SHAPE 2028

A Discussion Paper to develop the first Community Strategic Plan for the Northern Beaches

March 2017

NORTHERN BEACHES
COUNCIL

northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

Table of Contents

Message from the Administrator 1

About the Discussion Paper 2

Developing the Vision
Structure
Context
Policy and Partnerships

The Northern Beaches Community 5

Aboriginal Heritage
Population Trends
Natural Environment
Built Environment

Community Outcomes 8

Environmental Sustainability 9
Protection of the Environment 12
Places for People 15
Community and Belonging 18
Vibrant Local Economy 21
Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity 24
Good Governance 27
Participation and Partnerships 30

Appendix
References and Bibliography

SYDNEY'S NORTHERN BEACHES

Message from the Administrator

Living well is about living with a sense of balance between work, family, leisure and community commitments. It is about being able to wash off the day's worries and stressful drive home with a quick surf or a brisk walk. It is about catching up with friends, being out amongst people. It is about living in a way that doesn't impact too much on the environment, but still makes room for people, work, sports, arts and recreation.

Like most people who live or visit here, I deeply appreciate the stunning natural environment, fantastic recreation opportunities and friendly people. Community members tell me that the bush and beach is a welcome refuge from the pressures of modern day living - many people find it increasingly difficult to juggle mortgage/rent payments, work commitments, increasing commuting times and frustrations and family responsibilities.

I have talked to residents, businesses and visitors to the Northern Beaches from across the whole local government area about their vision for the area and I am struck by the how similar we are in terms of our overall aspirations. Even though communities and cultures are diverse across the area, we all want to protect the environment and create a community that better support each other and our relaxed lifestyle in a rapidly changing, and increasingly pressured world.

How can we live in a way that is better for us, better for the environment and kinder to the next generation?

This will be one of the big questions that we will be talking to the community about during the next round of engagement for the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) during March – April 2017. We will also be checking back with the community that the draft vision, aspirations, goals and strategies in this Discussion Paper reflect the diversity of views of the Northern Beaches community.

Values
During the first round of engagement for the CSP, community members told us about what a wonderful place the Northern Beaches is to live. The community values the 'beach and bush lifestyle', the rich natural environment. The community has also said that they value the built environment and diverse local villages – the open spaces, playgrounds, sports, the arts, cafés and bars. Residents are proud of who they are and grateful for what they have.

Concerns
I have heard that it is critically important to the community that we protect the environment. Population growth is a concern, and although the rate of growth is not as drastic as for other parts of Sydney, it is something that we collaboratively must plan for so that we can get quality outcomes - especially in regards to housing, transport and economic growth.

It is also clear that the community thinks that we can do better in terms of improving our public places and strengthening our neighbourhoods. We need to look after each other and make sure that those who are vulnerable to social disconnect or loneliness are supported and given the same opportunity to participate in community life as everyone else. Similarly, community members share a concern for the wellbeing of young people, many of whom experience the pressures of life especially acutely.

YOUR INPUT MATTERS
This Paper outlines a draft CSP Framework – vision, aspirations, outcomes, goals and strategies – that is based on what we have heard is important to the community. We now need your help to shape the Framework so we can develop a CSP that reflects the diverse needs of the community and effectively guides local decision making over to 2028 and beyond.

Thank you for your time and input.

About the Discussion Paper

DEVELOPING THE VISION

So far, more than one thousand people have contributed their time and knowledge to developing the first Community Strategic Plan for the Northern Beaches.[1] The following draft vision is based on extensive community engagement during September – November 2016 and further shaped through consultation with the Local Representative Committees (LRCs) and Strategic Reference Groups (SRGs)[2]:

Northern Beaches – a safe, inclusive and connected community that values its natural and built environment (draft)

The purpose of the Discussion Paper is to continue conversations with the community on how we can make Northern Beaches an even better and more sustainable place to live. The Paper should be read as an extension of the Issues Paper that informed the first round of consultation.

The Discussion Paper includes a draft CSP Framework (vision, aspirations, outcomes, goals and strategies) which we will test during the second stage of engagement during March – April 2017 to ensure that the CSP reflects the diversity of views in the community and is a useful foundation for future planning.

Objectives

- To **reflect back** what we have heard is important to the community
- To identify **goals and strategies**
- To consider **interrelationships** between issues
- To consider international, national and state **policy context and trends**

A third round of engagement has been planned for July – August where the Draft CSP is expected to be put on public exhibition before being presented to the new Council for adoption after the local government elections in September 2017.

STRUCTURE

The main part of the Paper, Community Outcomes, is structured around the community's draft vision and aspirations as shown below. The outcomes also align with the quadruple bottom line reporting standard (environmental, social, economic and civic).

Outcome 1: Environmental Sustainability
- Growth is sustainable and well balanced

Outcome 2: Protection of the Environment
- We are inspired by bush, beaches and waterways
- Development is balanced with our lifestyle and environment

Outcome 3: Places for People
- Our streets and neighbourhoods are safe, clean and family friendly
- We have vibrant spaces with diverse arts and cultural experiences

Outcome 4: Community and Belonging
- We celebrate local villages and communities
- Our communities and businesses are connected and inclusive

Outcome 5: Vibrant Local Economy
- Businesses have the infrastructure to grow locally and globally
- Local businesses thrive and grow

Outcome 6: Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity
- Transport is seamless and integrated

Outcome 7: Good Governance
- We demonstrate strong community leadership and environmental stewardship
- Our governance is open and transparent

Outcome 8: Participation and Partnerships
- We have a say in what happens in our local area

[1] The approach for developing the vision and aspirations is outlined in the Council Report 13 December 2016.
[2] The LRCs are comprised of former Councillors of each the three previous Councils (Manly, Warringah and Pittwater). The SRGs are comprised of community representatives. Both provide advice and feedback to Council on strategic matters.

CONTEXT

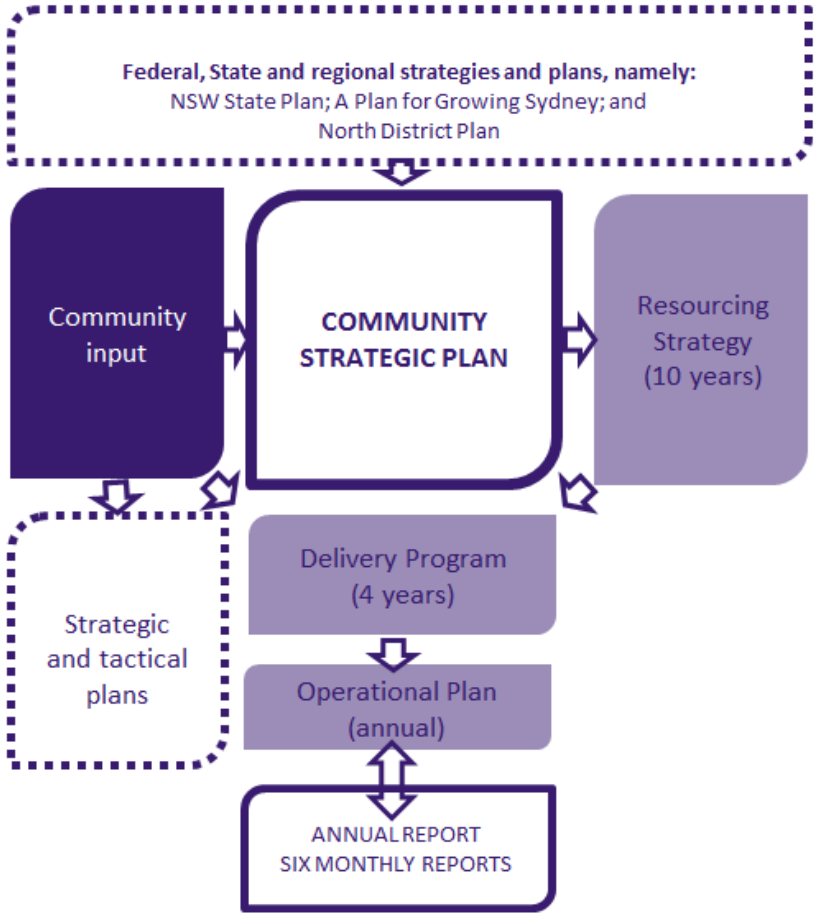
The CSP is one of the most important planning documents for the Northern Beaches. It is the basis on which all future planning (and budgets) rests. Council is accountable to the community on how well we progress towards the community's vision.

All councils are required to develop short, medium and long term plans under the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework.[3] The CSP is the highest order plan in this hierarchy that a council and its community will prepare and it must take into consideration the overall planning context for our region. The NSW *State Plan*, the Government's *A Plan for Growing Sydney* and the *North District Plan (draft*) provides the planning context for the Northern Beaches. An overview of the IP&R Framework is provided in **Figure 1** below.

The CSP is a broad and strategic framework that maintains currency and relevance over a ten year plus period. Future Council plans (namely the four year Delivery Program, annual Operational Plans, as well as strategic and tactical plans) will provide the detail and describe the actions that Council will take to address the broad goals and strategies in the CSP.

Council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and updating the plan on behalf of the community. It is not however, wholly responsible for its implementation. Not everything contained in the CSP is for Council to action. Other partners, such as Federal and State government agencies and community groups are also responsible for the delivery of the strategies in the plan. The aim is to encourage collaboration and partnerships to achieve the community's vision for the future.

Figure 1: IP&R Framework



[3] Office of Local Government (OLG) 2013

POLICY AND PARTNERSHIPS

The community's priorities include improvements in the areas of health, community safety, education, transport, housing affordability and environmental protection: these were strong themes emerging from the first stage of the community engagement.

Delivering on community expectations however, cannot happen in isolation and we must recognise the broader regional, national and global policy context.

The two plans that will have the greatest effect on the long term future of the Northern Beaches are the NSW Government's *A Plan for Growing Sydney* and *North District Plan (draft):*

- **A Plan for Growing Sydney (2014)** The Plan for Growing Sydney was released in December 2014. It is still the NSW Government's plan for the future of the Sydney Metropolitan Area over the next 20 years. It provides key directions and actions to guide Sydney's productivity, environmental management, and liveability including the delivery of housing, employment, infrastructure and open space.

- **North District Plan (draft), (2017)** The NSW Government's creation of the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) will have a major role in setting future metropolitan planning for the next 40 years. The GSC will set directions for land use planning for all of Sydney, and set direction and targets for economic growth and employment, housing, transport and infrastructure delivery, visitor (tourism) economy growth, environmental sustainability and climate change, waste and pollution reduction, and provision of sports and recreation.

The community has told us that they want Council to play an active role in shaping our future and advocating on their behalf for improvements. This requires us to rethink our role beyond the traditional understanding of local government and it gives us an opportunity to work together through our networks, local knowledge and broad perspectives to seek more sustainable and holistic solutions to our challenges.

The Northern Beaches Community

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and elders past and present. We recognise Aboriginal people as the original custodians of the land and appreciate the significant Aboriginal history on the Northern Beaches.

Prior to European settlement, Aboriginal people lived along coastal and estuarine foreshores, where they fished and hunted and harvested food from the surrounding bush. Aboriginal clans moved from site to site to access the bountiful tucker and bush medicine of the area. There are more than 440 identified Aboriginal heritage sites on the Northern Beaches, where some of the sites are under threat from development, vandalism and natural erosion.

Recognising Aboriginal history and protecting and preserving Aboriginal heritage is vitally important to respecting the first people of Australia and their culture.

In the past 20 years our population has grown by 13%. It is projected to increase by 10% over the next 25 years, to reach 277,850 people in 2036.[4] An increasing proportion of our population will be infants and children, parents and aged people.[5]

This section provides a brief snapshot of the community – the people, and the natural and built environment.

- Total population is 233,961 people[6]
- The median age is 39 years
- 16.5% are children aged 0 - 11
- 14.3% are young people aged 12 to 24
- 15% are aged 65 and over
- 2.6% are aged 85 and over
- 13% are from non-English speaking background

Northern Beaches as a family friendly place, “a great place to grow up”, was a strong theme in the consultation so far.[7] The area is also recognised for its access to specialised services which attracts people who live with a disability and their families to the area.

However the pressures on families, and especially lower and middle-income earners, are increasing in step with soaring house prices. This, combined with restricted access to tertiary education, is resulting in many young families and young people moving out of the area.[8] There is also only limited housing stock available that is accessible and adequately fitted out to cater for the needs of people who live with a disability.

[4] NSW Department of Planning Population Projections 2016
[5] The information in this section is sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census data unless otherwise stated
[6] Note that this figure is based on ABS Census data (2011). The Estimated Resident Population (ERP) in 2015 was 266,247
[7] Summary of community feedback, Northern Beaches Council 2016, n=2467 comments
[8] Northern Beaches Council 2016 Affordable Housing Needs Analysis

POPULATION TRENDS

In a 20 year period, from 1991 to 2011, the Northern Beaches population grew from 206,686 to 233,961. The largest growth occurred in the parents and homebuilders age bracket, older people and infants and children while there was a net loss of tertiary/independents and young workers from the area. In the next 25 years, The NSW Department of Planning forecast that the Northern Beaches population will increase by 10%, reaching 277,850 people in 2036[9]. This forecasted growth is less than what has occurred over the past 20 years, and it is low compared to the forecasted growth in other local government areas in the Sydney metropolitan area, which may see increases as high as 65% of the current population (or, in the unique case of Camden a predicted growth of more than 300%).[10]

In our region, growth is likely to be constricted somewhat by the natural environment, topography and associated challenges with providing the infrastructure to support a larger population on the Northern Beaches.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Life on the Northern Beaches is shaped by the natural environment and it is the 'beach and bush lifestyle' that is the main drawcard for people to visit or live in the area (and, increasingly, for businesses to choose to establish themselves here). Over millions of years, geological processes have produced striking landscapes characterised by dramatic escarpments, vertical cliff faces, high ridgetops, lush bushland, and an extensive network of creeks, waterways and coastal environments throughout the 257 km^2 area.

While the natural environment is deeply embedded in the Northern Beaches culture and valued in its own right, the topography and waterbodies presents challenges in terms of creating a 'connected community' – ensuring that our off-shore communities and those living in more isolated parts of the Northern Beaches are able to access the rest of the area safely and reliably.

Coasts and waterways

- 80km of coastline
- 15 coastal headlands
- 23 coastal beaches
- four cove/harbour beaches
- four coastal lagoons
- two river estuaries
- 1650ha estuary
- seven catchments
- extensive network of creeks and waterways

Bushland

There is a diverse abundance of vegetation communities, flora and fauna that have formed in harmony with the diverse topography:

- nearly 40 different vegetation communities
- more than 1,460 identified species of native plants
- more than 540 identified species of native animals

Protected areas

Our strong relationship with the landscape is formalised in the protection of areas of environmental significance such as:

- Cabbage Tree Bay Aquatic Reserve
- Dee Why Lagoon Wildlife Refuge
- Duffys Forest threatened ecological community
- Careel Bay and Winnererremy Bay estuarine wetlands
- Narrabeen Lagoon State Park
- Bungan Head and Mona Vale Headland intertidal protection areas
- Long Reef, Barrenjoey Headland and Narrabeen Headland Aquatic Reserves
- North Harbour and part of Middle Harbour
- 114 km^2 of National Park

[9] NSW Department of Planning Population Projections 2016
[10] Ibid

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The vibrant culture, lifestyle and association with the natural environment attract people and tourists from across the world to the Northern Beaches. The housing, infrastructure, public places, and community facilities we build and maintain will determine the quality of life of current and future generations on the Northern Beaches. Our challenge is to live and work in harmony with the natural environment and each other and manage the built environment so that it promotes social interaction and wellbeing, active lifestyles, and good and accessible work environments.

We enjoy a rich diversity of both private and public urban spaces ranging from small neighbourhood based 'watering holes' such as local coffee shops and corner stores, to lively small villages and to major urban centres that provide jobs, retail and industrial opportunities.

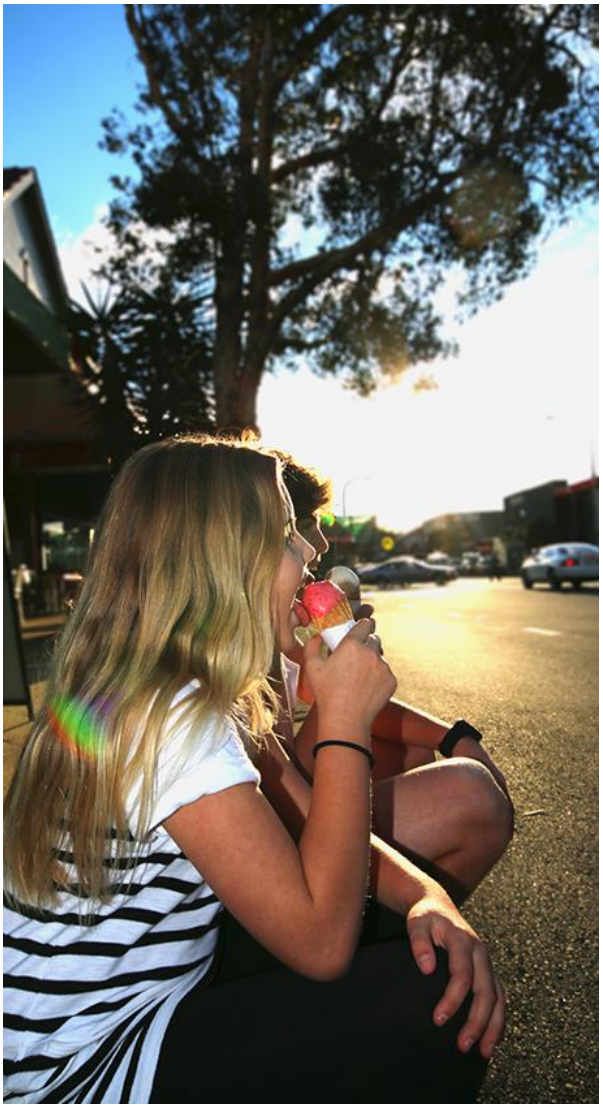
The Northern Beaches enjoys a good supply of recreational and sporting facilities that cater for a wide range of active and passive activities across all ages. We have more than 150 sports fields, 220 playgrounds, 21 surf clubs, 27 coastal and public pools, 17km^2 of natural bushland under Council's care, as well as access to approximately 114 km^2 of National Park.

Northern Beaches is also home to a variety of public community facilities, including 50 community centres, 2 galleries and 1 commercial theatre. The area's 10 libraries provide much valued indoor places for people to catch up whether through one of the many events or in informal ways.

Maintenance of assets - community and sporting facilities, environmental assets, footpaths, approximately 850km roads, and nearly 600km of stormwater pipes - demands careful management, diligent financial planning, and good operational programming.

In the next 20 years, we expect to see a growth in jobs and communities through high-quality sustainable planning. In the North Subregion of Sydney (which includes the Northern Beaches, North Sydney, Chatswood and Hornsby) we expect to see the population grow and change in its makeup, where the number of infants and aged people will increase at a faster rate than for the rest of Sydney metropolitan area. The changes in population and demographics will drive a greater demand for better housing choice, residential aged care and housing for people who live with a disability, as well as supporting active lifestyles, community interaction, health and social infrastructure.

In planning for the future, it is essential that we nurture and protect our connection to the natural environment while enhancing our built environment and ensuring connection to the other major centres of Sydney.



COMMUNITY
OUTCOMES

Environmental Sustainability

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

We need to live in harmony with the land and protect the environment. This is the essence of environmental sustainability and it is the foundation for achieving the Northern Beaches community's vision. It entails finding balance in meeting the resource and service needs of current and future generations without compromising the health of the ecosystems that provide them.[11]

During the first round of consultation, community members expressed a strong desire for ensuring environmental sustainability in the context of major challenges such as climate change, population growth, development, transport, infrastructure, recreation and access to public open space. Community members highlighted the need to tackle the causes of climate change and environmental degradation – not just treat the symptoms – as well as effectively monitor and manage risks.

- The community want sustainable integrated planning, where environmental protection, urban sprawl, waste minimisation, and reduction of water and energy consumption are some of the top issues they would like to be addressed in a comprehensive way.
- Community members expressed a general and profound concern about protecting our local and regional values and balancing the needs of the environment with population growth, development and infrastructure

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The challenges of environmental sustainability and climate change can only be solved by working together across all levels of society. On a societal as well as individual level, we need to curb consumption as this is the driver of environmental degradation, exacerbated by global population growth. We must think globally, but act locally. [12] Some of the main environmental sustainability challenges are briefly summarised below (and are also implicit in the whole document as an underlying theme):

Energy and water

- Northern Beaches has a large environmental footprint, especially for energy and water consumption, and we are largely dependent on coal-fired power for energy consumption

Transport

- The Northern Beaches community is dependent on private cars with residents on average using a private vehicle for 70% of their daily trips[13]

[11] This understanding of environmental sustainability is based on the most recognised definition of sustainability as *forms of progress that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs*. (Brundtland 1987)

[12] This phrase, originally attributed to Patrick Geddes, is perhaps more relevant today than in 1915 when it was first coined. We need to think 'big picture' in all our planning and, in line with Geddes thinking, 'work with the environment, not against it.'

[13] Transport for NSW 2016

Urban environments and development

- We experience urban heat island effect, where heat retention of hard surfaces results in higher than average localised temperatures

- There are poor awareness or incentive structures for promotion of sustainable building design in private developments

Pollution

- Stormwater pollution continues to impact our waterways and ocean

- There are increasing impacts of air pollution associated with increased traffic and congestion

Waste and clean environment

- We have a diminishing landfill capacity for disposal of waste

- There is limited recycling and waste reduction opportunities, incentives, and waste education

POLICY CONTEXT

Environment

In November 2016 Australia ratified the Paris agreement and hereby committed to limit global warming to below 2ºC and pursue a limit of 1.5ºC with the view of achieving net-zero emissions soon after 2050.

NSW has committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, increase resilience to climate change, and contribute to national priority projects and programs.

State programs include the Energy Savings Scheme to assist households and business cut electricity use. The NSW Government is also expected to release a $500 million Climate Change Fund for assisting advanced energy projects, energy efficiency and adaptation actions.

Strategic Planning

The UN's *New Urban Agenda* (ratified by Australia in November 2016) sets a new global standard for sustainable urban development aimed at protecting our natural areas, preserving our green space, and providing a range of social benefits to the community.

There are opportunities to build "climate smart precincts" and liveable urban areas that factor in the threat of changing climate. Green Building Council Australia offer tools, techniques and advice for creating sustainable buildings and communities.

WHERE SHOULD WE BE HEADING?

"*Cities are reaching the forefront of both climate impacts and climate action. As populations grow and climate-related natural disasters strain cities, adaptation and resilience need to be integrated into urban development*."[14]

We are a new and larger community that better can influence decisions at a regional scale and deliver effective, holistic and integrated sustainability actions. We need to work together across sectors to solve the 'wicked problems' of the future – such as environmental sustainability, housing, transport, employment, education and health.

We have the opportunity to lead best practice sustainable land use planning for the Northern Beaches community. In particular, the strategic centre of Northern Beaches Hospital Precinct in Frenchs Forest and district centres of Manly, Dee Why-Brookvale, and Mona Vale as well as the new release area of Ingleside and Warriewood offer prime opportunities to showcase sustainable development and effectively respond to the NSW Government's plans for growing Sydney in a way that is aligned with local values and unique characteristics of place. [15]

Telecommuting, co-working, globalisation and new technology trends also offer an enormous opportunity to increase our environmental sustainability and reduce our impacts.

Shared economy opportunities (e.g. car sharing) also offer significant opportunities for reducing our greenhouse emissions and make better use of our public land and natural resources.

[14] Five Emerging Trends in Climate Resilience, World Resources Institute 2016

[15] Greater Sydney Commission 2016 and Department of Planning and Environment 2014

DRAFT
GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following draft goals and strategies have been developed in direct response to the issues and considerations raised by community members during the first round of engagement.

They are a starting point for discussions with the community about how we can make the Northern Beaches an even better place to live.

1) **Our community is prepared for future climate change and we will work collaboratively to mitigate our impacts**

   a) Motivate positive changes in our response to climate change and monitor our impact over time

   b) Protect our community and respond to the risks posed by expected changes to the climate

2) **Our urban centres and assets are managed sustainably and support green developments.**

   a) Continually improve environmental standards in all new developments

   b) Improve water, energy and resource sustainability within the built environment including Council operations and assets

3) **Our community will continue to work toward sustainable use of resources**

   a) Decrease consumption wherever possible and improve the reuse and recycling of our resources to reduce waste.

   b) Create cleaner urban environments

Do you support the draft goals and strategies for achieving environmental sustainability?

Visit our website to let us know what you think - yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

Protection of the Environment

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

We are so blessed with natural beauty, immense waterways, bushland and wildlife[…] Here on the Northern Beaches, we have this in abundance and it's our biggest asset. We need to learn to live in harmony with the land.[16]

These words clearly encapsulate the sentiments of the majority of community members. Community members expressed strong concerns about climate change and the health of the environment during the first round of engagement. Catchments, coast and waterways, conservation of bushland and biodiversity are the three of their top five concerns.

We are lucky to live in an area of such dramatic beauty: low lying areas, steep escarpments and dramatic headlands. We are surrounded by significant stretches of bushland and waterways and we are relatively isolated from the rest of Sydney with only three main roads into the area (Warringah Road, Mona Vale Road and Pittwater Road/Spit Bridge). However these stunning features introduce a range of complex issues: we are vulnerable to the hazards of bushfire, coastal erosion and flooding and these risks are exacerbated by climate change and associated increases in extreme weather events (e.g. heatwaves, intense rainfall and storm surges).

[16] North Narrabeen Resident, Online Survey, 4 October 2016

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Our natural environment is under pressure from multiple sources. Increased urban sprawl, recreation and tourism, pests and weeds, pollution and illegal activities all place cumulative pressure on natural areas and introduce risks that must be actively managed:

- Loss of habitat and natural areas through land clearance and habitat fragmentation
- Introduction of weeds, companion animals and feral animals
- Impacts of tourism and uncontrolled recreational access on environmentally sensitive areas
- High levels of recreational use of environmentally sensitive waterways and bushland communities

In addition to the risks to natural areas, there are also significant risks to our public assets (such as roads and critical infrastructure) that must be effectively and collaboratively managed within an overall natural hazard risk management framework.

Mitigating and safeguarding against natural hazards present their own risks. For example, measures such as bushfire fuel reduction, flood mitigation, and management of landslip or erosion hazards have the potential of impacting on environmental values. A consultative approach is required in order to balance the need to protect life and property with the need to protect environmental values.

WHERE SHOULD WE BE HEADING?

We need to protect the environment for its own sake as well as for the sake of current and future generations. The ecological system, the flora and the fauna, are valuable and precious in their own right. They also provide essential environmental services for the community: for example the air we breathe, the water we drink and the pleasure we take from walking in nature.

Our challenge as a community is to be part of the global effort to protect the natural environment and ensure a healthy, resilient and safe future. While development and population growth is one of our greatest challenges, it also offers opportunities for more sustainable and liveable communities.

To date, land clearing for urban growth and infrastructure (commonly referred to as 'urban sprawl') has caused significant environmental loss and degradation on the Northern Beaches. This tendency is reducing and development now incorporates sustainable solutions to minimise environmental impacts while fostering greater social cohesion.

Managing and mitigating natural hazards is important to safeguard the welfare of humans and the environment. As such, environmental protection goes hand-in-hand with disaster risk management.

Disasters are increasing in frequency and severity. We must put sound environmental protection measures in place to help reduce the vulnerability of both the natural environment and life and property to hazards, and bolster their resilience and capacity to absorb the impacts of disaster events.

Our new local government area is geographically cohesive and catchment based. This gives us a good foundation for simultaneously managing hazards and protecting the natural environment while working to reduce our contribution to climate change.[17]

There is an opportunity to build the resilience of the Northern Beaches through active participation in the 100 Resilient Cities program which aims to help cities around the world become more resilient to the physical, social and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21st Century. The Greater Sydney Commission supports the Resilient Sydney office - hosted by the City of Sydney – to develop a resilience strategy for Greater Sydney.[18]

HIGH LEVEL POLICY CONTEXT

Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010–2030 builds on international commitments and provides direction to national, state and territory policies developed since then. The vision of the strategy is that Australia's biodiversity should be healthy, resilient to climate change and valued for its essential contribution to our existence.

The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) Saving Our Species (SoS) program seeks to deliver strategies and actions for species recovery and threat abatement as set out in the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. Funding of $100 million over five years has been pledged to achieve these aims.

Environmental protection is a priority of the NSW Government under both *A Plan for Growing Sydney* and North District Plan (draft),the latter of which provides the following key directions:

- Mitigate the urban heat island effect (e.g. by ensuring tree canopy is increased in urban renewal projects and for strategic and district centres)
- Integrate land use and transport planning to consider emergency evacuation needs
- Assist local communities develop a coordinated understanding of natural hazards and responses that reduce risk

[17] This two-pronged approach is commonly referred to as climate change adaptation (where we adapt to the impacts of climate change as they already are happening) and mitigation (where we reduce and stabilise the levels of heat-trapping gases such as CO_2 in the atmosphere).

[18] Greater Sydney Commission 2016

DRAFT
GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following draft goals and strategies have been developed in direct response to the issues and considerations raised by community members during the first round of engagement.

They are a starting point for discussions with the community about how we can make the Northern Beaches an even better place to live.

4) Our bushland, coasts and waterway assets are protected and managed for their natural values for future generations, allowing for appropriate and safe use and enjoyment.

a) Protect local indigenous biodiversity

b) Protect and improve the ecological condition of our bushland and natural water systems

c) Protect the natural and cultural values of Council-managed lands while ensuring that access and use is sustainable

d) Empower the community to be involved in the continued protection of our bushland, coasts and waterways

5) Our environment can withstand natural hazards (e.g. bush fire, flood, climate change and erosion), and there is a balance between ecological services and the built environment.

a) Minimise the risk to life, property and the natural environment from flood, erosion, bushfire and impacts of climate change

b) Maintain partnerships with government agencies and the community to effectively manage and respond to natural hazards

c) Maintain and improve natural hazard management, planning and warning systems

d) Facilitate a well-informed community that is able to respond effectively before, during, and after emergency situations

e) Create urban environments with improved landscaping and vegetation for the enjoyment of residents and protection of wildlife and built assets

Do you support the draft goals and strategies for protecting the natural environment?

Visit our website to let us know what you think - yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

Places for People

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

The community have told us they value the built environment of the Northern Beaches. They love the village feel, cafes, bars, shops and the wide range of sporting and recreational facilities – and they also want to see improvements to both public spaces, housing and private developments. During the first round of engagement, 26% of all comments received nominated 'planning for future communities' and 'built environment interactions' as key priorities for the region.[19]

Chief amongst community concerns is housing affordability (including affordable housing) which is pricing out young people, families and key workers. This also makes it difficult for seniors to downsize or move homes. There is only limited housing choice, very little 'communal living options' (e.g. youth dorms), and very little short term housing (e.g. crisis accommodation).

People also want to see more life in our urban spaces and better opportunities to get together in informal ways: '*overall I just want new and easier ways to meet people and make friends in a society that otherwise makes that a huge challenge.*[20]

This chapter explores how we can create diverse *places* that stimulate both physical and mental wellbeing. The next chapter will look more closely at the '*programming'* aspects of creating connected communities.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Many of our suburbs were established at a time when the roads were not congested and land was perceived to be plentiful (and awareness about environmental impacts not so advanced). The legacy of this is that many of our suburbs are car-dependent, built with a focus on single free standing houses and access to roads, and only providing limited local public amenity (e.g. footpaths, shops, parks etc.).

We now know that compact, walkable and diverse neighbourhoods with a mix of housing options and welcoming open space that caters for a variety of uses (including sports and recreation) fosters more inclusive neighbourhoods and promotes community health.[21]

'PLACES FOR PEOPLE'

Mental illness is one of the critical health issues facing Australians today, and is increasingly affecting young people. We need to pay close attention to what councils and communities can collectively do to not just treat symptoms of mental illness through conventional health measures, but also alleviate some of the causes of anxiety, stress and social isolation that are experienced by so many in our community. Recent research shows that city planning and design holds much promise for reducing this burden of disease, and for offering solutions that are affordable, accessible and equitable.[1] This is also reflected at an international level (e.g. the UN's New Urban Agenda which specifies both physical and mental health as key considerations in urban design and planning).

[1] Roe 2016

[19] Summary of community feedback, Northern Beaches Council 2016, n=2467 comments

[20] Collaroy Resident, Youth SpeakUp Survey 2012

[21] Talen and Koschinsky 2014

WHERE SHOULD WE BE HEADING?

There is increasing awareness that our health is closely linked to the natural and built environments in which we live […] The built environment has a key role to play in supporting human health as part of everyday living.[22]

While the NSW Government has the overall responsibility for health provision and treatment of diseases, local government is in a strong position to enhance the quality of life of our community by facilitating more housing choice (and affordable housing), providing integrated public and active transport, and creating good public spaces – measures that will alleviate some pressures of life. Local government can improve urban design through placemaking methods that actively involve the community in planning for social and active places. [23]

Aside from the social benefits, there is evidence that good urban design, using quality materials and creating good communal spaces, can be profitable to the developer or landowner.[24] Quality urban design can also yield substantial environmental benefits by reducing urban sprawl, energy consumption, car dependency, pollution (noise and air), and run-off as well as lessening conflicting land use.

We need to work closely with private developers, business, government agencies and the community to inspire a change in how we plan our urban centres so that we can meet housing and land-use requirements in a way that respects local values and promotes sustainability.[25] In particular, we need to have regard to the following considerations raised by the community:

Planning for a growing and diverse community

- General housing affordability (including affordable housing); limited housing choice, particularly for low and middle income households[26]
- Limited crisis and short term housing options (with particular consideration of women and children in need of refuge from domestic violence)
- Public spaces that are accessible and encourage safe, social interactions (e.g. 'safety by design')

Health and Wellbeing

- Risks of social isolation and loneliness - especially amongst seniors, young people, stay-at-home parents or carers, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, and people who live with a disability
- Increased prevalence of mental health illnesses, especially among young people
- Lack of support for new parents and families (e.g. parental support services; affordable childcare)

Recreation and community spaces

- Holistic open space planning which caters for multiple uses and draws on local community knowledge
- Need for a broader range of recreational and community facilities
- 'Whole of life' consideration (e.g. including maintenance and depreciation costs) in planning recreation and sporting facilities, and investment in quality products and creative solutions

[22] NSW Health 2015

[23] Village Well 2016: "*Placemaking is the art and science of making authentic, vibrant and resilient places that are valued by their communities and admired by visitors. It is a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to planning and development that involves understanding the culture, qualities and wisdom of its community*".

[24] New Zealand Ministry for the Environment (2005)

[25] In regards to housing growth, the draft North District Plan identifies a five year housing target of 3,400 dwellings. This additional housing supply will primarily be located within the Ingleside land release area and as part of urban renewal opportunities within the Northern Beaches Hospital precinct.

[26] With a median house price of $1.51 million at June 2016 (and no suburb having a median house price of less than $1million), soaring median rental costs at nearly double the Sydney average ($895 per week compared to $520 at June 2016), housing affordability is one of the biggest singular issues facing all demographics on the Northern Beaches. Less than 1% of housing stock (units or houses) is available for low to middle income earners (with a household income of less than $65,000 pa) to purchase. Northern Beaches Affordable Housing Needs Analysis (2016)

DRAFT
GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following draft goals and strategies have been developed in direct response to the issues and considerations raised by community members during the first round of engagement.

They are a starting point for discussions with the community about how we can make the Northern Beaches an even better place to live.

6) Our future is well planned for the diverse communities and villages across the Northern Beaches

a) Effectively prepare for future growth by balancing regional priorities with local values in our planning

b) Provide a mix of quality housing options and short term housing accommodation

c) Increase housing choice and improve housing affordability

d) Maintain the quality of our lifestyle through infrastructure improvements that keep up with growth

e) Promote and facilitate high quality urban design across all sectors (private, commercial, government and non-government)

7) Our well-designed public spaces inspire social interaction and inclusion and support health and wellbeing

a) Develop urban design requirements that support the health, wellbeing, safety and inclusion particularly for seniors and people who live with a disability

b) Collaborate with the community to design public open spaces and neighbourhoods that cater for a wide range of uses and social interaction

c) Encourage the community to be creatively involved in designing our public spaces and neighbourhoods

8) Our community is healthy, active and engaged with the Northern Beaches lifestyle and various recreational opportunities

a) Provide well maintained and safe public spaces that equitably support the active and passive recreational activities of the community

b) Encourage and promote healthy, active living through collaborative partnerships with government agencies, community and sporting groups

c) Encourage a broad range of activities that enable social interaction, stimulate wellbeing, and support people at each stage of their life

Do you support the draft goals and strategies for improving places for people?

Visit our website to let us know what you think - yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

Community and Belonging

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

The previous chapter looked at community wellbeing through the lens of physical surroundings - the places - that have a bearing on individual and community health. This chapter focuses more closely on the 'softer sides' of community wellbeing - the programming - that goes into building a sense of community and belonging (for example through arts, cultural and community events, sporting activities, service provision and community support).

Building community and belonging through arts, music and creativity was a strong theme throughout the first round of engagement, with one resident envisioning a Northern Beaches where "*ideas and imagination, engaged through the arts, play a vital role in creating new opportunities and business. They are not simply relevant to entertainment and leisure activities; they provide opportunities for people to explore*"[27]

WHAT DOES COMMUNITY AND BELONGING MEAN?

'Community and belonging' refers to the often intangible yet palatable 'sense of community', which commonly is defined as: *[…] a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together* (McMillan and Chavis, 1986).

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Our community is diverse and there are different cultural characteristics that define us. These can be roughly grouped along our preferences for how we live and the landscapes that surround us, for example: quiet bushland; family suburban settings; coastal villages; and urban/cosmopolitan centres. Each of these cultural groupings can give some indication of what values and issues are important to that particular area. For example, people who live in bushland settings are likely to share values of peace and quiet and conservation of local natural values; by contrast people who live in urban areas may value the vibrancy and liveliness of cosmopolitan settings and may embrace urban art and live music.

These nuances and associated values are important in future planning. Community members voiced a strong desire for a more inclusive and connected community across the LGA, building on shared values of protecting the environment and creating more opportunities for people to get together whether through arts, sports, recreation or music.

Similarly, community members share a concern for the wellbeing of people who may be vulnerable to social isolation or may experience unsafe domestic environments: people who somehow may be disadvantaged in terms of participating in community (and economic) life.

[27] Palm Beach Resident, Online Form, 29 September 2016

WHERE SHOULD WE BE HEADING?

Building strong and inclusive communities has significant benefits for individuals, the community and for society at large.[28] It reduces risks of social isolation and alleviates and pre-empts illness. In particular, we need to make sure that seniors can participate in community events and activities, that there is support in place for people who live with a disability, that carers are given opportunities for respite, and that people from non-English speaking backgrounds feel included and safe. Opportunities to foster a sense of community and belonging across all of Northern Beaches include:

Support and services

- Equity of access to support services across the Northern Beaches
- Support for seniors i.e. restrictions in access to health care, affordable housing and lifelong learning
- Support for special care and disabilities e.g. with childcare; youth before and after school care; respite care

Social inclusion

- Increased opportunities for people who live with a disability to participate in social and community events
- Youth need more opportunities to be mentored, consulted, and access education, training and accommodation
- Provision of affordable childcare and support for mothers to re-enter the workforce
- More mental health and sexual health support needed - clinical services and emergency accommodation
- Lack of community knowledge and awareness on how to support the inclusion of people who live with a disability or who somehow may be disadvantaged from participating in community life

Culture and creativity in urban spaces

- Supporting local artists and creating local art and creativity networks
- Availability of a diverse and evolving range of cultural and creative facilities and events that meet the needs of the whole community, including safe night-time opportunities to socialise
- Establishing creative and performance spaces and venues (including music venues and exhibition spaces and workshops)
- Inclusive opportunities for youth, families, multicultural and outdoor events
- Recognition and support for Aboriginal culture and heritage
- Support and celebration of diversity and multiculturalism through services, events, policies and plans

CREATIVITY

We often think about creativity as making something, but in fact the original meaning of the word is 'to grow'. When we are creative we feel as if the world and all that is in it is vibrantly alive.

Creativity expands our perceptions and brings new ways of thinking to problem solving - whether it's making art from waste, or assembling a building from recycled materials. Scarcity and obstacles can be turned into opportunities instead of becoming roadblocks.

Nurturing creativity is not only good for individual wellbeing and personal growth. It is also good for society. The by-products of creativity – the cultural expressions, the interesting ideas and places – help shape the identity and spirit of our community and inject colour, depth, magic, and humour into our lives and landscapes.

This is important. As our population grows and ages and housing density increases, our public domain becomes increasingly important to the wellbeing of our community.

(Creative Warringah Strategy 2014)

[28] For example, OECD demonstrated through recent comprehensive empirical research across its member countries that there is a strong correlation between inequity and economic potential. Inequality not only raises social and political but also economic concerns: it tends to drag down economic growth, and it is the rising distance of the lower 40% from the rest of society which accounts for this effect. Lower-income people cannot realise their human capital potential, which is bad for the economy as a whole. (OECD, May 2015)

DRAFT
GOALS AND STRATEGIES

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They are a starting point for discussions with the community about how we can make the Northern Beaches an even better place to live.

9) Northern Beaches culture is stimulated through the arts and a variety of cultural and creative events

a) Support local artists and creative groups to access facilities and networks and meet cultural and artistic needs of the community

b) Expand cultural activities, events and creative opportunities, including safe nightlife opportunities across the area

c) Provide more events and opportunities for young people to socialise in formal and informal ways

10) Our community feels safe and supported

a) Enable our community to feel safe and supported through the provision of quality services

b) Promote social inclusion through neighbourbood programmes

c) Build stronger communities where neighbours know and support each other

11) Our community is open and friendly, providing social and cultural opportunities for everyone

a) Facilitate a strong sense of community by encouraging community groups and volunteer opportunities

b) Enable all people - irrespective of age, gender, identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, mobility or cultural background – to participate in community life by breaking down institutional and social barriers

Do you support the draft goals and strategies for enhancing community and belonging?

Visit our website to let us know what you think - yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

Vibrant Local Economy

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

The community have told us they want a thriving and diverse local economy that provides a mix of jobs which suits a broad range of professions and lifestyles, reduces commuting times, encourages innovation, attracts business and industry, and adds vibrancy to our urban centres and villages.

The community engagement from the first round of consultation shows that economic development (diversity, innovation, growth, local employment, education, and tourism) is important for the Northern Beaches community. For instance, 14% of participants in the first round of engagement nominated this issue as a top priority.[29]

The economy has a direct bearing on the wellbeing of the community. The high cost of housing increases pressure to earn more money. In turn this emphasises the need for better education and employment choice.[30] Further, it means that families with children often are time poor and parents find it difficult to balance work commitments with the need to look after children.

Add a stressful commute on congested roads to the equation of making ends meet, and the pressures on families build up. This is particularly true for young families and young adults, who increasingly are choosing (or being forced by circumstance) to move out of the area. A strong local economy and job market is necessary for a healthy, connected community.

Seen from the business community's viewpoint, the combination of cost of housing and lack of efficient transport are posing significant challenges in attracting and retaining workers, businesses and industry to the area.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Economic growth patterns

Northern Beaches has a strong and stable economy valued at $13.35 billion in 2015 and provides an estimated 95,000 jobs.[31] The economy grew by $1 billion in the period 2005–2015 and by an estimated 5,000 jobs in the same period. While the economy and jobs have grown over the past years in absolute terms, the population has grown more. The proportion of people in the local workforce has grown by 11% over the 2005-2020 period, while local jobs grew by 5%. Consequently, the proportion of residents who live and work in the region declined from 50.2% in 2006, to 49.2% in 2011.[32]

[29] Summary of community feedback, Northern Beaches Council 2016, n=2467 comments

[30] Northern Beaches Affordable Housing Needs Analysis, 2016

[31] Northern Beaches Council, Economic Profile, economy.id

[32] Ibid

Industry composition

The main industry drivers of the economy on the Northern Beaches are 'Wholesale', 'Professional Services' and 'Healthcare' sectors. Jobs are concentrated in retail, healthcare and construction sectors. The manufacturing industry is declining (although it is still the fourth largest economic contributor) and there is market pressure for rezoning of some industrial and business zoned lands into residential. There are only a limited number of medium or large employers (over 20 employees) in the local government area (only 2% or approximately 600 businesses). The lack of diversity in industry composition is a key challenge for the future.

Employment

Northern Beaches enjoys a relatively low unemployment rate at 3.5%. However, youth employment and education is concerning with 4.7% of young people aged 15 to 19 not engaged in work or study and a further 10.2% only partially engaged. Our workforce is highly professional (28% professional and 17% managerial) and very well educated (28% have a bachelor or higher degree and 28% have a certificate, diploma or advanced diploma).[33] However jobs available in the region are not meeting the skills and aspirations of employed residents: there are five employed residents in the financial and insurance sector to every locally available finance and insurance job.

The key to addressing employment and economic growth challenges is greater business diversity. We must attract a mix of new business, ranging in both scale and in industry sector. We also need to protect and reinvigorate our employment areas by integrating them with transport and ensuring connection to the wider metropolitan and global economy. As well, the needs of small businesses should be supported – for example through business spaces/hubs, networks and support services.

[33] Northern Beaches Council, Economic Profile, economy.id

WHERE SHOULD WE BE HEADING?

The complex and interrelated challenges that affect the local economy the most are housing, transport, education (including vocational education) and availability of skilled workers. Although these areas are beyond the direct control of local government, Council can play an important advocacy and support role within the Government's overall plans for growing Sydney. [34]

Under the NSW Government's plans, the Northern Beaches Hospital Precinct in Frenchs Forest has been identified as a strategic centre and Brookvale-Dee Why, Manly and Mona Vale have been identified as district centres. These centres will be the focus of future jobs and business growth (see box below for job targets).

To achieve the job targets for the four Strategic/Direct Centres, Northern Beaches Council needs to plan for an additional 12,500 jobs over the next 20 years (this being the upper limit of the expected range). This is a 32% increase on existing jobs in these centres.

NSW GOVERNMENT TARGETS

The (Draft) District Plan identifies broad job growth targets for the Sydney metropolitan area. For Northern Beaches, jobs growth in strategic and district centres over the next 20 years is estimated to be in the following ranges:

Strategic Centre:

- **Northern Beaches Hospital Precinct:** 2,300 – 3,300 additional jobs

District Centres:

- **Brookvale-Dee Why:** 3,000-6,000 additional jobs
- **Manly:** 1,000 to 1,500 additional jobs
- **Mona Vale:** 700 to 1,700 additional jobs

[34] The Government's plans for Sydney and for Northern Beaches are described in *A Plan for Growing Sydney* (currently under review) and the (Draft) *North District Plan*. Once finalised, these plans will set long term strategic direction for the area.

DRAFT
GOALS AND STRATEGIES

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They are a starting point for discussions with the community about how we can make the Northern Beaches an even better place to live.

12) Our businesses are well-connected and thrive in an environment that supports innovation and economic growth

a) Ensure that employment lands are retained and cater for a diverse range of businesses and industry

b) Improve access for businesses to information, incentive programs and enterprise support

c) Facilitate innovative environments where start-up businesses, entrepreneurs and innovators are supported and connected

d) Support networks that are responsive to the evolving needs of the business community on the Northern Beaches

13) Our local economy provides a range of employment and education opportunities to match the skills and needs of the population

a) Facilitate new higher education and vocational training opportunities on the Northern Beaches

b) Facilitate and promote flexible work options that can reduce the need for daily commuting (e.g. telecommuting, Smart Work Hubs)

c) Attract knowledge-based industries to meet the skills and aspirations of residents and growth (e.g. Northern Beaches Hospital)

d) Expand employment, training and education opportunities for young people and people experiencing social disadvantage

14) Our local businesses create a diverse range of opportunities for work, education, leisure, and social life

a) Promote Northern Beaches as an attractive place to establish a business

b) Provide for diversified job growth and create industry clusters in our villages, Strategic and District Centres

c) Facilitate active and safe urban environments through increased economic activity and in keeping with local character

d) Enhance and extend opportunities for a sustainable tourist economy throughout the area

Do you support the draft goals and strategies for stimulating a vibrant local economy?

Visit our website to let us know what you think - yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

Community members have voiced strong frustration with traffic congestion, travel times and the lack of viable active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport options on the Northern Beaches. Though congestion affects all residents and visitors, frustrations with traffic congestion are especially acute for commuters who are dependent on car travel to get to and from work – especially if they are one of the 50.8% of the resident workforce who work outside of the local government area.

Transport, infrastructure and connectivity are key elements in creating a safe, inclusive and connected community. Poor transport options and increasing travel times is costly on several levels: social (stress, loss of time), economic (loss of productivity, difficulties in attracting and retaining business) and environmental (pollution, land use).[35]

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The Northern Beaches population is geographically dispersed across a large land area (257km^2) and with an extensive road network (in the order of 850km). Low density in many areas makes public transport less feasible and the provision and maintenance of infrastructure difficult and costly. However roads, infrastructure and public transport is essential to the future of the region.

Roads

With only three main roads into the area – Warringah Road, Mona Vale Road and Pittwater Road/Spit Bridge - we are particularly vulnerable to increases in traffic volumes as well as risks of natural hazards and storm events to these significant assets. A recent national audit of the country's infrastructure identified Warringah Road and Mona Vale Road as two of the costliest transport corridors to the Australian economy.[36] The East/West corridor is of critical importance to the economic growth of the area as it links Northern Beaches to Chatswood and the 'Global Economic Corridor' (as identified in the Government's *A Plan for Growing Sydney*).

Waterways

The Manly Ferry interchange provides an important gateway to Sydney CBD.[37] Other ferry services on the Northern Beaches include the Palm Beach and Church Point ferries. These services and related infrastructure provide essential connections to and from offshore communities.

Public transport and active transport

The Northern Beaches' main public transport corridors are restricted to bus and ferry services (there are no rail services), where the North/South route along Pittwater Road and to Manly ferry provides the most frequent and extensive service in the area. There is

[35] Recent large scaled research confirms that traffic congestion causes stress and has a direct and significant impact on our overall health and wellbeing. Haider, Kerr, and Badami 2013

[36] Infrastructure Australia 2015

[37] Nearly one fifth of all ferry users across Sydney live on the Northern Beaches. The wharf at Manly is the second busiest in Sydney after Circular Quay. NSW Ministry of Transport 2009

currently no express public transport options available on the East/West corridor (along Warringah Road and Mona Vale Road) and active travel options east/west are inhibited by topography challenges and safety issues.

The Northern Beaches enjoys an extensive network of bicycle and walking paths which provide much valued recreational opportunity. However there is only very limited supply of end of trip facilities (e.g. bike parking) at key transport interchanges.[38] The Manly Ferry interchange is one of the few places that provides undercover bike parking.

The limited transport options on the Northern Beaches and the congestion on our roads have direct impacts on the economy and on people's career choices. It also has a profound effect on people who don't drive a car and is a major risk factor in terms of social isolation as access from suburbs or more remote parts of the area to public transport hubs can be difficult. Young people, seniors, and people who live with a disability are especially affected.

Connectivity

The arrival of nbn™ network to the Northern Beaches creates exciting new opportunities for local business to sell new products and services, exploit new channels to market and to offer services globally. nbn™ is planned to be available to all business and residential premises on the Northern Beaches by 2020, with key employment hubs such as Brookvale expected to have access to nbn™ as early as April 2017.

NORTHERN BEACHES TRAVEL PATTERNS

- 71% of all daily trips are in a private vehicle. This is higher than the Sydney average of 64%
- 65% drive their own vehicle to work. The average travel to work time is 30 minutes
- Residents travel an average distance of 29km each day, with each trip being an average distance of 7km
- 17% of people walk and 7% use public transport, which is less than the Sydney average (22%, 11%)
- There are 161,000 private vehicles (averaging 1.7 cars per household) on the Northern Beaches

(Transport for NSW 2016)

[38] There is somewhere in the order of 480km of footpaths on Northern Beaches

WHERE SHOULD WE BE HEADING?

The logistical and geographical challenges of transport to and within the Northern Beaches call for strategies that not only aim to reduce road congestion through building better roads and infrastructure, but also aim to reduce overall car dependency. We need to create more jobs locally, promote flexible, digital workplaces, and integrate transport and housing in sustainable urban design that promotes active travel, public transport and carsharing options.

Provision of infrastructure, main roads and public transport is the responsibility of the NSW Government. However Council, the community and stakeholders play a crucial role in integrating transport with other strategic planning priorities and advocating for better transport solutions across the local government area, reaching isolated or low density areas.

The NSW Government has earmarked $633 million for transport investments on the Northern Beaches. Key highlights include the Bus Rapid Transit (B-Line) which will provide an express connection from Mona Vale to Sydney CBD, additional commuter parking which will take up to 800 cars off the road during peak hours, and improvements to Warringah Road (investments in underpasses), Mona Vale Road, and Wakehurst Parkway.[39] The NSW Government has also acknowledged the importance of addressing the Spit Bridge traffic bottleneck.

In addition to these improvements, Council and the Government are working together to deliver a 30km uninterrupted cycle and walkway from Palm Beach to Manly, building on the existing infrastructure.

The NSW Government's initiatives are a welcome start but do not meet the long term needs of the community. We need to think holistically about reducing car dependency while continuing to advocate for better and more sustainable transport and infrastructure. In particular, we need to advocate for express public transport that extends from Manly to Palm Beach as well as from east to west (connecting Northern Beaches Hospital Precinct with the Global Economic Corridor).

[39] Transport for NSW 2016 Northern Beaches Transport Action Plan

DRAFT
GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following draft goals and strategies have been developed in direct response to the issues and considerations raised by community members during the first round of engagement.

They are a starting point for discussions with the community about how we can make the Northern Beaches an even better place to live.

15) Our community is sustainably connected via various transport means to work, education, and leisure opportunities across Sydney

a) Facilitate and promote safe transport options that reduce car-based commuter travel

b) Improve transport options to broader Sydney (beyond CBD), especially along the East/West transport corridor

16) Our community and visitors are able to easily access and enjoy the diverse villages and places within the Northern Beaches

a) Improve public and active transport options and connectivity to better meet the community's needs for travel within the area

b) Facilitate and promote cycling and walking as safe and convenient transport options

c) Improve parking options in centres, villages and places

d) Deliver and maintain assets and infrastructure

17) Our community and visitors are able to easily connect and communicate through reliable communication technologies

a) Provide public spaces that are connected through communications and WiFi technologies

b) Facilitate business-friendly environments that are supported by digital and physical communications infrastructure

Do you support the draft goals and strategies for improving transport, infrastructure and connectivity?

Visit our website to let us know what you think - yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

Good Governance

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

"I believe the overarching issue is to give the public a more direct input into the decision making of projects, issues, planning for the future and even Council budgets. Electing officials with their own interests is not enough. The public needs to have a more direct involvement which cuts out special interests and re-establishes trust into politicians."[40]

As clearly articulated above, good governance is important to the Northern Beaches community, and especially in light of the recent amalgamation. Responses to a recent independent community satisfaction survey indicated that 'being a well-run and managed council' was a top priority for the community, followed by 'decisions made in the interest of the community' and 'providing value for money for my rates'.[41]

During the first round of community engagement for the CSP, the values of fair representation, transparency and accountability came across strongly across all themes. The community needs Council to provide strong leadership in responding to and advocating on behalf of their evolving needs. They want Council to listen in a genuine way and that decisions are made fairly and equitably on their behalf. Decisions and transactions need to be ethical and financially sound in the long term.

The community want Council to fairly balance local needs with long term, strategic priorities in an unbiased way: "*Councils need to remember they are there to serve the people - this means listening to all groupings, not just those few squeaky wheels who make the most noise*."[42]

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

As a newly amalgamated Council, it is a top priority to deliver high quality services to the community while working hard to effectively integrate systems and processes that enable transparency and accountability.

The merger of the three former Councils' organisational cultures, policies and procedures, is difficult and will take time. However we are in a strong starting position, as each of the three former Councils (Manly, Warringah and Pittwater) delivered a high standard of service and were all characterised by a strong customer focus.

We are presently working to draw the best elements together from three former organisations in creating a new organisation based on a strong public service culture and a shared desire to achieve good outcomes for the community in the long term.

[40] Frenchs Forest Resident, Online Survey, 12 October 2016
[41] JWS Research, 2016
[42] Palm Beach Resident, Online Form, 5 November 2016

WHERE SHOULD WE BE HEADING?

A culture of transparency and accountability is critical to good governance and especially for an organisation the size of Northern Beaches Council with more than 1,800 employees. Regular and clear corporate and financial reporting, internal auditing and rigorous risk management are some of the key mechanisms for embedding and maintaining a culture of accountability and being able to effectively direct and lead the organisation. However, these mechanisms tend to add to bureaucracy by introducing rules, procedures and documentation requirements and may stifle creativity and adaptability if not executed well.

As a new organisation, our focus is to develop integrated systems and safeguards that are adaptable to the evolving and diverse needs of the community. This challenges us to balance diligence and rigour with innovation and creativity.

Freedom in discipline

The community have told us they want less 'red tape' and bureaucracy. The consultation also showed a desire for Council to be innovative and progressive, showing strong leadership and vision: "*Lead the way to be innovative, sustainable, efficient and open*".[43]

However it is also clear that the community wants assurance that there are clear processes and procedures that will ensure fair and transparent decision making – mechanisms that tend to add to bureaucracy.

The tension between diligence and innovation is inherent to any organisation. The way forward is to build trust and communicate well within the organisation and externally.[44] Genuine communication, clarity on outcomes and effective delegation of responsibility is necessary for creativity and innovation to take place. Relations built on trust foster an organisational culture of continuous learning, where discipline and ethical conduct are internalised and embedded in the culture rather than imposed from the top. In the words of Aristotle: through discipline comes freedom.

Good governance requires a sound and clearly-defined working relationship between the administration and the elected council. The *NSW Local Government Act* 1993 clearly distinguishes between functions (which relate mostly to the administration) and decision-making (which mainly relates to the elected Council) and provides in principle guidance for everything that Council does – see box below for good governance principles.

GOOD GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

Good governance is clearly defined in the NSW Local Government Act 1993 – (not a direct transcript):

Guiding principles – functions

- Strong and effective representation, leadership, planning and decision-making
- Best possible value for residents and ratepayers
- Effective and efficient services and regulation to meet the diverse needs of the local community
- Application of integrated planning and reporting framework (IP&R reporting)
- Collaboration with the NSW government and other councils and stakeholders to achieve desired outcomes for the local community
- Management of lands and other assets so that current and future local community needs can be met in an affordable way
- Fair, ethical and non-biased operations
- Consultative and supportive working environment for staff

General principles – decision-making

- Recognition of diverse local community needs and interests
- Consideration of social justice principles
- Consideration of the long term and cumulative effects of actions on future generations
- Consideration of the principles of ecologically sustainable development
- Transparent and accountable decision-making
- Active engagement with local communities

[43] Frenchs Forest Resident, Listening Post 11 September 2016
[44] Govindarajan and Trimble 2010

DRAFT
GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following draft goals and strategies have been developed in direct response to the issues and considerations raised by community members during the first round of engagement.

They are a starting point for discussions with the community about how we can make the Northern Beaches an even better place to live.

18) A transparent Council that is trusted to make decisions on behalf of the community

a) Demonstrate a high standard of transparency and accountability

b) Provide regular, honest and transparent reporting of decisions

c) Ensure decisions and transactions are ethical, efficient and equitable

19) A Council that efficiently and effectively responds to the evolving needs of the community

a) Facilitate simple and consistent customer interactions through streamlined systems and processes

b) Ensure the long term financial sustainability of Council and effective maintenance of assets and service delivery

c) Identify and understand community service needs and satisfaction with Council

Do you support the draft goals and strategies for ensuring good governance?

Visit our website to let us know what you think - yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

Participation and Partnerships

WHY IS THIS A PRIORITY?

"[The] community must be involved, well informed and work together, for the benefit of the Community, as a whole. There is no room for self-interest or grand standing. Appreciate what we have, what we have achieved and move forward in harmony with each other and the land."[45]

The involvement of the community in government is an essential part of democracy and builds strong communities. Community participation leads to better decision making and supports effective functioning of government through improved trust and support.

There is a wealth of local knowledge, professional specialist expertise and creative thinking within the community. This is a good foundation for collaborations to create a 'safe, inclusive and connected community'. Building on local knowledge is also important in regards to advocating effectively on behalf of the community on complex issues that are beyond the direct control of Council (namely transport, housing, employment and planning for more cohesive neighbourhoods).

The importance of participation and engagement in decision-making emerged as a strong theme in the first round of engagement. Community members expressed concern about equitable representation in the new local government area. Many residents sought assurance that they could still have a voice on matters that are important to them within the larger Council area.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

It is important for Council to be flexible and responsive to the evolving ways our community connects and engages. Ensuring representation and participation across demographics (namely age, gender, socio-economic status, cultural and educational backgrounds) is key to decision making that is responsive to the diverse needs of the community.

Traditionally, government has engaged more routinely with people who have time to participate and found it difficult to reach the "time poor" majority of the population. This challenges Council to rethink methods of engagement and consider new technologies to ensure broader representation across the spectrum of demographics and across broad perspectives on specific issues.

[45] North Narrabeen resident, Online Survey, 4 October 2016

WHERE SHOULD WE BE HEADING?

In moving towards our vision and creating an inclusive community, we need to make sure that communication and engagement methods are relevant, targeted and effective to ensure broad representation across all demographics. We also need to embrace opportunities for collaboration across a range of areas that enable better outcomes for the community in the long term.

We need to hear from the whole community - from young and old, time-rich and time-poor - how they would like to be involved so that their values and views are fairly represented and taken into consideration. Council also needs to rethink its role and work past traditional boundaries of responsibilities regarding our duty of care to current and future communities. Council is not just about 'roads, rubbish and rates'. It is an intermediary at a local level that collaborates closely with a broad range of stakeholders within the shared reference of enhancing the wellbeing of the community.

The complex challenges that lie ahead require holistic and integrated planning that transcends organisational and departmental boundaries. For example, 'health' is not just the responsibility of NSW Department of Health and our hospitals. In the broadest of sense, 'health' is about how we live, work and play and we need to work pre-emptively to reduce pressures that contribute to modern day diseases and ill health.

What's at stake is beyond 'having a say' on isolated local issues. Public participation and partnerships are necessary for us to understand the 'big picture' and work together across areas. Many of these (i.e. health, environment, transport, education and employment) have traditionally existed in 'silos', defined by State level budgets and lines of responsibility.

Council can play a facilitation role in bringing together a multitude of stakeholders and diverse community groups. This will enable us to find balanced, innovative and modern solutions to the complex challenges that lie ahead.

BARRIERS TO ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT AND REPRESENTATION

Low rates of civic engagement, particularly for younger generations has been identified as an area of concern across western democracies with a shift away from organisational, institutional and political allegiance to alliances with issues and causes that resonate with an individual's lifestyle and values. Far from apathetic, disillusionment with political leaders and reduced levels of trust in political institutions have contributed to this shift away from traditional forms of engagement towards more diverse forms including consumer politics, community campaigns and engagement with international networks facilitated by online technology

Barriers exist within traditional forms of civic and political participation for young people. These include: competing pressures of work, study, health and important relationships resulting in being time poor; perceived exclusivity of groups; feeling overwhelmed; being unaware of opportunities or pathways to participation; experiencing disadvantage; perceived apathy and, for young people, adult-centric language and branding of civic engagement with images that aren't reflective of youth and civic life/activity.

DRAFT
GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following draft goals and strategies have been developed in direct response to the issues and considerations raised by community members during the first round of engagement.

They are a starting point for discussions with the community about how we can make the Northern Beaches an even better place to live.

20) Our community is actively engaged in decision-making processes

a) Establish a fair and representative engagement structure that enables a diverse community to engage in local neighbourhood matters

b) Enable community members to participate in decision-making with more engagement opportunities

c) Undertake innovative and adaptive community engagement

d) Improve community understanding of how decisions are made for the local area

21) Our Northern Beaches Council builds and maintains strong partnerships and advocates effectively on behalf of the community

a) Develop partnerships to deliver facilities and targeted services and programs to meet community needs

b) Facilitate collaboration between community groups, businesses and non-government organisations on projects and programs

c) Understand and advocate on behalf of community needs regionally, and at State and Federal levels

Do you support the draft goals and strategies for promoting participation and partnerships?

Visit our website to let us know what you think - yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

APPENDIX

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(Click on the link to open the documents)

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