

16 January 2018

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## **Re: 17/18666 – SUBMISSION – Urban Design Study Fairfield**

The Urban Taskforce thanks Fairfield City Council for the opportunity to comment on the *Urban Design Study Fairfield City Centre – Key Sites* (the Urban Design Study) and associated documents. Our comments are provided below for consideration.

The Urban Taskforce has been approached by a number of our members regarding the proposed changes to Fairfield City Centre. We understand council has prepared the Draft Urban Design Study to guide future development in Fairfield City Centre, by recommending buildings heights to allow new development, provide for an increase in apartments and grow the local economy, as well as provide new laneways, pedestrian connections and public spaces. We commend the work completed by council so far and make the following suggestions which we believe will enhance council's proposed changes.

### **More density needed**

Fairfield is identified as a 'Strategic Centre' in the *Draft Western Sydney District Plan*, produced by the Greater Sydney Commission and plays a critical role in the development of the Western Sydney District. Fairfield strategic centre is anticipated to accommodate 6,000-10,000 new jobs by 2036. Well designed, amenable higher density residential development, close to transport hubs and services is critical to accommodate Sydney's growing population. As a key strategic centre, Fairfield is an ideal location for additional growing and density. However, the building envelopes and massing identified in the Urban Design Study is not sufficient to reflect Fairfield's critical role. We believe that Fairfield needs to promote itself as an important centre and that more development than envisaged in the Urban Design Study is required.

### **Taller buildings will enhance city form**

Council's plans identify 13 'Key Sites' in Fairfield city centre' for renewal and has modelled potential building envelopes based on proposed height and floor space ratio controls. Some of these building envelopes unfortunately will create squat, awkward buildings, which do little to enhance the urban character and do not take full advantage of the accessibility and amenity of the Fairfield city centre.

The overall massing of the city centre will be enhanced by having taller buildings, up to 30 storeys in height.

The Council should model views of the centre from 'gateway sites' along key entry roads like The Horsley Drive to examine how building massing is improved with thin, elegant tall towers (such as sites 3, 5 and 7).

Gateway sites are critical to realise positive change for the future of Fairfield. Gateway sites create a new entrance to the city in which residents can feel pride, strengthen the image, role and functions emerging in Fairfield as a key strategic centre, capitalise on Fairfield's natural assets such as Prospect Creek and improve the quality and design of the built form.

We believe building heights for key sites should be revised upward to create thin, elegant towers. Council could also introduce a 'Design Excellence' clause in the Local Environmental Plan, offering 10% floor space for developments which demonstrate design excellence. This will ensure that taller buildings are well-designed and well suited to their setting.

The Urban Design Study also identifies the potential to extend a new pedestrian link across The Horsley Drive, connecting to Prospect Creek. This will integrate sites 5 and 6 into the city centre and allow easier access to the open space around Prospect Creek.


These sites have major potential for residential development and are well located close to transport and open space. Substantial land holdings are held by developers so site amalgamation is not always necessary. Encouragement should be given to land owners of sites that are of a large size ensure quality development occurs.

### **Strategic Plans and housing affordability**

We note that the Fairfield City Centre Urban Design Study was based upon the strategic objectives of two now out of the date strategic plans (*A Plan for Growing Sydney*, now replaced with *Draft Greater Sydney Region Plan* and *Draft South West District Plan*, now the *Draft Western City District Plan*).

The Draft Western City District Plan states: *Fairfield City Council is undertaking an urban design study for the redevelopment and revitalisation of key sites within the city centre. One of the core objectives of the study is to unlock additional housing potential close to public transport, open space and services, making use of the centre's strong connections to Liverpool and Parramatta.*

Additional actions are provided in the table below.

 Actions	Responsibility
57. Strengthen Fairfield through approaches that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. investigate opportunities for feasible redevelopment and increased density close to the Fairfield Transport Interchange</li> <li>b. enhance the public realm and encourage new connected civic plazas and public open spaces, including better walking and cycling links to nearby Fairfield Park and Prospect Creek corridor</li> <li>c. build on the emerging concentration of multicultural support services and support the current business and legal sector</li> <li>d. increase the liveability of the centre by activating the public realm, including developing the vision for an 'eat street' and growing the night-time economy</li> <li>e. facilitate the attraction of office/commercial floor space and allow for innovation including smart work hubs</li> <li>f. improve east-west connectivity within Fairfield City Centre from surrounding suburbs prioritising pedestrian, cycle and public transport facilities.</li> </ul>	Fairfield City Council, other planning authorities and State agencies

The *Draft Western City District Plan* notes on page 40, that 'In the past five years, 77 percent of completions were detached dwellings and 23 percent were multi-unit dwellings in the District...' and then goes on to note 'Multi-unit dwelling in the District provide transitional housing for seniors, homes for single persons and more affordable housing for young people and young families.'

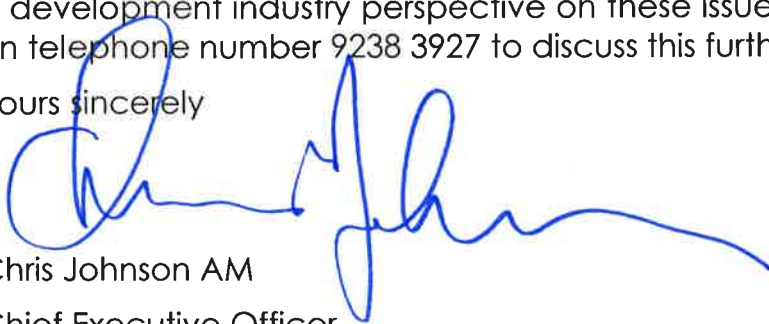
We believe that the controls proposed by Fairfield City Council 'undercook' some of the Key Sites, particularly as the strategic plans highlight the clear importance of providing additional multi-unit housing to address housing supply and affordability.

### Collaboration with landholders

A number of landholders in the area have sites of size which can deliver substantial housing and employment. Many of these landholders are keen to work proactively with Council and other agencies to deliver positive outcomes for the community through feasible redevelopment of their sites. The Urban Taskforce believes positive urban outcomes can be delivered by working with land owners and developers to identify optimal outcomes for all parties.

The Urban Taskforce is always willing to work closely with the Government to provide a development industry perspective on these issues. Please feel free to contact me on telephone number 9238 3927 to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely



Chris Johnson AM  
Chief Executive Officer

**Urban Taskforce Australia**