The Local Strategic Planning Statement was adopted by Council on xxxxxx Minute No.xxx.

The Local Strategic Planning Statement was endorsed by the Greater Sydney Commission and the Department of Planning and Environment on xxxxxx

This document represents the collaboration of information from a number of sources, including Government Plans and Policies and plans and policies of The Hills Shire Council.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE
This document may be reproduced for personal, in-house or non-commercial use. Reproduction of this document for any other purpose shall only be permitted with the written permission of The Hills Shire Council.

DISCLAIMER
Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that this document is correct at the time of printing. The Hills Shire Council disclaims all liability in respect of the consequences of anything done or omitted to be done in reliance upon any part of this document. The maps provided in this document are general in nature and should not be relied upon. This document is subject to change without notice.
Mayor’s Message

The Hills Shire’s Local Strategic Planning Statement reflects our community’s aspirations, and outlines how we will deliver a wonderful lifestyle for residents in the future. This document showcases the strategies Council has developed in collaboration with you, our residents, to create a Shire that we can all be truly proud of.

It’s no secret that The Hills is going through a time of unprecedented growth and major change, and with the arrival of the Sydney Metro Northwest, transformation in The Hills is inevitable. To help with change and to manage growth, now and into the future, we’ve created this Local Statement for The Hills Shire. This vision was developed from what residents told us was important, including managing growth, retaining and invigorating our current assets and providing new infrastructure, like parks, playgrounds, sporting and community facilities to provide you with the best possible quality-of-life.

This document will be used to determine how our town centres and communities can thrive and support our population, which is estimated to reach more than 250,000 people in the next 15 years. It will also look into transport opportunities that will connect The Hills with other regions of Sydney through established and planned corridors and routes. These important networks will allow people to easily move around The Hills, as well as access jobs and education facilities in the south-west, and the second Sydney Airport.

Our goal is to ensure residents get the right mix of housing, jobs and transport options. We are making sure areas around our new station hubs grow in a way that allows people to live and work within walking distance of future transport options. Shops, cafes, community hubs and well-designed open spaces within these new areas will continue to promote a healthy, active and engaged community.

Council is also investigating how we can cut commuter travel times through supporting local employment. We are looking at ways we can attract more businesses to the area and create more jobs. This will result in more residents being able to work close to home and spend indispensable time with their family.

I look forward to Council delivering this exciting plan and ensuring The Hills’ reputation remains as a desired place to live, grow, do business and raise a family.

Dr Michelle Byrne
Mayor of The Hills Shire
From the General Manager

Welcome to Hills Future 2036 - Council’s Local Strategic Planning Statement.

This document sets out the planning framework to deliver on the strategic directions that are important to our community.

For many years the Hills Shire has been a desirable place to raise a family with access to quality schools, sporting facilities and centres. The Hills Shire has provided for Sydney’s growth and will continue to do so well into the future.

Over the next five years, Council is in an implementation phase. The community is concerned about our growth and changes to residents’ lives, the increasing difficulty in moving around and changing urban environments. The planning system needs to deliver certainty for landowners, investors and government. Council alone cannot manage our growth, it needs the commitment of all stakeholders to get the job done.

That’s why our focus now is on managing development already identified, as well as providing infrastructure to support that growth and pursuing initiatives to provide more jobs. There are benefits that come with growth, such as new and enhanced public places, intersection and road improvements, new pedestrian and cycle links, and new and upgraded parks and playing fields.

This Local Strategic Planning Statement is centred on what is needed by Council, Government and the development industry to realise the benefits that come with growth. We are working hard to build confidence in our community as a result of changes in our urban renewal areas, such as around the new station locations. We are also working to ensure the Hills Shire remains true to the values that make it a great place to live.

Michael Edgar
General Manager
The Hills Shire Council
Contents

About The Plan 1

Context 3

2036 Vision 9

Planning Priorities 11

Structure Plan Map 13

A Vibrant Community & Prosperous Economy

Planning Priority 1 | Plan for sufficient jobs, targeted to suit the skills of our workforce 19
Planning Priority 2 | Build our strategic centres to realise their potential 20
Planning Priority 3 | Retain & manage valuable industrial & urban service land 35
Planning Priority 4 | Retain & manage the Shire’s rural productive capacity 36
Planning Priority 5 | Encourage rural support activities & tourism in rural areas 38

Shaping Growth

Planning Priority 6 | Plan for housing supply to support Sydney’s growing population 43
Planning Priority 7 | Facilitate housing in the right locations 45
Planning Priority 8 | Deliver a diversity of housing 46
Planning Priority 9 | Renew and create great places 49
Planning Priority 10 | Provide services & social infrastructure to meet residents needs 51
Delivering & Maintaining Infrastructure

Planning Priority 11 | Plan for convenient, connected and accessible public transport 57
Planning Priority 12 | Influence travel behaviour to promote sustainable choices 59
Planning Priority 13 | Expand and improve our active transport network 60
Planning Priority 14 | Plan for a safe and efficient regional road network 61
Planning Priority 15 | Provide new and upgraded passive and active open spaces 62

Valuing our Surroundings

Planning Priority 16 | Manage and protect the rural/urban interface 67
Planning Priority 17 | Protect areas of high environmental value and significance 68
Planning Priority 18 | Promote increased urban tree canopy cover 70
Planning Priority 19 | Manage natural resources and waste responsibly 72
Planning Priority 20 | Prepare residents for environmental & urban risks & hazards 73

Proactive Leadership

Planning Priority 21 | Prepare our residents for growth and change 77
Planning Priority 22 | Initiate and deliver solutions to growth and change challenges 77
Planning Priority 23 | Collaborate with other LGAs & Government to improve our places 79

Implementation
Our Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) is about the future of our whole community. It provides details upon which to base planning decisions and drive future land use planning and the management of growth in the Shire based on our economic, social and environmental needs over the next 20 years. The LSPS sets out planning priorities and corresponding actions to be delivered over the next 5 years that will provide for more housing, jobs, parks and services for our growing population.

This LSPS has been prepared in accordance with clause 3.9 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act, 1979 (EP&A Act).

**Purpose**

The LSPS recognises The Hills Shire’s place in the Greater Sydney Region and its mix of urban and rural environments that provide a number of challenges and opportunities in the delivery of housing, jobs and services to allow Sydney to grow as a metropolis. It builds on previous local strategies as well as key strategic planning documents such as Council’s Community Strategic Plan, The Hills Corridor Strategy and various detailed Precinct Plans. It will be used to inform future changes to Council’s Local Environmental Plan (LEP), Development Control Plan (DCP) and Contributions Plans.

**Policy Context**

The LSPS has been prepared to respond to the expectations of Government as enunciated in the Greater Sydney Region Plan, and the Central City District Plan. It articulates how we will implement...
the actions and aims of these plans that came into effect in March 2018. Both of these plans are built upon a vision of a metropolis of three cities where most residents live within 30 minutes of jobs, education, health facilities, services and great places. It is also informed by Future Transport 2056 and the State Infrastructure Strategy.

The Central City District Plan is a 20 year plan to manage growth in the context of economic, social and environmental matters; working to achieve the 40 year vision of Greater Sydney. It is a guide for implementing the Greater Sydney Region Plan at a district level and is a bridge between regional and local planning.

The LSPS links the Regional and District Plans to Council’s Community Strategic Plan (CSP) to guide how we will use our land to achieve the community’s broader goals. It is supported by six strategies that provide finer detail about how we will achieve our vision and guide growth into the future.

![Diagram of Links to the Regional and District Plans]

**Figure 2**: Links to the Regional and District Plans

### Consultation

The key themes found in this LSPS find their origin in the consultation that was undertaken in 2017 for the update of our Community Strategic Plan. Council engages with the community every year so that its actions remain relevant and the themes reflect the highest priority issues raised by the community.

This draft LSPS will also be developed in consultation with the community. Engagement activities may include drop in sessions at Council libraries, school visits and targeted workshops with local businesses and interested community groups. The aims of consultation is to inform the community about the LSPS and supporting strategies, seek feedback to revise documents where appropriate and inform Council of community input prior to finalisation.
**CONTEXT**

Our place in the Central City District

The Hills Shire is located in the North West of Greater Sydney and is currently home to around 178,000 people, although for alignment with the 20 year timeframe of the District Plan the figures used in this document are based upon the 2016 Census. The Hills Shire is part of the Central City District along with Blacktown, Cumberland and Parramatta Local Government Areas.

![Map of the Greater Sydney Region with the Hills Shire highlighted](image)

**Figure 3:** The Hills Shire as part of the Greater Sydney Region

The Shire is 380 square kilometres in area with a substantial metropolitan rural area, comprising 70% of the Shire’s land area. Development in the Metropolitan Rural Area is limited by environmental characteristics, bushfire hazard and flooding as well as the capacity of utility services and the regional transport network. However the area is valued for its agricultural production, scenic qualities, semi-rural living, extractive resources and tourism opportunities.
The urbanised part of the Shire represents about 90 square kilometres. The Shire has played a significant role in accommodating a share of Sydney’s growth and will continue to do so. We have greenfield growth areas at Balmoral Road Release Area, North Kellyville, Box Hill, Box Hill North, Kellyville and Rouse Hill and urban renewal growth along the North West Metro Corridor and Baulkham Hills Town Centre. For the foreseeable future, development for urban purposes will predominately be within the urbanised area.

The Hills Shire will be a significant contributor to achieving outcomes identified under the Central City District Plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Central City 2036</th>
<th>The Hills 2036</th>
<th>Our contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional dwellings</td>
<td>207,500</td>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional jobs (strategic centres)</td>
<td>108,000 - 141,100</td>
<td>32,200</td>
<td>23% - 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan rural area</td>
<td>300km²</td>
<td>300km²</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Contribution to Central City District Plan to 2036
Community Profile 2016

**Families**

- 53% Couples with children
- 8% One parent families
- 23% Couples without children
- 11% Lone person

**Household Size**

- 3.2 people
- Average household size

**Age**

- Median age: 38
- 21% 0-15 years
- 31% 25-45 years
- 14% 65+ years

**Employment**

- 95.4% Employed
- 4.6% Unemployed
- 6.1% Manufacturing
- 9.3% Education
- 10.4% Professional & Scientific
- 6.8% Finance
- 11.5% Health
- 10.3% Retail

**Education**

- 34% Bachelor or higher
- 11% Diploma
- 16% Vocational

**Journey to Work**

- Car: 78%
- Bus: 11%
- Walk: 9%
- Train: 1%
- Other: 1%

**Income**

- $2,359 Median weekly household income

**Housing Tenure**

- $2,500 Median monthly mortgage
- 78% dwellings owned or mortgaged
Growth in The Hills 2016 to 2036

**Population**
- 2016: 162,500
  - 64% Family Households
  - 36% Other Households
- 2036: 290,900
  - 61% Family Households
  - 39% Other Households

**Housing**
- 2016: 55,000 dwellings
- 2036: 93,000 dwellings
  - 82% Single Story
  - 12% Twin Story
  - 6% Multiple Units

**Workforce**
- 2016: 80,180 resident workers, 63,680 local jobs
  - 24,870 residents working locally
- 2036: 143,500 resident workers, 95,860 local jobs
  - 37,380 residents working locally

The Hills Shire Council | Local Strategic Planning Statement
Our local advantages

**Lifestyle, knowledge and prosperity**

The Hills Shire is unique within Greater Sydney. Historically known as ‘the Garden Shire’ the natural environment within the rural area forms part of the scenic green backdrop to the urban area. The Hills Shire is set apart by its range of lifestyle options that are made possible by the mix of urban and rural areas.

A journey along the iconic Old Northern Road reveals the range of lifestyle opportunities available to residents of The Hills. From apartments, townhouses and detached homes in Baulkham Hills and Castle Hill in our urban area, to larger lots in Glenhaven and Dural, through to our productive rural lands and on to the scenic natural landscapes towards the north of the Shire at Wisemans Ferry, The Hills offers a wide diversity of lifestyle and housing choice.

Our mix and diversity of housing attracts families who are seeking to benefit from the availability of open space, quality education and recreation opportunities as well as a high standard of community facilities.

As an integral part of The Hills ‘Garden Shire’ identity, our rural lands continue to contribute to the prosperity of the Shire. From its early years providing fruit for the burgeoning Sydney colony, The Hills rural area remains a valued provider of agricultural and horticultural produce and building materials to the Sydney basin.

Smaller settlements in our rural area offer further housing choice and a sought after rural lifestyle. These villages serve as a focal point for the surrounding rural land, providing essential services as well as meeting places for the community. The Hills Shire is known for its extensive areas of scenic and environmentally sensitive lands that form the gateway to recreation and tourism opportunities along the Hawkesbury River.
Our local opportunities

Connectivity, diversity and agriculture

The Hills is one of few Local Government Areas in the region that offers its residents such a diverse range of jobs and lifestyles.

The Sydney Metro Northwest allows people to safely and conveniently move through the Shire and beyond within the Region. The Metro has already begun to shape neighbourhoods, support business and improve our health, wellbeing and enjoyment of the places in which we live and work. It presents opportunities to shape travel behaviour away from private car use towards public and active forms of transport. With planned growth around 7 of the metro stations, the Shire’s community will enjoy greater housing choice, more opportunities to work closer to home and easier access to services that meet their changing needs.

The Metro will offer opportunities for Norwest Business Park to build on its prestigious business and lifestyle reputation. Growing investment in health and education infrastructure and knowledge-based jobs suited to the skills of our residents, will further strengthen its status as a world-class business park. Within the region, Norwest is second only to Parramatta in terms of targeted job growth. There is currently a 5-10 year window to increase capacity in Norwest, before the competitive advantage is reduced by new growth intended along the new North South Rail Link to the Western Sydney International Airport.

The growth of Greater Parramatta as a metropolitan city centre highlights the need for enhanced access to a larger and more diverse labour pool. Baulkham Hills is an important transport node providing opportunity for improved connectivity, strategically located between the Shire’s strategic centres and Greater Parramatta. Whilst a city shaping mass transit corridor has been identified between Parramatta and Norwest, opportunities for an integrated transport solution at Baulkham Hills will be diminished if early consideration is not given to how the corridor will be delivered through this centre.

The Shires rural lands provide opportunity for The Hills to play an increasingly important productive role in the region and contribute to the Shire’s economy. Strategic connections to the Western Sydney International Airport will leverage growth in our rural industries with future transport links like the Outer Sydney Orbital being vital for transporting fresh produce to new (potentially international) markets, particularly cut flowers and nursery products. A clearly defined urban edge within the Shire provides opportunity to protect valuable productive lands, reduce conflict between incompatible residential and rural uses, and provide certainty to rural industries that will enable them to prosper.
Hills Future 2036

To shape exceptional living, working and leisure places where expected growth brings vibrancy, diversity, liveability and prosperity for the Hills.

In 2036, The Hills Shire is distinguished by our high quality living and working environments. Since 2016, our population has grown by almost 80%, which has seen our urban area become more dense and vibrant, particularly around the busy Metro stations.

The character of urban and rural locations has been enhanced, and they continue to be attractive places to live, work and play for people of all ages. The Hills is awake with a thriving night life in its strategic centres, providing locals and visitors with opportunities to socialise, eat and have fun, as well as pick up some milk or dry cleaning on the way home. Public transport and walking and cycling tracks provide a safe and convenient journey to your home where you can rest, and then do it all again tomorrow.

Our community has access to the right mix of jobs and a wide variety of housing to suit their needs. The network of green spaces and parks contributes to the well-being of our residents and visitors, enabling them to connect with each other and the natural environment. Our rural area remains valued as the green backdrop of Sydney and long standing basis of our ‘Garden Shire’ identity. It also is playing an increased role in the local and wider economy by way of agricultural production and natural resource extraction.

The Hills Shire will be a significant contributor to achieving the Region and District vision with key attributes being the well-established and regarded Norwest Business Park and a highly skilled professional workforce. The opening of the Sydney Metro Northwest has had a transformative effect on The Hills, being the catalyst for growth in the Shire’s urban areas. In conjunction with the Metro, careful planning for new dwellings and employment opportunities close to transport nodes and bus links will contribute to the 30 minute city vision for Greater Sydney.

The Shire offers a range of lifestyle options characterised by family living and supported by good schools, accessible open space, recreation and community facilities. Housing choice is evolving and expanding due to investment in the Sydney Metro Northwest and the ongoing development of land release areas. The Hills has connected, inclusive neighborhoods, with access to multiple transport options, creating desirable places to live, work and play, making it the primary choice of destination for residents and businesses.
PLANNING PRIORITIES

Five related themes form the basis for our community’s vision of The Hills: a vibrant community and prosperous economy, shaping growth, delivering and maintaining infrastructure, valuing our surroundings and proactive leadership. These themes will be monitored against identified measures and implemented through 23 planning priorities.

These planning priorities will be delivered through related strategies that guide land use decisions and actions to be undertaken by The Hills Shire Council.
Delivering the vision is a shared responsibility. Council will work collaboratively with our community, Government, Business and the Development Industry to uphold the priorities of this plan and strive towards making the vision a reality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Priority 16</th>
<th>Planning Priority 21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manage and protect the</td>
<td>Prepare our residents for growth and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rural/urban interface</td>
<td>change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning Priority 17</strong></td>
<td>Planning Priority 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect areas of high</td>
<td>Initiate and deliver solutions to growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environmental value and</td>
<td>and change challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>significance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning Priority 18</strong></td>
<td>Planning Priority 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote increased urban</td>
<td>Collaborate with other LGAs &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tree canopy cover</td>
<td>Government to improve our places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning Priority 19</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage natural resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and waste responsibly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning Priority 20</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare residents for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environmental and urban</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>risks and hazards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Hills Shire Council | Local Strategic Planning Statement

Cultural Infrastructure
1. Castle Hill Heritage Park
2. Balcombe Heights Estate
3. Bella Vista Farm Park
4. Pioneer Theatre
5. Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences

Green Grid Urban Priorities
1. Caddies Creek Trail
2. Greenway Link
3. Small Creek Trail

Strategic Bus Corridors
1. Rouse Hill to Parramatta T-Way
2. Blacktown to Castle Hill T-Way
3. Castle Hill to Hornsby
4. Castle Hill to City (Via Macquarie)
5. Parramatta to Castle Hill
6. Parramatta to Hornsby

Potential Health Precincts
- Rouse Hill
- Public Hospital
- Norwest

REGIONAL TRANSPORT PRIORITIES
- Corridor Identification
  - Outer Sydney Orbital
- Annangrove Road
  - Arterial Status and By-pass of Round Corner at Kemhurst Rd.
- Public transport corridor investigations – Rouse Hill to Box Hill
- Public transport corridor investigations Norwest to Parramatta
- North South Rail Link
  - extension of Sydney Metro Northwest to St Marys

EMPLOYMENT TO 2036
- Rouse Hill Strategic Centre
  + 2,800 Jobs
- Norwest Strategic Centre
  + 23,900 Jobs
- Castle Hill
  + 5,500 Jobs
- Annangrove Road Employment Area
  + 16,390 Jobs
- Box Hill Business Park
  + 11,820 Jobs
Community & Economy
A Vibrant Community & Prosperous Economy

Building a vibrant community is about connecting our residents to a range of services and facilities that contribute to their health and wellbeing. A prosperous economy, where businesses are well supported with access to the right networks, good physical and social infrastructure and connections, encourages growth and the creation of a vibrant community.

The Hills Shire benefits from a diversified economy including traditional manufacturing, knowledge intensive industries, a growing health and support services sector, high quality education and training and an active agricultural and mining sector. Agricultural and mining activities have formed a good economic base for the rural area which continues to be a significant contributor to agricultural output within the Sydney Basin. Over the last 10 years the economic output of the rural area has increased with a move to more intensive horticulture and use of technology. This is despite a reduction in the amount of land used for agriculture purposes.

In more recent times, growth of the urban part of the Shire has substantially increased the demands placed on our employment lands and centres. The strategic centres at Norwest, Castle Hill and Rouse Hill are expected to continue to grow and evolve to serve the new population and deliver more knowledge intensive jobs to the area. In addition, the services and connections our Shire is able to provide to both Parramatta and the new Western Sydney International Airport will be crucial to leveraging our own economic growth.

This theme recognises our desire to grow our service and knowledge based economy as well as the importance of our rural area.

The following planning priorities will allow us to capitalise on our economic base and seek out new opportunities to expand The Hills economy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Priority 1</th>
<th>Plan for sufficient jobs, targeted to suit the skills of our workforce.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning Priority 2</td>
<td>Build our Strategic Centres to realise their potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Priority 3</td>
<td>Retain &amp; manage valuable industrial &amp; urban service land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Priority 4</td>
<td>Retain &amp; manage the Shire’s rural productive capacity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Priority 5</td>
<td>Encourage support activities &amp; tourism in rural areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measures:
- Jobs by industry (increase in proportion of knowledge intensive jobs)
- Level of employment (increased retention of resident workers)
- Gross Regional Product
- Commercial vacancy rates (decrease in commercial vacancy rates)
- Land zoned for employment purposes across various industry sectors (no net decrease)
- Visitor numbers (overall increase in visitor numbers)
Planning Priority 1
Plan for sufficient jobs, targeted to suit the skills of our workforce

Rationale
The Hills population is expected to grow by approximately 128,000 residents by 2036. To maintain our current ratio of jobs per resident worker of 0.8:1 we will need around 50,600 additional jobs. The Hills currently has a future capacity to accommodate around 83,000 extra jobs, comprising 59,200 under current controls and a potential 23,800 in locations where master planning and LEP review is yet to be completed (Norwest, Castle Hill Central and Cattai Creek West in Showground Precinct).

The remaining capacity in existing and potential business and industrial lands will be required to accommodate growth beyond 2036. The Hills is expected to deliver 38,000 new dwellings to 2036 with capacity for an additional 38,100 beyond that time. Those additional dwellings will create additional demand for local jobs, it is therefore vital to ensure that existing and planned business and industrial land is protected now in order to support future growth beyond 2036.

The Hills has a predominantly highly educated, highly skilled, highly paid resident workforce. Our current local jobs do not match the employment needs of our residents. In order to continue to grow our economy and provide suitable employment within the Shire for our residents it is important to understand the locational requirements of businesses that will assist us to start transitioning towards a more knowledge based economy. The Productivity and Centres Strategy 2019 focuses on these industry sectors and examines the potential to grow health precincts, education jobs and knowledge intensive jobs.

Improving the ability of the local population to find local employment can reduce commuting times and congestion and work towards the Central District Plan target of a 30 minute city. This will encourage a better work-life balance, increased local spending and stronger local communities. Our Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy 2019 provides further details about improving existing transport infrastructure and facilitating new transport connections to support jobs growth.

Figure 4
Comparison of Jobs vs Skills of our Workforce (2016)
Council will:

- Work with businesses to attract new investment and identify what makes locations attractive.
- Target businesses and industries that are attractive to our residents.
- Discourage conversion of employment land, such as our business parks and industrial lands for residential or part residential purposes.
- Seek a university presence in the Shire and closer connections to facilities at Parramatta and Hawkesbury to support growth of the knowledge economy and the agricultural sector.
- Support the growing health precinct at Norwest and its connection with the new health precinct at Rouse Hill in the vicinity of the proposed Rouse Hill Hospital.
- Work with the Department of Education & Communities to deliver school infrastructure, noting that the planned provision of schools does not cater for the population growth expected, thereby inhibiting the natural growth in jobs that would be expected.

Actions

1.1 Protect the extent, role and function of strategic centres and employment lands through land use zones and objectives. Include a commercial core within strategic centres for economic and employment uses.

1.2 Implement a planning proposal policy to clearly articulate locations where planning proposals for conversion to residential or mixed use zoning are discouraged.

1.3 Prepare an Economic Growth Plan.

Economic Growth Plan

- Program to attract new investment and jobs.
- Business partnering to attract knowledge based industries.
- Research what attracts those companies to the Hills.
- Changes to land use controls to attract the right businesses.
- Changes to works program to create better places.
- Changes to promote low impact night time economy uses.
- Measures to encourage growth in the visitor economy.

Planning Priority 2

Build our strategic centres to realise their potential

Rationale

Our strategic centres of Norwest, Castle Hill and Rouse Hill are targeted by the Greater Sydney Region Plan and the Central City District Plan to deliver high levels of private sector investment, flexibility, and co-location of a wide range of activities. Areas within these centres that are suitable for increased commercial activity will transition to more identifiable commercial core functions, to ensure an appropriate number and mix of jobs can be provided in these locations.
A significant trend across Australia has seen the continued growth in mixed use development where traditional commercial or retail development is co-located with apartment developments. Whilst a mix of different land uses is important in creating walkable neighbourhoods and vibrant communities, the creation of commercial office precincts such as Norwest are essential in providing clusters of higher order employment which can take advantage of opportunities for businesses to agglomerate.

Residential floor space can detract from the commercial function of the land and decrease the viability and desirability of future commercial investment. Noting that there are already large parts of our strategic centres identified as suitable to accommodate high density residential development, there is no need for encroachment of residential development into significant employment land. A continued focus on improving pedestrian and cycle networks and delivering higher density development based on transit oriented principles, will see the benefits of walkable and vibrant communities realised.

Under the District Plan, we need to reach jobs targets for each of our strategic centres in order to grow employment and the local economy. Reaching these targets will mean that we will go a long way toward providing our overall jobs target for the Shire of 50,600. We have estimated the additional jobs that could be delivered within each location based on the potential of these centres to respond to government targets. As can be seen below Council is well placed to deliver significant jobs growth in Norwest:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Centre</th>
<th>Targets for additional jobs</th>
<th>Estimated additional jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Castle Hill</td>
<td>6,200 – 9,700</td>
<td>5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwest</td>
<td>16,600 – 20,600</td>
<td>23,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rouse Hill</td>
<td>5,800 – 6,800</td>
<td>2,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>28,600 – 37,100</td>
<td>32,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: District Plan Job Targets - Strategic Centres to 2036

More work is needed to ensure we can meet the jobs targets for Castle Hill and Rouse Hill strategic centres. Whilst Castle Hill is well located to the workforce and transport infrastructure and has sites
for potential office development, growth has been inhibited by a number of factors including migration of businesses to business parks (Norwest in particular), traffic congestion and lack of premium grade commercial office space. This centre requires a clear vision for its commercial future and may need Council to take the lead on commercial development to provide a catalyst for investors to consider the area.

The announcement of a new public hospital in Rouse Hill presents an opportunity to collaborate with State Government and Blacktown Council in facilitating a health precinct to support the hospital and encourage job growth in Rouse Hill. Health services jobs are one of the fastest growing industries in The Hills and are well suited to our residents' skills.

In addition to the delivery of the Sydney Metro Northwest, the planning and delivery of the rail link between Rouse Hill and St Marys and ultimately through to the Western Sydney International Airport will be key to the success of Rouse Hill. Additional precinct planning work is also needed to complete the overall vision for the Rouse Hill strategic centre, which includes Rouse Hill Town Centre and other commercial land to the north west of the town centre, located along Windsor Road, to ensure we do not lose the opportunity for Rouse Hill to effectively transition to a fully functioning strategic centre, as identified in the Central City District Plan.

Coupled with this necessary focus on jobs, residential development will be restricted in our strategic centres so that sufficient land can be used for commercial and retail purposes, supporting the long term growth in population and the needs of our community. This approach corresponds with the Government’s approach outlined in the Greater Sydney Region Plan and Central City District Plan. To this end, Structure Plans and Phasing Strategies have been prepared for our strategic centres to outline how the centres are expected to grow and evolve.

Provision of physical and social infrastructure to support the workforce will also be important to future success and enjoyment of these places. Work locations that are rich in opportunities for meeting and connection, convenience retail, events and dining are sought out and valued by this generation of workers. A focus on the night time economy can assist in making it easier for workers to blend their work commitments and lifestyle more seamlessly.

As we welcome new residents and workers, and an increasing number of visitors, there is considerable potential for growing our vibrant night-time economy in our strategic centres. There are a range of mechanisms available to facilitate the night time economy including review of permissible land uses, review of hours of operation, review of outdoor dining policy, public domain planning and place making opportunities.

A Public Domain Strategy will integrate with our precinct planning for our centres to ensure they are great places to work as well as spend time connecting with each other out of work hours. Flexible planning controls will contribute to the delivery of vibrant main streets with plenty of opportunities to enjoy eating out, meeting together and enjoying a variety of entertainment.
Public Domain Strategy

The Public Domain Strategy will set the future direction for works and improvements throughout the Shire. It will establish a set of goals and enable and improved sense of place and identity. It will include:

- Design principles applicable across the whole Shire
- Key street design elements
- Specific pallets and design principles for a variety of character areas including
  - Local, village and town centres; and
  - Business and industrial areas
- Provision for precinct specific public domain plans for areas including
  - Baulkham Hills Town Centre
  - Castle Hill North;
  - Castle Hill Central;
  - Norwest Central; and
  - Norwest Service

The Public Domain Strategy will assist in driving better place making. Contents of precinct specific and Shire wide plans will inform Council’s Capital Works Program and provide direction and certainty to developers and planners in preparing and assessing applications which impact the public domain.

Council will:

- Prepare land use planning documents and respond to development applications and planning proposals for our Strategic Centres in line with the Structure Plans and Phasing Strategies.
- Work with State Government to bring forward planning for the city shaping link between Norwest and Parramatta (refer Planning Priority 11).
- Advocate for the early completion of the Sydney Metro linking our strategic centres with the Sydney CBD and the Western Sydney International Airport.
- Investigate measures to promote low impact night time economy including review of permissible land uses, review of hours of operation, review of outdoor dining policy, public domain planning and place making opportunities.
- Investigate measures to deliver desired outcomes in strategic centres including assistance for start-up businesses in the Norwest Service Precinct and management of serviced apartment outcomes in employment zones.
Actions

2.1 Prepare and implement Precinct Plans and development controls for Norwest Central, Castle Hill Central and Cattai Creek West (identified as Phase 2 delivery in 5-10 years).

2.2 Partner with Health Infrastructure NSW, Department of Planning and Industry, Blacktown Council and key landowners to develop a Health Precinct Strategy for the new Rouse Hill Hospital.

2.4 Prepare and implement a Public Domain Strategy to enhance the image and amenity of strategic centres.

Structure Plans

Structure Plans have been prepared for each strategic centre to indicate where Council will focus jobs and housing in these centres. These are informed by ‘Principles for Greater Sydney Centres’ contained in the Region and District Plans. These structure plans focus on the desired land uses, accessibility and public domain to grow investment and jobs in our strategic centres. They are an update on the outcomes envisaged in the Government’s North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy (2013) and the Hills Corridor Strategy (2015) and existing master plan work, noting the opportunities offered by Government infrastructure investment such as the new Rouse Hill Hospital and city shaping regional transport connections.

Castle Hill Strategic Centre

Castle Hill is our “CBD” and is set to become a vibrant and active centre comprising offices, retail, community facilities, recreation, cultural facilities, education and increased housing densities within walking distance of the station.

Land Use

- Development within the ‘ring road’ will form the commercial core of Castle Hill Central allowing for a range of retail, business, office, leisure, entertainment, hotel, administration and community uses that serve the needs of the wider community.
- Development surrounding the ‘core’ will provide a mix of business, office, residential, restaurants and supporting retail uses with a focus on creating a vibrant and active lifestyle precinct. The intent is to support the adjoining commercial core. Precinct

Figure 6: Castle Hill Strategic Centre – Sub Precincts
Planning may inform a suitable level of residential development (if any).

- Development beyond the commercial core and mixed use surrounds will provide a diversity of housing, within an easy walk of facilities and transport:
  - higher density residential (7 to 20 storeys) principally to the north; lower scale apartment development to the south, with heights around 4-6 storeys; and
  - beyond this, townhouses, duplexes and single detached dwellings.
- Development within and surrounding the centre will incorporate a variety of building heights, including some distinctive or landmark heights.

**Access**

- New pedestrian and vehicular connections, including some local road widening will increase connectivity and permeability.
- The Old Northern Road and Terminus Street ring-road link is to remain the primary north-south thoroughfare through the centre with changes to alignment at Brisbane Road and McMullen Avenue to improve accessibility and safety.
- Showground Road will remain significant to connect Norwest Business Park with the Castle Hill centre.
- Significant upgrades of the streetscapes on these major thoroughfares will be required to provide attractive and accessible pedestrian connections between the Centre and the adjacent uses.

**Public domain**

- The primary public domain works will involve upgrading of the streetscapes in and around the centre, with the creation of new and widened footpaths and attractive street furniture.
- Activation of buildings at street level will be promoted with urban plazas and recreational zones providing for civic gathering and open space enjoyment, particularly within the station precinct and the core of the centre.
- Existing green spaces which form part of the Castle Hill identity will be protected and enhanced such as the Arthur Whitling Park, Maurice Hughes Reserve, north west of the commercial core; and Bert Parkinson Reserve north of Castle Hill High School. Expansion of local parks such as Olola Avenue Reserve can be investigated as part of precinct planning.
- A Public Domain Plan will be required to detail the delivery of the above initiatives and to guide the broader character of the public domain.
Norwest is our premier employment location and is set to transform from a traditional business park and light industrial location to an integrated major employment precinct for the northwest, attracting knowledge intensive and innovative industries and large corporations as well offering enhanced opportunities for local businesses to start and grow.
Land Use

**Norwest Central Precinct:**
- Norwest Marketown and immediate surrounds will be the mixed use core of the precinct, with a mix of retail, business, office, leisure, entertainment and community uses with a balance of higher density housing.
- The primary focus of the mixed use core is to serve the needs of the employment area and wider community with diverse shopping, leisure, recreation and eating out opportunities. The delivery of housing, whilst contributing to a sense of vibrancy, should not inhibit the delivery of a high amenity, vibrant place to meet worker and resident needs.
- Sites surrounding the mixed use core will have enhanced office and business capacity to achieve the centres job targets.
- Development beyond the mixed use core and commercial surrounds will provide a diversity of housing, within an easy walk of facilities and transport.
- Development within and surrounding the centre will incorporate a variety of heights to facilitate a varied and interesting skyline which has regard to view corridors.

**Norwest Innovation Precinct:**
- The emerging health precinct centred on the Norwest Private Hospital will continue to grow with potential along Lexington Avenue for enhanced commercial development in the form of large floor plate campus style office spaces.
- Development in the Circa locality will focus on an enhanced local centre and longer term commercial capacity - subject to careful consideration of traffic and built form implications.

**Norwest Service Precinct:**
- The specialised retail (bulky goods) spine along Victoria Avenue will be retained to provide shopping and services for the incoming population.
- Opportunities for new commercial/office development will be provided along Carrington Road and on Windsor Road adjacent to Norwest Business Park with potential for taller office style buildings, with setbacks that incorporate quality landscaping to complement existing areas.
- Mixed use residential and employment development adjacent to Cattai Creek will facilitate restoration of the creek corridor and benefit from the natural setting, open space and amenity provided by the area.
- Light industrial areas in the west of the precinct will continue to offer urban support but in the longer term will also provide enhanced opportunities for smaller start up business - following review of lot sizes and permitted uses.
Access

- Permeability within all employment areas and connectivity to the Norwest, Showground and Bella Vista stations will be enhanced through the provision of through site links, on and off road pedestrian/cycle links, additional road connections and intersection upgrades.
- Norwest Boulevard provides the primary east-west thoroughfare through the centre, connecting to the M2 and M7 motorways.
- Showground Road will remain significant to connect Norwest Business Park with the Castle Hill Centre in the short term with longer term opportunity to connect Norwest Boulevard to Carrington Road.
- Significant upgrades of the streetscapes of major thoroughfares will be required to provide attractive and accessible pedestrian connections - Carrington Road will be aesthetically enhanced comprising a landscaped median, wide footpaths and mature street trees.

Public domain

- Norwest Station and Marketown will be the vibrant and active heart of the precinct with an enhanced network of footpaths, forecourts and boardwalks offering an attractive and accessible environment for pedestrians and cyclists focused on the amenity offered by Norwest Lake and a variety of restaurants, cafes, shops and public spaces.
- For all employment and residential locations, there will be upgrading of the streetscapes with enhanced pedestrian and cycle connections to the stations, the creation of new and widened footpaths and attractive street furniture.
- A Public Domain Plan will be required to detail the delivery of the above initiatives and to guide the broader character of the public domain.
Figure 9: Norwest Strategic Centre – Structure Plan
Rouse Hill Strategic Centre

Rouse Hill is an important strategic centre serving the rapidly growing northwest with a unique and appealing mix of shopping, dining, recreation and community services. It has opportunity to increase its vibrancy and activity with enhanced retail offer and new commercial capacity all within walking distance of the new Rouse Hill station. The centre will complement and support the new Rouse Hill Hospital with knowledge intensive jobs suited to Hills Shire residents.

Land Use

- Rouse Hill Town Centre will be the mixed use core of the precinct, with a mix of retail, business, office, leisure, entertainment and community uses with a balance of higher density housing. Part of the northern frame will allow for expansion of these activities with precinct planning to inform the suitable level of residential development.
- The primary focus of the mixed use core is to serve the needs of the wider community with diverse shopping, leisure, recreation and eating out opportunities. The delivery of housing, whilst contributing to a sense of vibrancy, should not inhibit the delivery of a high amenity, vibrant place to meet the needs of the northwest region.
- Sites to the north of the mixed use core will have enhanced office and business capacity to achieve the centres job targets and respond to the opportunities offered by the adjacent new Rouse Hill Hospital.
- Development beyond the mixed use core and potential health precinct provide a diversity of housing, within an easy walk of facilities and transport.
- Development within and surrounding the centre will incorporate a variety of building heights, including some distinctive or landmark heights.
- Retention of the village centre north of Mile End Road to serve local residents and workers daily shopping needs.
- Land around Caddies Creek will continue to provide for active sporting needs.
- Government owned land to the northwest of Caddies Creek Reserve provides opportunity for additional state infrastructure such as a new school.

Access

- New pedestrian and vehicular connections will be needed to increase connectivity and permeability. This will include:
  - extension of Green Hills Drive as part of adjacent mixed use development which will assist the delivery of a future public transport corridor to the north;
  - enhanced road and pedestrian connections through the northern frame;
  - new pedestrian links from employment areas to the town centre and hospital;
  - potential pedestrian bridge connection across Windsor Road;
  - upgrade of Commercial Road incorporating pedestrian links to active open space; and
  - enhanced access to Caddies Creek Reserve from Sanctuary Drive.

Public domain

- The primary public domain works will involve upgrading of the streetscapes in and around the centre, with the creation of new and widened footpaths and attractive street furniture.
- Activation of buildings at street level will be promoted with urban plazas and recreational zones providing for civic gathering and open space enjoyment, particularly within the station precinct and the core of the centre.
• A Public Domain Plan will be required to detail the delivery of the above initiatives and to guide the broader character of the public domain.

Figure 10: Rouse Hill Strategic Centre – Structure Plan
Phasing of Development

The Structure Plans consider long term (20 year) outcomes and need to be considered at a strategic planning level. They will ultimately be implemented through changes to zonings, amendments to development controls and preparation of developer contribution plans and public domain plans. However, further precinct planning work is required to inform built form responses, improvements to transport, connectivity and accessibility and necessary infrastructure to support growth. A staging plan identifying the potential 'on the ground' delivery of short, medium and longer term opportunities is provided highlighting the work required for medium and longer term growth.

Figure 11: Phasing Timeframes

Phase 1
Phase 1 development is that where the planning and associated infrastructure investigations are complete or near complete and implementation can commence. This includes:

- Castle Hill North Precinct;
- Showground Station Precinct residential development and local centre;
- Lexington Avenue commercial development;
- Bella Vista Station local centre and commercial development;
- Norwest Central Precinct (north) residential development; and
- Rouse Hill mixed use core (where residential densities do not exceed those already planned for).

Phase 2
Phase 2 development is that which will respond to the job targets for our strategic centres. Implementing the vision and creating the land use planning framework that will grow commercial capacity responds to the shared regional, district and local priority to attract investment, business activity and jobs in strategic centres. In order for the commercial and mixed use capacity to be realised in all precincts there is a need for the following to be completed:

- Traffic modelling to identify the impact of growth on the local and regional road network and upgrades to ensure roads will operate at an acceptable level;
- Additional infrastructure investigations and commitments including identification of open space facilities to serve growth and a K to 12 school to serve the Showground Precinct;
- Commercial and retail market demand analysis; and
- Urban design and built form analysis.
This work will be undertaken as part of a precinct planning process that requires a holistic approach to the wider area. Site specific planning proposals are discouraged to enable full investigation of all implications of growth and formulation of cohesive and sensible solutions.

Potential Phase 2 development includes:

- Castle Hill retail/commercial core and mixed use perimeter;
- Norwest Innovation commercial development uplift (Circa locality);
- Norwest Central commercial development uplift;
- Cattai Creek West Master Plan area; and
- Expansion of Rouse Hill Town Centre and adjacent residential development.

**Phase 3**

Phase 3 development is either not required in the short to medium term or requires further investigations in addition to those identified for Phase 2 development.

This Phase generally covers opportunities for higher density residential development surrounding the commercial and mixed use core, noting that there are considerable opportunities for higher density residential development to be delivered as part of Phase 1 development. For example Castle Hill North Precinct provides for an additional 3,300 dwellings in close proximity the Castle Hill Station.

Locations where further investigations are required include light industrial areas in the west of the Norwest Service Precinct and a Rouse Hill Health Precinct. These investigations will explore how opportunities for smaller start-up business can be enhanced whilst maintaining and improving opportunities for urban support activities. As noted in Planning Priority 2 the development of a health precinct at Rouse Hill will require collaboration with State Government agencies, Blacktown Council and landowners.

![Figure 12: Castle Hill Strategic Centre – Phasing Strategy](image-url)
Figure 13: Norwest Strategic Centre – Phasing Strategy

Figure 14: Rouse Hill Strategic Centre – Phasing Strategy
Planning Priority 3
Retain & manage valuable industrial & urban service land

Rationale
There is a growing and evolving demand for industrial services that support our growing population. Beyond being an important employment generator, industrial and urban services lands play a vital role in supporting ongoing business and residential growth, providing essential services to meet every day needs. Council’s Strategic Review of Industrial and Employment Activities identifies that the industrial precincts of Annangrove, Winston Hills, Castle Hill (Norwest Service), Box Hill and Glenorie contribute significantly to local employment and the local economy. To ensure an effective balance of urban services is achieved and maintained, industrial land will need to be available and affordable.

With increasing pressure placed on industrial precincts in the face of rising land values and land use conflicts, there is finite land available for urban services to keep pace with population growth. Many low impact urban services such as warehousing and storage services, postal and courier pick-up/delivery services and 24 hour gyms, can be suitably located within the B6 Enterprise Corridor Zone, where they can be conveniently located in close proximity to populated areas. Higher impact services such as vehicle repair, manufacturing or water and waste treatment plants are ideally located within industrial zones which provide a safeguard against land use conflict with non-compatible uses.

The nature of industrial and urban services uses is changing and evolving with increasing demand for a diversity of industrial lots. As manufacturing technology improves and the types of services in demand change, there may be opportunities to provide industrial and urban services land at higher densities allowing for a range of floor plates and optimising the use of available land.

The Hills is likely to have sufficient capacity within existing industrial and urban services land to satisfy demand up to 2036, which will need to be protected and managed to ensure there is sufficient land and well located to support growth. To ensure adequate protection and give these lands an opportunity to reach their potential, the planning framework must respond to market needs, including lot size and height requirements. Further, an audit of permissible land uses is required to ensure that our industrial and urban service lands deliver their intended functions. If the planning system does not support the needs of service industries it increases the risk of land being turned over to residential, business or retail zonings.
Well connected urban services land will also play an increasingly important role in enabling local distribution and freight services to grow and thrive in locations close to customers and markets. Preserving existing industrial and urban services land will ensure opportunities exist for services to locate close to their markets, allowing them to contribute to the local economy and remain competitive and adapt to emerging trends and technologies.

Industrial precincts should be at the forefront of good design, positively influencing internal and external amenity for staff and visitors. Achieving good amenity contributes to the visitor experience and reinforces identity and a sense of place as well as emphasising the importance and value of industrial and urban services lands.

**Council will:**

- Protect and manage industrial and urban services land to ensure the needs of our existing and future residents are met up to and beyond 2036.
- Discourage planning proposals seeking to rezone industrial and urban services land.
- Investigate opportunities to renew and improve controls related to amenity provisions including pedestrian access, car parking rates and landscaping in industrial areas.

**Actions**

Consistent with Planning Priority 1:

3.1 Protect the extent, role and function of strategic centres and employment lands through land use zones and objectives. Include a commercial core within strategic centres for economic and employment uses.
3.2 Implement a planning proposal policy to clearly articulate locations where planning proposals for conversion to residential or mixed use zoning are discouraged.
3.3 Prepare an Economic Growth Plan.

**Planning Priority 4**

*Retain and manage the Shire’s rural productive capacity*

**Rationale**

By 2056, it is expected that Greater Sydney will be home to 8 million people. Our Shire’s rural area will be integral in continuing to provide fresh food and building materials to the Sydney Basin.

The Hills is the only Local Government Area in the Central City District that contains land in the Metropolitan Rural Area (MRA), with two distinct clusters of rural activity within the Shire - Middle Dural to Glenorie, and Maroota.

Despite a decline in land area being used for productive purposes, our agricultural industry is becoming more efficient. Output and employment opportunities have increased over recent years due to technological advances and intensification of agricultural practices. Further intensification of
food crop production could assist in maintaining the proportion of fresh food that is supplied to Greater Sydney from within the Sydney Basin.

So that our rural lands can continue to be productive, we need to minimise land use conflict arising from incompatible uses being located close to each other. In particular, this involves focusing residential development in the urban area through the implementation of an urban growth boundary. Buffer zones and appropriate separation distances between productive uses and any surrounding sensitive rural residential uses will also assist in minimising risk of future land use conflict, allowing primary producers to undertake their lawful activities without undue interference.

The RU6 Transition zone has been applied since 2012 to provide a buffer between intensive urban land uses and sensitive agricultural uses. In the past the intent of the zone has been misinterpreted as ‘residential-in-waiting’, however the zone is intended to act as a boundary to urban development, to protect the viability of agricultural uses. The proposed urban growth boundary reinforces this position. Further review of permissible land uses in the RU6 zone will be undertaken to provide additional clarity.

Our agriculture and extractive industries contribute 1.5% to our total economy, with our cut flower and nursery sectors contributing most significantly. Over 85% of our agricultural output is sold locally, indicating the importance of our productive rural area to the region.

Innovation and research in agricultural practices presents opportunities to build relationships with researchers and intensify agricultural production. Greenhouse Research being undertaken by Western Sydney University may be well suited to The Hills and opportunities to partner with the university should be explored.

The development of the Western Sydney International Airport and the agribusiness precinct will change how our rural agricultural/horticultural business access markets. Preservation of a corridor for the Outer Sydney Orbital in the short term will give certainty to extractive industry operators and agricultural producers about future freight links and allow them to plan effectively for the future. Completion of the Outer Sydney Orbital will allow our rural industries to build on existing markets, access new opportunities and compete effectively.
Council will:

- Protect productive agricultural lands across the Shire from land uses that may lead to land use conflict.
- Forge links between The Hills Shire producers and Western Sydney University’s Greenhouse Research Education Training Facility at its Hawkesbury Campus and encourage intensification of horticulture activity including the use of hydroponics and greenhouses.
- Encourage better ways of accessing markets and distribution points that are essential for the growth of our rural industries, both agricultural produce and extractive materials.
- Work with State Government to facilitate the preservation of a corridor and delivery of the section of the Outer Sydney Orbital between North West Sydney and the Central Coast to facilitate growth of agricultural and extractive industries by opening up new market opportunities and supply chain efficiencies.

Actions

4.1 Review our planning controls and permissible uses in rural zones to minimise land use conflict and maintain desired character.
4.2 Investigate use of the optional Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan clause 5.16 to ensure consideration of existing rural uses when assessing applications for rural subdivision.
4.3 Implement a planning proposal policy to clearly articulate where planning proposals are actively discouraged to prevent loss of productive resource land.

Planning Priority 5

Encourage support activities & tourism in rural areas

Rationale

Support services and tourism will both play a key role in the growth of our rural economy. Intensifying agricultural production and protecting our extractive industry lands will lead to greater future output and employment opportunities in these sectors. Ensuring there is sufficient provision for activities that support these industries will contribute to their success and growth.

Rural industries that process agricultural produce or supply and service farming equipment as well as rural suppliers that sell support products including fertilizers, feed and other farm equipment, need to be able to locate close to concentrations of agricultural or extractive activity. Identifying potential locations and criteria for a future rural support hub that will be able to sustain these types of uses will assist in the growth of our rural industries and in turn support continued growth in the agricultural sector.

The rural landscape of the Shire and proximity to the Hawkesbury River provide opportunities to further develop tourism in the rural area, such as caravan parks, camping grounds and water-based recreation. Farm stay experiences, fruit picking, quality restaurants and cafes, markets, nurseries and golf courses throughout the area also attract visitors and provide a base to our visitor economy. Eco-tourism is growing in popularity, with tourists placing increasing value on experiences that have minimal environmental impact and showcase the natural environment. Identifying opportunities to
capitalise on existing specialist tourist zones (land zoned SP3 Tourist) will contribute to tourism growth.

The health of our waterways and natural environment, particularly in association with the Hawkesbury River, is vital to the success of tourism activities in our rural area. Increasing urbanisation in The Hills, Blacktown and Penrith is impacting the water quality in the Hawkesbury River, increasing its turbidity and potentially limiting water-based recreation opportunities. Water quality in the Hawkesbury River and its tributaries needs to be carefully managed well to ensure that all our waterways are accessible, healthy and able to support recreational uses.

**Council will:**

- Value the contribution that rural industries make to Greater Sydney’s economy and protect productive agricultural land from development pressures, particularly along the rural-urban fringe.
- Discourage planning proposals which seek to re-zone viable agricultural land for residential purposes.
- Investigate ways to grow tourism in the Shire.
- Collaborate with other LGAs and Catchment Management Authorities to better manage water quality in the Hawkesbury River.

**Actions**

5.1 Identify potential locations for a future rural services hub in the Rural North of the Shire.
5.2 Review planning controls and permissible uses in rural zones to facilitate land uses that will support and serve rural industry and encourage tourism in appropriate locations.

The **Rural Strategy 2019** articulates Council’s vision for the protection and management of rural lands to 2036 and establishes an urban growth boundary.
Shaping Growth

Shaping growth means delivering well planned and liveable neighbourhoods that meet growth targets and enhance amenity. It is also about ensuring safe, convenient and accessible transport options and a variety of recreational activities that support an active lifestyle. Planning for new housing is part of a bigger picture of the creation of neighbourhoods and places that people will enjoy living in.

The Hills Shire is expected to grow by almost 80% between 2016 and 2036, requiring an additional 38,000 dwellings. Whilst we will have a significant increase in the size of our older population aged over 65, our dominant age group will continue to be those aged between 30 and 55. The focus will continue to be on delivering a diversity of housing in the right locations, so that we can meet the needs of our growing community at all stages of their lives.

Our residential growth to 2036 will primarily be located both within existing urban release areas of Box Hill, North Kellyville and Balmoral Road, and within defined precincts close to our strategic centres of Castle Hill, Rouse Hill and Norwest as well as around Sydney Metro Northwest stations. Homes in release areas will predominantly be at low to medium density due to their greater distance from centres and Metro stations, and will provide opportunities for larger homes with backyards, as well as enjoying high quality recreation and community facilities. In station precincts, walkable neighbourhoods and vibrant streets will develop alongside higher densities closer to these centres and transport hubs, encouraging active and connected lifestyles, and taking advantage of services and infrastructure.

Alongside responsible management of growth, we will seek to maintain the Shire’s character and garden identity. This is especially relevant to our rural villages which are not expected to support significant growth. Any growth proposed in or around our rural villages, or within the rural area will need to satisfy specific criteria detailed in our Rural Strategy 2019 in order to be considered by Council.

The following planning priorities outline our approach to shaping growth to ensure housing supply and choice:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Priority 6</th>
<th>Plan for housing supply to support Sydney’s growing population.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning Priority 7</td>
<td>Facilitate housing in the right locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Priority 8</td>
<td>Deliver a diversity of housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Priority 9</td>
<td>Manage and enhance the character of places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Priority 10</td>
<td>Provide services &amp; social infrastructure to meet residents’ needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measures:

- Net new dwellings approved and completed (align with expected targets)
- Housing costs as a percentage of household income (decrease in percentage of low income households experiencing rental stress)
Planning Priority 6
Plan for housing supply to support Sydney’s growing population

Rationale
The Hills population is expected to grow by approximately 128,000 residents by 2036. Within existing zoned and planned residential land we are expecting to deliver an additional 38,000 dwellings by 2036, with capacity for a further 38,100 dwellings beyond 2036.

The Hills is on track to exceed our 5 year dwelling target set out in the Central City District Plan. Based on current development approvals, completions and take-up rates, 9,500 dwellings are anticipated to be completed by 2021.

In determining 10 year and 20 year targets, consideration has been given to forecast growth, housing locations and anticipated zoned yield and uptake rates. It is anticipated that initial uptake rates in release areas are currently nearing their peak and new dwelling approvals will start to decline over the next ten years with zoned capacity in these areas largely exhausted in 20 years. The delivery of dwelling completions in station precincts is expected to commence from 2025, contributing to longer term dwelling targets.

For our greenfield areas the rate of take up of housing opportunities depends upon many factors however the availability and delivery of sewer, water and electricity infrastructure has a correlation to development activity. The complexity of upgrading existing roads and relocating utilities adds significantly to the delay. It is essential State agencies are encouraged to more actively and proactively participate in delivering upgraded assets.
State Government led reviews of the planning framework in the Box Hill and North Kellyville release areas have identified a disconnect between anticipated yields and the scale of development being sought in the area, which has implications for the delivery of infrastructure to support growth. Density bands were proposed to address this mismatch and provide certainty around dwelling yields which would better align with planned infrastructure in release areas.

Matching infrastructure with growth is a challenge and the funding mechanism does not facilitate upfront delivery of local facilities such as roads, drainage, park and sporting fields. Funding of libraries, community centres and aquatic facilities in these communities is also uncertain with only the land for these facilities being able to be funded through the local contribution framework. The cost of such facilities is significant and it is beyond the rating framework to fund the upfront cost or service the debt. This is a matter that Office of Local Government and Department of Planning and Environment needs to address.

In urban renewal areas, the supply of housing will be slower than that of greenfield areas. This is due in part to the way these developments are financed, leaving it more exposed to economic peaks and troughs. It is also difficult to fund the required active open space to meet the needs of future residents as in most cases, it is not practical and cost prohibitive to provide it within the catchment of these precincts. The community is concerned about the impact of density in these areas as it finds it difficult to accept that levels of service will drop for existing roads, intersection and social infrastructure limits are exceeded.

For high densities to be sensible, it must be provided in areas that are well connected and with reach of available transport and other urban support services. The Metro Station precincts in our Shire need to be carefully planned along transport oriented design principles providing for a mixture of land uses, increased walkability and improvements to public domain.

The role of the planning framework is to support the delivery of the right types of housing in the right locations. Controls which seek to influence the built form and location of dwellings assist in creating or maintaining character, limiting the negative impacts of urban living and encouraging active, attractive, comfortable, safe and sustainable communities. The planning framework needs to be regularly reviewed to ensure controls are supporting delivery of housing and supporting infrastructure in line with community and industry needs and expectations.

**Council will:**

- Ensure the planning framework facilitates good outcomes and responds to market and community needs and expectations.
- Focus on facilitating dwelling completions in areas already zoned or planned for growth.
- Discourage planning proposals seeking to re-zone industrial, employment or rural lands for residential purposes.
- Monitor, review and update the Housing Strategy 2019 to ensure sufficient housing is delivered to meet community needs and market demand.

**Actions**

6.1 Complete Housing Market Demand Study to confirm take up rates and future demand.
6.2 Prepare a planning proposal to amend the State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) to introduce maximum density bands in Box Hill and North Kellyville.

6.3 Advocate for State Government to find better ways to address the timely funding and delivery of necessary infrastructure to support residential growth.

Planning Priority 7
Facilitate housing in the right locations

Rationale

We want our communities to enjoy attractive, liveable neighbourhoods. The majority of our new homes over the next 20 years will be in the form of high density dwellings. For many years we have successfully adopted a ‘Transit Oriented Development’ approach that locates higher density dwellings around public transport nodes, with a focus on providing liveable and connected neighbourhoods with a mix of uses close to transport and services. This approach will continue to shape growth into the future.

To ensure the creation of liveable, connected neighbourhoods, it is vital that the delivery of high density development is supported by the delivery of the right infrastructure. There are four (4) Station Precincts, being Cherrybrook, Castle Hill, Norwest and Rouse Hill, that will undergo detailed precinct planning to assist in providing longer term housing delivery. Future growth in the Shire will be monitored and managed to ensure significant change only occurs once key infrastructure is in place to support growth.

Our release areas of North Kellyville, Box Hill, Box Hill North and Balmoral Road will continue to play an important role providing low and medium density housing options that are supported by existing and planned infrastructure. These dwellings will cater to demand for detached dwellings which have been the core of The Hills housing market to date. Our existing residential areas, such as Baulkham Hills, will support limited growth to 2036 predominantly in the form of renewal of ageing housing stock.

Given the significant amount of existing zoned land and land identified for re-zoning for residential development, there is no identified need to convert employment, industrial, rural or environmental zoned land for residential uses. Implementation of an urban growth boundary will assist in limiting development to the existing urban area, and ensure the productive capacity and scenic characteristics of our rural area are protected.
Rural Villages
The Metropolitan Rural Area accounts for 70% of the Shire’s land area. Rural villages are the lifeblood of rural communities; they provide a centre for the services necessary to support the people who live and work in rural areas. They are a hub of social activity and provide opportunities for connection and interaction through activities including education, recreation and employment. Villages provide alternative housing options for both people transitioning from other rural lifestyles and those seeking the amenities that a rural village provides. Given The Hills proximity to the Sydney CBD our rural areas have long been popular among those seeking a rural lifestyle within close proximity to the conveniences in the city.

As our population continues to evolve it is important to both protect the role and function of rural villages and provide opportunities for limited expansion to meet the needs of the rural community. Investigations should consider existing constraints and detail opportunities for balanced growth in line with criteria detailed in the Rural Strategy 2019.

Council will:
- Use the hierarchical zoning framework to clearly identify the intention for housing growth close to centres, services and transport and to protect areas with environmental and scenic qualities.
- Limit residential growth to within the existing and planned residential zoned areas of the urban area below the urban growth boundary.
- Support coordinated development of higher density development in station precincts based upon a transit orientated approach.
- Encourage orderly and serviceable growth around Cherrybrook Railway Station.

Actions
7.1 Prepare precinct plans for Castle Hill Central, Norwest and Rouse Hill Station Precincts.
7.2 Investigate opportunities for limited residential expansion in rural villages in line with the criteria recommended in the Rural Strategy 2019.

Planning Priority 8
Deliver a diversity of housing

Rationale
Provide housing to suit the needs of a range of budgets and lifestyles. Most new households will comprise family groups with the average household sizes likely to increase slightly beyond 3.2 people per household. As the projected capacity in low and medium density housing areas will not be able to accommodate all new family households, a proportion of high density dwellings must be able to accommodate these groups.

Council’s housing diversity clause introduced in 2016 anticipated that at least 30% of new apartment dwellings should be suitable for families with a greater proportion of apartments with 3 or more bedrooms and larger living areas. A review of this approach in light of the expected number of new
family households, as projected by the Department of Planning and Environment, confirms that the number of units required to house family groups is likely to be at least 30%.

![Figure 20: Housing Diversity](image)

The demographic in The Hills is expected to remain family dominant; however the way in which families live their lives is changing, with many opting for smaller dwellings with greater access to public transport and recreational activities. Conversely, many smaller households aspire to larger dwelling sizes or lots, even if their household size does not reflect the need.

**Affordable Housing**

The Central City District Plan recommends setting Affordable Rental Housing Targets, recommended at 5-10% of new housing stock, as a mechanism to deliver an additional supply of affordable housing for very low to low-income households in Greater Sydney. The application of any target will be the subject of a viability test that the Greater Sydney Commission and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment are currently developing. Once this viability testing is available, Council will analyse and identify areas where affordable rental housing could be best located.

![Figure 21: Dwelling Mix 2016 to 2036](image)

Ensuring the availability of affordable housing stock is a complex undertaking. Provision of new affordable housing stock is only one part of the solution. Any affordable rental housing scheme needs to be considered in conjunction with the provision of housing diversity, movement within existing affordable housing stock and supply and vacancy rates, all of which influence the affordability of housing.

Housing diversity is a key driver of affordability. This requires planning for a diversity of dwelling types including apartments, townhouses/terraces, affordable
housing, housing for seniors and people with a disability, dual occupancies and detached dwellings. A mix of housing types allows people to relocate within their local area and stay connected to community services, friends and family whilst achieving the lifestyle that they desire.

The ‘Missing Middle’
Medium density housing is a key element in delivering a diversity of housing choices. Traditionally The Hills has been dominated by low density dwelling forms with only a small amount of medium density stock available. This may be in part due to high land prices which restrict the viability of this form of development. Notwithstanding, Council is seeking to incorporate medium density elements in master planning for station precincts with a preference towards delivering terrace style development.

The introduction of the Government’s Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code presents a number of challenges and concerns, primarily around the introduction of manor houses (small apartment buildings) which result in densities higher than those expected from other medium density forms. Whilst we support providing medium density housing forms in the right locations, manor houses may restrict the ability to deliver master planned outcomes and place unexpected and undue pressure on existing infrastructure.

Seniors Housing
As is the case with standard market housing, diversity is an important element to housing for seniors and people with a disability. Many capable and active seniors still want the privacy and space that a detached dwelling provides without the maintenance burden of a larger landscaped lot.

Location is vital to the ‘liveability’ of a development and larger seniors housing developments may have the means to provide for shuttle buses and medical facilities to meet the daily or weekly needs of residents, however for smaller developments it is important that residents have access to essential services including supermarkets, post offices, health care facilities and pharmacies.

Large scale seniors housing developments take on the density and built form character comparable to medium and high density housing developments. Seniors housing developments are generally not supported in rural areas as they do not complement rural character and lack the connectivity and close connection to services and facilities that make for successful seniors living developments. Council is currently collaborating with Hornsby Council, the Greater Sydney Commission and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to investigate the impacts of the Seniors Housing State Policy in the rural areas.

Council will:

- Focus on the delivery of a proportion of apartments that can support larger households with sufficient space, quality and facilities that provide a level of amenity that makes it an attractive and realistic choice for families.
- Encourage the delivery of affordable housing in areas supported by services and infrastructure.
- Support the delivery of medium density residential development in areas where infrastructure can accommodate growth.
- Support housing for seniors and people with a disability in accordance with the requirements listed in the Housing Strategy 2019.
Actions

8.1 Review residential zonings, objectives and provisions to ensure the planning framework effectively provides for a diversity of housing in the right locations, with a specific focus on the capacity of land currently zoned R3 Medium Density Residential.

8.2 Investigate the viability of an affordable housing scheme for new dwellings in urban renewal areas.

The Housing Strategy 2019 provides further details regarding future growth and what types of housing will be provided in particular locations.

Planning Priority 9
Renew and create great places

Rationale

Creating great places requires early planning intervention, including assessment by design panels and the preparation of master plans so that high quality buildings and public spaces are delivered as development takes place in an area. This includes the provision of wide footpaths, landscaping incorporating canopy trees, lighting, signage and wayfinding as well as passive surveillance to the street and mitigating overshadowing and built form dominance.

The Hills are taking several steps towards ensuring that our developing urban areas result in great places to live, work and play whilst respecting the important character elements of existing places which are valued by our community. Master planning is a key tool which is being used in areas of greatest urban change within station precincts. Master planning provides a clear vision for place making including identifying opportunities for improved connectivity and creating inviting places for planned and incidental interaction with others.

Our Design Excellence Panel and Design Review Panel are focussing on guiding great design in areas experiencing significant change. The panels will be instrumental in ensuring the best possible built form outcomes within urban renewal areas.

Council is preparing a Public Domain Strategy which will provide an overall vision for the public domain in The Hills and guide the preparation of individual public domain plans which respond to the unique place characteristics of master planned areas.

Rural Character
The Metropolitan Rural Area has three (3) distinct character areas:

- Rural Landscape – productive, largely undeveloped, high biodiversity value;
- Peri-urban – large lot rural-residential, lifestyle blocks, some dispersed agricultural practices; and
- Villages – community hub, contained residential settlement, recreation and employment options.
Given the limited amount of rural lands in the metropolitan area (and being the only rural lands in the Central City District more specifically), it is important to maintain rural character within The Hills.

Character Statements provide an opportunity to clearly articulate the elements of a place which give it a unique feel and identity that is valued by our residents. Character statements will be prepared for the three character areas nominated above and may also be utilised in urban areas subject to significant change. Character statements will initially be incorporated into the Development Control Plan and may in the future be subject to an overlay in the Local Environmental Plan.

**European Heritage**
Council’s existing Heritage Study was conducted in 1993 to 1994 and informed the list of heritage items contained within Schedule 5 of The Hills Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012. Currently there are 206 heritage items listed in The Hills LEP with varying levels of heritage significance. There are a further five (5) items located within the North Kellyville and Box Hill Release areas and are listed in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006.

Heritage contributes to the character of a place and preserves important elements of our shared history. The planning framework enables Council to afford appropriate protection to items of significance and inform the development of places to ensure heritage remains a key character element in evolving neighbourhoods.

**Renewal of Centres**
Amongst lower order centres experiencing decline, Windsor Road Kellyville Village Centre presents a unique set of challenges given its main road location, poor streetscape appeal and amenity, insufficient range of retail mix, ageing building stock, shop vacancies and poor connectivity. It is proposed that a master plan be prepared with a view to creating an overall vision for the centre and amending development controls to achieve an integrated and orderly approach to development.

Commercial/Retail Urban Design guidelines will be prepared to guide the redevelopment of existing centres or development of new centres. These will have regard to the principles for local centres contained in the Central City District Plan. This will be supported by the development of a Public Domain Strategy which will inform a cohesive set of public domain elements to ensure centres have a sense of place and identity. In order to achieve positive change within older centres, it will be important that Council promote the benefits of centre redevelopment to business and property owners. This will involve working with business owners to identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement.

**Council will:**
- Prioritise place making in new and emerging neighbourhoods to ensure a quality living environment that is attractive, safe and connected, with a strong sense of community.
- Promote the economic benefits of centre redevelopment to business and land owners.
- Discourage commercial and residential uplift in Baulkham Hills town centre until such time as transport and traffic issues are resolved.
- Only encourage planning proposals for local centres that demonstrate cohesive master planned outcomes that do not compromise a centre’s primary role to provide goods and services, and the opportunity for the employment function to grow and change over time.
- Protect items of European Heritage significance from the impacts of development.
- Investigate measures to encourage active uses in the R4 High Density Residential zone.
**Actions**

9.1 Prepare Local Character Statements for rural character areas and investigate the benefits of including character overlays in the Local Environmental Plan.

9.2 Review the Heritage Study undertaken in 1993-1994 and make any recommended changes to Schedule 5 of the Local Environmental Plan.

9.3 Review permissible uses in the B1 Neighbourhood Centre zone to ensure they are in keeping with the small scale objective of neighbourhood centres.

9.4 Prepare and implement Commercial/Retail Urban Design Guidelines.

9.5 Prepare a master plan for Windsor Road, Kellyville Village Centre.

**Planning Priority 10**

Provide services and social infrastructure to meet residents’ needs

**Rationale**

Social and cultural infrastructure are the glue that binds a community together, the places and spaces that contribute to our overall quality of life and provide opportunities for social interactions. Providing the right types of social and cultural infrastructure, particularly in high growth areas, is critical to creating great places which support active, healthy and socially inclusive communities.

**Social &Cultural Infrastructure**

Infrastructure such as galleries, theatres, active open space, libraries and community centres facilitate planned interactions and provide a focal point for community activity, where other types of infrastructure such as community gardens, walking trails and playgrounds provide opportunities for interaction which contribute to our enjoyment of our surroundings.

Council has a role in providing social infrastructure including libraries, community facilities and locations for cultural events. The Hills supports a range of cultural and creative events that engage the community like Shakespeare in The Park, The Second Age Youth Theatre Project, Lunar Festival, The Sydney Country Music Festival, Orange Blossom festival and others.

To ensure the delivery of social infrastructure keeps pace with population growth, a library and community facilities strategy is currently being developed to deliver social infrastructure that reflects the needs of the community now and in the future. This strategy will determine catchment areas for existing libraries and community facilities and whether any upgrades or expansions are required to service existing or anticipated demand.

As part of the master planning process, land is identified for public open space to service future demand. The zoning framework is the primary planning mechanism to protect and manage open space. Council seeks to deliver identified facilities in a timely manner, in line with population growth. An open space hierarchy and standard levels of service has been developed to reflect the role of function of all open space within the Shire to provide certainty to the community. The provision of passive and active open space is discussed further in Planning Priority 15.
The Role of Centres
Centres have both an economic and social role; they provide services and goods as well as places where people want to spend more time as part of a connected community. The Hills has adopted a Centres Hierarchy which allows for the classification of each centre in terms of its size, geographic area of influence, role and function in relation to other centres. This hierarchy ensures there is sufficient distribution of services and facilities to meet a range of needs from residents’ daily shopping or social needs in neighbourhood centres to larger scale centres providing a wider range of retail, entertainment and services.

Our centres should be places where people want to be, where they want to explore, meet and connect. The redevelopment and revitalisation of existing centres is a key priority in supporting our growing population and economy. Precinct planning for centres experiencing significant change including Norwest and Castle Hill will assist in identifying opportunities to improve functionality, identity and amenity.

Initial analysis indicates that there may be a current undersupply of specialty retail shops within existing centres. The current Shire wide supply of specialty retail shops (158,600m²) is 22% lower than would be expected based on the Sydney wide ratio of 1.25m² per capita (203,125m²). Whilst this could be partly addressed by future supply, a focus is also needed on ensuring the planned and potential supply is able to be delivered in the right places and at the right time in order to reduce the risk of retail shops remaining vacant for extended periods.

A retail floor space analysis and review of local centres function will be conducted to determine whether spatial distribution and scale is sufficient to meet community needs in accordance with the District Plan’s Principles for Local Centres.

Specialised Retail (bulky goods)
Specialised retail (or bulky goods) stores sell a variety of household appliances, furniture, outdoor / camping supplies, furnishings and homewares, and floor and window coverings. Provision of floor space for bulky goods retailing remains a challenge. Within The Hills Shire, concentrations of these premises are located within the Homemaker – style centres in the Norwest Service Precinct (Victoria Avenue) and a smaller pocket at Commercial Road Rouse Hill. Preliminary demand analysis indicates a need for an additional 93,700m² of bulky good floor space by 2036. A planning proposal for land at Withers Road and Annangrove Road will respond to short to medium term demand with potential for up to 60,000m² bulky goods floor space. There may be a longer term opportunity to develop a bulky goods cluster around this location.

Council will:
- Ensure the provision of services and social infrastructure keeps pace with population growth and meets the needs of existing and future residents.
- Continue to use the hierarchical zoning framework to clearly communicate the role and function of centres.
- Support a range of cultural and creative community events.
- Facilitate specialised retail development (bulky goods) only within larger centres and specific precincts, subject to locational criteria contained in the Productivity & Centres Strategy.
- Encourage developers to address the identified undersupply of specific retail types identified in the Productivity & Centres Strategy 2019.
Actions

10.1 Prepare a library and community facility strategy.
10.2 Reinforce and protect the hierarchy of centres through land use zones, objectives, permitted uses, local provisions and amended development controls where appropriate.

The Productivity & Centres Strategy 2019 establishes the hierarchy of centres and examines the amount and type of retail floor space needed to serve future residents based on established benchmarks of provision.
Infrastructure
Delivering and Maintaining Infrastructure

This theme is about ensuring community infrastructure is attractive, safe and well maintained and also providing new infrastructure in a timely manner that meets the needs of our growing Shire. Over the next 20 years the delivery of regional and local infrastructure will be crucial to community wellbeing and supporting the Hills Shire’s economic growth. The majority of our housing growth to 2036 is expected to occur within Sydney Metro station precincts and greenfield release areas including the North West Growth Area and Balmoral Road.

To enhance the liveability of our Shire and take advantage of the opportunities that the Sydney Metro brings, we need to ensure that additional infrastructure is delivered in line with the growth that we are expecting. This includes local and regional roads, cycleways and pathways, appropriate commuter car parking as well as accessible recreation facilities. This will be critical in meeting the needs of our residents and ensuring our Shire remains the sought after place to live that it is today.

Within the framework of a metropolis of three cities, where most residents live within 30 minutes of a metropolitan or strategic centre, the planning and delivery of key regional transport connections is essential to support economic and employment growth in a timely manner. This will require meaningful collaboration with, and by, State agencies, supported by information from Council on the staging and location of growth and how intended regional infrastructure can best be aligned.

Council will plan to the extent legislation allows, for the local infrastructure needs of new communities. New development and new communities in greenfield areas are expected to deliver and fund their local infrastructure needs and the rate revenue generated will allow this infrastructure and services to remain into the future. Areas of urban renewal should only rely on existing assets where development provides an upgrade and improvement to the levels of service for existing infrastructure.

Targeting infrastructure provision to areas where we are expecting significant growth in housing and jobs also contributes to greater efficiency in the use of land and financial resources of Council, as well as lessening potential environmental impacts.

The following planning priorities will allow us to respond to the expected infrastructure needs of our future population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Priority 11</th>
<th>Plan for convenient, connected and accessible public transport.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning Priority 12</td>
<td>Influence travel behaviour to promote sustainable choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Priority 13</td>
<td>Provide an active transport network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Priority 14</td>
<td>Plan for a safe and efficient regional road network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Priority 15</td>
<td>Provide new and upgraded passive and active open spaces.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measures:
- Increase in public transport patronage, decrease in private vehicle use as a percentage of mode share.
- Increase in active transport (walking & cycling) as a journey to work mode.
- Infrastructure projects planned and completed.
Planning Priority 11
Plan for convenient, connected and accessible public transport

Rationale
As our population grows, we need to ensure easy access to public transport so that commutes to work are shorter and more efficient, and that residents can take advantage of the 30 minute city.

The Sydney Metro Northwest has improved connections to Macquarie Park/Sydney CBD and within the local area. In order to make the most of this, Council must ensure that Metro stations are easy to get to, and that opportunities to connect the local road network to the Metro stations are leveraged.

In addition to commuter car parking provided at selected Metro station locations, Council is implementing the State Government’s Sydney Metro parking management strategy for surrounding local streets within a 400m radius. Linking our network of cycleways and footpaths to the Metro stations will further facilitate accessibility to public transport and assist in taking cars off the road.

Council has been actively investigating ways to make best use of existing infrastructure to provide ‘pop-up’ commuter parking, supported by regular bus routes, to provide additional commuter parking outside of the walkable catchment of stations.

New transport solutions are needed to connect residents of Box Hill and Box Hill North to the Sydney Metro network and extensive bus services. These two release areas are expected to accommodate close to 56,000 people and are already 35% complete. Investigations are urgently needed to identify the route for a public transport corridor, building on the existing corridor between Annangrove Road and Commercial Road.

A key priority for Council is to establish a mass transit connection to Parramatta. Over 12% of our working residents travel to Parramatta for work, almost as many as travel to the Sydney CBD. These key workers will not be serviced by the Sydney Metro and so will continue to rely on private vehicle and buses in the short term. Future Transport 2056 identifies a future mass transport link between Norwest and Parramatta and nominates a timeframe of approximately 20+ years before planning will commence. Earlier planning and identification of necessary land for this link will be sought in collaboration with Transport for NSW to ensure opportunities are not lost. The early delivery of this link will greatly assist in providing a meaningful link between The Hills and the Parramatta CBD, cementing Parramatta as the heart of the Central City and connecting Norwest to the Greater Parramatta Economic Corridor.

Baulkham Hills is the only local centre identified in the long term plan for a mass transit link. Assuming the link is likely to be a metro system, identification of a station box location in Baulkham Hills would reaffirm a commitment to delivery of the link and provide an opportunity to develop a bus interchange which would assist in servicing this important route whilst planning and delivery of a mass
transit link is underway. Possible locations for a future metro box include Crown land around the Baulkham Hills library or alternatively behind the Bull and Bush site. The library site is considered to be the optimal location with good access to Windsor Road and the ability to contribute to any future grade separation at Windsor Road and Seven Hills Road.

The city shaping connection to the North South rail line via Schofields should be prioritised to facilitate connection to the developing Western City and to provide faster commutes to Parramatta. This would provide another interim solution pending the delivery of the identified mass transit link between Parramatta and Norwest via Baulkham Hills.

Whilst the introduction of the Sydney Metro Northwest will be instrumental in shaping change in The Hills and influencing travel behaviour, our local bus network will remain an important public transport option. Bus patronage has been increasing in recent years and further investment in bus infrastructure will ensure that this trend continues. Buses are important for supporting the Metro by facilitating convenient connections to the stations, as well as serving routes which are not supported by the Metro at this time, including between The Hills and Parramatta. The Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy 2019 identifies a number of key bus priority measures which will assist in improving and building upon the success of the bus network.

Council will:

- Collaborate with Transport for NSW to identify and preserve a public transport corridor between Rouse Hill and Box Hill, and determine the most appropriate transport mode.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the Government's Sydney Metro parking management strategy and seek to identify improvements or appropriate extensions to its area of operation.

Actions

11.1 Identify preliminary corridor and station box options and advocate for the earlier planning for a mass transit link between Norwest and Parramatta.
11.2 Seek State Government commitment to the early planning and delivery of the North South Rail Link between Tallawong Station and St Marys.
11.3 Plan for and advocate to Transport for NSW when appropriate for local bus priority measures as identified in the Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy 2019.
11.4 Commence a pilot program of ‘pop-up’ commuter car parking.
Planning Priority 12
Influence travel behaviour to promote sustainable choices

Rationale
The Hills Shire has historically had high levels of car ownership due to fewer public transport options and the relatively long distances to key employment locations of our workforce, such as Parramatta, Sydney CBD and Macquarie Park.

Future Transport 2056 does not identify any major new road connections to or through The Hills within the next 20 years. Any additional vehicles will thus be added to the existing road network, increasing the need to address congestion issues and parking demand. Rather than meeting demand for car parking, an alternative approach is to influence demand. Adopting a Transit Oriented Development approach, locating high densities and a mix of uses close to Metro stations will assist in reducing dependence on private vehicles for short trips and encourage public transport use amongst residents moving in to developing communities.

In conjunction with a high car ownership rate, development controls in The Hills have historically provided for a large amount of parking. A reduction in car parking rates for residential and commercial developments in close proximity to public transport may influence travel behaviour and reduce construction costs, increasing development viability.

Opportunities to implement car sharing initiatives in high density residential and commercial areas close to transport hubs will be supported through targeted development controls. These could include reduced car parking rates for developments incorporating shared parking facilities in station precincts, requirements for dedicated car sharing spaces for new developments or provision of dedicated on-street parking for shared vehicles.

The availability of convenient, accessible, safe and well-located short-stay parking for visitors and customers is essential to the economy of individual businesses and centres. Improving active and public transport quality, limiting the available long-stay parking and including paid short term parking in appropriate locations, will encourage a change in travel behaviour and enhance the effectiveness of the public transport system and support the economic vitality of businesses in the area.

Council will:

- Seek to influence travel behaviour through careful management of parking demand.
- Encourage car sharing in areas of higher residential and commercial density close to transport hubs.
Actions

12.1 Review car parking rates for centres.
12.2 Investigate and implement car parking controls for provision of car sharing spaces for large scale commercial and residential development.
12.3 Investigate the introduction of metred, short term parking in key locations to manage parking demand and support businesses.

Planning Priority 13
Expand and improve our active transport network

Rationale
A network of pedestrian and cycle paths that link public transport hubs to parks, waterways, centres and services is crucial to encouraging the use of recreation opportunities available in the Shire as well as potentially reducing the number of cars on our local roads.

Providing a safe, attractive and accessible active transport network encourages people to be more physically active and connect with the natural environment. In general, providing these links also comes at a lower cost to Council and the community, as off road links are less expensive to build and maintain than road connections.

Increasing active transport links throughout the Shire will facilitate more opportunities to create places for people, characterised by slower movement and the prioritisation of walking and cycling over vehicle use. Future Transport’s ‘Movement and Place’ framework recognizes that when the pace of transit slows down the quality and amenity of a place increases. This benefits residents’ physical and mental well-being as they walk or cycle to connect with their community.

Council will:

- Progressively identify and fill the gaps in our network of off road cycleways and footpaths.
- Support the health and wellbeing of our residents by prioritising active transport links in centres and residential areas.

Actions

13.1 Review and update the Bike Plan.
13.2 Improve wayfinding on existing and proposed cycleways.
Planning Priority 14
Plan for a safe and efficient regional road network

Rationale

We face significant challenges upgrading and maintaining our existing road infrastructure to ensure our growing community has access to an efficient transport network. Key road connections identified in Future Transport 2056 will be integral in enabling fast and safe movement of people, goods and waste – all of which are increasing in number and volume.

Road congestion is a source of significant frustration for Hills Shire residents and leads to a negative view of continued growth. Whilst improvements to public transport assist in alleviating the problem in the short term, a focus on improving level of service on arterial and regional roads is necessary to ensure our road network is able to support growth in the long term.

The Outer Sydney Orbital will connect The Hills to the Central and South Coasts via Western Sydney Airport and will be crucial in the movement of people and goods, boosting our economy and providing essential access to employment and business markets. The Orbital will be key to the success of the Box Hill Business Park as well as influencing the growth of the Shire’s agricultural and extractive industries sectors, as it will constitute the main freight link to the Western Sydney Airport.

Growth in Box Hill and neighbouring areas such as North Kellyville, The Ponds, Schofields and Riverstone in the Blacktown LGA, has placed increased pressure on Annangrove Road. This road is frequently used as an alternate east-west route for people located in the north of The Hills and Blacktown to access Hornsby and the M1 Motorway via Pennant Hills Road, and by-pass Windsor Road, the M7 and M2 Motorways.

Whilst most sections of the road are currently operating at a satisfactory level of service, some including between Bannerman Road, Sedger Road and Angus Road are nearing capacity with up to 970 vehicles passing through during the morning and afternoon peak, equivalent to volumes expected on regional, rather than local roads. With Box Hill and Box Hill North currently only a third complete, traffic volumes accessing Annangrove Road are only expected to increase in the near future.

Amending the status of Annangrove Road from sub-arterial to arterial status will assist in securing the appropriate attention and funding required to upgrade it to a standard befitting its current and expected usage. In conjunction with this, a bypass of Kenthurst Road to connect directly with New Line Road would significantly ease congestion around Dural and Round Corner.

Residents who live in and around Baulkham Hills are subject to significant traffic congestion and delays on a daily basis. Grade separation of Windsor Road and Seven Hills/Old Northern Road will improve intersection capacity and functionality. Resolving traffic congestion at this location is needed in the short term and Council will continue to ask State Government to seriously consider grade separation at this location; and in particular, how it could potentially complement the delivery of the identified ‘city shaping corridor’ between Parramatta and Norwest.

The changing nature of retail trade with an increased reliance on on-line shopping and delivery is changing the nature of urban freight logistics. The introduction of ‘local distribution premises’ as a new land use term seeks to facilitate this emerging logistics task by permitting smaller distribution centres, close to populated areas to facilitate more efficient last mile freight which can be achieved
using vehicles more appropriate within an urban environment. Council will monitor uptake of this development type to better understand demand and any barriers to success.

Council will:

- Advocate for regional road projects that will benefit the Shire as well as Greater Sydney.
- Monitor traffic levels on key regional roads to pinpoint timing for necessary upgrades.
- Monitor uptake of ‘local distribution centres’ and consider if the use is appropriate in additional zones to improve the efficiency of the freight network.

Actions

14.1 Work with State Government to revise the status of Annangrove Road to an arterial road to recognise its increasing role in facilitating regional traffic movements.

14.2 Plan for and seek State Government support for grade separation at the intersection of Old Northern Road/Seven Hills Road and Windsor Road, Baulkham Hills.

The Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy 2019 articulates Council’s vision for land use and transport planning to 2036 and provides additional detail on Council’s road hierarchy, regional and local transport priorities.

Planning Priority 15

Provide new and upgraded passive and active open spaces

Rationale

High quality and well maintained playing fields, parks and playgrounds should be within easy reach of all Hills Shire residents, to provide them with every opportunity to develop a strong physical, social and emotional connection with the outdoors and with their wider community.

A key responsibility of Council is to ensure our community can access and enjoy quality open space, whether it is relaxing in a small local park or playing organised sport at world-class sporting facilities.

Open space of all kinds provides positive benefits for our community, enabling an active healthy lifestyle as well as creating opportunities for connecting with people and the natural environment. Open space also brings ecological benefits through the provision and preservation of vegetation links and habitat for native fauna.
The Shire offers an extensive range of active recreation facilities which cater for a variety of formal sports, indoor recreation centres, community facilities and private health and fitness venues. The delivery of sport and recreation facilities which meet the existing and future needs of The Hills Shire community will ultimately ensure that the Shire remains a highly desirable place to live.

Council has developed an open space hierarchy and levels of service to guide the provision and embellishment of open space. Passive open space is generally provided at a rate of a minimum 1.62 hectares per 1,000 people, existing and planned provision in The Hills is expected to exceed this minimum rate. For active open space, an adopted level of service of 1 field per 2,000 people in low and medium density areas and 1 field per 4,000 people in high density areas will result in a need for Council to source an additional 21 fields above those already planned for.

Locating new fields in established urban areas is a significant challenge. Council has been at the forefront of seeking innovative solutions to this challenge through shared use of facilities with the Department of Education. The Bella Vista Public School includes a playing field and indoor sports facility which is shared with Council. The experience gained through this collaboration will influence future collaboration opportunities on other school sites.

Caddies Creek Reserve is currently in the ownership of the NSW State Government. Council is working with the State Government to secure the ownership of this land, which will enable planning and delivery of a significant amount of open space, additional playing fields and improved active transport links between Rouse Hill and Kellyville. The end result of this will be the delivery of the priority Green Grid Link along Caddies Creek, identified in the Greater Sydney Region Plan.

Council is bound by the Essential Works List prepared by IPART which articulates what infrastructure can be included within a contributions plan, which results in planning outcomes that are more expensive and less efficient. Broadening the list will enable Council to identify and levy for shared facilities and allow an increase in capacity of existing facilities. Whilst embellishment costs may be higher than a turfed open space they generally remove the need for more extensive land acquisition.

**Council will:**

- Progressively review and update key existing open spaces to reflect their role within the Open Space Hierarchy and Standard Levels of Service contained within the Recreation Strategy 2019.
• Investigate locations for new playing fields, shared use agreements with local schools and expansion of existing open space facilities to meet the future demand for open space and playing fields.

**Actions**

15.1 Apply the criteria listed in the Recreation Strategy 2019 when planning for new passive and active open spaces.

15.2 Secure the transfer of Government land adjoining Caddies Creek Reserve to facilitate planning for additional open space.

The *Recreation Strategy 2019* articulates Council’s vision for open space and recreation planning to 2036 and provides additional detail on Council’s open space hierarchy, levels of service and existing and future gaps in provision.
Valuing our Surroundings

This theme is about ensuring our natural surroundings are valued, maintained and enhanced. Managing impacts responsibly through education and regulatory action is a key part of Council’s strategic response under its Community Strategic Plan.

Our natural environment and bushland setting have provided desirable living conditions for generations of Hills residents. As our Shire continues to experience significant change and transformation, careful management of our natural assets will be central to ensuring future generations will benefit from the garden shire lifestyle.

Our natural environment shapes how we live, the spaces we play in, and the communities we build. A strong focus on valuing our natural surroundings will contribute to building vibrant, healthy communities.

The following planning priorities will allow us to respond to the expected needs of our future population and our environment.

**Planning Priority 16** | Manage and protect the rural/urban interface.
**Planning Priority 17** | Protect areas of high environmental value and significance.
**Planning Priority 18** | Promote increased urban tree canopy cover.
**Planning Priority 19** | Manage natural resources and waste responsibly.
**Planning Priority 20** | Prepare residents for environmental and urban risks and hazards.

**Measures:**
- Increased tree canopy coverage in targeted areas including Kellyville and Box Hill.
- Environmental indicators (water quality, air quality)
Planning Priority 16
Manage and protect the rural/urban interface

Rationale

Land at the interface between our urban and rural areas performs an important function for our Shire, providing a transition between rural and other more intense uses associated with urban development. Limiting the extent of more intense development preserves rural values as well as protecting environmentally sensitive areas within our Shire, which are predominantly located in our rural area.

Despite sufficient capacity for residential growth in the urban area of our Shire, there has been sustained pressure on land at the rural/urban fringe to be developed for residential uses. This has impacted on the availability of viable land for rural activities and threatened the character of rural areas. There is sufficient land within the Shire already planned or zoned for residential and urban uses to sustain expected growth beyond 2036, therefore it is not necessary to further encroach on the rural area. The Greater Sydney Region Plan recognises that urban expansion is not appropriate in the metropolitan rural area. Implementation of an urban growth boundary reinforces the commitment to protecting land at the rural/urban interface.

The Hills has experienced challenges in attempting to appropriately manage and protect land at the rural/urban interface, with existing State planning policies, in particular the Senior’s Housing State Policy at times sidestepping the local planning framework and allowing outcomes that are detrimental to the values and character of the rural area.

Responsibly managing the land within our urban area so that it does not further encroach into the metropolitan rural area, as well as continuing to work with State Government on solutions to overarching challenges associated with protecting our rural area will ensure that we can continue to enjoy this land for its scenic and environmental values for years to come. Protecting rural lands from urban encroachment creates the environment necessary to support a productive rural economy that is free to operate without the constraint of land use conflict. As note in Planning Priority 8, Council is currently collaborating with Hornsby Council, the Greater Sydney Commission and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to investigate the impacts of the Seniors Housing State Policy in the rural areas.
Council will:

- Implement an urban growth boundary that largely follows the boundary of the RU6 Transition zone.
- Not support planning proposals or development applications seeking to intensify urban land uses above the urban growth boundary line.

Actions

16.1 Apply the outcomes of the Greater Sydney Commission working group in relation to seniors housing in rural areas.

Planning Priority 17

Protect areas of high environmental value and significance

Rationale

With 70% of the Shire within the metropolitan rural area, our community benefits from close proximity to valuable and sensitive environments and habitats. Large tracts of densely vegetated land are home to many species of plants and animals; a significant number of which are identified as vulnerable or critically endangered in the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. An improved understanding of the extent of these areas will enable Council to better plan for their protection as well as the protection of the plants and animals they support.

Around 900km of different waterway environments wind their way throughout the Shire, with approximately 32km being Hawkesbury River coastline. These waterways contribute to local character in The Hills and provide opportunities for conservation, recreation and tourism. Ensuring water quality is monitored, improved and maintained, and that residents and visitors use these environments responsibly, will contribute to the protection of our waterways, and ultimately increase the enjoyment afforded by these environments.

Waterways also serve an important function of linking public and private open spaces, thereby contributing to Greater Sydney’s Green Grid. Council has undergone a process of mapping the health of waterways where Council is responsible for management and maintenance. This mapping assists in targeting projects and works to improve overall waterway health and is due to be updated to reflect current conditions and provide a clear picture of the success of waterways improvements to date.

Ensuring our local waterways are healthy improves the overall health of larger waterways, such as the Hawkesbury River. Water quality is critical in the success of tourism and businesses that depend on the Hawkesbury River. Taking an integrated approach that considers our waterways, stormwater network, wetlands and coastal area along the Hawkesbury in a holistic manner will assist in safeguarding future water supply as well as contributing to the future health and enjoyment of our wider water systems.

Protection of environmentally sensitive lands occurs through several layers of State and Local Government legislation. At a State level significant protections are afforded through the application of
the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. Council currently affords protection to environmentally sensitive lands through the application of the Terrestrial Biodiversity map contained within its local environmental plan. The biodiversity map identifies land with environmental values that could be negatively impacted through development. The map is currently being reviewed to ensure that it more accurately reflects the nature and value of environmentally sensitive lands. The review is based on principles relating to habitat quality, vegetation type and density. To ensure that the terrestrial biodiversity map does not restrict reasonable development of rural properties, exclusion zones will be included around established and approved dwellings and outbuildings on affected land.

The District Plan prioritises two strategic Green Grid corridors within The Hills, being the Cattai and Caddies Creek corridors. Green Grid connections contribute to the development of the 30 minute city by providing valuable active transport connections in established and developing residential areas. In urban areas these corridors are important links for recreation, cycling, urban greening, water management and biodiversity. Protection of these corridors reaffirms Council’s commitment to providing urban spaces which maintain the Garden Shire image and giving our residents access to high quality natural environments.

Figure 25: Urban Green Grid Priorities

In rural areas public access to these corridors is limited, as they are mostly privately owned. In addition, topographical constraints and bushfire risk limit the potential of improving accessibility of these corridors. Their primary function therefore rests in biodiversity conservation and providing key habitats for flora and fauna.
Council will:

- Protect natural assets and ensure the biodiversity of our Shire is appropriately identified and preserved for future generations.
- Retain and enhance vegetated riparian corridors, bird habitats and wildlife corridors across the Shire to support biodiversity and water quality outcomes.
- Seek opportunities to improve access to Green Grid corridors in our urban areas.
- Continue to manage areas of high environmental value.
- Continue to protect and enhance water quality in local catchment areas.

Actions

17.1 Review and update Terrestrial Biodiversity mapping as contained in Council’s local environmental plan.
17.2 Review and update Waterway Health mapping.
17.3 Identify opportunities to collaborate with adjoining LGAs to link Green Grid corridor initiatives across boundaries.

Planning Priority 18
Promote increased urban tree canopy cover

Rationale

Tree-lined streets, urban bushland and tree cover on private land form the urban tree canopy. The urban tree canopy is a form of green infrastructure that mitigates the urban heat island effect, supports cleaner air and water and provides local habitat. The urban tree canopy can also help make communities more resilient, by reducing the impact of extreme heat, lowering cost of living through reduced cooling requirements and contributing to the character of places and to our overall enjoyment of our surroundings.

The Hills is fortunate to benefit from good urban tree canopy cover in the eastern portions of the urban area. These areas contain typically older detached dwellings on large lots; these are the areas of the Shire which have historically contributed to the Garden Shire Image. Residential streets with wide setbacks containing established street trees, intermingled with large swathes of urban bushland such as Fred Caterson and Bidjigal reserves give rise to the feeling of connection to nature in established urban areas.
As residential development has expanded to the west and north of the Shire, development lots have become smaller and house sizes larger, reducing opportunities for tree planting. This is clearly evident in the above urban tree canopy map which shows the transition between the older suburbs and newer suburbs in regards to density of tree canopy coverage. Some more established suburbs including Bella Vista still have a leafy feel, but the density of tree cover is perceived to be less than in the more established eastern suburbs.

In response to decreasing lot sizes, the public domain becomes increasingly important in the provision of urban tree canopy. However, this comes with its own challenges. The location of services and smaller road verges limits the potential to provide tree cover in urban release areas.

Street tree master plans have been prepared in a number of locations to guide the developing character of new and renewing areas. Developing street tree master plans for high growth areas will assist in planning for the delivery of trees in the public domain. Street tree master plans can be implemented through conditions of consent on development applications as well as through Council works programs.

Further opportunity exists in the development of a Public Domain Strategy to consider how street trees may be better accommodated in the public domain in developing areas. This may include measures such as the use of trees in traffic calming, enabling planting away from services contained within the immediate road verge.

Council currently leads a program to assist residents in greening their suburbs through the provision of street trees. Residents can request a tree of their choice to be planted in a nominated location. Final planting location and species type are determined having regard to the location of services, sight lines, and property width and growth characteristics of the chosen tree. In 2018 Council received over 250 requests for street tree planting, over 50% of which came from Kellyville and North Kellyville. As new communities continue to develop it will be important to continue community education around the street tree planting program and support communities in greening their neighbourhoods.

**Council will:**

- Incorporate measures to increase urban tree canopy and shading within the Public Domain Strategy.
- Progressively develop street tree master plans for high growth areas.
- Continue to educate residents in regards to the street tree planting program and the benefits of street trees.
Actions

18.1 Identify areas vulnerable to the urban heat island effect and direct planting and education efforts to these areas.

Planning Priority 19
Manage natural resources and waste responsibly

Rationale

We impact on the surrounding environment through our use and management of natural resources, particularly water, and the amount of waste we generate as a community. How we store, transfer and dispose of waste also has environmental impacts. By 2036, the amount of waste that will need to be transferred out of the Central City District will increase by 137%. If we continue to use water at the same rate we do today, our consumption could more than double by 2036. Looking to the future, we need to be smart about our natural resource consumption and how we manage our waste.

Overall, there has been an increase in the amount of materials diverted from landfill through recycling initiatives, chemical clean up events, composting and green waste collection. However, as landfill facilities approach their capacity and new sites become scarcer, we need to take every available opportunity to avoid the creation of waste, reduce our consumption of materials and resources and dispose of waste as efficiently as possible.

Innovative solutions such as on-site organics processing within residential flat buildings are being trialled and will assist in reducing waste management costs and the amount of waste going to landfill. Large waste compactors are also being investigated for residential flat buildings to reduce collection frequencies, requiring fewer trips to waste disposal facilities. Further waste innovations will be investigated, including reviewing re-use and recycling options for hard waste clean-up materials, and seeking community feedback on the collection of food waste in green lid bins.

Planning and design of new developments also contributes to the efficiency of waste collection and management. Our roads and laneways need to be wide enough to accommodate waste removal vehicles that necessitate fewer trips to distant disposal facilities. Loading facilities in apartment buildings and commercial areas also need to support the efficient and safe collection of waste whilst being responsive to place making principles and future needs and innovations, such as precinct-based waste collection, reuse and recycling systems in higher density areas.

Council as an organisation is a large user of energy and water. Council has long been committed to reducing our energy and water usage through initiatives including the installation of solar panels on Council facilities. Council’s energy usage is showing a positive trend towards sustainability. Investigations are continuing around opportunities to capture and re-use water with a view to reducing Council’s water demand.

Management of stormwater is a key responsibility of Council which impacts on the amenity of places and the health of our environment and waterways. Council is preparing a stormwater asset management plan which will detail how stormwater is managed, identify key areas for improvement and will inform Council’s capital works program.
Council will:

- Continue to educate our community on how to minimise waste generation and raise awareness of waste as a resource.
- Continue to investigate regional contracting opportunities that may assist in the development of an alternative waste disposal facility for the Western Sydney region.
- Investigate opportunities to capture and re-use water on Council owned facilities.

Actions

19.1 Extend trial of on-site organics waste separation for high density developments.
19.2 Seek community feedback on the collection of food waste in existing green lid bins.
19.3 Review development controls for residential flat buildings and rear laneways to ensure that sufficient space is available for efficient and safe waste collection.
19.4 Complete the Stormwater Asset Management Plan.

Planning Priority 20

Prepare residents for environmental and urban risks and hazards

Rationale

Urban and environmental hazards have the potential to impact residents and infrastructure within The Hills. Rural land in our Shire is heavily vegetated and as such is at risk of bushfire. Much of this land is also steeply sloping and at risk of geotechnical instability. Our location within the Hawkesbury River catchment places a number of properties at risk of flooding. Risks associated with bushfire and flooding include fire damage, property inundation, isolation due to road closures and potential health impacts associated with flood waters.

Urban environments that have been mostly cleared of vegetation, such as industrial land or new residential areas, are particularly vulnerable to the urban heat island effect. Hard surfaces such as concrete, asphalt and dark roofs combine to attract and retain heat, making these areas significantly hotter than greener areas. Increasing awareness of risks associated with extreme weather conditions and the natural environment will enable our existing and future residents to make better choices that will reduce the impact of these events.

Population increase and the associated transport and waste management systems that are required to service these communities combine to reduce air quality through the production of dust, smoke and odours, as well as noise associated with traffic, construction and industry. Management of public health risks associated with food safety, waterway quality and recreational facilities, and the transmission of communicable diseases, becomes vitally important in areas with more people living, working and playing closer to one another.

Continuing Council’s existing practise of risk minimisation in designing and constructing assets will ensure that our public spaces and facilities are safe whilst providing valuable opportunities for our community to connect. Educating our community about environmental risks and hazards as well as methods to minimise these risks will assist in ensuring new developments are designed to be safe and reduce the impact of extreme weather events.
Council will:

- Continue to provide hazard identification maps that show areas at risk of bushfire and geotechnical instability.
- Educate and inform our community about environmental and weather-related risks and hazards.

Actions

20.1 Prepare a suite of information material to raise awareness of and prepare existing and future residents for environmental and urban risks and hazards.

The Environment Strategy 2019 articulates Council’s vision for the protection and management of the environment to support a healthy and vibrant community.
Proactive Leadership
Proactive Leadership

This theme is about valuing our customers and achieving prudent financial management and sound governance. In a planning context this means ensuring that our community are well informed and have an opportunity to participate in strategic land use planning decisions which affect them. In addition it is about ensuring that the strategic land use decisions we make today will be environmentally, socially and economically sustainable into the future.

The following planning priorities will allow us to respond to the needs of our future population.

**Planning Priority 21** | Prepare our residents for growth and change.
**Planning Priority 22** | Initiate and deliver solutions to growth and change challenges.
**Planning Priority 23** | Collaborate with other LGAs & Government to improve our places.

**Measures:**
- Increased community participation in planning.
- Appropriateness and quality of landowner initiated planning proposals.
- Success of collaboration projects.
Planning Priority 21
Prepare our residents for growth and change

Rationale
In a time of rapid change, Council acknowledges that our community has the right to participate and be engaged in making decisions that affect their future. Regular engagement with the community assists in identifying the challenges and opportunities that are most important to our residents.

Council regularly engages with the community at all levels of planning for change, from the preparation of strategic documents including the Community Strategic Plan and the Local Strategic Planning Statement, site specific strategic decisions on land use including the assessment of planning proposals, through to the assessment of individual development applications.

Council’s Community Engagement Strategy details our approach to engaging with the community and encourages community participation in the planning system. It is Council’s primary tool to guide engagement around the preparation of the Community Strategic Plan.

Council’s Community Participation Plan (CPP) sits within the Community Engagement Strategy. The CPP is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and details the circumstances in which Council will engage with the community in regards to specific planning matters and the ways in which that consultation may take place.

Council will:
- Encourage increased community participation in the planning system.
- Educate and inform our community about planning matters which affect them.

Actions
21.1 Review and update the Community Engagement Strategy and Community Participation Plan as required.

Planning Priority 22
Initiate and deliver solutions to growth and change challenges

Rationale
Council is committed to providing sound governance in the face of change and the challenges associated with growth. Council seeks to be at the forefront of delivering solutions to managing the challenges associated with growth to ensure that The Hills continues to be a premier destination to live, work and play into the future.

In an environment of rapid change, managing landowner initiated planning proposals is a significant challenge. In most cases planning proposals seek to amend planning controls to enable increased
residential density and development yield on specific and often isolated sites. Recent planning proposals lodged with The Hills have sought development outcomes well in excess of what can be justified under existing strategic planning documents, potentially resulting in poor design quality and inadequate infrastructure plans to support growth.

Landowner initiated planning proposals are often lodged in advance of the completion of holistic strategic planning for an area, including the preparation, exhibition and adoption of precinct plans, technical studies (including traffic modelling) and contributions plans to ensure future development can be adequately serviced. This can make site-specific planning proposals difficult to assess as documentation typically relates to individual development sites in isolation, without adequate assessment of longer-term and broader development outcomes within an area. This can lead to ‘piecemeal’ and ‘ad-hoc’ planning, making it difficult to achieve good outcomes and adequately align growth with infrastructure.

In addition to these challenges, the ability for applicants to seek review of Council’s decision from Planning Panels as well as the introduction of Local Planning Panels hinders Council’s ability to make decisions based on local outcomes and community expectations.

Planning Proposal Policy
Despite the challenges outlined above, landowner initiated proposals will remain an important element in delivering the housing, jobs and infrastructure required to service our growing population. Therefore a new approach is required to best guide the preparation of proposals and articulate Council’s position based on sound planning, to ensure that the best possible outcomes can be achieved.

In order to clearly communicate Council’s objectives to the development industry and the community, it is prudent to develop a policy which clearly articulates Council’s expectations with respect to the lodgement and assessment of planning proposals. This policy may include the locations where planning proposals will (and will not) be considered (in accordance with the Local Strategic Planning Statement and its supporting Strategies), and the extent to which developers must address the need for new infrastructure and public benefits associated with increased development yields. Key elements of the policy should include, but not be limited to:

1. The process for accepting and assessing planning proposals and the prevention of ambit claims and overdevelopment;
2. Information requirements for lodgement of planning proposals;
3. Clear guidance with respect to where planning proposals will not be considered by Council; and
4. Guidance with respect to the key elements of a successful planning proposal.

Council will:
- Clearly articulate Council’s expectations in regards to the quality, location and requirements for lodgement of new planning proposals.

Actions
22.1 Prepare and endorse a Planning Proposal Policy.
Planning Priority 23
Collaborate with other LGA’s and Government to improve our places

Rationale
The challenges facing The Hills in the wake of unprecedented population growth do not exist in isolation and will require cooperation and collaboration with Government and neighbouring LGA’s to provide the best possible outcomes.

Opportunities exist to collaborate with neighbouring LGA’s and State Government to deliver improved outcomes in areas including major infrastructure improvements, management of shared natural assets, jobs creation, active transport links and place making.

Council is already working in collaboration with other LGA’s and Government on a number of key projects including the Hawkesbury Nepean Flood Study, Hawkesbury Catchment Management Plan and shared use of sporting facilities at Bella Vista Public School. Further opportunities have been identified in this plan including but not limited to:

- Creation of a health precinct around the recently announced Rouse Hill Hospital;
- Planning and delivery of key infrastructure assets including the Norwest to Parramatta mass transit link and extension of the Sydney Metro Northwest from Tallawong to St Marys; and
- Shared sporting facilities.

Council will:

- Welcome opportunities to collaborate with Government and/or other LGA’s where it will enable the best outcomes for our community in line with the principles and priorities outlined in the Local Strategic Planning Statement.
Implementation
Implementation Plan

The Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) communicates the long-term land use strategy for The Hills Shire between 2016 and 2036. To realise our vision, a series of amendments to other Council plans which provide the delivery framework for Council’s strategic planning will be required. Further detail on the implementation of individual actions described in this plan can be found in Council’s Local Strategic Planning Statement Implementation Plan.

Local Environmental Plan Amendments
Amendments to the LEP are subject to planning proposals in accordance with section 3.4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Planning proposals to amend the LEP may either be prepared by Council or by applicants. Alignment to the strategic direction within the LSPS will be a significant consideration when determining whether an LEP amendment will proceed.

The LSPS and supporting strategies demonstrate sufficient capacity in existing zoned land to respond to housing targets. This strategy flags a number of potential changes to planning controls following further investigations and precinct planning work. It is anticipated that these precinct plans and subsequent planning proposals will be completed by the next 5 year review. Proposed amendments that do not warrant detailed master planning or further investigations will be included in the pending review of Local Environmental Plan 2012, to be completed before June 2020.

Monitoring and Review
Council will monitor, review and report on its Local Strategic Planning Statement to ensure that its planning priorities are being achieved. Council will use the existing Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework under the Local Government Act 1993 for the purpose of monitoring implementation of the LSPS.

Council will commence its first full review of the LSPS in 2023 and again every four years to align the review period with Council’s overarching community strategic planning and IP&R under the LG Act.

Funding
The LSPS will play an important role in Council’s resourcing strategy, with preparation of strategies and studies required by this plan funded in the 4-year delivery program and annual operational plans.

Partnerships
Council will work to establish effective partnerships with other LGA’s identified in the LSPS with a view to recognising regional matters which require a coordinated approach. The LSPS provides a framework for the coordinated action of many other partners in delivery. Council will continue to work hard to establish effective partnerships with State Government agencies and other organisations to support the realisation of the plan.