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Project

Social Infrastructure and Open Space
Report Area 20 Precinct

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Appendix 1 Map of social infrastructure in and
around Area 20

Executive Summary

This report has considered the community facilities, human services and open space that will be required to support the population of the future Area 20, within the North West Growth Centre. The report has been prepared for the Department of Planning (DoP), (formerly the Growth Centres Commission), as one of the studies needed to support preparation of the precinct plan for Area 20.

The report contains 8 sections:

Section 1 provides an introduction and background to the study and outlines its scope and purpose.

Section 2 outlines the policy background to the study, identifying objectives for the provision of social infrastructure and open space for the precinct within the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy, the Growth Centres SEPP and Development Code, and policies of Blacktown City Council. These objectives provide the guiding framework for the community facilities and open space strategy recommended in the report. Based on these objectives, a set of best practice principles for the provision of social infrastructure in Area 20 is outlined.

Section 3 examines the social context of the precinct. It discusses the pattern of development in the area and describes characteristics of the existing population. This section uses the existing social context of surrounding areas to explore the potential characteristics of the further Area 20 population.

Section 4 considers the characteristics of the future population of Area 20, based on a development scenario of high and medium density residential development. A preliminary estimate of 2,500 dwellings and 7,000 residents is given for the precinct at full development, and these figures are used to assess likely demand for social infrastructure and open space. The population is expected to have reasonably similar characteristics to households in other nearby recent release areas.

Section 5 examines the availability of existing services, facilities and open space in the area and their capacity to absorb demand likely to be generated by residents of the Area 20 Precinct. The assessment showed the only existing facility within the precinct is the Anglican High School. Whilst there are currently basic services and facilities located around the precinct, there are plans for the development of district level community services and facilities within reasonable proximity to Area 20. While there is a reasonable supply of open space in nearby areas, most notably in Rouse Hill Regional

Park, overall there is a shortage of useable high quality parklands and open space and few recreational facilities to meet future residents' needs.

Section 6 provides an assessment of the community facilities and services likely to be required for residents of the Area 20 Precinct, based on Growth Centre Commission standards and recent policies of Blacktown City Council. The analysis shows that the residential population will warrant facilities including a primary school, neighbourhood level retail and possibly some child care services. Whilst the population also qualifies the precinct for a small neighbourhood level community centre, its social infrastructure needs must be considered together with existing services and facilities located close to the precinct as well as proposed community and human services and facilities that will come on line as the North West Growth Centre develops.

Section 7 examines the likely open space and recreation requirements of the precinct. After outlining some general trends in the demand for open space and recreation, it presents Growth Centre Commission standards for provision of open space and recreational facilities. Blacktown City Council has also developed its own standards based on recent planning for open space and recreation for the City. These have been applied to derive estimates of open space requirement for Area 20 and will create demand for more than 13ha of open space for passive recreation, plus the provision of two sports fields and a community court requiring 4.5ha, bringing the total requirement for open space and recreation to 17.5ha. It will also be necessary to ensure Area 20 residents can access additional open space and playing fields off-site, in adjoining areas. The population will also contribute to demand for tennis courts, netball courts and other facilities which may need to be provided off-site. Provision will need to be made for residents of Area 20 to contribute to these future facilities from the outset.

Section 8 draws together the findings and recommendations for facilities and open space outlined above.

1 Introduction

Although originally a triangular area of 100 hectares and bounded to the west by Second Ponds Creek, a boundary review resulted in the expansion of the size of this Precinct by another 145 hectares, as shown by the dark hatched area on the map below.

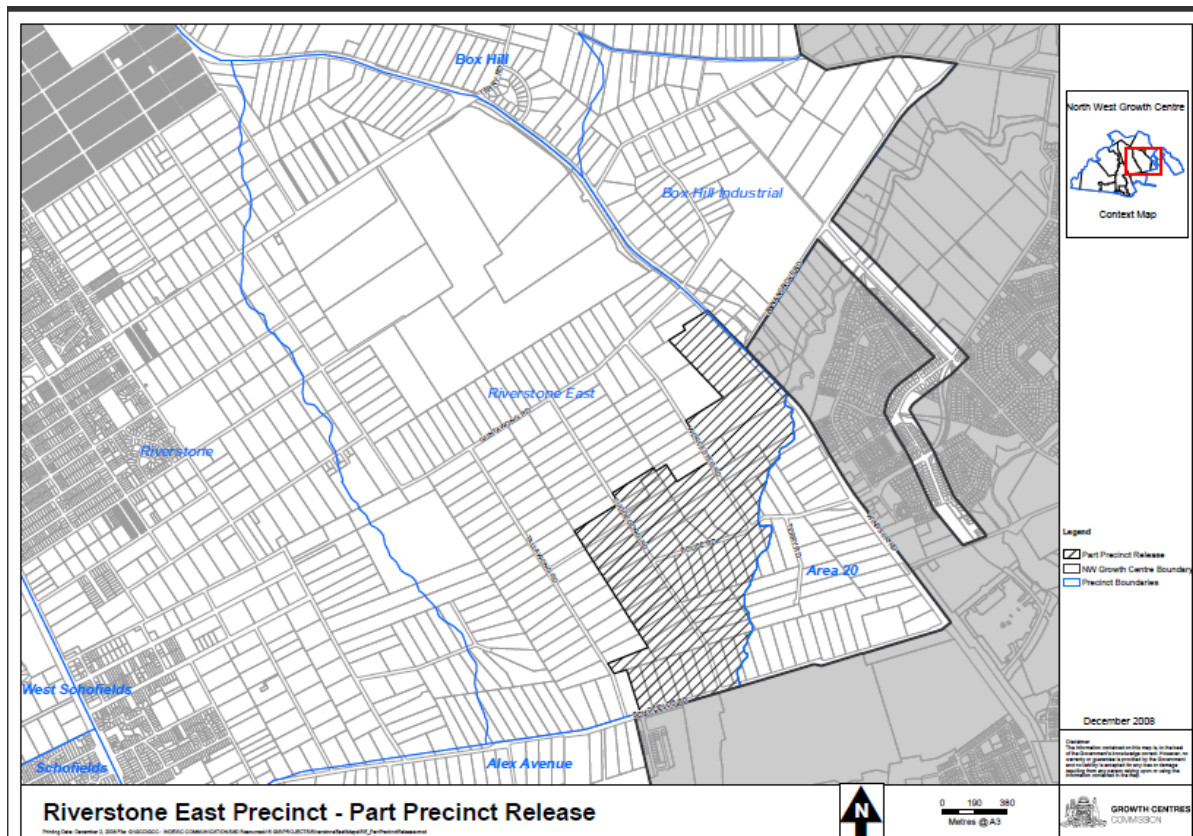
1.1 Background

In 2006 the NSW Government announced plans outlining the future of land releases in the North West and South West Growth Centres of Sydney. The Growth Centres will together provide for 180,000 homes over the next 30 years, characterised by staged delivery of infrastructure co-ordinated with land releases and a focus on sustainability to achieve world's best practice standards.

Area 20 is one of the first Precincts to be released by the Growth Centres Commission (GCC, now Department of Planning). Planning commenced in 2008.

1.2 Development context

Area 20 is located in the eastern part of Sydney's North West Growth Centre, to the east of the Riverstone East Precinct. This 245 hectare Precinct is roughly diamond shaped, bounded on the east by Windsor Road and to the south by Schofields Road. Its northern boundary lies between Guntawong and Macquarie Roads and the western boundary is near Tallawong Road, Rouse Hill. Across Windsor Road to the east lies the suburb of Rouse Hill, including the Rouse Hill Regional Centre. To the south of Schofields Road are the new development areas of The Ponds and Kellyville Ridge. Second Ponds Creek flows in a roughly north-south direction through the centre of the Area 20 Precinct.



Much of the site currently has 2-3 hectare allotments of rural residential and low intensity agricultural uses. The Precinct contains part of Rouse Hill Regional Park, the historic Rouse Hill House and Farm, a quarry and Rouse Hill Anglican College. In the south eastern corner of the Precinct, off Terry Road, is the OK Caravan Park.

The Growth Centres Commission has adopted a target of 2,500 dwellings and a population of approximately 7,000 for the Area 20 Precinct. It is expected that the Area 20 Precinct will contain a mix of housing types, including some medium and high density housing. It is currently envisaged that the medium density dwellings will take the form of terrace and townhouse accommodation and the higher density properties will be 2 to 3 storey walk

up residential flat buildings. However, as is demonstrated in the neighbouring suburb of Kellyville Ridge, there is potential to develop higher densities, particularly along the spine of Windsor Road. Current population estimates are based on a conservative assumption of the high density development.

1.3 Scope of this study

This Social Infrastructure and Open Space report provides specialist advice to support the preparation of the Area 20 Indicative Layout Plan with regard to:

- Demographic profiles for the precinct regarding the size and characteristics if the future population of Area 20 based on an estimated yield of 2,500 dwellings¹
- The community facilities and open space requirements of the precinct, having regard to the regional context, the GCC Development Code, existing facilities and services within the study area and surrounds, and likely needs of the incoming residential population.
- Opportunities for more innovative and site responsive strategies, including co-located and shared facilities
- Identification of design, spatial and locational criteria for recommended social infrastructure and their application in the draft Indicative Layout Plan (ILP) for the precinct
- Strategies to maximise the connectivity of the precinct with adjoining areas
- Recommendations for strategies with regard to management and land titling to facilitate social infrastructure outcomes, and for integration with conservation and other infrastructure outcomes.

1.4 The study process

Preparation of this report has involved:

- Discussions and meetings with representatives of the Department of Planning (DoP) and Blacktown City Council (BCC)
- Review of existing plans, policies and background studies from Blacktown City Council, the Growth Centres Commission and the NSW Department of Planning
- Analysis of the social context of Area 20, including demographic analysis of the surrounding

district population (using 2006 ABS census data for the local area)

- Analysis of potential participation in sport and recreation activities based on national, NSW and City of Blacktown population levels
- Discussions with relevant government agencies about existing services and future requirements of the forecast population
- An assessment of the existing community facilities and open space in the Area 20 Precinct and surrounding areas
- Identification of other social planning matters that have emerged during the research and are considered to contribute to positive social outcomes.

¹ Based on discussions with the Department of Planning and proposed Residential Yield Calculations by LFA

2 Policy Framework

A number of policies have been examined as part of this study to provide context and guidance for the planning and delivery of social infrastructure and open space for Area 20 Precinct.

The policy review has considered:

- Sydney Metropolitan Strategy
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006
- Growth Centres Commission Development Code
- Social infrastructure and open space studies prepared for GCC Precincts (such as North Kellyville, Riverstone and Alex Avenue and Marsden Park Industrial Precinct) and other new development areas
- Strategic and social planning policies of Blacktown City Council
- Draft s. 94 Development Contribution Plan for Riverstone and Alex Avenue Precincts.

A brief outline of relevant issues contained in these policies is presented below.

2.1 Sydney Metropolitan Strategy

Economic, social and environmental sustainability are the guiding principles for the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy. Aims which are most relevant to achieving the sustainability objectives for residents in areas such as Area 20 are:

- Enhancing Liveability
- Strengthening Economic Competitiveness

2.1.1 Enhance Liveability

Key objectives with regard to Enhancing Liveability include to:

- Focus residential development around town centres, villages and neighbourhood centres
- Plan for a housing mix near jobs, transport and services
- Provide for a range of dwellings suited to the changing population
- Improve housing affordability

- Promote good access to services and timely infrastructure
- Improve access to shopping, friends and family, parks and recreation and other daily activities
- Encourage use of active transport – public transport, walking and cycling - to improve community health and connectivity to services and facilities
- Promote active healthy lifestyles and community interaction through provision of parks, sporting facilities and public places
- Provide a diverse mix of parks and public places and improve the quality of local open space
- Apply sustainability criteria for new urban development. The sustainability criteria include the provision of mechanisms to ensure infrastructure (including social infrastructure) is provided in a timely and efficient way, and that adequate and accessible services and facilities are available to meet quality and equity objectives.

2.2 The Growth Centres SEPP

State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006 provides the statutory planning framework for the Growth Centres and establishes the broad planning controls for their development. In particular, it identifies areas of open space and environment conservation to be protected, areas that are flood prone or major creek lands and transitional lands that need to be further assessed in the precinct planning process.

The objectives of the SEPP include to:

- Enable the establishment of vibrant, sustainable and liveable neighbourhoods that provide for community well-being and high quality local amenity
- Provide controls for the sustainability of land in those growth centres that has conservation value
- Provide for the orderly and economic provision of infrastructure in and to those growth centres.

The SEPP also provides objectives for Public Recreation: Regional and Local Zones, which includes the following relevant objective:

- To enable the land to be used for regional open space or recreation purposes that are consistent with the protection of its natural and cultural heritage values.

2.3 The Growth Centres Commission (GCC) Development Code

The GCC Development Code provides the basis for the planning and design of precincts and neighbourhoods within the Growth Centres, and provides a guide to the incorporation of best practice standards. The Development Code contains a large number of objectives to guide the planning and provision of community facilities and open space. They include:

- Achievement of quality design outcomes
- Infrastructure investment to keep pace with development
- A range of housing types to suit the needs of all members of the community
- Planning to enable residents to walk to shops for daily needs
- Easy access to town centres with a full range of shops, recreational facilities and services, along with smaller village centres and neighbourhood shops
- A range of land uses to provide the right mix of houses, jobs, open and recreational spaces.

Specific objectives of the Development Code address particular elements and include to:

- Increase housing choices
- Provide facilities and services at a local level, including parks, libraries, shops, schools, and health facilities
- Improve walking and cycling pathways, especially between residential areas and shops and schools
- Integrate existing infrastructure
- Provide, protect and maintain a range of open space opportunities throughout the entire precinct
- Provide a range of commercial and retail opportunities
- Enhance safety, maximise surveillance and minimise opportunities for crime
- Utilise public places and public buildings to promote community identity.

Specific Development Code objectives with regard to community facilities include to:

- Provide community facilities within walking distance of residential neighbourhoods and transport nodes
- Provide access to a wide range of social and community facilities catering for different social groups and age groups

- Create good access to new areas of open space and community facilities
- Improve access to existing parks and recreational facilities
- Minimise the impact of access ways on the environmental qualities of public open space
- Provide good, but unobtrusive, access.

The Code also provides objectives in relation to the location, co-location and multiple use of community services and facilities in order to:

- Facilitate efficient use of resources and services through maximising opportunities for joint, shared or multiple-use of open space and community facilities
- That adequate social, cultural and community facilities are appropriately located in relation to public open spaces
- Facilitate the viability of social facilities by means of appropriate location and distribution
- Maximise accessibility and convenience of social facilities and services through co-location
- Facilitate social and community facilities that meet the future requirements of the population
- Provide for the social needs of future communities
- Enable adequate land to be made available for the provision of social infrastructure
- Facilitate the timely provision of community facilities and services
- Locate community facilities within the centres and neighbourhoods
- Create opportunities for the optimal use of land and resources, educational and community facilities.

The Development Code's objectives relating to public open space aim to balance the dual function of the undeveloped land for both recreational purposes and stormwater management systems. In addition the land needs to be accessible and useable by the public for a wide range of activities. Specific open space objectives include to:

- Integrate stormwater management and water sensitive urban design with networked open space
- Provide a balance of useable and accessible open space with neighbourhood and district stormwater management
- Protect recreational uses
- Provide an interconnected network of open spaces
- Integrate public open space into the urban structure to maximise land use efficiency

- Facilitate the provision of public open space of an appropriate quality and quantity
- Facilitate the provision of public open space and its development as part of the subdivision process
- Provide a diverse mix of open spaces and community facilities designed to cater for a range of uses and activities
- Facilitate the provision of sporting and recreation facilities that can meet the needs of future communities
- Provide amenity to residential areas
- Avoid pressure to existing open space systems in surrounding areas.

Additional open space objectives with regard to urban spaces and connections include to:

- Provide public open space that is pleasant, safe and usable both during daytime and at night
- Integrate open space with the mix of uses in the town centre to form a focal point
- Provide residents with accessible passive and active recreational opportunities
- Provide open space that promotes local character and identity
- Provide play spaces which are designed and located to be safe and convenient and to assist in childhood development
- Retain existing stands of remnant vegetation and to associate them with passive recreational facilities
- Provide open space for a diversity of interests catering for a wide range of users.

The Development Code also contains a set of Precinct Development Parameters which provide some guidance in establishing benchmarks and thresholds for the planning of open space and social infrastructure in precincts.

The North West Growth Centre is approximately 10,000 hectares in size and comprises 16 Precincts, in which about 70,000 new homes are planned.

2.4 Blacktown City Council policies

2.4.1 Blacktown City 2025 - Delivering the Vision

This document provides a strategic framework for creating a healthy and vibrant city as it changes over the next 15 years and beyond, based on ideals, values and aspirations of residents.

Eight key strategies have been developed around the following directions:

- A creative, friendly and inclusive City
- Environmental sustainability
- Vibrant commercial centres
- A smart economy
- Urban living and infrastructure
- Clean green spaces and places
- Getting around
- A sporting City

Focus areas within several themes which are relevant to the future community infrastructure, services, open space and recreational needs of Area 20 are summarised below.

A creative, friendly and inclusive city –

- Expand the role of community centres so that they become community resource hubs, providing spaces for learning, human service delivery and recreational and cultural activities
- Council to continue to play a role in providing high quality child care services which meet the needs of all children and their families

Vibrant commercial centres –

- Implement planning strategies to describe the desired future development and foster partnerships with government, land owners and the private sector

A Sporting City -

- Provide and promote indoor and outdoor sporting opportunities for a wide range of users
- Establish relationships with peak governing bodies and identify innovative approaches in the creation of new venues and facilities
- Support and promote local sporting champions as role models
- Maximise community interest in sport and increase participation by actively promoting Council's facilities and the benefits of sport to the wider community
- Promote community development through sport

2.4.2 Blacktown City Council Social Plan 2006-2010

The Blacktown City Social Plan 2006-2010 (Blacktown Social Plan) has been prepared following extensive research and analysis of ABS 2001 Census data, and consultations with key stakeholders, service providers and targeted groups of the community. The Plan looks at the overall characteristics, social needs and aspirations of the Blacktown LGA population, and further analysed sub-places in order to identify local strategies.

The Blacktown Social Plan aims to:

- Utilise community strengths
- Establish collaborative partnerships between the community sectors and stakeholders
- Integrate initiatives with existing networks to maximise efficiency and benefits to the community.

Eleven indicator based priority areas examine the health and social wellbeing of the community. Data analysis and stakeholder consultations have resulted in key concerns being identified. Key concerns in the North-West sector included:

- The Social Gradient
 - Travel distances to work from home and the impacts of this on family
- Stress
 - Whilst it is acknowledged that crime and safety are not the issues they are in other parts of the local government area, they are still of concern for the residents of the north west sector
 - Need for access to information about services, particularly on new estates
- Early Life
 - A lack of services: youth, family, and transport
 - Travel distances to work from home and the impacts of this on family
 - Limited Aboriginal services.
 - Limited child care places
- Social Exclusion
 - Limited supply of support services for Aboriginal people and need for more low cost/affordable childcare services for Aboriginal people.
- Work
 - Large travel distances to work from home and the impact of this on family and personal time.

- Unemployment
 - Large distances between employment locations and residential areas.
- Social Support
 - A lack of services: especially for young people and families
 - Poor public transport
 - Location of shaded and seated rest areas in parks so they can be better utilised
 - Poor street lighting and footpaths
- Addiction
 - Whilst it is acknowledged that crime and safety are not the issues they are in other parts of the local government area, they are still of concern for the residents of the north west sector
- Food
 - Limited choice in local shopping areas
 - A reliance on public transport to access food often results in limited choice
- Transport
 - Limited public transport options and the impact of increased traffic and travel times on family and personal time
- Service Development
 - The fragmentation, lack of integration, under resourcing and poor funding of human services

2.4.3 Blacktown City Council Cultural Plan 2007

The Cultural Plan aims to increase community participation through cultural development and provide citywide access to cultural development opportunities for all residents.

The strategy aims to incorporate arts and cultural services in new and existing community facilities, involving the community in any developments to create ownership and involvement.

2.4.4 Wellness through Physical Activity Policy 2008

Blacktown Council's Wellness Vision aims "to promote physical activity in the community as a contribution to achieving physical, mental, cultural, social and environmental health and wellbeing" (p.3).

Through this policy BCC is committed to:

- "Interpreting, supporting and strengthening Council's overall vision through enhancing wellness by means of promoting physical activity and its associated health benefits

- Enriching residents and visitors to Blacktown City through the provision of and access to programs, services and facilities that enhance wellness through physical activity
- Identifying priority populations and/or locations for increasing physical activity related initiatives throughout the City
- Creating safe and sustainable physical environments that foster wellness through increased physical activity and assist in promoting a vibrant city image” (p. 5)

Council has adopted the following guiding principles to promote and develop wellness in the City:

- “Provision and access – Council recognises the need for an accessible network of recreation infrastructure and an opportunity for all members of the community to engage in physical activity, regardless of ability, age, class, gender, sexuality, culture or race
- Special needs and population groups – Council will encourage a focus on activities that have a positive impact on groups who have lower levels of physical activity
- Community interaction and engagement – Council appreciates the rich and powerful resources that the community can provide through identifying needs, obtaining support for programs and initiatives, providing resources and shaping strategies
- Whole of council approach – Council recognises the need to adopt an organisational philosophy where wellness and physical activity is incorporated within the strategic directions of Council and its operations
- Safe, supportive and sustainable environments – Council acknowledges the importance that the physical environment plays in supporting the local community to participate in a range of activities that will lead to community wellness through physical activity
- Partnerships – Council creates and maintains relationships with key stakeholders including other spheres of government, neighbouring Councils, local businesses and community groups to produce mutually beneficial outcomes related to physical activity and community wellness
- Civic responsibility / governance – Council will assume a leadership and advocacy role in developing a setting for wellness in Blacktown City and ensure that physical activity is recognised as a priority in relevant activities and actions

- On-going monitoring and evaluation – Council recognises the importance of reviewing participation in physical activity in order to adequately meet the demands of the changing demographics and lifestyles of our residents” (p.4).

2.4.5 Blacktown Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2009

BCC’s Recreation and Open Space Strategy (ROSS) outlines directions for the provision, development, management and maintenance of open space and recreation facilities within the City for the next eight years.

The Strategy recognises that recreation and open space facilities contribute to, and are important for, the quality of life of residents. It provides an understanding of:

- The needs and issues for the existing population, including community and sporting groups
- The issues and gaps for provision of existing recreation and open space and sporting facilities
- Opportunities for improving existing recreation and open space and sporting facilities
- Priorities based on the level of need.

This information will assist in the planning and management of enhancements to open space and service provision and in implementation of the City Vision strategies for ‘Clean, Green Spaces and Places’ and ‘A Sporting City’. Priority strategies include:

- Directions for sport such as:
 - The provision and development of sportsgrounds within a hierarchy
 - The provision of key facilities for some sports and organised activities
 - Promoting community and sport development
 - Development of Blacktown as the sporting capital of Western Sydney
- Catering for informal recreation, particularly:
 - The provision and development of parks
 - Provision of linear parks and trails
 - Local parks and playgrounds
 - Youth facilities
- The future provision and development of aquatic and indoor facilities
- Directions for the protection, enhancement and maintenance of natural areas including bushland and watercourses

- Opportunities for using facilities and supporting community participation
- Directions for future planning

Key issues which need to be considered in planning for and maintaining the open space areas within the BCC area include:

- Equity – there is a high demand for sportsgrounds and other areas of open space due to the large proportion of families and young people and the anticipated growth in physical activity participation rates. Equity in provision across the municipality is an important consideration
- Quality – there will be a high priority for further development of reserves to enhance their quality and encourage their use
- Access – Council needs to continue to provide for the needs of people with disabilities, people with prams, older people in using paths, accessing open spaces and recreational facilities
- Safety – the community values safety highly and will use recreation and open space facilities more when they feel safe and secure
- Sustainability – Council will need to balance values of biological diversity, ecological integrity and intergenerational equity with community demands and needs.

2.4.6 Blacktown City Council Affordable Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan 2009

This plan was adopted by Council on 17 June 2009. The plan examines the issues of both affordable housing and homelessness in both a general and local context. These issues are canvassed separately in the report.

- The plan defines **Affordable Housing** as being when 'households who are renting or purchasing are able to pay their housing costs and still have sufficient income to meet other basic needs such as food, clothing, transport, medical care and education'. The plan identifies that Blacktown still provides some relatively affordable housing stock, however there are still a significant number of moderate income households that are in housing stress (both those renting and with mortgages).

The plan identifies a range of issues for local action for Council and its partners to address to improve housing affordability in the Blacktown area:

- Positioning Council for funding opportunities to assist in the provision of affordable housing initiatives
- Increasing the supply of affordable housing available for purchase
- Increasing the supply of affordable rental properties
- Increasing access to support for people experiencing mortgage stress
- Enhancing the capacity of community members to participate in affordable housing programs
- The plan recognises that **homelessness** can take many forms ranging from people that literally have no shelter, to people that living in housing that is close to or below minimum standards including those in boarding houses and unemployed persons living in caravan parks.

The plan scopes a range of issues for local action to reduce the incidence of homelessness and address its impact on individuals and the community.

- Positioning Council for funding opportunities to assist in the provision of initiatives to reduce homelessness and support those experiencing homelessness
- Increasing the numbers of spaces in local emergency and supported accommodation services
- Increasing the availability and accessibility of early intervention support for people at risk of homelessness
- Increasing coordination of service providers at a strategic and grass roots level
- Increasing the availability of social housing accommodation

2.5 Principles for sustainable social infrastructure

Based on the objectives contained within the state and local government planning policies outlined above and best practice principles, objectives to guide the provision of sustainable social infrastructure in Area 20 include:

1. Provide facilities and services in an efficient, timely and co-ordinated way to support the pattern of development. This means ensuring that facilities and services are available to residents as early as possible and they are not disadvantaged through delays in delivery;
2. Make most efficient use of limited resources, for instance through designing community facilities to be multipurpose, co-located with other facilities and able to accommodate shared and multiple use arrangements;
3. Cluster related facilities and services, preferably within designated centres or hubs, to promote

civic identity, safety, accessibility and focal points for the community;

4. Ensure facilities and services are accessible by public transport and located to maximise access for pedestrians and cyclists;
5. Ensure flexibility in the design and use of facilities, so they can respond and adapt as needs change. Where possible, buildings should be capable of delivering a range of services, rather than designated for single uses or specific target groups that may quickly become outdated;
6. Promote an equitable spread of facilities and open space and equitable access for all sections of the population, through the distribution, design and management of facilities. In particular facilities should be affordable for their target population;
7. Provide environmentally and economically sustainable buildings;
8. Ensure viable levels of resourcing, particularly recurrent funding for staff and programs, not just initial capital development;
9. Promote innovation and creativity in the way agencies come together to deliver and integrate services that aim to enhance community capacity and resilience;
10. Develop sustainable ownership, governance, management and maintenance arrangements for facilities;
11. Enhance potential connections between social infrastructure and open space, including the potential to establish activity and service hubs and links to unique open space features.

3 Existing social context

It is important to understand the social context of any new development, to ensure that its planning takes account of and is responsive to the surrounding social conditions and that it will integrate, both physically and socially, with the surrounding area. This chapter presents an overview of the social context for development of Area 20. It considers issues of growth and change in Blacktown LGA, and the characteristics of surrounding areas. An assessment of existing community facilities, human services and open space in the surrounding area which could address some of the needs of the future new population is provided in the following chapter.

3.1 The regional social context

North Western Sydney has experienced high levels of growth over the past decade. New housing development and ongoing planning for the North West Growth Centre have created demands for shops, infrastructure, community services, open space and recreational areas. In addition, upgraded roads and improved road networks i.e. Windsor Road, M2 and M7, have attracted greater concentrations of business and industrial employment opportunities to this region.

To service some of this new population, the new Rouse Hill Regional Centre to the east of Area 20 has been completed. This development contains a town centre with about 100,000sqm of commercial and retail space, approximately 1,800 dwellings, parks and some community facilities. At completion, the Rouse Hill Regional Centre will house approximately 4,500 people. Housing comprises a mix of apartments and family homes. A transit interchange was proposed to connect to the future Rouse Hill train station as part of the North West Metro. However the State Government has placed this project on hold indefinitely and this area will be serviced by the recently completed North Western Bus Transitway into the immediate future.

Residential development is currently occurring to the south of Area 20 at The Ponds. Part of Stage One of this development has been completed. Stage three which sits closest to the Area 20 Precinct is yet to be subdivided for residential lots.

The Ponds development will generate 3,200 dwellings across the three stages with a projected total population to reach 9,500 people. Elsewhere in the North West Growth Centre, Precinct Plans have been developed for Riverstone and Alex Avenue, located approximately 5 kms to the east and north

east. These areas are expected to accommodate another 15,000 new housing lots.

The Riverstone release area comprises 1,149 hectares of new land (544 hectares of residential land) which will house approximately 24,000 new residents in approximately 8,900 new dwellings. The Riverstone precinct will provide an expanded Riverstone industrial area which will include an additional 14 hectares of land providing land for 1,250 jobs. The precinct will include 170 hectares of open space and recreation areas including various walking and cycling paths.

The Alex Avenue precinct encompasses 420 hectares of land which will house approximately 17,000 new residents. In terms of employment, Alex Avenue will have approximately 25,000 to 30,000sqm of retail and commercial space located in its Town Centre. It is anticipated that this area will generate over 1,000 new jobs. The Alex Avenue precinct will provide nearly 50 hectares of open space and recreation areas.

Much of the planning for the Alex Avenue and Riverstone precincts has been undertaken concurrently. As such, even though two separate precincts, they are considered together for the purposes of a range of planning instruments including Blacktown City Council's s.94 Development Contribution Plan which also apportions some contribution for community and recreation facilities to Area 20.

This recent and proposed growth and the related planning processes have important implications for the planning and delivery of social infrastructure and open space for Area 20. Rapid population growth in surrounding areas has and will continue to place strain on existing services and facilities within Blacktown City and The Hills Shire. At the same time, planning for new precincts has focused mainly on local community services and open space needs, with less focus on planning for higher level regional social infrastructure. There is a role for ongoing work to identify suitable locations for regional facilities and open spaces

Social issues associated with the rapid rate of urban development occurring in this area include:

- A shortage of local employment opportunities, coupled with relatively poor public transport services. Many residents spend considerable time commuting to work outside the region. Time spent commuting can restrict time available for family life, recreation and for involvement in community life. This demonstrates a need for facilities and activities that are locally based.
- Newcomers can be separated from established support networks and may experience isolation

and dislocation. This indicates a need to foster social support networks and services.

- The relatively high cost of new housing creates financial stress for many households. This may be exacerbated by uncertainties associated with the threat of unemployment or negative equity. There is a need for social and recreational opportunities that are affordable.
- There is a need for strategies to promote integration of new and existing communities, to foster community cohesion and identity and help ensure that the change process does not strain social harmony.

3.2 Social profile of the area

Understanding the profile of the existing population of an area can help in predicting the characteristics of new residents. It is also useful when developing strategies to promote integration of new and existing communities. In addition, some existing residents are likely to be displaced by development of the Area 20 Precinct over the next 20 years. It is important to understand the similarities and differences between existing and future populations, and the types of social impacts which could arise through this process of change.

In addition to this, an examination of population trends and characteristics in like areas located in close proximity to the study area can be useful. It assists in analysing the types of households and communities that may be attracted to the area and to the style of housing provided for in the study area. It can provide an insight into the types of services and facilities that may be required by new populations.

3.2.1 Characteristics of existing Area 20 population

The Area 20 site is typical of a semi-rural landscape with dispersed housing and large acreages.

The following demographic summary is primarily based on data from the ABS 2006 Census. The smallest area for which ABS data is available is the Collection District (CD). CD Number 1272807 coincides very approximately with the boundaries of the Area 20 Precinct. However, the match is not precise and although the part of the study area that lies outside the CD is similar to the area within the CD, the following data should nevertheless be taken as indicative.

- On Census day in 2006, 490 people nominated an address in CD 1272807 as their place of usual residence, including 112 people who said that their home was a "Caravan, cabin, or houseboat".

It is reasonable to assume that all, or almost all, of the 112 people lived in the OK Caravan Park.

- There were 183 occupied dwellings (excluding those occupied by visitors) on Census night, comprising 115 freestanding houses and 68 caravans. Another 20 caravans were occupied by visitors on the day of the Census and are not included in Census statistics reported here. This equates to approximately 3 persons per dwelling in the houses and 1.65 persons per dwelling in the caravans. 38% of dwellings were fully owned (including 19 of the caravans) and a further 13% were being purchased (including 6 caravans)
- 68% of residents stated they were born in Australia. Other responses in regard to place of birth were: Malta 4%, England 4%, New Zealand 3%, Italy 2% and Croatia 2%
- Family households comprised 52% of all households in the area. Of these, exactly half were families with children, a third were couples without children and the remainder were sole parent families. Lone person households comprised 30% of households and group households, only 5%. Given the low average number of occupants in the caravans, it is likely that many of the lone person households are residents of the caravan park.
- 11% of residents were aged 65 or over and a further 17% were aged 55-65 years. Only 5% of residents were children aged 0-4 years, with 12% being aged 5-14 years, suggesting that the majority of families with children were mature families.
- 59% of residents aged 15 or over were in employment, whilst 2.2% were unemployed. Among employed persons, 18% worked in construction, 13% in manufacturing, and 10% in retail trade. Only 5% worked in agricultural occupations.
- Average incomes in CD 1272807 were relatively low. Median individual weekly income was \$478, and median household income \$1,005. However the income profile reveals a cluster of lower incomes (particularly among non-family households) and a cluster of higher incomes. It could be assumed that the low income households are concentrated in the caravan park, however there is no concrete data to support this assumption.

The demographic indicators outlined above show that the area differs in a number of ways from the wider Blacktown LGA. In particular:

- The household mix in the area includes fewer families (52%) and more lone person households (30%) than the LGA (78% and 16% respectively)
- The proportions of children aged 0-14 years (17%) are lower than the LGA (25%)
- The proportions of older people aged 65 years and over (11%) is higher than the LGA (8.2%)
- The proportion of people born in Australia (68%) is significantly higher than that the proportion of people born in Australia across the LGA (59%)
- Only 13% of homes are being purchased under a mortgage as opposed to 40% in the Blacktown LGA
- Median incomes for individuals and households are very similar to those in the wider LGA.
- Among employed people in the area, 15% are managers and 20% are professionals (Sydney SD 13% and 23% respectively), and the occupational profile of employed people is broadly similar to the Sydney average.
- The income profile of the area shows that at the time of the Census, 10% of households had a weekly income under \$500 (Sydney SD 17%) while 31% had an income over \$2000 a week (Sydney SD 23%).
- In regard to local housing stock, detached dwellings comprised the majority of the stock (87%) which is significantly higher than the Sydney SD (57%). Only 1.5% of dwellings in the area were medium density at the time of the Census. (Figures include vacant dwellings).
- The area demonstrates a high level of home ownership with 53% of homes being purchased with a mortgage as compared to only 31% in the Sydney SD. Conversely, there are only a small proportion of rental properties (19%) as compared to Sydney SD (30%).
- Levels of car ownership, internet usage and housing loan repayments are all above the Sydney average.

3.2.2 Characteristics of the wider area

The following brief profile relates to the area comprising the suburbs of Rouse Hill, Schofields, Kellyville Ridge and Stanhope Gardens. These suburbs form a boundary between Blacktown City and The Hills Shire, and include major recent residential developments (notably Rouse Hill Town Centre, Stanhope Gardens and Kellyville Ridge) as well as extensive but thinly populated areas of longstanding uses including some established residential areas and semi-rural areas. The following data is drawn from the ABS Census 2006. There were 15,200 residents in these four suburbs in 2006.

In essence, the area is characterised by the predominance of family households and by employment in middle to upper middle income occupations.

- 82% of households in the area are family households as compared to 69% for the whole of the Sydney Statistical Division (SSD). Among these family households, 59% are couples with children which is significantly higher than the SSD (49%).
- Only 13% of households are lone person households, which is significantly lower than the SSD proportion of 21%.
- Children aged 0-11 years make up a high proportion of residents (24%) as compared to the SSD (16%).
- The proportion of older people is well below the Sydney average. In particular, only 4% are aged 70 years of age or older as compared to the Sydney SD of 9%.

3.3 Housing market characteristics

The Housing Market Study for this report was conducted by Elton Consulting in June 2009. Since that time there have been significant changes to the Sydney housing market overall and to the benefit schemes extended to new home buyers by both the State and Federal governments. As such, the information contained within this section of the report may not reflect current market trends. It may be advisable that the Department conduct further feasibility on the housing market for Area 20 in light of these changes.

Discussions with the Department of Planning suggest that proposals for Area 20 will comprise approximately 70 hectares of low density housing and 79 hectares of medium density housing². The market for low density (freestanding) homes in the region is well established, and until recently there have been limited opportunities to buy or rent townhouses or apartments. The likely market for attached housing and apartments in the Area 20 Precinct has therefore been reviewed and findings are summarised in this section.

² Based on discussions with the Department of Planning and proposed Residential Yield Calculations by LFA

3.3.1 Existing medium density

Recent construction has introduced the following medium density housing in the immediate area:

- Rouse Hill Town Centre apartments (Rise Apartments) on several levels above the shopping centre. These are high quality apartments ranging from 1-3 bedrooms, and are marketed as offering a unique cosmopolitan location
- Apartments in 3-5 storey buildings in nearby Kellyville Ridge. Many of these units are located along Windsor Road and are therefore very close to the bus interchange and transport.
- Small numbers of townhouses in Kellyville Ridge and further away, in Schofields.

3.3.2 Dwelling prices

A review of dwellings advertised for sale in early May 2009 found the following:

- In Rouse Hill, the only units completed to date are the Rise Apartments, above the Town Centre shops. They are priced from \$355,000 for 1 bedroom, \$389,000 for 2 bedrooms and \$490,000 for 3 bedrooms, most of which have been sold. At the time of writing, no apartments were being advertised for rent, possibly suggesting high demand from renters. Australian Property Monitors³ indicate a median sale price for units in Rouse Hill in the last quarter of 2008 of \$425,000 which probably relates exclusively to sales in the Rise Apartments.
- Houses currently for sale in Rouse Hill are all freestanding, with most priced \$450,000 to \$600,000, although a few large properties are significantly more expensive. Australian Property Monitors indicate a median sale price for Rouse Hill in the last quarter of 2008 of \$540,000.
- Kellyville Ridge, which adjoins Area 20 to the south, offers new units from \$340,000 to over \$400,000; new townhouses from around \$450,000 to \$500,000; and new freestanding homes from around \$500,000. Consequently, a full range of price points from \$340,000 upwards is covered. Some units are available to rent from \$350 a week upwards. Apartments in this area offered a slightly better rental yield than houses.

3.3.3 Market conditions

In early 2009, it was widely reported in the press that Northwest Sydney was “bucking the trend” which had seen dwelling prices fall across most of the Sydney Region. The Rouse Hill area in particular reported solid sales, and internet-based market

³ www.homepriceguide.com.au

summaries indicate price growth of up to 5% during 2008⁴, although the price of low density housing was relatively flat at that time. Nearby, Landcom had reported that land sales at The Ponds were the best in a new development for years⁵ while strong and growing interest in The New Rouse Hill was reported by Delfin LendLease⁶.

It is, however, recognised that the local housing market was strongly fuelled by the generous First Home Owners Grant, First Home Buyers Supplement, First Home Plus (State) and the First Home Owners Boost (Commonwealth). Sales have been strongest at prices below \$400,000. Few if any low density homes are available below this price, and there has therefore been strong interest in units and townhouses in the area.

Since early 2009, there have been a number of important changes, as the First Home Owners Boost and First Home Buyer's Supplement have been discontinued. It is important that the Department of Planning and Council keep a 'watching brief' on the impact of the reduction in government support for first home buyers in the area.

The demand for medium density homes can therefore be seen to be “affordability led” in that medium density products are affordable to many first time buyers and freestanding homes (or house and land packages) are not. It is unlikely that the affordability of freestanding homes will improve sufficiently in the future so as to enhance affordability for the majority of first time buyers. This factor alone is likely to facilitate ongoing demand for lower priced medium density products.

It should be noted that whilst there is a market demand for the purchase of higher and medium density dwellings in the North West Growth Centre, there is a difference between demand for the product in the residential market and the viability of such developments in the developer's market. As such, it is recommended that further exploration of the development feasibility of medium and high density developments be undertaken prior to zoning the area.

3.3.4 Industry feedback

Local real estate agents and analysts are optimistic about market prospects in the Rouse Hill area, including eventual prospects for the Area 20 Precinct. However, in order to gain a better insight into the market for medium density housing, detailed discussions were held with a Development Manager⁷ responsible for The New Rouse Hill in 2009. Key points from this discussion include:

⁴ www.Domain.com.au

⁵ Reported in Rouse Hill Times, 9 March 2009

⁶ Reported in Rouse Hill Times 11 February 2009.

⁷ Mr. Nick Lennon

- Sales of the Rise Apartments in the Rouse Hill Town Centre have been strong and have appealed to a wide selection of buyers, ranging from older people who are downsizing to young single people and some investors. These apartments occupy a unique market niche in that they are located on top of the retail precinct in the Rouse Hill Town centre and so are part of a vibrant and animated area which provides lifestyle benefits for residents. However, there is every reason for confidence in demand for new apartments in the wider area provided they are close to transport and have good access to facilities.
- There has been unexpectedly strong demand for large 3-bedroom apartments.
- Attached housing is expected to sell well over the next few years, partly because of its affordability. Several hundred new attached homes are planned in forthcoming land releases around the Rouse Hill Town Centre.
- Overall, the plan to provide medium density housing on the eastern side of the Area 20 Precinct and lower density housing on the Western side of the precinct appears to match market demand quite well.

The New Rouse Hill project director Mr. Ed Wortman also comments that there is interest in housing in the area from a wide range of household types, resulting in demand for a variety of dwelling types.

3.3.5 Conclusions

In policy terms, the Area 20 Precinct is well located for medium density housing which is known to be particularly popular in accessible locations close to facilities and transport. Area 20, particularly the section to the east of Second Ponds Creek, has good transport access (including Windsor Road, the bus interchange and the T-Way, and the proposed North West metro station) and excellent facilities across Windsor Road at Rouse Hill Town Centre. The Town Centre itself has helped to enhance the appeal of the area to a diverse range of households, including non-family households, by providing a variety of retail, dining and entertainment facilities as well as a resident population.

In market terms, Rouse Hill appears to be moving beyond the “pioneer” phase, that is, the early years of development in a new residential area during which incoming residents are mostly family households seeking house and land packages. In 2009, there was local evidence of good demand for smaller and more affordable homes, including appropriately located units, as well as for larger, lower density houses. This pattern is expected to continue. In particular, the affordability of attached homes compared to low density houses is expected

to lead to continued demand from first time buyers. This demand is currently being evidenced in some of the areas surrounding Area 20 such as Rouse Hill, Kellyville Ridge and Schofields and is expected to remain constant as development in the area continues. However, it is important to note that these findings are based on research undertaken in early 2009 and the effects of the discontinuation of State and Federal government incentives and more recent changes to the housing market have not been factored in to this analysis.

In summary, a range of dwelling types is justified, in market terms as well as from the viewpoint of social sustainability, with lower density housing located away from the major roads. There is scope for higher density dwellings such as apartments along Windsor Road, and perhaps also Schofields Road. It should be noted that in keeping with the topography and amenity of the area, high density development should consist of low rise residential flat buildings. Medium density housing (particularly attached homes including villas and terraces) could be integrated along the main circulation routes within the Precinct. It is important that both medium and high density development reflect the suburban nature of the communities within the North West Growth Centre.

3.4 Issues for the existing population

The future proposals for development of approximately 2,500 new dwellings will result in substantial change to the character of the area and residents’ lifestyles if they continue to live in this rural residential area, or the caravan park, as development occurs.

Potential issues and impacts arising from this arrangement and future plans for the site’s caravan park residents need to be considered and it is recommended that this issue should be further investigated by the Department of Planning.

The existence of a large number of land owners across the Area 20 indicates that there could also be issues associated with coordination of sales and development, impacts of development in some areas while others remain as rural residential land holdings, potential impacts of rural land uses on new residential areas (possibly, noise, visual, odour or construction impacts) and disruption to existing lifestyles and networks for those who perhaps do not wish to move.

4 Population forecasts

4.1 Projected development yields

Preliminary estimates of dwelling yields for Area 20 were originally set by the Growth Centres Commission (GCC) and have been revised to take account of the enlargement of the proposed Precinct Release Area.

According to discussions with the Department of Planning and estimates provided by LFA Pacific Pty Ltd regarding developable land capacity, the target yield for Area 20 is 2,500 dwellings. An estimated breakdown on dwelling types is for approximately 40% low density and 40% medium density dwellings, with the remaining 15% being high density dwellings.

The consultant team for the current Precinct Studies has considered the land likely to be available for residential development and initial findings⁸ suggest the following development areas and related yields:

Table 1: Projected dwelling yields

Area	Land area (ha)	Dwellings per ha (net)	Approx. number of dwellings
Low density	70.8	15	1062
Medium density	35.4	30	1062
High density	7.5	50	375
Total	113.7	95	2,499

The mix between low density housing and higher density housing that has been assumed in these calculations appears to be reasonable, based on the Housing Market findings presented in Section 3.3 of this report. The expected disposition of dwelling densities across the site would therefore be as follows:

- Higher density housing (potentially including apartments of 3-5 storeys) facing onto Windsor Road and potentially also onto Schofields Road close to its junction with Windsor Road.
- Medium density housing (mainly attached housing and small lot homes) behind the higher density areas and along main circulation routes within the Precinct.

⁸ Based on discussions with the Department of Planning and proposed Residential Yield Calculations by LFA

- Lower density housing (mainly freestanding homes) primarily located west of the line of Second Ponds Creek, with potential for smaller areas east of the Creek but away from the external roads and main internal roads.

4.2 Projected population size

The future population of the area will depend on the number of dwellings actually constructed and the average number of occupants in each dwelling (the "average occupancy rate"). The following factors will affect the average occupancy of dwellings in Area 20:

- Detached homes typically have more occupants than medium density homes (because a large proportion are occupied by families with children) and bigger homes typically accommodate more people than smaller homes. However, the correlation between household size and dwelling size/type is not as strong as often imagined. In Blacktown, for instance, almost 45% of lone person households occupy a detached home with three or more bedrooms, while approximately 10% of families with children occupy medium density homes⁹.
- Average occupancy rates have been declining for many years and are expected to decline still further. However, the average occupancy rate in Blacktown LGA is well above the Sydney regional average, largely because of the high proportion of family households. In 2006, the average occupancy rate of dwellings in the LGA was 3.02 (down from 3.08 in 2001)¹⁰
- Average occupancy rates in older residential areas are lower than in recently developed areas, mainly as a result of the tendency for older residents to remain in the same home after offspring or partners have moved on. For instance, in the developing suburb of Kellyville Ridge, the average occupancy rate in 2006 was 3.35 people while in the suburb of Blacktown, which contains mainly older residential stock, the rate is 2.78 people per dwelling.
- Within new residential areas, occupancy rates change over time as a result of the lifecycle of residents. In areas with large numbers of families, the maximum occupancy is experienced around 5 years after first occupation of new homes, by which time many the young couples who moved into a new home will have 1 – 2 children.

⁹ Dwelling Opportunities Analysis (update) for Blacktown Council, by Informed Decisions, 2008. Based on Census data.

¹⁰ Based on ABS Census data

By way of comparison, the following average occupancy rates have been assumed for the purposes of planning new residential developments in north-western Sydney:

- Area 20 (former boundary): 2.8 persons per dwelling
- Marsden Park: Low density dwellings 3.1, medium density dwellings 2.8
- Riverstone/Alex Ave: Average 2.8, peaking at 2.9 in 2021.

Blacktown Council Draft Section 94 Development Contribution Plan for the Riverstone and Alex Avenue Precincts suggests the following future occupancy rates per dwelling:

Table 2 Occupancy rates for dwelling sizes

	1 bed-room	2 bed-rooms	3+ bed-rooms
Dwelling houses	2.9	2.9	2.9
Dual occupancy	1.2	1.9	2.9
Integrated housing	1.2	1.9	2.9
Other medium density	1.2	1.9	2.7

The Plan suggested a future population of 4,200 for Area 20 (old boundary) reflecting an average occupancy rate of 2.8 persons per dwelling.

Based on available data from the surrounding areas, the Plan's estimated occupancy rates for detached dwellings may be a little low, and for medium/higher density dwellings a little high. However, taking account of all the above evidence, an average occupancy rate of 2.8 persons per dwelling is a realistic long term projection, based on approximately two thirds of the dwellings being medium or higher density. This takes account of the likelihood that the majority of medium density dwellings will be quite large (2-4 bedrooms), reflecting current market trends in the area.

Thus, applying an average occupancy rate of 2.8 persons per dwelling to a dwelling yield of 2,500, a population of 7,000 persons is projected upon completion of development. Based on the proposed dwelling yield, occupancy rate and the developable land area, Area 20 would have an approximate population density of 61.54 persons per hectare.

4.3 Demographic characteristics of new release areas

Forecasting age or household characteristics of a future population requires consideration of factors

such as dwelling size and mix, market price and segment, experience in similar areas and the influence of other factors particular to the site.

The proposed dwelling mix has the potential to attract a range of household types at different stages of the life cycle and with different needs. The higher proportion of medium and moderate levels of high density dwellings is likely to attract smaller household types, including singles, couples and first home buyers, investors and retirees with older children or empty nesters. These dwellings will typically be available in lower price ranges than larger detached dwellings. Established families, second and third home buyers and those trading up to larger properties are likely to be attracted to detached housing.

At this stage, with few details of housing characteristics, it is too early to predict the specific age structure or other demographic characteristics of the area's future population.

However, residents in this area are expected to share characteristics of populations of recent land releases in other nearby parts of western Sydney.

Some common features of residents of these new release areas include:

- Households will usually move into the area from within a 5-10 km radius
- A high proportion of first home buyers
- There is likely to be a general predominance of young families with young children and couples who have not yet started a family
- Most adults will be in the 25-49 years age cohorts
- There will be a small but significant number of single person households
- Larger numbers of home owners
- Increasing family sizes over time, as couples have children

As land release areas develop over time, the peaks in the age distribution associated with a predominance of young families tend to reduce and the population will become more diverse in terms of age and household type. The proportion of the population who are young children and young adults will decline as the population ages and the proportion of older children with older parents grows. The proportion of the population aged 55+ will also increase considerably as the area matures and older people are attracted to the area to be near family and grandchildren, or to downsize to a smaller home.

In this way, the population profile is likely to come to more closely approximate that of an established area

with a variety of age and household characteristics, rather than a traditional new release area with particular age concentrations.

A number of other demographic trends in the wider population will have an impact on future demographics of the area. These include trends such as:

- Smaller households and declining occupancy rates
- Increasing numbers of people choosing not to have children
- The later age at which people do have children
- Increasing numbers of people choosing to live alone
- Higher incidence of relationship breakdown
- The ageing of the population, increasing life expectancy and growing numbers of people in the oldest age cohorts

Changing lifestyle trends, including increasing numbers of people working from home and the extent to which housing forms will attract particular lifestyle groups.

The age profile of the future population will reflect the affordability of housing. First home buyer estates tend to have slightly younger parents (25-34 years) and a higher proportion of children aged 0-4 years. Release areas settled by families who are second and subsequent home buyers show a slightly older age distribution, with a higher proportion of adults in their 30s and early 40s and primary school or teen aged children. Smaller properties will be attractive to single person households, younger people, 'empty nesters' and retired couples. Attached medium density housing is attractive to investors and tenants.

In order to provide a broad indication of the approximate age breakdown of the future population in this area, the age profile of a number of housing estates in surrounding areas at the 2006 census was examined. Details are presented below:

Table 3: Percentage of population by age cohort for nearby suburbs, 2006

Suburb	Proportion of the population in each age group (%)								
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-39	40-49	50-64	65+
Stanhope Gardens	11	8	5	5	6	32	13	13	7
Glenmore Park	10	10	9	8	7	26	15	12	4
Quakers Hill	8	9	8	7	8	26	15	14	5
Rouse Hill	14	11	8	5	4	31	13	11	4
Blacktown LGA	8	8	8	7	7	23	14	18	8

Source: ABS 2006 Census of Population and 11.5Housing 1. Estimated in Elton Consulting, July 2008

The above table provides an indication of the approximate age breakdown which might be expected for residents moving into new development areas. On the basis of these figures, some preliminary estimates of the population breakdown for Area 20 are estimated. This breakdown is a useful starting point in estimating needs for child care services, schools and aged care in the following sections. They will however need to be further refined as more detailed planning for the area takes place.

4.4 Projected demographics

Projections prepared for Blacktown Council¹¹ provide an indication of expected population characteristics over the coming 15 years. These projections are based on anticipated levels of new development and migration and on demographic trends over the period.

The majority of detached homes in Area 20 are expected to be occupied by families. In addition, much of the medium density housing in Area 20 will be sought after by the increasing numbers of young families who tend to occupy attached homes, according to recent trends evident elsewhere. Thus it is expected that families with children will continue to be the most common household type in the area – however they are expected to represent a smaller percentage of households than in nearby areas dominated by detached family homes. A substantial number of childless couples and non-family households are also anticipated, particularly given that Area 20 will also house some high density development.

The projected household breakdown in 2021 is as follows:

¹¹ Forecast ID, Rouse Hill-Schofields small area. Accessed at <http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/our-city/statistics/demographics.cfm>

Table 4 Projected household types

Household type	% in 2021
Couple families with dependents	35
Couples without dependents	29
Lone parent families with dependents	10
Other families	2
Lone person households	20
Group households	4
Total	100

The large number of families with children will result in a youthful population, with large numbers of children (particularly those aged 0-11 years) and also adults aged between their late 20s and early 40s. However, the proportion of children will be smaller than the peak that was achieved in some previous new development areas. This will be mainly due to the demographic trend towards fewer and smaller families and to a relatively diverse population in Area 20, facilitated by the availability of a wide choice of housing.

The following table provides an indicative breakdown of the anticipated final population in Area 20, shown by age groups.

Table 5 Indicative age breakdown

Age	% in 2021	No.
0 to 4	9.3	651
5 to 11	9.8	686
12 to 17	6.9	483
18 to 24	10.6	742
25 to 34	22.6	1,582
35 to 49	21.2	1,482
50 to 59	8.9	623
60 to 69	5.6	392
70 to 84	4.8	336
85 and over	0.3	21
Total	100	6,998

Other projected population characteristics are expected to be as follows:

- Predominantly middle income households, in keeping with housing being affordable to better off first-time buyers. A large proportion of household income is likely to be devoted to housing cost however, which may restrict the spending of residents on non-essentials and services
- High levels of workforce participation, with two working parents in many families, and consequently high levels of commuting
- High levels of car ownership
- High levels of mortgaged home ownership. However, depending on general economic and investment conditions, up to 20% of the dwelling

stock is likely to be privately rented, with a higher figure for medium and higher density homes

- Increasing cultural diversity. Blacktown is a diverse LGA, and former tendencies for new residential areas to be occupied by people from English-speaking backgrounds are starting to break down with the emergence of substantial and affluent middle classes, particularly among people from Chinese and Indian backgrounds.

5 Existing community facilities and open space

Existing human services, community facilities and open space in the surrounding areas which could be accessed by the future population of Area 20 have been identified and examined to determine their availability and capacity to absorb demand generated by this future residential population.

A map showing key community facilities and areas of open space and their proximity to Area 20 is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

5.1 Existing community facilities

5.1.1 Primary and secondary schools

The Department of Education and Training (DET) has undertaken strategic planning regarding indicative numbers and types of new schools for the area. In terms of educational facilities and number of new residents planned for the Area 20 Precinct will require the construction of a new primary school. DET has advised that a primary school in this area would need to accommodate up to 600 children at peak usage which would be expected to occur approximately 5 to 10 years after the area has been developed. Thereafter, enrolments would probably drop back to a long term of average of about 400 students.

A primary school would need to be centrally located and easy to access. There has been some suggestion regarding the potential to locate local level retail near the primary school in order to animate the area and also out of convenience for the residents. DET have advised that this would not be problematic provided that the retail was appropriate and that traffic and pedestrian management was adequately planned for.

In terms of secondary schooling, students from this area will be in the catchment zone for Riverstone and Rouse Hill High schools. As such, transport and access to this and other high schools for residents will be important.

Rouse Hill High School opened in 2009. The High School has the capacity to cater for 1020 students in years 7 to 12. There are currently 350 students enrolled in years 7, 8 and 9.

Riverstone High School has significant spare capacity, and operates as a junior high school only (Years 7 to 10). Senior students progress to Nirimba College in Schofields, which is on a shared site with TAFE, University of Western Sydney and Terra Sancta College. Nirimba College opened in 1999 and has recorded strong enrolment growth. DET has advised that Nirimba College is currently at full capacity. The site has capacity for further accommodation. However, Nirimba is currently difficult to access by public transport from the Area 20 precinct.

Rouse Hill Anglican College is located on a 7.3 hectare site within the Area 20 precinct. The College is a co-educational school that caters for students from kindergarten to year 12. Opening on site in 2002 (the school had been operating on another site since 2000) the school had its first year 12 group complete the Higher School Certificate in 2007. The anticipated capacity of the school is 1,300 students with 1,000 currently enrolled.

5.1.2 Community Centres

There are currently no community or health facilities located within the Area 20 precinct. However, there are a number of services and facilities located within the surrounding areas that residents of Area 20 would be able to access. There are currently the following community facilities within close proximity to the precinct:

- Vinegar Hill Memorial Centre, Civic Way Rouse Hill Town Centre
- Rouse Hill Community Centre, Clower Avenue, Rouse Hill
- Rouse Hill House and Visitor Centre, Rouse Hill Regional Park, Guntawong Road, Rouse Hill
- The Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope located at the corner of Stanhope Parkway and Sentry Drive, Stanhope Gardens has a number of flexible multipurpose community spaces. These comprise 2 meeting rooms in the new library (opening on 8 August 2009) each of which can seat 40 people, a large function room and a new 'social lounge' which provides a community/meeting area for approximately 20 people. Each of these spaces is leased at a 'not-for-profit' rate for community and leisure/recreation groups
- There are two community centres planned for construction in the Ponds development to the south of the Area 20 Precinct
- The draft s. 94 Development Contribution Plan for the Riverstone and Alex Avenue Precincts provides for two Community Resource Hubs to be constructed within these areas. One will be

located in Riverstone Town Centre. The second hub is still under consideration and may not proceed. The draft s. 94 Development Contribution Plan apportions the cost of these Centres across the Area 20 precinct in anticipation that these centres will provide the community infrastructure for residents of Area 20. District level Community Resource Hubs provide for neighbourhood centre/community development, youth facilities, arts and cultural facilities children and family services and informal indoor recreation.

5.1.3 Health Services

Sydney West Area Health Service has advised that residents of Area 20 will be able to access the district level Community Health Facility that is planned for Rouse Hill Village. This centre will deliver a General Practice service, early childhood health and family services and some services for older people. Secondary services are currently being offered out of the community facility in the Rouse Hill Town Centre and these include services such as mums and bubs groups. Sydney West Area Health Service has advised that it is also investigating the provision of allied health services such as occupational therapy and speech therapy out of the Town Centre facility and this would be accessible to residents in Area 20.

5.1.4 Child Care Services

Within approximately 7 kilometres of Area 20 there are over 20 child care services operating. These are a mix of private, community and Council centres offering a range of care options including pre-school, long day care, family day care and occasional care. Currently centres in the area are underutilised due to oversupply of places.

5.1.5 Places of worship

There is currently only one religious facility on the Area 20 Precinct site. The Rouse Hill Anglican Church meets on the site of the Anglican College. However, there are a number of churches and church groups that meet in community facilities and places of worship in the areas surrounding the Area 20 Precinct including a range of Christian Churches located in Riverstone, Stanhope Gardens, Glenwood and Rouse Hill. Further, there is a Sikh Gurdwara in Glenwood, and the Imam Hasan Madrassah, a Muslim educational, worship and community centre located in Kellyville.

5.1.6 Libraries and cultural facilities

The closest library service for the residents of Area 20 is the Vinegar Hill Memorial Library which is located in the Rouse Hill Town Centre. This library is approximately 1 kilometre from the Area Precinct.

Dennis Johnson Branch Library which is located in Stanhope Gardens is approximately 4 kilometres from Area 20. This library is co-located with the Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope.

Further, residents of Area 20 will be able to access the Riverstone Library. The Riverstone Library is currently beyond capacity and would struggle to meet the needs of the growing population of the North West Growth Sector. This is recognised by Blacktown City Council and as such, the Section 94 Draft Contributions Plan, No.20, Riverstone and Alex Avenue Precincts identifies that the Riverstone Library will undergo a significant redevelopment and be integrated into the Riverstone Community Resource Hub. This library is located approximately 7 kilometres from the Area 20 precinct.

In addition to the provision of a library facility in the Riverstone Community Resource Hub, Council also identifies the need for an arts centre function within the hub. Although there is currently not a large amount of detail in regard to what this space may offer, it will be available to the residents of Area 20.

5.1.7 Entertainment and Leisure Facilities

The Rouse Hill Town Centre provides a range of entertainment and leisure options. In addition to a large number of specialty stores, the centre offers a range of indoor and outdoor dining options, a 9 screen movie cinema and a program of entertainment.

5.1.8 Emergency services

There are currently no emergency services located within the Area 20 Precinct. However, Riverstone Police Station (Quakers Hill Local Area Command) currently services the Area 20 Precinct and it is anticipated that the redeveloped Area 20 precinct will continue to be serviced by the Quakers Hill Local Area Command upon completion. A new ambulance station at Riverstone currently services the areas surrounding the Area 20 Precinct and the Area 20 Precinct should be included in the future catchment area for this service.

The NSW Fire Service has advised that the Area 20 Precinct is currently serviced by the Rural Fire Service at Kellyville. As development in the area progresses the NSW Fire Service will be evaluating the spread of services and how to best meet the needs of the new communities in these areas.

5.1.9 Surrounding areas

Riverstone and Alex Avenue

The Riverstone and Alex Avenue Precincts to the west of the Area 20 Precinct currently have a limited range of human services and facilities, including several schools and child care centres, a community centre, youth centre, indoor sports centre and a

small branch library situated on the first floor of a shopping centre at Riverstone. These facilities have been provided to meet existing local needs. As discussed earlier in this report, they will not be adequate to meet needs of the growing populations of Riverstone and Alex Avenue as these precincts are developed and will certainly not be able to absorb additional demand from Area 20.

Planning is underway for the Riverstone and Alex Avenue precincts to house approximately 15,000 new dwellings and over 40,000 new residents. The following community facilities are proposed to service the new population (Macroplan and GCC, 2008):

- A new town centre in Alex Avenue with retail and commercial facilities
- A Community Resource Hub in Riverstone that will include a library, arts centre, multi-purpose space meeting rooms and cultural centre
- A staged duplication of the Richmond Rail Line and improvements to the existing Riverstone Station
- Three new primary schools and a new combined Kindergarten to Year 12 school (with special needs services) at Riverstone and one new primary school and a new combined Kindergarten to Year 12 school (with special needs services) at Alex Avenue
- Two youth centres at Riverstone and Alex Avenue (Macroplan)

Although a second Community Resource Hub is identified in Council's draft s.94 Development Contribution Plan for the Riverstone/Alex Avenue Precinct, this facility remains under consideration and may not proceed.

5.1.10 Summary of existing community facilities

In summary, the only existing social infrastructure within Area 20 itself is the Anglican School (K to year 12). However, there will be a range of local and district level services and facilities available to the residents of Area 20. Access to these services and facilities is varied, although many are located within a few kilometres of the precinct.

Should the planned services and facilities in the surrounding areas, particularly Rouse Hill, Riverstone, Riverstone East and Alex Avenue all develop as intended, the residents of Area 20 will be able to access a range of services and facilities within relatively close proximity. However, should this not occur, there is a risk that the future population of Area 20 would be underserved in regard to community services and facilities. Ease of access to the Rouse Hill Town Centre will impact the ability of residents of Area 20 to enjoy a broad range of

services and facilities. As such, planning for the precinct must include strategies to ensure this access.

5.2 Existing open space and recreational facilities

Existing Open Space and Recreation Facilities in Area 20

Area 20 is relatively undeveloped with limited existing open space and recreation facilities. The existing open space and recreation facilities include:

- Cudgegong Reserve located on Cudgegong Road on the western side of Area 20, which is approximately 4 hectares in size. However, Cudgegong Reserve contains significant Cumberland Plain Woodland which requires protection. Defined walking tracks around the outer of the reserve may be possible, but overall the recreation value of the land is likely to be limited.
- Land along Second Ponds Creek. However, uncontrolled vegetation growth and private ownership along the creekline makes this land relatively inaccessible.
- One playing field recently developed within the Rouse Hill Anglican College grounds. However, this field is relatively small and designed as a rugby field for school use. Car parking and amenities are limited. Community use of this ground would require negotiation with the school and issues such as potential impacts on the ground quality and school security would need to be addressed.

5.2.1 Open Space and Facilities in the Surrounding Area

The suburbs surrounding Area 20 are either relatively recent new development areas or are to be developed in the future. A number of open space parcels and recreation facilities have been provided to cater for the new communities. The main open space and facilities are discussed below.

Rouse Hill Regional Park

Rouse Hill Regional Park is the most significant existing open space in the surrounding area. The park is currently 42ha in size and includes picnic areas, playgrounds, pathways, car parking and open spaces. The Park also incorporates Rouse Hill House and Farm which was established between 1813 and 1818 and has significant heritage value. Rouse Hill Regional Park is managed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service as part of the Department of Environment and Climate Change.

A significant portion of Rouse Hill Regional Park (including Rouse Hill House estate) is located within the northern portion of Area 20 and will be easily accessible along Second Ponds Creek. However, there are limitations with Rouse Hill Regional Park as outlined below.

- Rouse Hill Regional Park receives a high level of use with around 200,000 visits each year and the capacity for additional users is limited. The intended capacity of the existing park was 50,000pa.
- The Park included 'state of the art' facilities and design features when it was developed in 1997. However, the facilities are beginning to decline in quality due to the high use and limited improvements since inception.
- The land area available for recreation is limited for the number of users. The recent installation of portable toilets is an indication of the high demand and the inability of existing infrastructure to meet this demand.
- Recreation facilities in the existing Park must consider the environmental and cultural value of the remaining landscapes, e.g. treed areas and open grassland linked to the Rouse Hill House and Farm.
- The latent demand for the regional park is high due to the increasing population in the region.

The State Government has committed to expanding the size of Rouse Hill Regional Park in the future (the

Table 6 Sports grounds near Area 20

Sports Ground	Location	Main Facilities	Distance From Area 20
Riverstone Park	Riverstone	A number of playing fields, athletics track, netball courts and tennis courts	Around 5 km
Schofields Park	Schofields	Playing fields for soccer and other sports	Around 2.5 km
Stanhope Gardens Reserve	Stanhope Gardens	Softball diamonds (4)	Around 4 km
Commercial Road Reserve	Kellyville	Baseball diamonds (5)	Around 1 km
Commercial Road Netball Reserve	Kellyville	Netball court complex (27)	Around 1 km

In addition:

- Wright Reserve (Quakers Hill) caters for athletics and Australian Rules Football with a district catchment.
- Glenwood Reserve and Connors Park cater for soccer (two fields at each reserve).
- Corbin Reserve (Quakers Hill) caters for baseball.

park will more than double in size). However, this will require the purchase of private land to the north of Guntawong Road and future planning and design work. The full operation of an expanded park may not occur for some time.

Given the existing high use of Rouse Hill Regional Park and its regional focus, the park should not be relied on to cater for the local needs of the Area 20 population. In addition, the Area 20 population should not be required to fund improvements or the expansion of Rouse Hill Regional Park due to the regional nature of the Park.

This view is supported by Rouse Hill Regional Park management who believe the Park should not be relied on to meet local needs. In particular, it is felt that Rouse Hill Regional Park was developed to provide a regional destination for the wider area and individual areas should have adequate local open space to complement and alleviate the pressure on the regional open space.

5.2.2 Other open space

Other key open space and facilities provided in the surrounding area (within 10kms of Area 20) are summarised on the following pages.

Sports Grounds

The main existing sports grounds around Area 20 include:

- Patterson Reserve is a large reserve which caters for a number of sports.
- An additional four playing fields are proposed as part of The Ponds development.
- Netball courts for training are linked to a number of sports grounds. Sixteen courts are provided across six reserves and an additional four courts are planned in The Ponds development.

- The closest lawn bowling facility is believed to be in Riverstone. However, Blacktown City Council anticipates that demand in the new development areas will be low and additional facilities in the immediate area would not be recommended.

The Blacktown City Council has advised that all sports grounds in the surrounding area receive a high level of use. In particular:

- The existing four soccer fields in the district are inadequate and Council is planning to convert three other sports grounds in the area to cater for soccer.
- Athletics is very strong in the wider district with high use of Wright Reserve.
- The softball diamonds at Stanhope Gardens receive high use as do the Blacktown International Peace Park softball facilities. The City of Blacktown is keen to consolidate and relocate these two facilities to another central location linked to the newer development areas.
- Netball clubs who use local courts for training have high numbers of players.

Overall, there is limited capacity for additional players at most sports grounds in the surrounding area.

5.2.3 Other Recreation and Sport Facilities

Indoor Sport

Two indoor sport courts are currently provided at the Blacktown Leisure Centre Stanhope and there are plans by Blacktown City Council to extend the facility to four courts in the future to cater for demand from the surrounding areas. This facility is around 4km from Area 20.

The Riverstone Sports Centre linked to the Christian Centre provides a one court sports hall and spaces for fitness programs and functions. A Blacktown City Council survey in 2007 found the facility receives a high level of use, but the Christian Centre does not have the land to expand the provision. This facility is around 6km from Area 20.

Recent planning for North Kellyville in the Shire of Baulkham Hills recommended that the Bernie Mullane Sports Complex, which is currently a two court facility, be expanded by one additional court to cater for the North Kellyville population. This facility is around 4.5km from Area 20.

Aquatic and Leisure Facilities

There are two main swimming facilities in the surrounding area, including:

- The Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope which includes an indoor 25m pool and leisure wave pool as well as other water space and health and fitness facilities. This facility is 4km from Area 20. However, it already receives a high level of use and Blacktown City Council has advised that aquatic programs such as Learn to Swim are at capacity.
- The Riverstone Swimming Centre which is an outdoor 50m facility that is around 6km from Area 20. However, it is an ageing facility that is in need of upgrade and lacks indoor pool and fitness components. A substantial redevelopment is planned for this facility by Blacktown City Council in the future.

Given the Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope is operating close to capacity, it will be important for the Riverstone Swimming Centre to be redeveloped to cater for the surrounding communities, including Area 20.

Golf Courses

- The Castle Hill Country Club, which is a high quality 18 hole golf course, is located around 6kms from Area 20.
- It appears that the Kellyville Country Club, located only 1km from Area 20, has either been down sized from an 18 hole course or is no longer operating.

Rouse Hill Regional Centre

Open space and sport and recreation facilities linked to the Rouse Hill Regional Centre are limited. Some linear open space is provided to the east of the Regional Centre linked to a stormwater detention system and leisure facilities and a community centre and library are provided as part of the retail centre. However, outdoor sport and indoor sport facilities are not catered for and people living within the Rouse Hill Regional Centre will be reliant on the surrounding areas.

6 Community facility requirements

6.1 General approach to planning of social infrastructure

In social infrastructure planning, facilities and open space resources are commonly considered at three levels:

- Neighbourhood level services and facilities, available within about five - ten minute walking distance for most residents, and generally provided for a population of about 4,000 – 12,000 people.
- District level services are more specialist services which operate on a broader district catchment (about 15,000 – 50,000 people). These will vary according to the particular characteristics and needs of the population. They are usually staged to respond to the achievement of population thresholds, with numbers sufficient to support their provision
- Sub-regional and regional level services, comprising major facilities for a population of over about 50,000 people.

Social infrastructure is provided by a wide variety of agencies, including all levels of government, non-government organisations and the private sector. At the precinct planning phase, the strategy needs to focus on the facilities which may have significant land requirements, to ensure that sufficient land is identified in appropriate locations to meet future need. This focuses particularly on facilities and services provided by local government and State Government agencies (such as schools). Services provided by the Commonwealth Government (eg employment services, some family services, veterans' services,) have land requirements that are likely to be relatively modest, and most likely will use available commercial office space within designated centres. Such sites can be identified in subsequent detailed levels of planning.

Sites for facilities provided by the non-government and private sectors are usually acquired through the private market and will need to be considered at a later stage of development as demand is established. At the same time, it is recognised that some types of private / non-government facilities may have significant land requirements. These include private schools, private hospitals and medical services, churches, private childcare services, commercial gym

and fitness facilities, residential aged care facilities and entertainment facilities such as cinemas, hotels and restaurants. The Precinct Plan will need to allow sufficient scope and flexibility to accommodate such uses as demand emerges.

The following sections summarise the types of services and facilities which the Area 20 population will need to access.

6.2 Defining the catchment population

As outlined in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 above, Area 20 is anticipated to yield about 2,500 dwellings, resulting in a population of around 7,000 at completion. Residents of this area will need to have access to neighbourhood services and facilities to meet a range of daily needs.

A population of 7,000 will not be large enough to meet the thresholds for most types of community services and facilities. It will, however, be large enough to sustain some local neighbourhood facilities such as local shops and parks.

Residents of Area 20 will also contribute to demand for local and district level facilities in the wider area. A wide range of services and facilities are likely to be provided in the surrounding areas such as the Riverstone, Riverstone East and Alex Avenue precincts. The populations of Area 20 and these surrounding areas will therefore need to be considered together for planning purposes.

6.2.1 Community facilities requirements

Because of the need for planning Area 20 community facilities in parallel with those of the Alex Avenue, Riverstone and Riverstone East Precincts, GCC standards have been used to estimate future demand for community services and facilities for Area 20, the larger surrounding areas and the combined populations. The table on the following page shows the indicative need for a large number of facilities in this wider area.

Table 7: Community Infrastructure Estimates, Area 20

Type of facility	Benchmark (Number per population)	Estimated requirements		
		Area 20 (Population 7,000 Dwellings 2,500)	Riverstone, Riverstone East and Alex Avenue (Population 58,800 Dwellings 21,000)	Total
Education				
Public Primary schools	1:2,000 new dwellings (approx)	1.2	10.5	11.7
Public High Schools	1:6,000 new dwellings (approx)	0.4	3.5	3.9
Tertiary				
Health and Social Welfare				
Community Health Centre	1:20,000 people	0.3	2.9	3.2
Hospital	2 beds:1,000 people	13.5 beds	117.6 beds	131.1 beds
Aged Care				
Aged Care Housing	1:10,000 (centre)			
High Care (Nursing home)	40 beds:1,000 people 70+ years	0.7centres	5.9 centres	3.4 centres
Low Care (Hostel) places	48 beds:1,000 people 70+ years			
Youth Centres	1:20,000 people	0.3	2.9	3.6
Community Service Centre	1:60,000	0.1	1	1.1
Childcare facility	1 place:5 children 0-4 years	126	1,094 ¹	1,220 places
After school care facility	1 place:25 children 5-12 years	26	230 ²	256
Culture				
Branch library	1:33,000 people	0.2	1.8	2.0
District Library	1:40,000 people	0.2	1.5	1.7
Performing Arts/Cultural Centre	1:30,000 people	0.2	2	2.2
Emergency Services				
Ambulance				
Fire Station				
Police Station				
Community Services				
Local	1:6,000 people	1.1	9.8	10.9
District	1:20,000 people	0.3	2.9	3.2

Note: 1. Assumes 9.3% of residents aged 0-4 years as outlined in Section 5.4

Note: 2. Assumes 9.8% of residents aged 5-12 years as

6.3 Location, spatial and design criteria

In addition to GCC standards and general principles for the design and location of sustainable social infrastructure outlined in Chapter 2 (section 2.5), a number of spatial and design criteria should also be taken into account when planning infrastructure needs for new areas. These include:

- The need for an equitable spread of social infrastructure, open space and recreation and sport facilities, giving consideration to hierarchy levels and desired catchments
- The capacity of any existing social infrastructure and open space to cater for parts of the new population
- The potential connections between social infrastructure, open space and facilities, including

the potential to establish activity and service hubs and link to unique open space features

- The topography of the development, proposed main road systems and potential barriers that could impact on access and connections
- The arrangement of neighbourhoods and centres, including links to schools, commercial centres and other facilities
- Opportunities for co-location and shared use to make efficient use of land resources.

6.4 Community infrastructure needs

This population will generate demand for a range of regional, district and neighbourhood level services.

6.4.1 Neighbourhood level services

The projected population for Area 20 alone does not meet the threshold levels to justify provision of most types of neighbourhood facilities. Instead, its population will contribute to the need for facilities which will be shared with the adjacent precincts. A population of this size is likely to require:

Neighbourhood level retail: It is important for residents to have access to neighbourhood level services to satisfy day to day convenience retail needs (eg for milk, bread and newspapers) without having to drive long distances. This suggests a need for local convenience retail shopping, although the specific nature has not yet been determined and will be influenced by the dispersed layout of residential development across the site and the proximity of Area 20 to Rouse Hill Village and the Rouse Hill Shopping Centre. However, key to residents of Area 20 being able to access any facilities in Rouse Hill will be their ability to safely and easily cross Windsor Road. This issue must be considered in the planning for the area.

Primary school: Based on a Department of Education and Training (DET) standard of 1 primary school for 2,000 dwellings, Area 20 residents will require one primary school. Primary schools require a site area of approximately 3 hectares. There is little scope to reduce this until precise demand can be assessed, as a site of this size is required to carry demountable classrooms through peaks in demand. There may be opportunities to vary the site size later as detailed planning occurs in response to specific sites and if joint use of facilities can be negotiated,

Location guidelines for DET schools include:

- The school should be on a distributor or collector road for ready access, but not on a sub-arterial or arterial road, to minimise noise and traffic safety problems

- For primary schools, the school should be central to its catchment, with a catchment radius of 1.6km road distance to minimise the demand for bus transport and maximise opportunities to walk to school
- Locations adjacent community playing fields are an advantage
- Opportunities for joint use of land are to be encouraged
- Sites should have a slope no greater than 1:10
- Sites must be above the 1 in 100 year flood level and be well drained
- Sites should have a substantially regular shape
- Sites should be free of possible restrictions such as power easements, contamination, and environmental constraints.

DET advise that demand for a new primary school is generally reached with the sale of around new 400 lots, although this is dependent on the capacity of schools in surrounding areas (eg Rouse Hill) and State government approval processes. As the proposed site is yet to be agreed and purchased, the school is unlikely to be operational before 2014.

Community Centre: The population of Area 20 justifies the provision of a neighbourhood level community centre. However in consideration of the larger social infrastructure context and Blacktown City Council's Community Resource Hub strategy it is advised that this be provided as part of a larger district level Community Resource Hub (see 6.5 below)

Child care: The population of Area 20 will require two to three child care centres. The provision of childcare has changed substantially in recent years, associated with shifts in government regulation and funding policy, such that the private sector is now the provider of the majority of childcare centres in Australia. As such, the supply and location of childcare in many new developments is now commonly left to market forces, once need can be demonstrated. Many councils are now reviewing their role in the provision of childcare, and some have decided to no longer provide new childcare facilities. Others recognise that the private sector often leaves particular needs unmet (such as places for the more expensive 0-2 year olds), and that local government has a role to ensure affordable places are available to meet the full spectrum of need. Given the oversupply of childcare services in close proximity to Area 20 it is not recommended that public agencies provide child care facilities to this area.

6.4.2 District and Regional level services

The new population will require access to a variety of district, sub-regional and regional level services, usually provided for larger populations, including:

- Health and hospital services
- High schools
- Emergency and safety services
- Tertiary education facilities – TAFE colleges and university
- Major welfare and support agencies eg Home and Community Care
- Major cultural and civic facilities – eg large performing arts venue, exhibition space, local government branch office, major library
- A Community Resource Hub, providing multipurpose, flexible community facilities and spaces to accommodate community organisations
- Civic and cultural facilities, including a branch library and community arts spaces
- Entertainment, leisure facilities and services
- A range of medical and community health services
- Individual and family support services, and services addressing particular issues such as welfare, legal aid, employment, housing
- Facilities and services for particular sections of the population, such as young people, older people, people with a disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Planning for regional level social infrastructure for the North West Growth Centre has not yet occurred and it is unclear whether or where such facilities will be provided, or the extent to which there will be reliance of existing facilities in Blacktown LGA or the wider area. However, it is clear that regional level services will not be located in Area 20 to serve the wider area

6.5 Blacktown City Council community facilities policies

The recent *Riverstone and Alex Avenue Demographic Profile and Community Infrastructure Report* (Macroplan, 2008) examined community infrastructure needs, initially using the traditional GCC approach as outlined above. However, Blacktown City Council has since adopted an alternative model of service provision, based around

the concept of Community Resource Hubs (BCC, 2008).

The new model was prompted by:

- An increased supply of child care centres due to private sector investment and public-private partnerships in schools
- Changes in the funding of neighbourhood centres which removed funding for community development officers
- Small size of existing Council neighbourhood centre facilities which limited the range of programs
- Opportunities for an alternative 'consortium' model of service provision, as piloted in the Ropes Crossing precinct.

Although still in the development phase, details of the model are summarised below.

6.5.1 Community Resource Hub (CRH) Model

Blacktown City Council is currently investigating the identified needs for community facilities, including a Community Resource Hubs, before finalising plans for the areas.

CRHs will be larger than single-purpose buildings and will be planned around service delivery rather than size needed for particular uses. The aim is to provide local, multipurpose community facilities which are fitted out so that services can be functional immediately. CRHs will provide a focus for local communities to come together for social, life long learning and human service activities and services. A CRH would have a larger building form than existing neighbourhood centres, funded by merging budgets for different centres (eg local community, youth and childcare). This will result in larger facilities, whose increased critical size will provide opportunities for increased co-location of agencies, and thus improved delivery of services and programs.

A CRH would have three broad functions:

- Life long learning – providing opportunities for individual community members (from birth through to active ageing) to gain knowledge, skills and qualifications in order to reach their full potential within their communities. Potential life long learning activities within CRHs may include playgroups, library outreach story times, homework support, small business courses and TAFE outreach courses (eg languages, first aid, job preparation).

- Health and wellbeing - providing spaces for a range of community (and private) health and welfare practitioners to offer support and counselling services to individuals and families. Potential health and wellbeing services might include, early childhood clinics, family support services, therapeutic clinics such as speech pathology, psychology, counselling services and group programs such as stress management, quit smoking, weight loss.
- Recreation and culture - providing spaces and opportunities for community members and groups to express their cultural identity and engage in leisure and recreational activities. Potential recreational and cultural activities might include music lessons, spaces to hire for family events such as birthdays, weddings and anniversaries, school holiday programs, craft programs for people with disabilities, seniors community choirs, community film nights, dance classes and playgroups.
- Multipurpose and flexible design will allow for the generation of income streams to assist in offset of costs
- Ability to integrate larger facilities into mixed use developments to potentially offset construction and maintenance costs
- Ability to provide a spectrum of community, leisure and recreation services in the one location
- The ability to co-locate complementary services
- The provision of a 'one stop shop' for community services and facilities for residents
- Integration with district level shopping and services to create animated and active spaces
- The ability to provide larger and more flexible spaces that grow and change with communities

Blacktown City Council's draft s.94 Development Contribution Plan for the Alex Avenue, Riverstone and Riverstone East Precincts currently provides for apportionment of funds for the development of the two Community Resource Hubs across Riverstone, Alex Avenue, Riverstone East and Area 20. The need for the provision of two district level facilities in close proximity to one another is currently under review. As such, the Alex Avenue hub may not proceed.

The plan describes Community Resource Hubs as follows:

"Community Resource Hubs are usually a larger building form than existing neighbourhood centres. This increased critical mass (size) provides opportunities for increased co-location of agencies (and thus improved delivery of services and programs). One large Community Resource Hub, at a location to be determined by Council prior to adoption of this draft contributions plan will serve the precincts of Alex Avenue, Riverstone, Riverstone East and Area 20"¹².

This document and discussion with Council staff would indicate that it is the intention of Council to use the proposed Community Resource Hub (or Hubs) to service the Area 20 Precinct. There are certainly benefits to both Council and the community of the provision of community facilities in this way including:

- Economies of scale in the construction of fewer but larger facilities
- Financial sustainability through the maintenance of fewer, fit-for-purpose facilities

- Clustering of services and facilities close to transport, schools and town centres.

There are no doubt benefits to communities and Council of delivering community facilities in this manner. However, it should also be noted that the Growth Centres Commission Development Code includes the following objectives in regard to the provision of community facilities:

- To provide community facilities within walking distance of residential neighbourhoods and transport nodes
- To provide access to a large range of social and community facilities catering for different social groups and age groups
- To create good access to new areas of open space and community facilities
- To improve access to existing parks and recreational facilities.

The use of Community Resource Hubs located in the Riverstone and Alex Avenue Precincts whilst providing a more integrated and comprehensive service model does raise issues of access for residents of the Area 20 Precinct. The proposed Riverstone Community Resource Hub will be located approximately 7 kilometres of Area 20 and as such would be fairly accessible, particularly to residents that have access to a vehicle. The demographics of the surrounding areas do suggest that the residents of Area 20 will have a high level of car ownership. The use of a 'district level' Community Resource Hub model also raises the need to plan adequately for public transport to ensure that the Hubs are

¹² Blacktown City Council, *Draft s. 94 Contributions Plan No. 20 Riverstone and Alex Avenue Precincts* p. 18

accessible to residents from across all four contribution areas including Area 20.

6.5.2 Section 94 implications

The s.94 Development Contribution Plan for the Alex Avenue, Riverstone and Riverstone East Precincts provides for apportionment of funds for the development of facilities across the Area 20 Precinct for the following community and recreation facilities. Calculations within the draft plan are based on a population of 4,200 for Area 20. This will need to be revised as population projections are further refined in accordance with decisions regarding the development capacity of the site.

Currently the Area 20 Precinct has been apportioned 7.2% of the cost of the development of the two Community Resource Hubs which includes the provision of the upgraded Riverstone Library, children and family services, arts and cultural spaces, informal indoor recreation facilities, neighbourhood centres and a youth centre. The approximate cost apportioned to Area 20 using this calculation is approximately \$2 million. Further, the apportioned cost to Area 20 residents of the redevelopment of the Riverstone Aquatic Centre using this calculation is \$1.7 million.

The provision of these facilities at this cost presents an opportunity for the residents of Area 20 to be able to access state of the art facilities for less than the cost of the provision of standard neighbourhood level facilities. The only issue in regards to the provision of facilities in this manner is that, should these facilities and the services housed by them prove to be inadequate for the populations of the larger area, then Area 20 residents will need to compete with those residents located immediately near these facilities for access to them.

It is suggested that these cost estimates be revised at a later date once detailed planning of social infrastructure for Area 20 is assessed.

6.6 Conclusion

This section has outlined requirements for neighbourhood level community facilities and human services in Area 20 and principles for their design and location.

Facilities required to meet the local needs of Area 20 include:

- A primary school
- Neighbourhood level retail to meet everyday needs
- Two to three child care centres to be provided by the private child care market

Without having them directly located within the precinct, Area 20 residents will need to have access to:

- Branch library
- Emergency services
- High School (public and private)
- Community Health Services
- Hospital Services
- Family and children's services
- Arts and cultural facilities
- Places of worship
- Some services for older people

These are currently being provided or have plans to be provided in the surrounding areas.

Although the population of Area 20 could sustain a local neighbourhood community centre, the larger local and district context must be considered. In addition, the best use of Section 94 contributions and the benefits to be gained by the provision of district level multipurpose facilities such as Community Resource Hubs should also be considered. Given that Blacktown City Council is currently proposing the development of a Community Resource Hub (or Hubs) in the Riverstone, Riverstone East Precinct and Alex Avenue Precinct, it can be assumed that the residents of Area 20 will be serviced by these hub(s).

The development of Area 20 and the wider North West Growth Centre will also give rise to a need to expand existing human services in the area in line with population growth. This will require increases in recurrent funding through State and Federal government health, welfare and community programs for staffing and accommodation.

7 Open Space and Recreational Requirements

This chapter examines the open space and recreation facilities that will be required to satisfy the needs of the Area 20 resident populations.

7.1 Demand considerations

7.1.1 Trends in demand

Based on the available research on sport and recreation participation in Western Sydney, it is predicted that the following factors will characterise the long term demand for recreation and open space opportunities across the North West Growth Centre. Factors most relevant to the future Area 20 population include:

- National health issues will continue to stress improving opportunities within the built environment for everyday incidental exercise within residential areas and requiring designated walking and cycling tracks within nature corridors and natural areas.
- There is likely to be a sustained demand for health and fitness opportunities, requiring both indoor and outdoor facilities.
- The quality of facilities and open space is as important as quantity. Open space should be carefully designed and take into account a wider range of needs.
- The high demand for recreation programs for all age groups is likely to continue, resulting in increased demand for indoor multipurpose sport and leisure centres.
- As the population grows there could be increased levels of cultural diversity in the community, giving rise to a greater variety of sport and recreation needs.
- There is likely to be demand for recreation, entertainment and commercial leisure opportunities for young people. It is important to view young people as having a legitimate claim on public space and this should be addressed in the planning of the open space and public domain areas.
- There could be demand for natural areas as places to experience the natural environment, away from the urban setting and for appealing areas to walk and relax in a natural setting. In particular, natural river settings, creek corridors and larger bushland parks are valued.
- There is increasing demand for walking and cycle networks, including track systems linked to corridors and natural areas.
- Sporting codes are increasing the duration of playing seasons and increasing demand for training as well as competition grounds. Coupled with climate change, consideration needs to be given to managing the use of grounds and optimising water use through quality irrigation systems.
- Sporting clubs are demanding higher standards of provision, with change facilities, storage and floodlighting being desired inclusions so sports can play and train in the evening and in winter.
- Changing demand patterns suggests growth in adventure based activities such as artificial climbing wall, bmx, skateboarding, in-line skating, mountain biking, trail running and beach volleyball.
- Amenities within parks are essential. Shade, water seats, interactive play equipment and bike areas are core inclusions for parks to be used regularly.
- The increase in community events within parks requires additional facilities and utilities such as power, water, and parking infrastructure.
- There is a move towards establishing shared-use and multi-functional outdoor sport facilities to reduce duplication and manage costs.
- With an increasing trend to indoor multipurpose facilities, consideration should be given to the design of community centres to ensure that they can accommodate a range of leisure and recreation programs, for example dance, yoga, exercise and martial arts.
- There is increasing demand for informal recreation opportunities for families, and for affordable facilities and activities.
- There is an increasing demand for quality playgrounds with diverse opportunities for older and young children.

7.1.2 Demand for district level open space

Blacktown City Council has noted increasing participation in physical activity in many areas,

particularly in both informal recreation and in demand for organised sport.

In future growth areas, the high representation of young families creates the need for junior sporting activities and facilities which meet the needs of both males and females. However, growth and change place an emphasis on the need for a flexible approach to the provision and management of sports grounds.

With respect to open space, there is a need for accessible, useable and high quality parks with well maintained facilities such as paths, play equipment, fencing and landscaping. Demand analysis has indicated that community usage would increase if a hierarchy of city-wide parks was established, focusing on family and group activities such as picnic areas, trails and play areas. There is also an identified desire for some unique 'regional' playgrounds.

At the same time, Council has identified a number of other factors influencing demand here and elsewhere in NSW including:

- The costs of operating sports facilities, including insurance costs
- Declining numbers of volunteers
- Funding and the ability to attract sponsorship

- The desire to improve facilities to accommodate growth.

7.1.3 Demand for local open space

Demand for local open space relates to resident's expectations and aspirations. Future developments will contain a mix of families with children, adolescents and young people, and middle aged and older people. Local open space is important for encouraging physical activity, informal interaction and creating opportunities for new and existing residents to come together and build networks, both at a local neighbourhood and whole of community level. In addition local open space encourages extended family activity, for walking and cycling as well as family gatherings.

The provision of local open space is also an important urban design consideration. The level of local open space will in part be informed by GCC and BCC's standards of local open space provision, outlined below.

7.2 Open space standards

7.2.1 Growth Centres Commission Benchmarks

The GCC Development Code provides indicative thresholds for the provision of open space and recreational facilities, as shown in the table below.

Table 8: GCC Community Open Space Standards

Type of facility	Benchmark (Number per population)	Size (Site area)
Open Space and Recreation		
Overall Open Space	2.83ha:1,000 people	
Neighbourhood Open Space	1:2,000 people	1ha
Local Open Space	1:10,000 people	2ha
District Open Space	1:100,000 people	5ha
Local Sports Ground	1:10,000 people	1ha
District Sports Ground	1:30,000 people	2ha
Regional Sports Ground	1:200,000 people	5ha
Local Tennis Centre	1:10,000 people	1ha
District Tennis Centre	1:30,000 people	1ha
Equestrian	1:30,000 people	2ha
Lawn Bowls	1:30,000 people	1ha
Netball/Basketball Local	1:10,000 people	1ha
Netball/Basketball District	1:30,000 people	2ha
District Aquatic Centre	1:100,000 people	1ha
Regional Aquatic/Indoor Sports Centre	1:300,000 people	2ha

Source: Growth Centres Commission (2003) Briefing Paper to inform the Development Code

It is understood that BCC views the GCC Development Code open space standard of 2.83 ha per 1,000 people (excluding regional open

space) as a minimum acceptable level for this new development area.

Other standards included in this table are either inconsistent with Blacktown Council's hierarchy of open space provision, or considered to be below the desirable levels for BCC. For example, the site area of local and district sportsgrounds appears to be well below the desired size for such facilities. In the Blacktown LGA, the minimum area preferred for a local sports ground is considered to be a double playing field facility with an approximate minimum area of 4ha, including playing fields, amenities, parking, buffer zones and other interrelated facilities such as playgrounds.

Blacktown City Council does not see a need for an equestrian facility, as planned residential development will adversely affect horse ownership in the area, and equestrian demand is consequently forecasted to fall.

Benchmark indicators for aquatic facilities provided in the GCC Development Code are also not consistent with Council's current planning or existing facilities. Council considers a district facility in the vicinity of 50,000 to 100,000 people and regional facilities for over 100,000 people.

Table 9 Open space benchmarks

Facility	Benchmark	Facility Requirement Implications for 7,000 Population
Parks	1.9 ha per 1,000 people	13.3ha parks
Playing fields	1: 1,850 people	3 fields full sized plus one junior field (around 5.5ha)
Tennis courts	1: 4,000 people	1 court plus two third use of a second court
Netball courts	1: 3,500 people	2 courts
Playgrounds	Neighbourhood - 1:500 0-11 yrs	2-3 neighbourhood playgrounds
	District - 1:2,000 0-11 yrs	
	City - 1: 10,000 0-11 yrs	
	Regional - 1: 20,000+ 0-11 yrs	

In addition, Blacktown City Council requires:

- Youth recreation spaces such as BMX tracks and skate areas with consideration to access and social places.
- One indoor sports court per 25,500 people.
- The strategic provision of cycle paths and fitness trails, especially along green corridors.

Using the above Blacktown City Council benchmarks, there would be a need for around 20 ha of total open space (2.85ha per 1,000 people) for a population of 7,000 people.

7.2.3 Other Considerations

Other issues which need to be considered in planning for facilities include:

- Diversity in needs and expectations in relation to the provision of amenities, storage, parking and other facilities.

7.2.2 Blacktown City Council Benchmarks

Blacktown City Council uses the minimum benchmark of 2.83ha per 1,000 people for open space as outlined in the Growth Centres Development Code in the absence of any other industry endorsed provision rate. However, Blacktown City Council suggests that this open space excludes regional open space, drainage, areas of cultural significance, flood prone lands and creek lines.

Planning by Suter Planners using a participation analysis and trend information has found that there is often justification for around 3.3 to 3.5 ha of open space per 1,000 people depending on population characteristics and allowing for open space linked to district facilities as well as local.

Other related benchmarks adopted by Blacktown City Council and the implications for Area 20 are listed below.

- Sportsgrounds should cater for a number of sports, to improve their viability and meet community needs.
- Sportsgrounds located in residential streets can impact on residents.
- Where possible, sportsgrounds and recreational spaces should be integrated, and incorporate trees and shade.
- Sportsgrounds should be accessible to the general community for casual sport and recreation.
- Recreation and sport open space and related facilities should be accessible to people with a disability and comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (unless landform prohibits this).
- Recreation and sport open space should be safe and appealing and comply with CPTED principles (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).

7.3 Provision of open space

7.3.1 Outdoor Sport Demand Considerations

A detailed analysis of potential demand has been undertaken to consider the future requirements for sports facilities in Area 20. This analysis has considered two scenarios, taking potential population size and potential participation levels into consideration. The basis of each scenario is as follows:

Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Based on national and NSW participation levels	Based on participation levels projected by Blacktown City Council

Potential Participation Analysis

Through an assessment of potential participation it is possible to provide an indication of the sports facilities that could be required for a future population. This analysis has been undertaken for the above scenarios and the results are summarised below.

The analysis considers what the facility requirements would be for a population of 7,000 people if participation were the same as national and NSW participation levels, or projected Blacktown City Council levels.

Scenario 1: Based on National and NSW Participation Levels

Sport	Potential Players		Potential Teams		Indicative Facility Requirements
	Juniors	Seniors	Juniors	Seniors	
Athletics	28	23	n/a	n/a	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Australian Rules	18*	12	1	0	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Baseball	6	5	0	0	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Cricket	52	103	3	6	1 cricket pitch
Golf	8	301	n/a	n/a	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Hockey	18	24	1	1	Access to one multi-use field
Lawn Bowls	n/a	56	n/a	n/a	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Netball	82	114	7	10	1 court full day and 1 court half day
Rugby League	40	70	2	4	Access to one multi-use field
Rugby Union	20	47	1	2	Access to one multi-use field
Soccer	128	211	8	14	2 fields (although not high use)
Softball	9	17	0	1	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Tennis	71	162	8	20	3 tennis courts
Touch Football	16	159	1	14	One field for 2-3 nights

Note:

- Juniors relates to out of school hours participation.

- Seniors refers to 15 years + and relates to organised participation (except golf which includes total participants).

- Juniors are based on national figures (ABS data) and seniors are based on NSW figures (ERASS data).

*Australian Rules indicatively reduced to reflect NSW trend (State data is not available for juniors).

Scenario 2: Based on Participation Levels Projected by Blacktown City Council

Sport	Potential Players		Potential Teams		Indicative Facility Requirements
	Juniors	Seniors	Juniors	Seniors	
Athletics	46	23	n/a	n/a	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Australian Rules	11	12	0	0	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Baseball	11	32	1	2	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Cricket	47	80	3	5	1 cricket pitch
Golf	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Hockey	11	14	0	1	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Lawn Bowls	n/a	36	n/a	n/a	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Netball	107	215	9	19	2 courts full day and 1 court half day
Rugby League	24	23	1	1	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Rugby Union	11	28	0	1	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Soccer	170	190	11	12	2 fields (although not high use)
Softball	16	13	1	1	No facility (cater for in the wider area)
Tennis	63	145	8	18	3 tennis courts
Touch Football	13	66	1	6	One field for 1 night

Note:

- Juniors relates to out of school hours participation.
- Seniors refers to 15 years + and relates to organised participation.
- All figures are based on Blacktown City Council projections which were originally based on ABS and ERASS figures.

The analysis has used participation data from the following reports:

5-14 year olds

Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006

15 years +

Participation in Exercise Recreation and Sport, Australian Sports Commission, 2007

Summary of Indicative Sports Requirements:

Demand for open space and recreation in new development areas shows relatively high participation and need for areas for formal and informal play and leisure activities.

A summary of the indicative sports facility requirements for each scenario is provided below.

Scenario 1

Based on national and NSW participation levels

- 2 playing fields
- Access to 3rd playing field
- 1 cricket pitch (over fields)
- 1.5 netball courts (one full day and one half day)
- 3 tennis courts

Scenario 2

Based on participation levels projected by Blacktown City Council

- 2 playing fields
- 1 cricket pitch (over fields)
- 2.5 netball courts (two full day and one half day)
- 3 tennis courts

For both scenarios, there is no justification to provide the following sports facilities within Area 20:

- Athletics track

- Australian Rules Football oval
- Baseball diamond
- Golf course
- Lawn bowls facility
- Softball diamond

However, the Area 20 population will contribute to the demand for these facilities in the surrounding area.

7.3.2 Informal Recreation Demand Considerations

Communities require recreation open space and Blacktown City Council suggests 1.9ha per 1,000 people for parks and linear connections for recreation. This would represent 13.3ha of usable land for a population of 7,000 people. Further, the GCC Development Code requires local parks within 400m of most dwellings.

All age groups seek recreation activity such as walking, bike riding, play and picnics, and facilities are required to support these and other recreation activities. The main indicative potential recreation demands using a population of 7,000 people based on national and NSW participation rates are as follows:

- A relatively high demand for walking with around 1,670 people aged 15 years and over walking for fitness and 330 people 15 years and over bush walking.

- Around 660 children aged 5-14 years and 450 people aged 15 years and over participating in bike riding.
- Around 400 people aged 15 years and over participating in running and jogging.
- Around 230 children aged 5-14 years and 15 people aged 15 years and over participating in skateboarding and rollerblading.

The analysis highlights the need for the following facilities and spaces:

- Larger parks that support family and community activity.
- Walking tracks, including bush tracks and connections to tracks and trails in surrounding areas.
- Cycle tracks, including shared use with walking, a safe street bike network and connections beyond Area 20.
- Bike riding areas for children and young people such as BMX.
- Access to skate facilities in the wider area. 240 potential users would not justify a facility in Area 20.

In addition, there will be a requirement for playgrounds to support children and families. The total number of children aged 0-11 years is anticipated to be around 1,290 for a population of 7,000. This number would generally require 2-3 playgrounds using Blacktown City Council's benchmark of 1:500 for neighbourhood playgrounds.

Area 20 offers opportunities for linear connections and walking tracks to support participation in walking, including dog walking. Bike tracks that provide safe and appealing opportunities for recreation and travel, particularly for children and young people, will also be important.

7.3.3 Indoor Sport and Aquatic Demand Considerations

The demand analysis for indoor sport and aquatic facilities for a population of 7,000 (using national and NSW participation figures as a basis) highlights there could be:

- Around 64 children aged 5-14 years and 100 people aged 15 years and over participating in organised basketball.
- Around 1,065 people aged 15 years and over participating in aerobics and fitness activities.

- Participation in a number of other health and fitness programs, including:
 - Dance (around 120 5-14 years and 80 15 years +)
 - Yoga (around 170 15 years +)
 - Martial Arts (around 45 children 5-14 years and 90 15 years +)
 - Weight training (around 100 15 years+)
- Around 170 children aged 5-14 years and 740 people aged 15 years and over participating in swimming.

This analysis highlights the need for:

- One indoor court for three nights to cater for basketball and other indoor sports.
- Access to a swimming pool in the wider area. The demand would not sustain a facility in Area 20.
- Access to district or regional health and fitness facilities as well as local community space to cater for local health and fitness programs (within or close to Area 20).

7.4 Recommended Provision of Open Space in Area 20

7.4.1 Sporting Open Space Provision

The analysis of potential participation suggests there is justification to provide the following facilities within Area 20 for a population of 7,000 people:

- 2 double playing fields
- 1 cricket pitch (over fields)
- 2.5 netball courts (two full day and one half day)
- 3 tennis courts

The above recommended provision considers the projected participation levels for the City of Blacktown (determined by Council) as well as national and NSW levels.

Whilst the population size in Area 20 justifies access to a third playing field, the land area is quite small and Second Ponds Creek reduces the developable land further.

As such it is recommended that the provision of sporting open space is as follows:

Recommended Approach

Establish two double playing fields with outdoor courts in Area 20

It may be possible to access the Rouse Hill Anglican College playing field instead of locating another playing field out of the area. However, this will require negotiation with the school and should not be relied on.

The land area recommended for the two double playing fields is around 4.5ha, allowing for amenities, car parking and space around the sports ground edge for general community access. The sports ground should be linked to the primary school to enable school use, but it should be located on community rather than school land to ensure long term security of tenure and community access.

Rationale

Sport should be catered for in Area 20
A double playing field should be the minimum provision.

In relation to the provision of outdoor courts, there are two main options that will need to be assessed by Blacktown City Council in consultation with potential users prior to the development of facilities.

The main options are:

1. Provide all courts within Area 20, although small numbers of courts are difficult to manage and may not be well used.
2. Provide some courts in Area 20 for community use and connect the remaining courts to another location with other courts to create larger and more viable facilities.

The recommended option is option two. This would require provision of two tennis courts on site with a multi-purpose court overlaying these to support recreation activity by the community. These courts could serve a dual school and community use. The remaining courts could be located at the district sports complex suggested for the provision of playing fields, i.e. out of Area 20 and linked to other courts.

The sports and the justified land allocation for a population of 7,000 are summarised below.

Table 10 Proposed land allocation

Sport	Participant Demand	Land Justification	Total Land
Athletics	Potential 55 participants (juniors and seniors) Approx 20% of an athletics club	Full sized track is around 1.8ha 20% of 1.8ha = 0.45ha	0.36 ha plus space for amenities and surrounds
Australian Rules Football	Potential for 1 junior team One team = 0.5 of 8 games per oval = 6% of oval use	Oval size is 2.5ha 6% of 2.5ha = 0.15ha	0.15 ha plus space for amenities and surrounds
Baseball	Potential for 3 teams (based on BCC figures) 3 teams = 1.5 of 8 games = 20% of diamond use	Diamond size is 1.8ha 20% of 1.8ha = 0.36ha	0.36 ha plus space for amenities and surrounds
Softball	Potential for 2 teams (based on BCC figures) 2 teams = 1 of 8 games = 12.5%	Diamond size is 1.2ha 12.5% of 1.2ha = 0.15ha	0.15 ha plus space for amenities and surrounds
TOTAL LAND AREA REQUIRED FOR PLAYING FIELDS			1.0ha
Land Area Contribution for Amenities and Surrounds			1.0ha (100% of fields additional)
TOTAL LAND CONTRIBUTION JUSTIFIED			2.0ha

The above analysis is based on Blacktown City Council projected participation figures and national and NSW participation figures.

For a population of 7,000 people, the provision of two double playing fields and 2.0ha of land is greater than Blacktown City Council's desired benchmark requirement for three playing fields plus a junior sized field (1 field per 1,850 people).

7.4.2 Recreation Open Space Provision

Ideally Area 20 would be allocated 1.9ha of open space for recreation use per 1,000 people. This would provide 13.3ha for a population of 7,000. This is consistent with Blacktown City Council's desired benchmark.

Blacktown City Council has recommended the recreation open space to exclude Cudgegong Reserve due to its protected nature and flood areas along Second Ponds Creek. However, due to the relatively small land size of Area 20 and the dominance of Second Ponds Creek, this level of provision excluding the natural and flood zone areas could be difficult to achieve.

Rather than totally base provision on a benchmark, it is recommended that the emphasis be placed on providing a good spread of parks and open space that are good size, high quality and usable for recreation. In addition, there should be good linear connections for walking and bike riding. The emphasis should be on achieving a quality and connected open space system that supports an active community, particularly in the areas that are higher density.

The recommended provision and broad principles that should be used to guide provision (taking site character into consideration) are provided below.

Recreation Open Space Principles for Area 20:

- Create usable and high quality recreation settings along Second Ponds Creek. This includes some good sized parks of 0.5ha or larger with open spaces and areas for play.
- Establish continuous pathways along the creekline that connect to The Ponds to the south and Rouse Hill Regional Park to the north. Ideally pathways for walking would be provided on both sides of the creekline and a wider 3m shared-use path (for walking and bike riding) would be provided on one side of the creekline.
- Provide 2-3 larger parks that are at least 1ha in size and provide a focus for community activity.
- Design the sports ground to have a recreation focus. This will include providing land around the sports ground that people can walk around while sport is in action and the provision of play space for children.

- Create linear connections between the larger recreation parks and the creekline and from the higher density areas to the creekline.
- Provide other smaller parks to ensure that all residents are within 400m of usable open space (recreation, sport or linear). These parks should be at least 0.3ha in size.
- Whilst Cudgegong Reserve requires protection, endeavour to gain broader community value from this resource through access to the outer area. This could involve extending the border of the reserve slightly to incorporate a pathway, seating and interpretation around the outer that is positioned within a treed setting.
- Ensure that the medium and higher density areas of Area 20 towards the Schofields Road and Windsor Road intersection have a good provision of usable recreation open space (including one of the larger parks as a central focus).

Recommended Provision

Taking the principles for Area 20 into account, the recommended provision of recreation open space is as follows:

- Three larger recreation parks that are at least 1ha in size
- At least three parks of at least 0.5ha along Second Ponds Creek connected to linear pathways and open space and co-located with dry drainage basins
- Four or five other parks to provide reasonable access to open space (at least 0.3ha in size).
- Three playgrounds linked to larger parks and the sports ground.
- Linear connections along Second Ponds Creek and from the larger parks to Second Ponds Creek.
- Cudgegong Reserve with pathways around the outer (this may require extending the boundary to incorporate the path, seating and interpretation amongst trees).

This recommended provision of recreation open space is likely to require around 13ha of land which is equivalent to around 1.85ha per 1,000 people for a population of 7,000.

Whilst Rouse Hill Regional Park should not be factored in to address the recreation open space requirements, there is no doubt that the Area 20

community will benefit from the existence of this Park. Rouse Hill Regional Park will be particularly valuable for family and larger group outings, with large shelters and picnic settings provided in the park. In addition, Rouse Hill Regional Park incorporates a regional playground which will benefit the surrounding communities and it has good accessibility which will benefit older people and people with a disability living in Area 20.

In addition, the large area of open space through the Second Ponds Creek and drainage basins may contribute to open space available to residents.

7.4.3 Recommended Provision of Indoor and Aquatic Facilities in Area 20

Indoor Sport and Recreation Facilities

The potential demand for indoor sport and recreation facilities is estimated to be as follows:

- One indoor court for three nights to cater for all indoor sports for a population of 7,000.

One indoor court on its own would not be viable and as such it is recommended that the Blacktown Leisure Centre Stanhope indoor courts be expanded to cater for the demand from Area 20 and other surrounding areas.

The use from Area 20 could represent 'one half of one indoor court' based on the above demand. Having said this, Blacktown City Council's benchmark is 'one indoor court per 25,500 people' and this would represent 27% use for a population of 7,000 people.

Aquatic and Fitness Facilities

The demand analysis highlights the Area 20 population will require the following aquatic and fitness facility provision:

- Access to a swimming pool in the wider area (ideally indoor). The demand would not sustain a facility in Area 20.
- Access to district or regional health and fitness facilities as well as access to local community space (within or close to Area 20) to cater for local health and fitness programs.

Given the Blacktown Leisure Centre Stanhope aquatic facilities are close to capacity, it is recommended that the Riverstone aquatic centre be redeveloped in accordance with Blacktown City Council's plans to cater for Area 20 and the surrounding populations. This facility should include both aquatic and fitness facilities.

To support local participation in recreation activities such as dance, martial arts, yoga and exercise, it is recommended that the community centre provided

for Area 20 includes good size space for these activities (around 1,000 square metres).

7.4.4 District and Regional Opportunities

As outlined in the Recommended Provision sections there is a need for some facilities to be located outside of Area 20 that cater for the wider district or region.

The recommendation for these wider area facilities is as follows:

- A district level sports ground that caters for the wider area, including Area 20.
- Access to the Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope indoor courts, which would need to be expanded to meet the demand.
- Access to the Riverstone Swimming Pool once it is redeveloped, including access to fitness facilities. Given the proximity of the Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope, it is very likely that people would also use these facilities.

Further planning will be required to determine the specific requirements in the wider area and the appropriate location of the district facilities.

7.5 Summary

The Open Space and Recreation analysis is based on a sound assessment of potential demand and consideration of Blacktown City Council projected participation levels and benchmarks.

Recommended Provision

The total approximate open space that would be available to the Area 20 population, based on the recommended provision, is summarised below:

Within Area 20:

- 13ha for recreation open space
- 4.5ha for sporting open space

Further, residents will require:

- Allocation of 2.0 ha for playing fields and courts for other sports (0.28ha per 1,000 people)
- Access to indoor and aquatic facilities
- Good access to Rouse Hill Regional Park

8 Conclusion

This report has considered the community and recreation facilities, human services and open space that will be required to support the residential population in the future Area 20 Precinct. Area 20 when fully developed, is expected to contain approximately 2,500 dwellings and a residential population of about 7,000 people. A variety of new facilities, services and open space opportunities will need to be provided, recognising that existing facilities in the established parts of north western Sydney will not be able to extend to cover the new release areas. These new facilities will need to meet the needs of the incoming population, as services in other established areas, and those to be provided elsewhere within the North West Growth Centre, are generally provided for local populations.

The report has identified the types of facilities and services that will require further consideration as the planning of the Area 20 Precinct moves forward. Key issues include:

- The location of a range of community facilities within close proximity to Area 20. Residents of Area 20 will be able to access a number of proposed community facilities in Riverstone, Riverstone East and potentially Alex Avenue. It must be noted that whilst there are a range of outreach services provided into these facilities by various community and government organisations, a watching brief must be kept to ensure that a comprehensive suite of services are available to the Area 20 population. Expansion of these services to keep pace with the growing populations of the North West Growth Centre will also need to be considered to ensure they do not become overstretched.
 - The need to consider the population of Area 20 within the context of the development across the area. The analysis in this report indicates that the future residential population for Area 20 will be too small to generate demand for many community facilities on its own and there are arguments for the inclusion of Area 20 residents in the planning of district level facilities such as the Community Resource Hubs.
 - The need to provide adequate open space and recreation facilities for the population both within the Area 20 Precinct and off site. Key to this will be connectivity, particularly with the Rouse Hill Regional Park.
- Given the population of Area 20 is not large enough to require more than the provision of neighbourhood level retail, a primary school and some child care, transport and access in and out of the precinct and connection to major service hubs in the area such as Rouse Hill and Riverstone will be of utmost importance.
 - The higher levels of high and medium density development will require the provision of usable and flexible open spaces and informal community gathering spaces.

Key social, recreational infrastructure and open space to be provided within Area 20 includes:

- A primary school
- Neighbourhood level retail to meet everyday needs
- A small community meeting space
- 17.5 ha sport and recreation within Area 20.

Key social, recreational infrastructure and open space that should be accessible to residents of Area 20, although not located on site include:

- Allocation of 2.0 ha for playing fields and courts (0.28ha per 1,000 people)
- Access to indoor and aquatic facilities
- Good access to Rouse Hill Regional Park
- Neighbourhood level community centre (included as part of the two proposed Community Resource Hubs in the Alex Avenue, Riverstone, Riverstone East precinct)
- Branch library
- Emergency services
- High School (public and private)
- Community Health Services
- Hospital Services
- Family and children's services
- Arts and cultural facilities
- Places of worship
- Some services for older people.

Costs for social, recreational infrastructure and open space will need to be apportioned to the population of Area 20 and it will be important not to forgo the

opportunity to levy development contributions. This appears to be the current direction being taken by Blacktown City Council as reflected in its Section 94 Draft Contributions Plan, No.20, Riverstone and Alex Avenue Precincts.

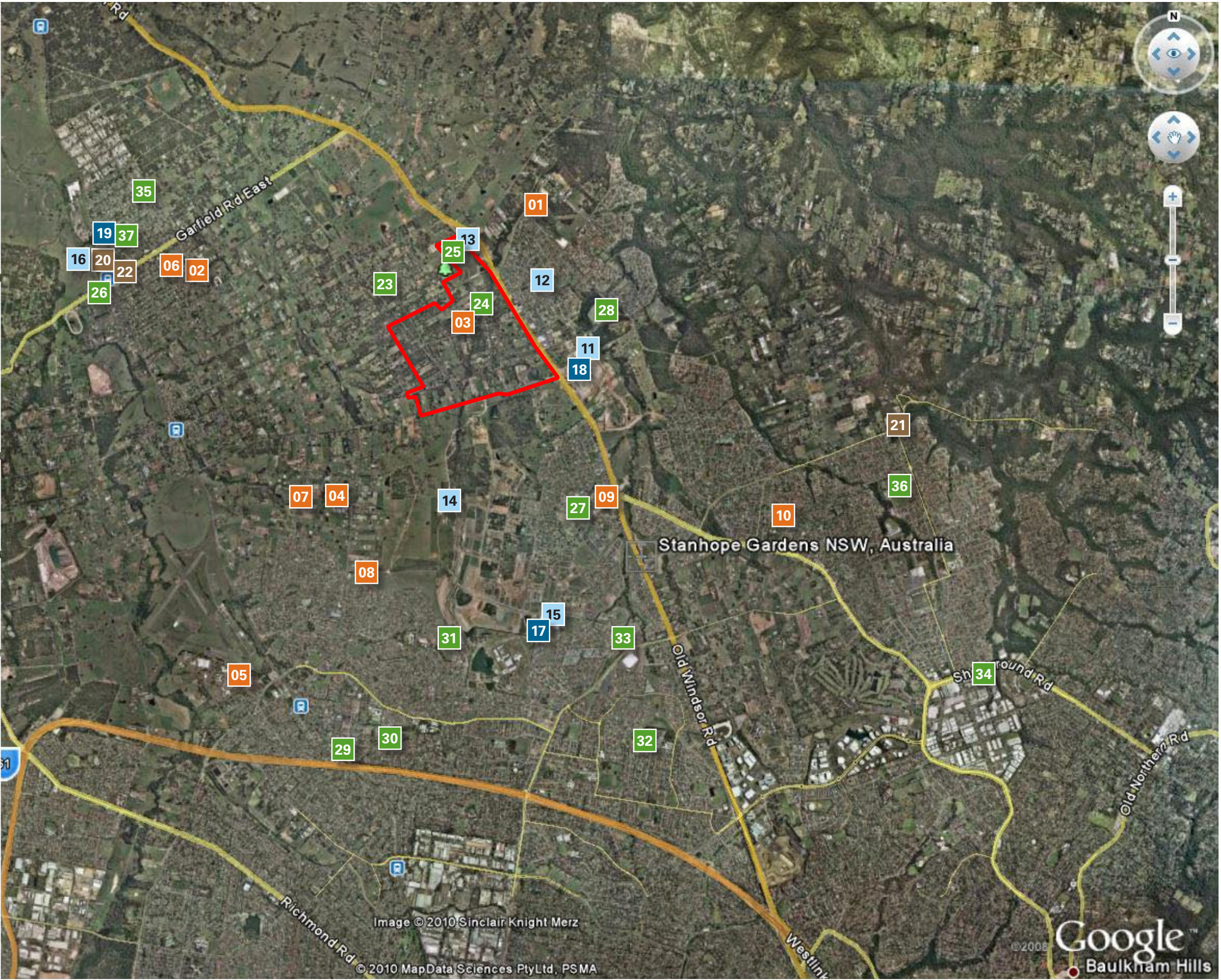
The ways in which social, recreational infrastructure and open space will be provided will require detailed consideration at the master planning stage.

9 References

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Appendix 1 Map of social infrastructure in and around Area 20

- SCHOOLS**
- 01 Rouse Hill High School
- 02 Riverstone High School
- 03 Rouse Hill Anglican College
- 04 Terra Sancta College
- 05 Terra Sancta College / Nimba College / TAFE / University of Western Sydney (Schofields)
- 06 Riverstone Primary School
- 07 St Josephs Primary School
- 08 Mary Immaculate Primary School
- 09 John XXIII Catholic Primary School
- 10 Our Lady of the Rosary Primary School
- COMMUNITY CENTRES**
- 11 Vinegar Hill Memorial Community Centre
- 12 Rouse Hill Community Centre
- 13 Rouse Hill House and Visitor Centre
- 14 The Ponds Community Centre
- 15 Blacktown Leisure Centre Stanhope
- 16 Riverstone Town Centre Community Resource Hub
- LIBRARIES**
- 17 Dennis Johnson Branch Library
- 18 Vinegar Hill Memorial Library
- 19 Riverstone Library
- EMERGENCY SERVICES**
- 20 Riverstone Police Station
- 21 Kellyville Rural Fire Brigade
- 22 Riverstone Ambulance Service (estimate)
- OPEN SPACE**
- 23 Cudgegong Reserve
- 24 Rouse Hill Anglican College Playing Fields
- 25 Rouse Hill Recreation Park
- 26 Riverstone Park
- 27 Stanhope Gardens Reserve
- 28 Commercial Road Netball Reserve
- 29 Wright Reserve
- 30 Corbin Reserve
- 31 Paterson Reserve
- 32 Glenwood Reserve
- 33 Connors Park
- 34 Indoor Sports NSW
- 35 Ridgeview Park
- 36 Bernie Mullane Sports Complex
- 37 Riverstone Swimming Centre



Social Infrastructure in and around **Area 20**