

Mr Ray Brownlee
Chief Executive officer
Northern Beaches Council
PO Box 82
Manly NSW 2095

8 November 2019

Dear Mr Brownlee

**Northern Beaches Council Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement
(Northern Sydney Local Health District Submission)**

Thank you for the opportunity for Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) to provide feedback on Northern Beaches Council's draft Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS). NSLHD Health Promotion commends Council's inclusion of 'health and wellbeing' in its 'Vision' section (p.22). Likewise, the proposal of four fast, frequent public transport corridors (connecting the Northern Beaches to the rest of Greater Sydney) with safe and convenient walking and cycling paths, supports active living by reducing car dependency.

NSLHD Health Promotion is committed to ensuring that the built environment has a net-positive impact on the health and well-being of individuals and the wider community. There is a growing body of evidence^{3,2,3} linking the built environment and the health of its community, by influencing:

- Physical activity
- Healthy eating
- Tobacco use and alcohol consumption
- Community strength, social cohesion and mental wellbeing
- Planetary health

We look forward to further collaborations with Northern Beaches Council on a range of health promotion and strategic planning projects. Please find attached a detailed list of comments and recommendations on the Statement.

If you require any further information, please contact David Morrisey, Health Promotion Officer, on 9388-5289 or david.morrisey@health.nsw.gov.au.

Kind regards,

Paul Klarenaar
Director Health Promotion, Population Health

³ L. Kent, J & Thompson, S (2019). Planning Australia's Healthy Built Environments. 10.4324/9781315524573.

² NSW Healthy Planning Expert Working Group (2018) NSW Healthy Planning Action Resource No. 2 - Creating Walkable Neighbourhoods <https://www.activelivingnsw.com.au/resources/>

³Giles-Corti B, Ryan K, Foster S, (2012), Increasing density in Australia: maximising the health benefits and minimising the harm, report to the National Heart Foundation of Australia, Melbourne. <http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/density>

⁴ NSW Ministry of Health. Healthy Built Environment Checklist <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/urbanhealth/Publications/healthy-urban-dev-check.pdf>

Recommendations for Northern Beaches Council's LSPS.

General Comments

NSLHD Health Promotion commends Northern Beaches Council's inclusion of a healthy and active community in its 'Vision' for the Northern Beaches and its proposal for four, fast, frequent public transport corridors connecting the Northern Beaches to the rest of Greater Sydney, with safe and convenient walking and cycling paths, so more people choose to live without a car. The focus on place-based planning will help Council develop a sense of individuality and community in the many neighbourhoods on the Northern Beaches.

Landscape

NSLHD Health Promotion supports Council's principles of supporting primary industry, particularly food production, which aligns with avoiding urban intensification and subdivision in the Metropolitan Rural Area. This is also in accordance with the NSW Health recommendation to 'protect local food production and agriculture through land use planning'⁴.

NSLHD Health Promotion notes that there will be a 40 hectare shortfall in land for sport by 2031 and commends council's plan to use existing space more efficiently and open new space, not only for sport but for passive and community activities such as gardening and social gathering. As such, Health Promotion supports Council's principle to locate all high density areas within 200m of open space.

Recommendation:

- Ensure that mixed use developments prioritise outlets which provide quality fresh fruit and vegetables.

People and Great Places

NSLHD Health Promotion supports Council's view that everyone in the Northern Beaches community should be able to engage in activities where they interact with others to improve social wellbeing. This will be achieved by creating an inclusive, healthy, safe, socially connected community. Health Promotion welcomes the studies itemised in Action 11.1 and the actions listed that will result from those studies.

Health Promotion acknowledges the high rates of mental health-related hospitalisations and suicide on the Northern Beaches and agrees that creating opportunities for people to participate in community activities encourages social connections, trust, understanding and neighbourliness.

Recommendation:

- Council partner with NSLHD Health Promotion to develop wellbeing indicators (Action 12.7) to foster an inclusive, healthy, safe and socially connected Northern Beaches community.

HP supports Priority 17: *centres and neighbourhoods designed to reflect local character and lifestyle*. Health Promotion also supports Council's view that its community should have access to world class education including universities. Health Promotion notes that Northern Beaches LGA has a lower than average participation rate in tertiary education.

Recommendation:

- Partner with the university sector to bring a major campus and or/more tertiary education options to the Northern Beaches. This will increase vocational opportunities and improve equity for the Northern Beaches community, as well as reducing traffic congestion caused by students commuting out of area to attend university.

Housing

Health Promotion supports Priority 15: *Housing supply, choice and affordability in the right locations*. Health Promotion also supports Council's principles that planning proposals must be considered through precinct level planning, located within 800m of high-frequency public transport, with provision of open space and other infrastructure for the whole centre. Health Promotion endorses Council's determination to investigate increasing residential diversity, addressing the 'missing middle', which will be vitally important to the Northern Beaches' growing retiree population, so they may 'age in place'.

Recommendations:

- Ensure all residential areas are within 10 minutes' walk of quality public green space as per the NSW Premier's Priority.
- Ensure all high density residential areas are within 200m of quality public open space, with this being provided in the early stages of new developments.

Connectivity

HP supports Priority 19: *frequent and efficient regional public transport connections*. Health Promotion commends Action 20.4 'Investigate new safe cycling routes separated from traffic within five kilometres of strategic centres.....including regional cycling routes in the Greater Sydney Principal Bicycle Network'. Health Promotion notes Council's determination to work with state agencies to develop and align planning for the Beaches Link Tunnel. Once this tunnel is complete one would expect that it should markedly reduce vehicular traffic in the currently congested Military Rd corridor and enable cycling to be promotion, particularly for commuters.

Recommendation:

- Northern Beaches Council work with Mosman and North Sydney Councils to facilitate building a separated cycleway from the Northern Beaches through Mosman and North Sydney LGAs to the City of Sydney.

Health Promotion recognises that Council is currently undertaking a study into encouraging active travel to school. Given that many parents drop their children to primary schools, which are often within walking distance from home, increasing active travel is a reliable way to reduce car usage and traffic congestion.

Recommendation:

- Collaborate with existing and new schools to provide active transport routes and infrastructure which will encourage active transport.

Jobs and Skills

Health Promotion notes that the Northern Beaches has a greater proportion of residents drinking alcohol at a high risk level than the North District and NSW as a whole.

Recommendation:

- Health Promotion supports Priority 30 (a diverse night-time economy) which is not solely predicated upon the consumption of alcohol.
- Support diverse late night attractions such as night markets, parks and public spaces with adequate lighting and access to public toilets.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide recommendations in the interest of a vibrant and healthy Northern Beaches community. For more information please contact Health Promotion Officer David Morriesy on 9388 5289, or david.morrissey@health.nsw.gov.au.



Paul Klarenaar | Director | NSLHD Health Promotion