

North West Rail Link Station Precincts

Community Consultation Report

December 2014



Planning &
Environment

THE HILLS
Sydney's Garden Shire

NORTH WEST RAIL LINK

The \$8.3 billion North West Rail Link is Australia's largest infrastructure project currently under construction. Eight new stations will be built along the rail line at Cherrybrook, Castle Hill, Showground, Norwest, Bella Vista, Kellyville, Rouse Hill and Cudgong Road.

The North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy was finalised and adopted in September 2013, and included Structure Plans to guide future planning and development around each of the new stations. It was predicted that there will be about 28,000 new homes and 49,500 new jobs provided in the rail corridor by 2036 to meet the growing demand for more homes and jobs in the region.

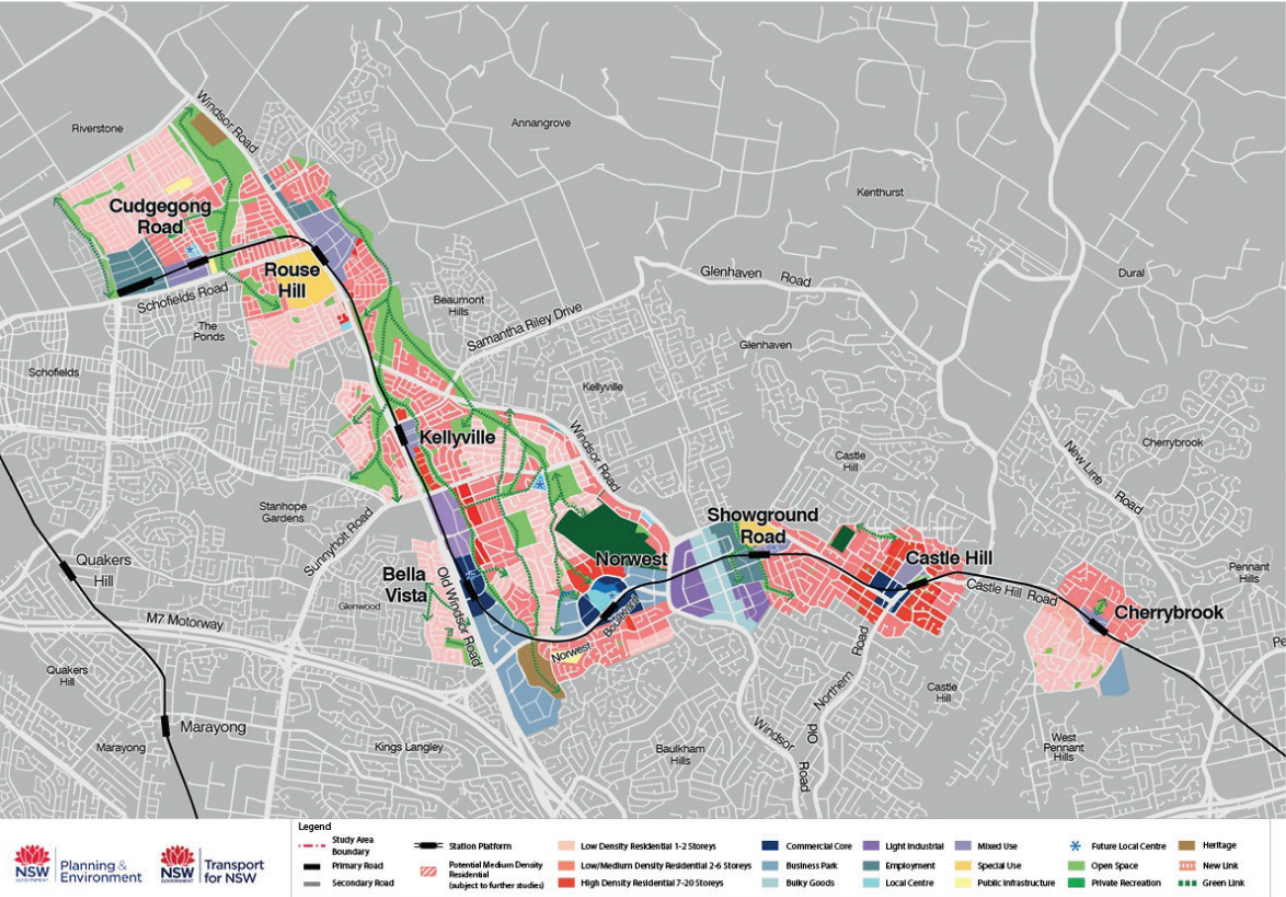


FIGURE 1 NORTH WEST RAIL LINK CORRIDOR STRATEGY

PRIORITY PRECINCTS

Following The Hills Shire Council nomination of the Kellyville, Bella Vista and Showground Precincts, these Priority Precincts were endorsed and announced by the NSW Government in August 2014.

Priority Precincts aim to increase the number of homes and jobs in an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable manner, and providing the community with greater housing choice, improved public spaces and services, and good access to infrastructure, particularly transport. Community consultation is important in developing plans for all Priority Precincts.

PROJECT STATUS

Specialists have been engaged and are preparing detailed studies to examine the existing characteristics of each precinct, and will recommend what is required in order to achieve the best outcome for each of the three station precincts. The studies will cover issues such as traffic and transport, open space and community facilities, pedestrian and cycle links, urban design, heritage and other important areas. Once these studies are completed, the rezoning plans will be prepared for the public exhibition phase.



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION STRATEGY

One of the key principles of the Priority Precinct program is extensive community engagement throughout the planning process. Consultation with the community undertaken between April and November 2014 for the Kellyville, Bella Vista and Showground Station Precincts is detailed in this report.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Four community information stalls were held in 2014 following the announcement of the three Priority Precincts. Staff from the Department of Planning and Environment were at the stalls to provide information about the NWRL Corridor Strategy, the planning work being undertaken, and to answer questions. An ideas board was provided for people to add their comments and suggestions about the station precincts, and these will be considered as part of the planning process.

The four events were:

- Paws in the Park at Castle Hill Showground – Sunday 31 August
- Orange Blossom Festival, Castle Hill – Saturday 13 September
- Hawkesbury Harvest and Food Fair – Saturday 11 October
- Bella Vista Farm Open Day – Sunday 2 November



Some of the key comments made by the community that are being considered in the planning for these precincts include:

- the need for good connections to the rail stations, and through the precincts, for pedestrians and those using buses and bicycles
- adequate car parking at the stations
- the importance of parks and green spaces
- provision of sports facilities
- provision of schools and community facilities
- provision of dog parks/facilities
- protection of heritage
- safety and security, especially at night and around the stations.

TELEPHONE SURVEY

The Department of Planning and Environment commissioned a telephone survey that was conducted in April 2014. The survey involved randomly generated numbers of residents living in the North West Rail Link corridor, with a total of 503 residents completing the survey.

The survey was conducted to gain an understanding of the types of activities and facilities the community would like to see within the precincts, and how the community would like to be consulted throughout the process.

The survey found that:

- awareness of the NWRL Corridor Strategy was high, with 84% of respondents aware of it
- visions for the future included a vibrant and well-connected community with good transport links, job opportunities and educational facilities
- car parking, parks and other open space, cafes, restaurants and shops, community facilities and cycling links are some of the facilities that residents would like to see around the stations
- newsletters and local papers are the favoured form of communication regarding local planning and development activities, although younger people favoured online and email formats.
- The telephone survey report has been made publicly available on the station precinct websites.

ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey was made available on the Kellyville, Bella Vista and Showground Station Precinct websites following the announcement of these areas as Priority Precincts. The survey was available to be completed over a 10 week period between 1 August and 19 October 2014.

The survey asked 12 questions to understand the respondent's current circumstances including age, gender, where they lived, future housing considerations, and favoured local facilities and amenities.

A total of 280 respondents completed the survey, with 63% living in one of the three station precincts.

Some of the findings of the survey included:

- Most respondents (83%) lived in detached homes, which is consistent with the percentage of these types of homes in the area according to 2011 Census data
- The majority of respondents (78%) would prefer to live in the same area if they moved to a different type of home in the future
- The most important features influencing where people would live were public transport; proximity to cafes, restaurants and shops; and proximity to parks and open space.
- Most respondents (80%) were concerned that young people would have difficulty affording a home in the area in the future
- The most popular local facilities to support growth in the area were parks and reserves; community facilities such as libraries and community centres; and bicycle and pedestrian paths.
- The most popular facilities that could be provided at Castle Hill Showground were a multipurpose venue; car parking facilities; and markets.

The online survey report is available to view on the station precinct websites.

NEWSLETTERS

A newsletter for each of the three station precincts was delivered to residences within each precinct in early October 2014. Future newsletters will be sent to residents at key stages throughout the planning process, with the next newsletter to be sent shortly. These newsletters are designed to keep the community informed about the planning for the precincts around the new Kellyville, Bella Vista and Showground, and how they can get involved.

The number of residences that were delivered a copy of the October 2014 newsletters and that will receive future newsletters are as follows:

- Kellyville – 2,150
- Bella Vista – 2,400
- Showground – 1,150

A copy of each newsletter is on the relevant station precinct website.

STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING SESSIONS

Stakeholder Briefing Sessions were held for the Showground Station Precinct on 30 October 2014, and for the Kellyville and Bella Vista Station Precincts on 6 November 2014.

The purpose of the Stakeholder Briefing Sessions is to provide information to representatives of community, business and other relevant local groups about the planning being undertaken for the precincts, and for these representatives to pass this information to their members. These sessions also provide these representatives the opportunity to raise issues and concerns they may have.

A report summarising the key issues raised at the initial sessions is on the relevant station precinct website. These key issues are summarised in the table below:

TABLE 1 KEY ISSUES RAISED AT STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING SESSIONS

Traffic and parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing traffic congestion especially in Norwest Boulevard Impact of increased population on traffic congestion Parking provision and demand for on-street parking
Public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future of bus services, including services to Parramatta Transport connections to get to and from the stations Consideration of bus services through Norwest Business Park
Pedestrian movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved links through the precincts, especially across Norwest Boulevard
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of adequate and quality open space for the additional population Importance of well-connected areas of open space for people and native fauna Treed character of the area should be retained
Castle Hill Showground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future role and use of the Castle Hill Showground How new development will relate to the Castle Hill Showground (in terms of both built form and land use)
Bella Vista Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historical significance of Bella Vista Farm, including view corridors Has an important open space function
Built form and future housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New development should not destroy the character, and fit into the lifestyle of the area Development should be coordinated rather than piecemeal How heights transition across the precinct from high to low rise Issue of high rise adjoining the Castle Hill Showground Factors affecting housing choice should be considered
Business and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for growth in the Norwest Business Park Local employment opportunities for young people
Heritage and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of retaining connections to the past e.g., farming history
Safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity around the stations and surrounding areas, as well as the provision of lighting along pathways and streets at night so people feel safe Design of access to apartment buildings around the station Safe and accessible travel to and from the station
Schools and child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for local schools will increase Better access to child care facilities, including near the stations for convenience
Precinct boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship of the Bella Vista and Norwest precincts Land adjoining or just outside the precinct should be considered
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth should be involved more Aged care facilities and mobility

The next Stakeholder Briefing Sessions are scheduled for February 2015. It was noted that younger people need to be consulted and engaged through the planning process but were under-represented at the initial briefing sessions. Consequently, a specific youth forum will be held in February 2015.

REGISTRATION FOR PROJECT UPDATES

Members of the community can email their details to urbanactivation@planning.nsw.gov.au, and request the precinct(s) they would like to receive updates for. Copies of the August newsletter(s) have been sent those who registered prior to 28 October 2014. Registrations received after this date will be included in the next update, which will contain the December newsletter.

STATION PRECINCTS WEBSITES

Websites for the Kellyville, Bella Vista and Showground Station Precincts were launched following the announcement of the Priority Precincts.

Information on the website includes:

- Planning for Sydney's North West brochure (dated August 2014)
- Frequently asked questions (dated August 2014)
- Kellyville Structure Plan (dated September 2013)
- Copies of the first station precinct newsletters (dated October 2014)
- Results of the telephone survey of April 2014
- Link to the first online survey (between 1 August and 19 October 2014 only)
- Results of the first online survey (dated December 2014)
- Timeline image to show the current stage of the planning process
- Information about the next steps in the process
- Instructions on how to register for further updates about the precincts
- Link to the Transport for NSW North West Rail Link webpage for information about the rail link construction and design.

UPCOMING AND FUTURE CONSULTATION

Further consultation with the community is planned, and will include:

- Further newsletters with updates of the planning for the precincts
- More community event stalls in 2015
- More Stakeholder Briefing Group sessions
- Youth forum (February 2015)
- Updates to be emailed to those who have registered
- Ongoing updates to the station precinct websites
- Public exhibition of the rezoning proposals for the three station precincts, which will include community drop in sessions during the exhibition period.



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