

Frenchs Forest 2041 Place Strategy

December 2021



The NSW Department of Planning and Environment has finalised the Frenchs Forest 2041 Place Strategy, paving the way for a new town centre near the Northern Beaches Hospital.

Development of the new town centre will happen gradually over the next 20 years and start after The Forest High School has been relocated to a new site in Allambie Heights.

The town centre will include shops, restaurants, offices, 1.5 hectares of new open public space and 1,000 new homes. A further 1,000 new homes will be delivered in nearby residential areas. The place strategy is supported by a special infrastructure

contribution that will provide up to \$37.3 million to help pay for the infrastructure needed in the precinct.

We exhibited the draft Frenchs Forest 2041 Place Strategy and supporting technical studies from 23 July to 3 September 2021.

This document outlines the key issues raised during the exhibition and how feedback informed the final place strategy.

Key issues and feedback

The community is generally supportive of Frenchs Forest 2041 but expressed concerns about the following issues.



Transport

What we heard: The community was concerned about the capacity of the road network to cope with additional traffic and limited public transport, and adequate parking availability.

Frenchs Forest 2041 will deliver Phase 1 of the 3-phase Hospital Precinct Structure Plan. Phases 2 and 3 will only be considered with further transport network upgrades, such as the Beaches Link motorway and Bus Rapid Transit connecting Dee Why to Chatswood.

Traffic modelling found that growth from Phase 1 can largely be accommodated. Another right-turn lane from Forest Way into Naree Road may be required before 90% of the Phase 1 area has been built.

A further traffic and transport study will be conducted when a stage 1 concept development application is lodged for the town centre. The study must demonstrate there will be adequate transport infrastructure and capacity to service the town centre. It will account for changes such as the shift to working from home and projects such as the Beaches Link and the Bus Rapid Transit connecting Dee Why to Chatswood.

The place strategy also recognises the need for the Bus Rapid Transit route connecting Dee Why to Chatswood, including a new bus interchange bridge connecting the precinct to the southern side of Warringah Road.

The Frenchs Forest Special Infrastructure Contribution allocates \$1 million to investigate Bus Rapid Transit. An additional \$8m will be allocated to deliver a new regional cycle connection to Manly Dam. It also recognises the potential of the Beaches Link and Western Harbour Tunnel project to reduce traffic along Warringah Road and benefit Bus Rapid Transit services.

The place strategy puts pedestrian access first in the town centre and focuses on walking, cycling and public transport.

Car parking will generally be in basements, apart from at Karingal Crescent, which is a low-scale neighbourhood.

Northern Beaches Council's Development Control Plan (DCP) will set controls for the number of parking spaces including vehicle types such as car share, electric vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles.



The Forest High School

What we heard: The community was concerned about walking and cycling connections to the new school site, the effect on space for ovals and sports fields, and the potential loss of a green break within the existing urban area.

The design of walking and cycling connections will be addressed in Council's DCP and will require additional local planning as development occurs.

School Infrastructure NSW (SINSW) advises the new school site on Allambie Road has enough space for a high school with up to 1,500 students. This includes space for a sports oval, multi-purpose courts, gymnasium, covered outdoor learning area, landscaped recreation areas and walkways between buildings. The size of building footprints, learning space inclusions and play spaces have been determined in accordance with NSW Department of Education guidelines. The design of the school has also considered existing trees on the site and aims to retain as many trees and bushland as possible while providing the needs of a modern high school. An ecology report and landscape design will be prepared and submitted with the State Significant Development (SSD) application for the project.

As part of the planning for The Forest High School relocation, SINSW must undertake an environmental impact study. The study will inform SINSW's SSD application for the new school, which the community will be able to comment on.

The high school is planned to open in early 2025. However, the completion date will be confirmed should the SSD application be approved and when a delivery program has been finalised.

For more information on The Forest High School relocation project, please visit the [SINSW project webpage](#) or contact School Infrastructure NSW at schoolinfrastructure@det.nsw.edu.au or 1300 482 651.



The town centre

What we heard: Many people are looking forward to the energetic vibe of a new town centre and saw potential for community events or rooftop gardens, but others were concerned about possible noise and light pollution, and whether more retail is needed.

The revitalised mixed-use town centre will include 1.5 hectares of new open public space that could host community events. Public spaces will be improved, and streets will be active and exciting.

The potential effects of development on nearby residential areas will be addressed in Council's DCP, which will include controls to:

- provide a transition to low-density residential areas
- minimise the effects of open community space on neighbours.
- enhance the local streetscape

Our Precinct Employment Strategy recognises there are existing retail services at Forest Way Shopping Centre and Chatswood, but there is still a need for new retail floor space to service the local area and support demand from the new precinct and Northern Beaches Hospital.



Housing density

What we heard: While there was support for increased housing density, including the potential for more affordable housing, some people were concerned it is out of character for the area.

The place strategy provides for up to 2,000 new dwellings including terraces, medium-scale apartments and higher-density apartments. No buildings will be higher than the hospital, with the scale of buildings decreasing in the north and south of the precinct so that new development integrates with existing low-density residential areas.

Under Council's Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme, any development in the precinct must include a contribution towards affordable housing in the form of dwellings dedicated to council or an equivalent monetary contribution. This will secure 250 dwellings for key worker housing to support the hospital, and is the highest affordable housing contribution rate in Greater Sydney.



Bantry Bay Track

What we heard: Residents who rely on Bantry Bay Track to access Frenchs Forest Road West were concerned they will lose this vehicle access.

The place strategy will maintain access but changes Warringah Local Environmental Plan 2011 maps to extend the 20-metre height limit and 2:1 floor space ratio over the front portion of the Bantry Bay Track. This aligns with planning controls to the east of the Bantry Bay Track and provides flexibility for future development.





Development feasibility

What we heard: There were concerns about reduced heights and floor space ratios on Frenchs Forest Road West, with some feeling the area would not be practical for development.

We recognise the COVID-19 pandemic has led to uncertainty about housing, travel and work patterns. A recent surge in prices has widened the gap between houses and units in Frenchs Forest in favour of detached housing. This affects the short-term viability of the density limits in the place strategy.

We expect this price boom to be tested by greater demand once pandemic-driven factors fade. We also expect the practicality for Frenchs Forest to return to pre-pandemic levels within 3 to 5 years. When migration to Sydney resumes, demand for units will return, which will see prices recover.

Our updated feasibility assessment for the Frenchs Forest Road West Neighbourhood area confirmed density limits are likely to be acceptable to the market in the foreseeable future.



Heritage and green space

What we heard: The community was concerned about protecting mature trees around the current high school site and several buildings, including the Hews' residence.

Our Tree Canopy Audit shows the precinct will have 30% tree canopy cover, including the planting of 732 additional trees. Council's DCP will include requirements to:

- retain mature trees, particularly in public areas
- offset any tree removal by planting 2 trees for each one removed
- encourage new tree plantings and maximise deep soil areas.

Our heritage assessment identifies and recommends strategies for the protection of heritage items, including the Hews' residence.

Council's DCP will require development applications to undertake a heritage interpretation strategy that includes Aboriginal heritage, early settlement patterns and agricultural activities. The DCP will also consider the heritage significance of the Hews' residence.





Sustainability



What we heard: The community wanted sustainability to be a key feature of the precinct.

Sustainability requirements in the precinct include:

- a 5% floor space bonus in the town centre for development that exceeds efficiency benchmarks for energy and water the maximum floor space ratio in the town centre remains at 2.9:1, as exhibited
- development above 12 metres or 3 storeys (except for the Karingal Crescent sub-precinct) must be ecologically sustainable to meet Design Excellence standards
- development must consider sustainability actions, including those in council's local strategic planning statement.

Council's DCP will have several sustainability requirements, including the need for new development to:

- help deliver a low-carbon precinct
- minimise energy use through passive building design (buildings that use little energy for heating and cooling) and energy-efficient systems
- encourage energy and water efficiency and water recycling in development that doesn't have to comply with BASIX (Building Sustainability index) standards t
- promote natural ventilation and passive heating and cooling to reduce urban heat.

Infrastructure



What we heard: The community was concerned about whether infrastructure will be delivered alongside development.

Infrastructure will be in place as the population grows, with a focus on walking, cycling and public transport to achieve a shift away from private car use.

A Special Infrastructure Contribution (SIC) will raise up to \$37.3 million to pay for the infrastructure needed for the development of Frenchs Forest.

Additionally, Council has been awarded a \$9-million grant under the Strategic Open Space program to deliver a new park at Nandi Reserve, Frenchs Forest. The NSW Government has also given council \$6.16 million in funding under the Precinct Support Scheme to upgrade 3 local parks in Frenchs Forest: Brick Pitt Reserve, Akora Reserve and Rabbett Reserve.

Council is preparing a local contributions plan to further fund the delivery of local infrastructure.

The new planning controls will begin on 1 June 2022 to allow Council to exhibit and finalise the local contributions plan for the precinct.

W: dpie.nsw.gov.au