectation” of taller buildings (up to 50 storeys) between St. Leonards and Crows Nest.. Who’s expectation?. The developers? – This plan? The 3 Councils - certainly not the community.

Unfortunately the pinnacle height is another place where the goal posts keep moving.. At times the developers and Councils refer back to the 2006 St. Leonards Masterplan where the Forum at 37 storeys was to be the highest building and all other developments to graduate down from it. I realise that the State Government is pushing for a “big Sydney” but I do not think the push for higher and higher buildings is good planning. The very strategic siting of the Metro station has made it possible to extend the overhigh buildings further up and down the Highway and this will become a real thorn in the side of North Sydney Council and the Crows Nest Community. Even since this draft plan has been printed a developer has requested a height of 60+ storeys on the IBM building site (so called State Significant site) – where will it end and is it necessary?

There should be NO SIGNIFICANT SITES in this Masterplan because who knows what the implications are.

The stepping down with graduated heights should apply from the northern side of the Pacific Highway down to the Naremburn Heritage area and the Pacific Highway down to River Road.

I hope that the lower height in Willoughby Road can be retained and the setbacks and height of Duntroon Avenue retained in that area.

South St. Leonards should not have any building over 8 storeys high and the strip of land between Marshall Street, Berry Street and the Pacific Highway should remain at 9 storeys as shown on the builtform height changes on page 50 so that the units just completed in Marshall Street and Marshall Lane will not be overlooked and overshadowed by loss of sunlight.

If any height above 9 storeys is allowed in this strip on the Pacific Highway it will cause overshadowing to all of South ST. Leonards residential area.

The strip along the Highway towards Greenwich Road is mainly 6 storeys which is acceptable but the site on the corner of Greenwich Road and Pacific Highway should remain at its current height and not be permitted to be built any higher.

The site on the western side of the rail line and the northern side of the Pacific Highway should not be 18 storeys. 18 storeys already makes is too high for the site as it will cause

overshadowing to the residential area to the south of it. This site is already an example of good planning with its wide pavements and reverse building setbacks – together with the lovely avenue of mature plane trees.

The height of the Medibank building is already considerably higher than the neighbouring Forum buildings fronting the Pacific Highway. Where is the graduation of building heights here?

18 storeys is also a number that causes alarm bells to ring as the building then becomes a “tall building” and as such seems to be able to then be developed to any height.

Lane Coves Council’s past history shows that they would then also want to develop the other side to similar heights regardless of overshadowing issues.

This also applies to the 88 Christie Street site on the Pacific Highway that has been approved as an 18 storeys commercial building. Despite community disapproval this site can be developed below ground level without developing aboveground.

The site has an 18 storey approval which makes it a tall building and is marked on the BuiltForm Height Changes (page 50) as a building to be considered for height change.

No wonder the community is so dissatisfied with the planning system and process as it is so unfair.

The DoPE draft plan states “that new developments present opportunities for well-designed interfaces to sensitive places within the area. Setbacks, variation in height, floorscape ratios and solar access plane requirements will be used to ensure the level of transition from dense and tall development to low scale such as Heritage Conservation areas”.

100 Christie Street at 36 storeys makes that already crowded area more crowded and gives very poor level of transition to the neighbouring buildings in Chandos Street and the Naremburn Heritage area.

The draft plan encourages a stepped setback for gradual transition to the adjoining Naremburn Conservation area and gives 30-32 Chandos Street as the preferred response to Transition to Naremburn Heritage Conservation. This transition should continue along the northern side of Chandos Street from Oxley Street to the station to protect, not only the Heritage area but also allow the sun to Christie/Chandos Park by not permitting any building taller than the Law School (5 storeys) be built on that site or the area north of it. The Law School is an ideal site for a school for the area.

The buildings on the southern side of Chandos Street should be no taller than those already there, which is about 10 storeys, however on page 50 it shows height along this southern side changing to 12 and 18 storeys. 12 storeys with reverse setbacks, above over pavement awnings, would be acceptable, however 18 storeys is too high considering the close proximity to the heritage area and we now know the “trick” about “18 Storey Tall Buildings” The western side of Christie Street towards Northcote Street should be kept in line with the northern side of Chandos Street – most buildings along that side of the street are mainly low rise and sympathetic to the heritage area. Any replacement should be of a similar height to achieve a satisfactory transition of height to the Heritage area and the low rise blocks of units that are already in Northcote Street.

There are also 5 state significant sites shown in the draft with 3 being in the North Sydney LGA - on the IBM site and opposite it on the western corner of Mitchell and Atkinson Streets and at Pacific Highway and Falcon Street. Who has declared these to be state significant sites the DoPE or North Sydney Council, Lane Cove Council or is it part of a

developer wish list as we already know that Stockland has applied for 60+ storeys on the IBM site – does this mean that there will be an application for 70+ storeys on the site on the opposite corner or the site on the corner of Christie St and Pacific Highway or the corner of Oxley Street and Pacific Highway. All would be out of context and overshadow the homes south of the Pacific Highway.

The siting of a tall tower at Pacific Highway, Falcon Street and Alexander Street is completely out of character with the “villagey” feel that the community wants.

A tall building on this site would then open the door to developers to proceed further up and down the Highway – in exactly the same way the strategic siting of the Metro OSD has whetted the development appetite.

The maximum height of these 5 “State Significant buildings” should be set with consultation with the community and what makes these sites significant anyway?

The introduction of the state significant building sites (cnr south Christie Street and Pacific Highway and corner of Oxley and Pacific Highway and 601 Pacific Highway the CUMULATIVE shadows of these and other buildings along the Pacific Highway will extend over the southern slopes of St. Leonards down as far as River Road. (page 50 of the draft). These shadows will cover the proposed St. Leonards Plaza, the park at the intersection of south Christie Street and Oxley Streets and Newlands Park.

601 Pacific Highway and Site on the corner of Mitchell Street and Atchison Street will overshadow Mitchell Street “Park” and be out of context with the surrounding buildings. If buildings of great height are built there it will be impossible to get a stepping down effect in one block to the Naremburn Heritage area.

I cannot recall one beautiful overseas city that would allow heights and density of this magnitude in a suburb excepting Asian cities which Australia should not attempt to emulate.

ALL 5 SIGNIFICANT SITES SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM THIS MASTERPLAN as they do not comply with the Design Criteria listed on page 62 of the draft Masterplan.

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

The community does not have confidence that the infrastructure required to cater for the population increase will be delivered at the same time as, or before, the construction of the large developments.

There will be pressure put on healthcare, traffic management, open space and there isn't a designated site for a SCHOOL or additional schools.

THE LAW SCHOOL on the corner of Christie Street and Chandos Street is an ideal site for a school. It is presently under lease, is set up for students, is close to transport and within easy walking distance of the houses and units of the area.

The brutalist architecture of the building blends with the heritage building on the diagonal corner and adds character to that intersection. The block next to it on the western side and those north of it could be used for a playground for a school and/or building extensions.

These sites should be compulsorily acquired by the government giving the community a school and also ensuring that the Christie/Chandos Park retains the sunlight that it now enjoys.

The building's height just allows sun to the Christie Street park in mid winter.

The school playground could be used by the community after hours and at the weekend and part of the building could be used by the community for meetings as there is nowhere in St. Leonards to hold a meeting. Willoughby Council can then retain the neighbouring station carpark for commuters and State Rail can retain its maintenance area.

TAFE should be retained for TERTIARY EDUCATION.

NORTHERN BEACHES/HARBOUR TUNNEL ROAD

This road will have an unfiltered smoke stack close to the Artarmon road exit. This unfiltered smoke stack will be sited close to the rail line and close to the Gore Hill Highway/ Reserve Road entrance/exit

The areas most affected by the tiny carcinogens emitted from this unfiltered stack will be within the 600m to 1.5km ring around the smoke stack. Naremburn Park, thousands of residents in houses in Naremburn and Artarmon and St. Leonards, thousands of workers in the Artarmon industrial area, 3 hospitals, Tafe and Artarmon school .

Flat Rock Creek will be an excavation site and will bring 140 large trucks per day through the roads of the Masterplan area.

There is no traffic planning for the vehicles that exit the Beaches/Harbour Road at Artarmon. Will this traffic affect the already busy Reserve Road and Herbert Street.

PLANNING FOR THE NORTHERN BEACHES/HARBOUR TUNNEL ROAD SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THIS MASTERPLAN.

SPECIAL INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTION SCHEME

I have no preference as to who should receive the monies paid for infrastructure or community benefit – but whether it be the local Councils or the State Government written assurance should be given to the community that ALL monies received will be spent in the Masterplan area and not be used anywhere else in their LGAs or by State Government in other parts of the city.

INFRASTRUCTURE

There are many suggestions for infrastructure, but most are subject to further investigation. This is not acceptable as the community wants infrastructure to be put in place with development or before development. This will require all Councils and Government bodies to collaborate to produce a proper master plan.

Provision for cycling is too strongly represented in the Masterplan. The roads are too narrow and in many cases too busy to accommodate cyclists.

The area of the Masterplan is relatively compact and walking should be encouraged over cycling.

A 200 space cycle station and shower facilities was to be included in the 100 Christie Street development, but that was omitted with a statement that it would be built in Chandos Street near the Forum – where? and as that area isn't in North Sydney Council's LGA I don't know how they can make that statement.

There is mention of a cycle/pedestrian rail crossing to the RNSH but this would be very difficult to achieve. There are many more cycle paths mentioned but most are subject to further investigation –and they should be considered well as they would be in a very confined area and cyclists will be a danger to themselves and pedestrians. Footpaths should not be reduced to introduce bike paths and roads are too narrow for the introduction of bike paths. Anyway one rarely sees a cyclist in the area.

Councils are promising to widen footpaths and increase building setbacks but there is no evidence of this at the present.

Taxis are to be discouraged to use the bus zone on the Pacific Highway, but as there is no taxi stand in St. Leonards apart from the one at the hospital so people wait outside the station to get a cab. Many of these people want to access RNS Hospital or the Mater Hospital and are not in good health. There still appears to be no definite plan for a taxi rank – which we should have now.

The intersections at Christie and Chandos Streets, Oxley and Albany Street, Oxley and Atchison Streets, Oxley Street Bend near Hume Street Park, are all dangerous for pedestrians but are “subject to further investigation” only.

The pedestrian crossings for residents and workers south of the Pacific Highway to both stations were to be addressed in the development approvals, however all were given approval without any funded plan for these crossings.

Herbert Street appears to be working much better with the staff of StationLink manning the pedestrian crossing to the hospital- resulting in better traffic and pedestrian movement- perhaps in the future one person (hospital or rail employee) could remain to control the pedestrian crossing – there is no need for the 5 persons that control it at peak times at present.

There is mention of another set of traffic lights at Portview Street, but this suggestion has already been discouraged by Main Roads as they do not want another set of lights between Frederick and Herbert Streets to further slow peak hour traffic. Surely people can walk an extra couple of hundred metres to the traffic lights already positioned.

CONCLUSION

Somehow at the end of it all after 5 years of the community trying to get the 3 Councils to collaborate on St. Leonards planning I understand from this Masterplan that it is suggesting that the planning be left to the 3 Councils. The community knows that the 3 Councils do not want to collaborate as Lane Cove and NorthSydney Councils vie for supremacy.

Yes they will increase the population and yes they will receive much higher rate payments but this Masterplan plans for very few jobs in St. Leonards in these 2 Council areas.

There are no solutions for infrastructure and movement problems, but at least they are identifying them.

I suppose that Willoughby Council will supply the jobs with the Health Dept. moving onto to hospital site and the expansion of the Technology Park. One would hope that Willoughby Council will upgrade the industrial area with general cleaning up of streets and planting of trees with spreading canopies. Footpaths at intersections could be landscaped.

This Masterplan must revert back to being a Masterplan for ALL of ST. LEONARDS (map on page 3) with COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE THREE COUNCILS AND DOPE and hope that it is not already too late).

