

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
NSW Government
Sydney NSW 2000

9 August 2021

Dear sir / madam

Re: Draft Frenchs Forest 2041 Place Strategy

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Frenchs Forest 2041 Place Strategy. Northern Sydney Local Health District Health Promotion is committed to ensuring the built environment fosters places and spaces that support the health and wellbeing of individuals and the wider community.

Health Promotion commends the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for developing a place strategy for Frenchs Forest, in particular prioritising action on key issues such as sustainability, connectivity, liveability and building community. This is borne out by the objectives of planning for a mixed use town centre; creating and identifying opportunities for high quality, attractive and welcoming public spaces, with pedestrian and cycling connections; providing a range of housing types and densities, including apartments, terraces and affordable housing and installing green infrastructure, while creating opportunities and spaces for people to relax outdoors. While the draft plan is of high quality and well thought out, Health Promotion has some observations and suggestions as follows:

Tree Canopy

The audit showed that tree canopy cover is currently 28%, mainly on private land and mainly planted, native and exotic trees, semi-mature trees. The proposal is for a tree canopy cover target of up to 30% in new public open spaces and green spaces, however it is unclear if the target is inclusive of the current tree canopy. If so, this would suggest only a 2% increase in canopy cover.

Recommendation

Clarify the increase in percentage tree canopy cover proposed for the Frenchs Forest precinct. Health Promotion encourages an ambitious increase, with preference for mature shade trees with larger leaf canopies.

Transport and Connectivity

Health Promotion welcomes the focus on walking, cycling and public transport to achieve a shift away from private car use, which is important not only for Frenchs Forest's current residents and those who will live in the proposed two thousand new dwellings, but for all residents living between Dee Why and Chatswood.

This strategy refers to a *potential* Bus Rapid Transit route connecting Dee Why to Chatswood along Warringah Road. Establishing public transport infrastructure *prior to* new residents occupying their dwellings is necessary for residents to form their active travel routines and behaviours from the outset, rather than trying to shift residents away from private vehicle use once the behaviour is entrenched.

Recommendation

That the final Frenchs Forest Place Strategy require the establishment of a Bus Rapid Transit from Dee Why to Chatswood prior to new dwellings being occupied.

The Draft Frenchs Forest 2041 Place Strategy states that those living south of Warringah Road will be able to access the town centre 'safely and conveniently'. It is not clear how this will be done. Warringah Rd has one pedestrian bridge crossing it in Frenchs Forest, near its intersection with Forest Way. This is quite a distance from the proposed town centre.

Recommendation

Construct a second pedestrian and cyclist bridge near the intersection of Warringah Rd and Wakehurst Parkway to connect the new town centre with Bantry Bay Neighbourhood Centre.

Liveability

Health Promotion is pleased that several community centres and services will be co-located in the proposed town centre. Catering to all age groups is a vital component to building a successful community, so that people may remain part of their community from ‘birth to the grave’ if they so choose.

Recommendation:

That consideration be given to including a community garden and dog park in the final plan, as they are important components to the mental health of the community, especially with higher density living.

Thank you for considering the above recommendations from Northern Sydney Local Health District Health Promotion, which we believe will enhance an already thoughtful and engaging place strategy for Frenchs Forest.

Yours Sincerely,



David Morrisey

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