

**Submission
No 70**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP ROSEHILL RACECOURSE

Organisation: Committee for Sydney

Date Received: 18 July 2024

July 2024

Dear Members of the Select Committee on the Proposal to Develop Rosehill Racecourse

Re: Proposal to develop Rosehill Racecourse

The Committee for Sydney is writing to support the potential of the redevelopment of Rosehill Racecourse as a 'density done well' precinct. While we note the specifics of this project are subject to an independent, confidential Unsolicited Proposal processes, we wish to provide some comments on the principles of this proposed development, and how it can align with delivering great outcomes for Sydney.

Who we are

The Committee for Sydney is an urban policy think tank. We are advocates for the whole of Sydney, focused on developing solutions to the most important problems we face. We are proud to have over 160 members that represent key business, academic and civic organisations across Sydney.

We advocate for policy and investment outcomes that shape the future of Greater Sydney. We work across six distinct but connected program areas which include resilience, planning, mobility, economy, culture and equity and fairness.

A deep research base on the issue of transport oriented development and housing in Sydney

The Committee has developed a significant body of work in the housing and transport-oriented development space, including our reports:

- [Chronically unaffordable housing](#) – determining that a lack of affordable housing is costing Sydney over \$10bn per year, every year, in lost productivity, talent and innovation
- [Rethinking station precincts](#) – examining the opportunity for transport-oriented development in Sydney
- [Bringing Affordable Housing to Scale](#) – examining options for the delivery of social and affordable housing at scale to address chronic unaffordability issues in Sydney
- [Planning for growth](#) – making the case for housing approvals to outstrip the expected number of completions needed
- [Better parking for better places](#) – arguing for reform to parking policy to unlock density done well, shift the sustainability of our transport system and make housing more affordable
- [Making great places, density done well](#) – articulating the principles of what 'good' density needs – in terms of connectivity, amenity and affordability.

Our work has both catalysed and influenced the development of key city-shaping agendas led by the NSW Government, including but not limited to fast rail between Sydney and Newcastle, the State Disaster Mitigation Plan, transport-oriented development, low to mid-rise housing reforms, and vibrancy reforms.

Density near transport infrastructure

Given Sydney's housing crisis, the proposal to build more housing and a new station along the Metro West and Parramatta Light Rail corridor is a good thing for our city.

Housing in Sydney is chronically unaffordable and we need more housing to help solve this. This represents one of the largest challenges facing Sydney and has consequences for all aspects of our society and economy. Essential workers are struggling to afford to live near their workplace. Creatives are being priced out of the city. Our efforts to decarbonise our city are hindered by the cost of making energy efficient, climate-change resistant housing and communities.

Our report, [Rethinking station precincts](#), found station precinct development could deliver up to 45% of the total dwellings required in metropolitan Sydney over the next two decades. This represents the largest and most impactful policy change to Sydney's housing crisis – increasing the amount of housing in well-located places like transport hubs. We note this now forms the core of the NSW Government's housing delivery strategies.

It also represents the best way to create housing where people need it. Access to public transport is a fundamental requirement for density – and conversely, without density around train stations, public transport is not used to its full benefit. Living in dense communities delivers lower transport costs for communities, more affordable housing and living for families and reduces our carbon footprint while enabling climate-resistant urban design.

It has long been the Committee for Sydney's perspective that as metro lines are delivered in Sydney, we should be maximising the amount of density (of housing, commercial and social infrastructure) around each train station.

It makes sense to add stations where there is opportunity to increase housing density. The trade-off between travel time between Parramatta and the CBD would be minimal, while the benefits for the community would be significant.

With this principle in mind, delivering thousands of homes within walking distance of a new metro station at Rosehill is a positive objective and aligned with principles of 'density done well'.

Public transport alone does not make 'density done well'

Critically, access to public transport alone is not sufficient to deliver 'density done well'. When increasing the density of a place, it's critical we also ensure sufficient social infrastructure and amenity to match the increase in population. Specifically, we note some key considerations for this project:

1. Integration of Social Infrastructure and Open Spaces

Care will need to be taken to ensure this Rosehill development ensures access to high quality open space, including both parklands and active sporting facilities, as well as a variety of social infrastructure, including:

- Health services
- Schools and education services
- Childcare and spaces for children

2. Affordable housing

Aligned with other transport oriented development sites across Sydney, it is critical that a proportion of the housing developed is allocated as social and affordable housing. Given the site is currently not zoned for residential uses, there is opportunity to embed affordable housing into the land value. The exact proportion will be subject to feasibility, noting that other Tier 1 TOD sites are delivering up to 15% social and affordable housing.

3. Proximity to employment hubs

People need access to employment opportunities within a reasonable time. Westmead is poised to become a centre for high-skill, well-paying jobs. The Parramatta CBD is already emerging as a critical jobs hub, with knowledge economy work agglomerated in dense a commercial and residential centre. Sydney Olympic Park is home to an entertainment, sports and major events cluster. The Sydney CBD already hosts over 500,000 jobs. With a metro station at each of these locations, and travel times from Rosehill to each one of less than 25 minutes, this presents an opportunity to link housing people need with jobs that need people.

4. Active transport infrastructure

Walkable and cyclable development pattern will be critical to delivering a dense community where residents are able to access the things they need on a daily basis without getting in the car. Currently the Rosehill site is an island when it comes to walking and cycling access. It is surrounded by major roads and the river, making accessing the site difficult. Careful consideration needs to be given to ensure that improvements are made surrounding the site – such as new traffic lights and crossings or pedestrian bridges. These will be required to meet acceptable standards of walkability and accessibility.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposal to develop Rosehill Racecourse presents a significant opportunity to address housing affordability and create a sustainable, vibrant community – by strategically aligning high-density housing with transport infrastructure, employment, social infrastructure, open spaces and affordable housing.

Kind regards,

Eamon Waterford
CEO
The Committee for Sydney