



Western Sydney Aerotropolis Planning Package

Submission from the Committee for Sydney

March 2020

About the Committee for Sydney

The Committee for Sydney is an independent think tank and champion for the whole of Sydney, providing thought leadership beyond the electoral cycle. We bring people together to solve the problems of today and tomorrow.

With over 150 member organisations, we work on behalf of Sydney, not the interest of any industry or sector. Our goal is to build on our already strong history of shining a light on critical issues shaping our city and developing a suite of actions for a better future.

Executive Summary

How we plan for the future of Western Sydney will shape the city for generations to come. The Western Sydney Aerotropolis Precinct will play an integral part of this and the Committee for Sydney welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to the Western Sydney Aerotropolis Planning Package.

As a general principle, the Committee supports the NSW Government with their aims and objectives in these documents.

We see the biggest risk to a successful outcome being the possibility of developing the aerotropolis in the form of traditional suburban sprawl.

The most important thing to get right about this opportunity is to not let that happen – in other words, to ensure that all development other than warehousing and logistics is concentrated around train stations in compact, walkable patterns.

We suggest a simple test be used for evaluating project proposals: would the project locate jobs or homes somewhere where people will not realistically be able to walk to the train station? If the answer is yes, then don't permit it. (Again, warehousing and logistics jobs are an exception.)

One tool to shape growth along these lines is to set aside a large area of land away from train stations as protected open space. Another tool is to ensure that finalised documents align with the Local Strategic Planning Statements of Penrith City Council and Liverpool City Council.

But the larger point is that this planning package should provide crystal clear direction to concentrate growth around the train stations.

Background

It is a rarity to have the ability to design a city from the ground up. We need to ensure that the growth Sydney is planning to accommodate in Western Sydney increases, not decreases the liveability of our city. For the Aerotropolis, this means a city that is walkable, green, sustainable and liveable. We need to ensure that this brand-new city is focussed on how friendly public spaces are to the communities they serve, prioritising the human-scale, rather than the car-centric design we have been exposed to over the last decades.

Now is the time to ensure that the city we are planning for is the city that future generation will want to live in. Over the next forty years we will have to accommodate the same number of people as we had to accommodate over the past two hundred years.

Our Submission

Our submission makes general comments regarding the planning package and makes mention of a wide range of our past work.

We note that at this stage the documents do not specific zoning lot by lot nor is there a discussion of how specific locations will look.

Specific Response

The Western Sydney Aerotropolis Plan (the Plan) sets out 10 objectives which focus on productivity, sustainability, infrastructure and collaboration, and liveability. The Committee strongly agrees that the development of a new city should focus on these objectives.

We note that, the Plan consists of 10 precincts, of which six will be initially planned and four will be undertaken at a later date:

Initial precincts

Aerotropolis core
Northern gateway
Wianamatta-South Creek
Badgerys Creek
Agribusiness
Mamre Road

Remaining precincts

Dwyer Road
Kemps Creek
North Luddenham
Rossmore

The Committee notes and support the staged development approach of the Western Sydney Aerotropolis precinct. We believe that a staged approach ensures that the right development occurs in the right locations at the right time.

The Development Control Plan sets out a set of key principles for each of the precincts – while we believe that these are broadly correct, we are concerned that there is a lack of specificity in some of the principles that leaves open the potential for 'Business as Usual' to be delivered – essentially that there is scope within some principles, while aiming to achieve a great place, could be met while delivering underwhelming or unliveable places.

While we broadly support the of the principles, they need to ensure the development does not result in traditional urban sprawl, **but rather development is required to deliver the principals of "density done well."**

The Committee strongly supports the proposal for a **large portion of the precinct being zoned for Environmental and Recreation**. We ask that the State Government consider the purchase of land that falls with this zoning in order to provide greater protection and to align with the Premier's Priority of 'increasing the proportion of homes in urban areas within 10 minutes' walk of quality green, open

space by 10% by 2023', and ' increasing the tree canopy and green cover across Greater Sydney by planting one million trees by 2022'.

We also suggest that while finalising the planning package consideration is given to **alignment** with the Penrith City Council's **Local Strategic Planning Statement** and Liverpool City Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement.

We note that more detailed precinct plans for the initial precincts (above) will be on exhibition by mid-2020 and we look forward to providing further detail submissions in due course. In the meantime, we make the following comments:

- Aerotropolis Core Precinct:
 - We believe that this objective could be strengthened by mentioning solutions to reduce reliance on private vehicle ownership and a reduction in car spaces.
 - Amend 2.1.2(f) to read – Develop street networks and links to rail stations to accommodate public transport infrastructure provision to allow for a 30-minute city and create pedestrian orientated development centred around key destinations and around transport nodes, for example metro station/s. Such networks should be developed to reduce the reliance on private vehicles and the number of required car parks.

- Northern Gateway Precinct:
 - While commercial employment uses are vital to provide jobs and place, the Committee believes that there is a need to permit residential development in locations that support the principles of transit-orientated development. This is because the community should be able to rely upon public transport while reducing their reliance on private vehicles.
 - Amend 2.2.2(b) to read – Facilitate a wide variety of high order employment uses and ~~limited~~ mixed residential development in locations that support the principles of transit-oriented development.

What makes for a good place?

The Committee strongly believes that the above examples are what is required to create a great city.

It is not just the Committee that believes this. In fact, in 2019, the Committee engaged IPSOS to undertake polling in relation to a broad range of issues currently facing Greater Sydney. We asked 1,000 Sydneysiders what their top ten favourite suburbs to live and visit were. The findings are instructive:

Visit:

- Manly

Live:

- Manly

- Sydney
 - Newtown
 - Cronulla
 - Bondi Beach
 - Chatswood
 - Parramatta
 - Bondi
 - Balmoral
 - Penrith
- Sydney
 - Bondi Beach
 - Mosman
 - Cronulla
 - Kirribilli
 - Avalon Beach
 - Vaucluse
 - Rose Bay
 - Bondi

The data illustrated that Sydney's favourite suburbs are places that feels safe, have high quality health services, affordable housing, reliability and efficient public transport, and good job prospects. We encourage the NSW Government to have the ambition to make the new city as good, if not better, than these places. The polling also illustrated that while more than two thirds of the residents in the Western City expect to live in low density, support for increasing density is highest in satellite centres and outer suburbs.

As this is essentially green field development, the Committee believes that there is a great opportunity to create an incredible third city. Reference should be given to the Committee's previous papers, including:

- [Reclaiming Sydney's High Streets](#);
- [Making Great Places: Density Done Well](#); and
- [Re-balancing the city: town centre renewal for Sydney](#).

The Committee believes that reference should also be made to other NSW Government policies such as:

- The End to End Housing Strategy (which is in development); and
- Low-Rise Medium Density Code and the related Design Guide.

The Committee looks forward to the outcome of this planning package and welcomes the further opportunity to provide a submission on the particulars of the individual precincts when they are exhibited mid this year.

Conclusion

The Committee for Sydney welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Western Sydney Aerotropolis Planning Package.

The Committee is aware of the complexities in creating Sydney's third city. However, we believe that this presents us with an immense opportunity to create a city on the back of the lessons learned from the development of the eastern and central city over the last 200 years.

We urge the urge the Western Sydney Planning Partnership consider our submission and implement our recommendations.

Should the Western Sydney Planning Partnership require further information, please reach out to [REDACTED]