

13 PENNANT HILLS TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN SURVEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In 2006, a Master Plan project undertaken for the Pennant Hills Town Centre identified the need for a more comprehensive study of the Centre following the release of State Government subregional targets to guide the plan.
- The 2016 Strategic Planning Program includes a project to undertake a Pennant Hills Community Survey prior to commencing a review of the Pennant Hills Master Plan in 2017.
- It is recommended that an on-line and pedestrian-intercept survey be undertaken to identify and establish the vision, principles and key outcomes that should guide the future review of the Pennant Hills Town Centre Master Plan.
- It is recommended that ratepayers (residential and commercial) in Pennant Hills and Thornleigh suburbs, business tenants in the Pennant Hills and Thornleigh Town Centres, community progress groups and peak time visitors be invited to participate in the survey. Do

RECOMMENDATION

THAT :

1. A community survey be undertaken in accordance with the consultation strategy outlined in Group Manager's Report No. PL48/16 for the purpose of identifying and establishing the vision, principles and key outcomes that should guide a future review of the Pennant Hills Town Centre Master Plan.
2. The Acting General Manager be authorised to approve any consultation material and/or additional consultation techniques recommended by Council's community consultation specialist to engage with the community.
3. Council accept receipt of written submissions in addition to feedback provided in the survey.
4. Any responses to the survey and written submissions received be evaluated and a report prepared for Council's consideration.

PURPOSE

On 18 May 2016, Councillors were briefed on the progress, consultation method and draft content of a stakeholder online survey, to establish the vision, principles and key outcomes that should guide a future review of the Pennant Hills Town Centre Master Plan.

At the briefing, it was agreed that a report would be progressed to the next Council meeting seeking a resolution to proceed with the consultation.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Report is to seek endorsement to undertake a stakeholder online survey and pedestrian-intercept survey as the consultation methodology for this project.

BACKGROUND

Pennant Hills Town Centre is clustered around the Pennant Hills Railway Station. The land comprises four precincts including the civic precinct (zoned RE1 Public Recreation), service precinct (zoned B6 Enterprise Corridor), retail precinct (zoned B2 Local Centre) and office precinct (zoned B5 Business Development).

The Centre serves the local population of Pennant Hills and surrounding suburbs, providing neighbourhood shops, food services, professional services, commercial offices, a district library facility, and transport services, being strategically located on the Northern Railway Line, and arterial Cumberland Highway.

State and Regional Context

The draft *North Subregional Strategy 2007* of the *Sydney Metropolitan Strategy 2006* identifies Pennant Hills as a Village Centre, defined by a strip of shops and surrounding residential area within 5 to 10 minute walk containing a small supermarket, hairdresser, take-away food shops, servicing between 2,100 and 5,500 dwellings.

The Greater Sydney Commission has recently been created as a dedicated new body which will drive the implementation of the 2014 Metropolitan Strategy '*A Plan for Growing Sydney*' across Sydney's six subregions. Hornsby Shire is located within the North District, and the Strategy identifies Pennant Hills as being located within an Urban Renewal Corridor that is strategically located beside the Northern Railway Line.

The *North District Plan* when made is likely to address:

- A vision for housing and employment growth in the subregion, consistent with *A Plan for Growing Sydney*;
- The distribution of housing and employment at the Local Government Area level;
- The goals, directions and actions contained within *A Plan for Growing Sydney*; and
- The infrastructure required to support housing and employment growth within the subregion.

The Greater Sydney Commission was established in January 2016 and is responsible for preparing the *North District Plan*, with public exhibition to commence before January 2017.

Local Planning Context

Pennant Hills has been the subject of previous planning studies including the *Pennant Hills Commercial Study 1993* and the *Commercial Centres Study 2006*, outlined below.

1. *Pennant Hills Commercial Centre Study 1993*

Planning controls for the Pennant Hills Town Centre in the *Hornsby Development Control Plan 2013* and *Hornsby Local Environmental Plan 2013* were informed by the 1993 *Pennant Hills Commercial Centre Study* and associated *Strategy Plan*. The *Plan* provided a framework that sought to create an integrated centre with improved vitality, seeking to reduce traffic conflicts, reorientate the focus of the Centre away from Pennant Hills Road, to pedestrianise Hillcrest Road and Warne Street, to integrate community services, to provide more pedestrian spaces, opportunities for shop top-housing and enhance the Centre's landscaping.

The implementation of the Plan delivered a number of achievements for the Centre, including the formation of Wollundry Park as a key public open space, improvements to and expansion of Pennant Hills Library, as well as pedestrian and street calming improvements to Hillcrest Road.

2. *The Commercial Centres Study 2006*

In 2006, Council commenced a project to prepare master plans for specific major commercial centres as part of the *Employment Lands Review*, including the commercial centres of Pennant Hills, Carlingford and Berowra, and were undertaken in consultation with land owners, public authorities, business groups and community groups.

The intent of the master plans was to demonstrate how housing and urban renewal could be achieved within the commercial centres to stimulate vitality and to address preferred uses, the provision of shop-top housing, strategies for car parking, principles for pedestrian amenity and vehicular access, and considerations for the urban design and streetscape of the Centres.

At the time, community feedback indicated that the scope of the study should be expanded to include a comprehensive review of economic, traffic and parking, environmental, social and culture, and urban design. Council subsequently resolved not to proceed with the master plan until the release of the Subregional Plan and supported the need for a more comprehensive review.

DISCUSSION

Based on recent urban renewal projects in Hornsby, Epping and expansion of employment centres in Macquarie Park and Norwest Business Park, the feasibility of redeveloping land within Pennant Hills based on Council's current strategy is in decline. The character and identity of the centre needs renewal with issues surrounding traffic and parking, night time economy, outdoor dining areas, public domain improvements and the creation of a focal point to be addressed.

Consistent with Council's previous position, the commencement of a community survey prior to the release of the North District Plan is appropriate to ensure that Council's future planning response is reflective of the community's aspirations and vision for the Pennant Hills Town Centre. The key drivers that will assist with a future review of planning strategy for the centre include:

- the completion of the Pennant Hills Railway Station upgrade as part of the North Freight Line extension project;
- the Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney identifies Pennant Hills Road Corridor for urban renewal;
- the NorthConnex tunnel, anticipated to be completed in 2019, will remove heavy vehicles and regional traffic from Pennant Hills Road in an underground tunnel;
- recent developer interest over various sites in the Town Centre; and
- scheduled upgrade to the Pennant Hills Library to a Multi-Purpose District Hub.

Further to the above, the future North District Plan is likely to identify the second tranche of dwelling and employment targets for Hornsby and provide actions for addressing future growth along the Pennant Hills Road Corridor. Therefore, consideration should also be given to the inclusion of the Thornleigh Town Centre within the review given Council's existing commitment to review existing floorspace controls within this centre.

In recognition of the strategic importance of the Pennant Hills Town Centre at the State and local level, it is appropriate that Council commence the process of planning for the future of the centre in consultation with the community. This process would assist to establish the vision, principles and key outcomes that should guide the future review of the Pennant Hills Town Centre Master Plan. Similar to other strategic projects commenced for the rural lands and Brooklyn, it is proposed that this process be commenced by undertaking a community survey, with the scope to identify:

- existing strengths of the Town Centre to be retained and enhanced;
- the broader community's vision, principles and key outcomes for the Town Centre to underpin the master planning process, including the size of study area, future land use and density and solutions to key issues experienced by the Centre; and
- Council improvements and priorities for the Town Centre in the short and long term.

The above matters provide for a wide range of issues to be addressed. Initial consultation via survey would confirm their relevance and whether additional matters warrant consideration.

CONSULTATION STRATEGY

The Miller Group has been engaged as specialist consultants to assist the design of a stakeholder online survey and a pedestrian intercept survey, and to assist with the evaluation of survey responses. The surveys will seek feedback on community and visitor attitudes and priorities to revitalisation constraints and opportunities for Pennant Hills Town Centre.

It is recommended that ratepayers (residential and commercial) in Pennant Hills and Thornleigh suburbs, business tenants in the Pennant Hills and Thornleigh Town Centres, community progress groups and peak time visitors be invited to participate in the survey.

It is proposed that the survey be run using an on-line platform (Survey Monkey) that can be accessed from home, mobile devices or from Council's libraries. Visitors would be surveyed through face to face street intercepts and a limited number of hard copies would be made available for invited respondents who may not have computer access. Appropriate measures and control will be applied to preserve the integrity of the process.

The surveys would be facilitated of a four week period during the second quarter of the 2016/2017 financial year and the results would be reported to a Council meeting in 2017. Subject to Council endorsement, it is likely that the survey results would inform a tender brief for the future review of the Pennant Hills Town Centre Master Plan.

BUDGET

As a scheduled project on the Strategic Planning Program, sufficient funds are available to cover project costs associated with the community survey within the 2015/2016 financial year budget.

POLICY

There are no policy implications associated with this Report.

CONCLUSION

The Strategic Planning Program includes a project for a community survey to inform a planning response in the Pennant Hills Town Centre. As the first step in the process, it is recommended that Council undertake an internet based survey of all ratepayers (residential and commercial) in Pennant Hills and Thornleigh suburbs, business tenants in the Pennant Hills and Thornleigh Town Centres, community progress groups and peak time visitors to identify the future vision, principles and key outcomes that should guide future planning. Given the current drivers for change, the survey results would assist in preparing a future brief for the comprehensive review of the Master Plan.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

The officer responsible for the preparation of this Report is the Manager, Strategic Planning – Fletcher Rayner - who can be contacted on 9847 6744.

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Attachments:

There are no attachments for this report.

File Reference: F2015/00414
Document Number: D06953430