

**WOLLSTONECRAFT PRECINCT MEETING**  
**10 December 2024 – MINUTES**

1. **Open meeting. Acknowledgement of Country:** RB (Chair) read the acknowledgement
2. **Apologies:** CE; AF; EY
3. **Guests:** Mayor Zoe Baker, Councillor MaryAnn Beregi, Councillor Christopher Holding, Councillor Godfrey Santer, Councillor Nicole Antonini, North Sydney Council CEO, NSC Director of Community, Planning and Infrastructure, NSC Manager Strategic Planning
4. **Confirmation of Minutes** of meeting held on **9 October 2024:**  
Motion: That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday **9 October 2024**, having been circulated were taken as read and are hereby confirmed.

Proposer: RB    Seconder: JH

The motion was put and passed unanimously.

5. This meeting was intended as a community information gathering to review two significant projects – the Crows Nest Transport Oriented Development (TOD) Accelerated Precinct Plan and North Sydney Council (NSC) Special Rate Variation proposals.

**Crows Nest Transport Oriented Development (TOD) Accelerated Precinct Plan**

**Mayor**

Identified three ‘headline’ components of the Plan:

*1. Exhibited versus adopted plan*

Unprecedented post exhibition amendments including new sites with additional height and density (most obvious in Sinclair and Nicholson Streets).

*2. Paucity of affordable housing*

3-18% affordable housing provision in return for huge gift to private property owners of much higher intensity of yield.

### 3. *Special Infrastructure Contribution*

St Leonards Crows Nest 2036 Plan provided a special infrastructure contribution of \$117m for: new open space; investigation for new school; upgrades to five intersections on the highway. Minister for Planning however repealed this contribution, allocating these funds to treasury.

Council unanimously resolved on 9 December 2024 to seek an urgent meeting with Minister for Planning, to secure funds for three sites for open space in Crows Nest precinct, from the \$520m pool set aside for eight of the accelerated precincts. The three sites have either adopted plans or other proposals for open space.

A link to the Mayoral Minute is here:

<https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/ecm/download/document-11313484>

The sites are Hume Park Stages 2 and 3, Holtermann Street Carpark redevelopment and partial pedestrianisation of Willoughby Road.

### **NSC Director of Community, Planning and Infrastructure and NSC Manager Strategic Planning**

Highlighted significant changes and challenges facing the North Sydney area created by the Crow's Nest TOD rezoning plan gazetted on 27 November 2024. However, the NSW Government's proposed Low to Medium Density housing reform plan, expected to be released shortly, will also have an impact.

A link to the TOD on the Department of Planning Major Projects website is: <https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/draftplans/made-and-finalised/crows-nest-state-led-rezoning>

The NSC is currently reviewing and analysing the TOD Plan. The review will be uploaded - with written commentary - on Council's website. The aim is to provide clarity for landowners, the community and Council staff who will be assessing the related development applications. A copy will be circulated to Wollstonecraft Precinct residents, and via Council, to Hayberry Precinct residents.

Population density is a major concern. Together, the 2036 Plan and the TOD overlay on top of existing population in the 2036 Plan area, will ultimately result in 36,000 persons living in this area of about 1.8 sq km. The existing open space at 2020, according to the 2036 Plan, was 21 hectares. The new open space referred to above is about 1.0 hectare. Density per open space is already low at 1.37 Ha/1000 population. If all the housing planned is completed and the government agrees to fund that extra open space, density will increase but open space will fall to 0.6 Ha /1,000.

TOD shadow diagrams also suggest there will be some shadowing reaching down to River Road. With taller buildings, there will be a continual wall with very narrow bands in between where areas will get solar access.

### **NSC Special Rate Variation**

#### **CEO, NSC**

Presented details of the four Special Rate Variation options currently on exhibition for public comment. There are also eight Informing strategies that are on exhibition to help finalise the Council's draft 10 Year Plan. Closing date for submissions is 10 January 2025. The timetable is mandatory and is set by NSW Local Government. All councils across NSW are doing similar community consultation. Some are also proposing Special Rate Variations.

A link to this consultation process is on Council's website at 'Have Your Say':  
<https://yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/srv>

The Council has an operating deficit projected to continue for the next 10 years, largely due to declining revenue streams from user charges, fees and commercial rental income that have not recovered since the pandemic. In addition, the NSC needs to fund new infrastructure and upgraded infrastructure, and repay borrowings. Council's substantial repair bill on \$1.5 billion of assets, is \$500 million. This will bring the assets up to "good" condition. The Special Rate Variation would address funding shortfalls, particularly relating to deteriorating community assets and the North Sydney Olympic Pool (NSOP) project's cost overruns.

Community feedback was actively sought on various topics, including proposed rate increases and specific projects, with action items established for council representatives to engage further with both the community and state officials,

reinforcing the importance of transparency and inclusion in the council's planning and development processes.

Once community consultation is received, it will be compiled and sent to Councillors under a report from the CEO with a recommendation. That report will be presented to a scheduled February Council meeting. Councillors' intention is to make an application to IPART for the preferred SRV option which could be different to any of the four options depending on the quality of submissions received. Council stressed the need to make submissions that address the requirement to repair the financial position of Council which is not sustainable. Angry comments will get nowhere – substance of submissions is vital.

IPART will do its own community consultation and make its determination in time for Council to set rates before the commencement of the 2025/26 financial year. The clear message to the community is to make well considered comments because IPART is independent, and their decision is final.

Comments from the attendees ranged from full support for community consultation to one suggestion that Councillors resign and appoint an administrator, with no rate increases until the administrator could form a view. Sue Wadley spoke in support of the current Mayor and Councillor Beregi who are the only two current Councillors who spoke vigorously against the NSOP contract proceeding in its proposed form, without the design being complete. Only one Councillor from the previous Council that approved the pool, remains an elected Councillor. Precinct attendees applauded Sue Wadley's comments.

The NSOP project has a final forecast cost of \$122 million which includes:

- internal costs of administration
- interest on borrowings
- equipment fit-out
- pool employees costs to plan and prepare for the expected opening in mid 2025.

It also includes expected further claims from the contractor above the current approved contract cost of \$91 million. Its impact on the repair bill is limited to interest and repayment of external borrowings of \$51 million and repayment of internal borrowings of \$39 million.

The decision by the former Council in 2021, to award a contract of this magnitude at a time when design was indicative and far from suitable to mitigate risk was, as the Mayor put it, a disaster, considering the budget cost for replacement of the 50 metre pool was \$28 million.

## **6. GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **The Fiveways Site at Crows Nest: SSD 66826207**

The IPC is the consent authority for this project. The proposed public meeting to hear submissions has been cancelled because only one person nominated to speak. The IPC invited submitters to private hearings. Mayor Baker and John Hancox were scheduled separately to meet with the IPC Panel the next morning. Transcripts of those hearings will be uploaded to the IPC website and all submissions will be available to read after the closing date of 19 December. Copy of the Precinct submission is attached.

## **7. Close and Refreshments**

The chairman closed the meeting at 9.45 pm and everyone was invited to stay for refreshments. There were 80 attendees. The next meeting is on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025 commencing at 7.30 pm.