

**Neutral Bay Alive Community Consultation Group
Meeting Minutes
Thursday 19 October 2023
6.00pm start, Ros Crichton Pavilion**

Neutral Bay Alive Community Consultation Group

In Attendance (in-person):

- Alison Bentley (AB)
- Fiona Gracie (FG)
- John Lucas (JL)
- Meredith Trevallyn-Jones (MTJ)
- Peter Marshall (PM)
- Peter Moor (PMo)
- Rob McKay (RM)

In Attendance (online):

- Anna Summerhayes (AS)

Apologies:

- Candice Tabone (CT)
- Kristina Kazmer (KK)

North Sydney Council (NSC) Staff

In Attendance (in-person):

- Neal McCarry (NMc), A/Manager Strategic Planning
- Emma Booth (EB), Team Leader Design
- Jing Li (JLi), Senior Strategic Planner – Urban Design
- Solmaz Khabir (SK), Strategic Planner – Urban Design

Presiding: Peter Marshall (PM)

The meeting started at 6.00pm

1. Acknowledgment of Country

PM opened the meeting by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which the meeting was held.

2. Introduction

PM welcomed all members of the Neutral Bay Alive Community Consultation Group ('the Group' or NBACCG) to the meeting and invited EM (NSC) to introduce herself to the Group.

EM (NSC) provided a concise introduction regarding her current role and position at NSC. She emphasised her background and experience in the context of the previous Military Road Corridor Planning Study (MRCPS).

3. General Update

i. Minutes of Previous Meetings

PM enquired if there were any concerns or objections regarding the minutes from the preceding meeting, and no issues were carried forth.

ii. Business Arising

PM enquired about any outstanding matters. He also pointed out that the actions from the previous meeting minutes are on today's meeting agenda.

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4. Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study

i. Supporting information on selected key sites:

- **The rezoning review panel outcome for 1-7 Rangers Rd & 50 Yeo St (PP)**

NMc (NSC) provided an update on the rezoning review panel's decision and Council's position on this planning proposal. Council initially rejected the planning proposal, which prompted the proponent to follow the rezoning review pathway. On 11 September 2023, Council received the panel's recommendation that the Planning Proposal proceed to gateway determination subject to certain amendments. The rezoning review record of decision was distributed to the Group via email after the last meeting.

The key changes required by the panel before submitting the proposal for gateway determination include:

- reducing the maximum height
- removing a two-story retail strip
- lowering the floor-to-floor height
- increasing building articulation along Yeo Street
- removal of the additional public car spaces in excess of Council's DCP rates
- ensuring no further shadow impact on Yeo Street properties compared to the rescinded MRCPS

NMc (NSC) clarified that in response to the panel's decision, Council has prepared a letter to the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) requesting that specific issues and concerns related to the proposed built form and overshadowing be addressed appropriately in any Gateway Determination issued. Council is exploring ways to achieve a more appropriate outcome through preparation of a site-specific Development Control Plan (DCP).

- **Rationale Behind the Selection of Opportunity Sites**

NMc (NSC) provided detailed clarification regarding the rationale behind the selection of the opportunity sites including a general focus on the town centre core, proximity to transport nodes and primary stops, solar access, opportunities with public plaza interfaces, minimising site isolation, lot sizes and ownership patterns. Additionally, the impact on the surrounding area was considered to ensure an appropriate transition in the built form.

The initial approach of the rescinded MRCPS was discussed, along with the purpose of the new planning study, emphasising that it is a revised version rather than starting from scratch.

- **Discussion points:**

- The Group discussed the idea of taking a broader view of height and density considerations across the entire town centre, not limiting the focus solely to identified key sites.
- NMc (NSC) clarified this by explaining that a balance must be made between various planning controls, considering factors such as topography, zoning, lot size, etc.
- The Group raised questions regarding how this planning study aligns with state government initiatives to increase height and density.
- NMc (NSC) clarified that as per council's local strategic planning statement and local housing strategy, the primary objective of this planning study is not necessarily to deliver increased housing supply.

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- **Shadow analysis and solar protection**

JLi (NSC) further provided more explanation on the key objectives of selecting an

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opportunity site, focusing on achieving a balance between building height and public benefits. This included exploring opportunities for enhancing public amenities, such as the pedestrian links upgrade between Grosvenor Plaza and Military Road. Additionally, factors such as solar protection and integration with residential areas played a significant role in determining the suitability of sites, and siting of increased building heights to ensure adequate solar access and an appropriate transition to nearby residential zones. In addition, JLi (NSC) outlined for Site 1, the draft study recommends allocating any increased heights to the north, and a lower height to the south to protect solar access for any future plaza, considered valuable for the community.

To address community concerns on solar access, an in-depth solar analysis was undertaken, considering public open spaces, and residential properties along Yeo Street. The discussion also delved into potential controls for solar protection, which are not currently covered by the existing DCP.

JLi (NSC) presented built form consideration for solar access protection, focusing on Grosvenor Plaza, Rangers Road Plaza, and residential properties along Yeo Street. These included:

- a comparison of the existing LEP/DCP built form and the proposed built form was discussed to improve solar access at Grosvenor Plaza.
- the proposed shape and orientation of Rangers Road Plaza to protect the solar access within the plaza area.
- an analysis of individual residential properties on Yeo Street was explored to ensure ADG and DCP required solar access can be retained. Additional upper-level setbacks are recommended to ensure any additional height increase would not create unreasonable shadow impact to those residential properties.

- **Key point of further discussions:**

- questions were raised about the upper-level setback and their integration into architectural design.
- the Group discussed the proposed 'wedding cake' built form proposed for the Coles site DA is not a proper outcome and the potential built form recommended by Council is more efficient.
- strategies to manage noise on Rangers Road Plaza were discussed, with council proposing various landscape strategies, including the placement of seating areas, within the plaza and potential treatments of the interface with Military Road through greenery and trees.
- floor-to-floor height discussions were guided by ADG requirements for retail and residential spaces.

- ii. **Case study - development application plan of "The Albany"**

SK (NSC) presented the architectural design of the Albany site. Demonstrated the site setting, integration of the built form, and public open spaces to help function the mixed-use development properly. The importance of making a balance between all the design considerations such as separation of residential entry from retail and commercial to keep the resident's amenity and consideration of combined design strategy were noted.

The Group discussed conversations around the activation and location of the plaza and shared their personal experiences regarding the function of the public plaza.

Key point of further discussions:

- The Coles and Arkadia design options for the service lane were discussed among the

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team and they were concerned about the parking issues, inflexibility for outdoor dining and shops with attributed to the service lane.

- NMc (NSC) clarified that Coles concept for the plaza is a 'placeholder' design, however the need to create a balance between the accessibility to the shops and achieve the pedestrianised plaza were emphasised, referring to some examples that were presented to the Group previously.

iii. Previous Australian post office site update

NMc (NSC) noted no updates or information had come to council regarding the future development of the site.

5. Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study -Traffic and Transport Study

i. Existing key traffic and transport issues and findings

- NMc (NSC) outlined the status of the study... It was noted that the final report is anticipated in a few weeks.
- The scope of work, including background study on different strategic and local contexts such as state government policies, council policies, and plans, was explained.
- Details about existing conditions, such as travel patterns, car ownership, active transport, road network, and parking occupancy, were presented.
- Intersection performance, measured by the level of service (LOS), was discussed as a baseline for assessing the impact of various change and growth scenarios.
- The closure of Grosvenor Lane as a test case for its impact on the road network was examined and the outcome was reviewed by the internal traffic expert team for accuracy.
- Parking survey results were discussed, with a focus on achieving an 80% public car parking occupancy rate in the study area.
- Discussion was also had on various parking management strategies, such as variable time restrictions, technology, and digital signage.

NMc summarised analysis recommendations from Stantec, including treatment of footpaths near bus stops and exploring new or improved pedestrian crossings on Yeo Street and Grosvenor Street due to expected high activity levels.

Key point of further discussions:

- Questions were raised regarding parking rate recommendations for future developments.
- Information on recent amendments to parking rates in NSDCP was provided.
- It was confirmed that a data breakdown at each intersection would be included in the final traffic and transport report.
- Concerns were raised about Military Road as a barrier and how it is addressed in the planning study. Concerns included pedestrian overpasses, underpasses, and limited crossing times.
- Proposals for pedestrian crossing treatments at intersections with Military Road was discussed, with related challenges highlighted.
- The Group questioned the potential traffic impact on local roads and proposed extending the plaza by closing the Waters Road and Rangers Road intersection with Military Road.
- NMc (NSC) elaborated on the challenges of closing Rangers Road and impacts on the traffic network.

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- The complexities related to pedestrian overpass bridges and role of Military Road. NMc (NSC) highlighted the council's overarching objective of enhancing pedestrian accessibility, however pointed out that the proposal to close intersections like Waters Road and Rangers Road with Military Road posed challenges.
- A group member shared an example of a pedestrian overpass over Epping and Delhi Road, highlighting its relevance to new developments and a train station. The member recommended keeping this idea on the table for consideration.

ii. **Potential traffic and transport strategies**

NMc (NSC) provided an overview of recommendations, including:

- enhancing accessibility and connectivity within the town centre
- promoting active transport modes such as walking, cycling, and public transportation
- maintaining existing public parking spaces
- minimising the additional traffic impact

The methodology for traffic analysis and its impact assessment was explained, which considered factors such as the current conditions and modeling potential growth scenarios, acknowledging these numbers are based on assumptions and aim to retain the current quantum of non-residential GFA and study aiming to maintain a balance between different uses.

NMc (NSC) summarised the traffic and transport study's trip generation outcome with the following key points:

- emphasised that trip generations could be managed within the local road network under growth scenarios.
- potential unit numbers across the precinct remained relatively stable, influenced by factors like land allocation for public open space, building setbacks, and plaza spaces.
- potential discussions with the state government may be required to address future dwelling targets.
- the study, although not complete, has the potential to encourage further discussions after council endorsement.

EB (NSC) emphasised the value of proactively addressing state government's residential and employment targets through a thorough planning study underpinned by community consultation.

Noting the Group's earlier comments querying the rationale for proposing additional height only on sites 1-3, EB asked whether they felt the community could support increased heights on some landholdings and still protect the village feel of the town centre.

The Group emphasised the importance of the site-specific consideration, the quality of architecture design, preserving the local character and heritage valued façade in new developments, avoiding a uniform increase in height across the area, and engaging the community in the decision-making process.

The Group expressed support for the planning study, hoping that the planning study would guide future decisions and promote a thoughtful approach to development.

6. Proposed Development Update

NMc (NSC) provided an update on 1-7 Rangers Road & 50 Yeo Street and noted no changes to status of the other proposed developments.

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7. General Business

No issue was carried.

8. Next Step

NMc (NSC) noted that this is the last NBACCG meeting before a report to Council and discussed addressing outstanding updates and identifying which issues are essential. With reflection on 4 previous meetings' themes and main focuses, he proposed that the Group collaborate to provide their collective perspectives. This input would form a categorised position and advisory input regarding key moves and direction for the planning study. He introduced a suggested format included high-level headings and sub-points. The Group is invited to refine/change the format and add their comments.

The Group planned to hold a subsequent meeting on 24th October to share their views and offer feedback to the Council team on the key moves discussed during the meetings. The focus was on obtaining the Group's direction and position on these important topics noting it was not necessary or expected that there would be a consensus amongst the group on some issues.

PM and NMc (NSC) thanked the Neutral Bay Alive Group members for their attendance and their thoughtful insight.

The meeting closed at 8:15pm.