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S13361 - Planning Proposal and Site Specific Development Control Plan for Lindfield Village Hub Site

The 416 Group is a community organisation with its membership drawn from the 750 households in Killara and Lindfield west of Lady Game Drive. It has engaged with Council and the State Government on the need for commuter parking at Lindfield station since 2008. Residents west of Lady Game Drive in Killara and Lindfield travel to Lindfield station and shops typically via Bent St and Highfield Rd. It should be noted that residents of this part of Killara use Lindfield station over Killara station as it is more accessible and does not involve crossing the Pacific Hwy from Fiddens Wharf Rd where there are no traffic lights.

Because of the distance and the topography, the journey is not generally walkable or easily cyclable unless an electric bike is used. Residents who commute by train from Lindfield station, use parking, kiss and ride and the 565 bus. The bus usage is constrained by service frequency, unreliability (delays due to congestion on main roads), slowness and distance from homes to nearest bus stop.

The 416 Group objects to the proposal as formulated as an overdevelopment of the site. The community vision was for a village hub.

The objectives of the Planning Proposal fail to adequately reference the primary role of the land in providing access to Lindfield station and the 2012 initiative of the State Government in providing funding for **additional** commuter parking.

Village: A settlement of small size
Hub: The central part of something

The proposal is for a town centre with new apartment buildings of a scale and bulk that bears little resemblance to the original vision developed by the community. In particular the nine storey north east apartment building removes morning light and will dominate the space as has the over-height Aqualand building overshadowed the platforms at Lindfield station. The additional floors on the north-west building increase afternoon overshadowing of the park and reduce the sense of space otherwise achieved by the westerly aspect to the valley.

Parking for Commuters

Lindfield is a transport hub and interchange for bus, train, self-drive and pick up/drop off. Other places also have shops, cafes, parks, community facilities but stations on the train line are the only place on the North Shore you can catch the train. The train line being the most valuable piece of community infrastructure we have.

Transport for NSW has previously advised:

- Almost 2/3 of the Lindfield Station's patronage is from the west side.
- There are 1830 pedestrian crossings over the Pacific Hwy during the peak hours.

On 14 July 2019 the Minister for Transport said train usage in Sydney over the past five years had grown from 305 million trips to 420 million. An extra 115 million or 38% since just 2014.

By way of example, the success of the Metro line is underpinned by 4000 commuter parking bays in North-West Sydney provided by the State Government. A promise of a similar funding provision for additional commuter parking is where the Lindfield Village Hub project started nine years ago in 2012 as an O'Farrell Government initiative for an additional 240 commuter parking bays on the west side.

Both Federal and State Governments have understood that to incentivise train use by commuters and to get people out of their cars on congested main roads the provision of commuter parking near railway stations is a key initiative. Both have responded with funding.

We are fortunate that the Lindfield train service is excellent and onward travel options will be further enhanced when the next stage of the Metro line opens from Chatswood in 2024.

Getting more people out of their cars requires improved station access and more parking to supplement other means of reaching the station (that includes future possible means not yet available). It should be noted that in the case of non-commuters existing two and three hour time limited Council parking bays do not provide sufficient time for residents to visit the city who then crawl the streets looking for any commuter spaces which have become available.

Original TfNSW proposal	240 additional parking bays on the west side
	<u>105</u> transferred to the Village Green
	135 remaining as part of the Village Hub

The DI&E Gateway Determination dated 22.1.21 requires Council to:
Clearly indicate, in the proposal report, the quantity of commuter carparking spaces to be provided on-site, in relation to commuter car parking for the Lindfield local centre as a whole and how this relates to any commuter carparking agreements;

This proposal report has not met this requirement. On 14 January 2014 the 416 Group provided Council a count of the west side commuter unrestricted parking spots within reasonable walking distance of the station. An update of this information is below

Drovers Lane carpark	49	
Street parking		
Bent Street	90	
Balfour St	45	
Wallace Pde	12	
Lindel Pl	10	
Stokes Plc	9	
Newark Crs	18	
Frances St	<u>19</u>	
		<u>203</u>
Total		252

The FAQ attached to the proposal says:
Council has committed to providing 135 commuter parking spaces in the basement car park on behalf of Transport for NSW. The Council has also committed to replacing the existing 109 car spaces, either in the basement car park or along adjoining roads
These 109 spaces do not include the existing 49 commuter parking spaces. The 416 Group has written to the project team seeking clarification but has not yet received a response. These 49 spaces must be provided in addition to the 135 and access linked to use of the Opal card so that the State Government's objective of an **additional 240 commuter spaces** in Lindfield is met.

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The 416 Group has recently received advice from Jonathon O'Dea MP that "Please note that the additional commuter parking spots funded by the NSW Government and proposed for the Lindfield Village Hub, will be in addition to any current Council commuter parking spots."

The Lindfield Village Hub proposal has some direct and indirect impact on street parking

Existing street parking	203
No to be lost on sth side of Bent Street	<u>5</u> (exact number subject to confirmation)
Reduced street parking	198

Some new on street parking is to be provided within the Village Hub but it is not specified whether it will be unrestricted.

The proposal must ensure that parking on site in the development is adequate for apartment residents and their visitors and the staff and patrons of the new commercial, retail and community activities.

The 416 Group would like to see a report by a suitably qualified person which quantifies the total commuter parking post development including the impact on the street parking. This analysis must also consider the approval for the Coles redevelopment in Balfour St and the loss of any street parking.

In conclusion whilst consultants may propose that parking for residents in apartments near public transport should be limited, if the consequence of that is that those residents then park out local streets then the interests of other residents who previously used those places for access to the station is compromised. A case study of this is North Epping where residential development at the station has caused the whole area to be parked out to a greater and greater distance.

Funding

Council has not shared the financial feasibility due to commercial in confidence. The December 2020 Council minute records that the tender process had not achieved a result. It now appears that there is an absence of competitive pressure in the continuing process. We also note that property values in the area have grown rapidly in 2020-21 making apartments on completion significantly more valuable than when the tender process began and so improving the return to the developer. Developers are good at bargaining long and hard and persuading Councils that more FSR is necessary.

There is opportunity for Council to revisit the benchmarks set for the project to see how they can be lowered.

As we understand it Council's proposal is not just that the developer fund the community facilities but that there is also funding for the upkeep of the additional assets. This has contributed to the drive for more apartments. The logic of this must be challenged as the

community has consistently provided strong feedback that it does not want the site overdeveloped.

The beneficiaries of the new facilities will be future Ku-ring-gai residents and it seems reasonable that they, through their Council rates, should pay for their ongoing upkeep. If there is any doubt about this, then it can be tested via an independently administered survey.

A further option is for an external review of the scale of the library and community facilities to examine whether they exceed what is actually in demand and if so, what cost savings can be achieved.

Finally, the development of a new library allows the existing Lindfield library site to be sold. The proceeds from the library sale should be applied to the project as logic dictates and the community expects.

The Pedestrian Bridge

The traffic engineer's report includes assessment of the alternate pedestrian crossings of the Pacific Highway. The report has not adequately researched the opportunity and undervalues the option for a new pedestrian bridge over the Pacific Highway linking Lindfield station with the Lindfield Village Hub.

The basis for the pedestrian bridge include:

1. Greater safety for pedestrians
2. Removal of existing pedestrian lights contributes to traffic flow especially with new lights required at the Beaconsfield Parade intersection
3. Feeds train travellers into and out of the LVH development helping to drive the retail and activate the precinct
4. Connects the east and west sides of Lindfield into a true hub and by providing safe all weather pedestrian access reduces vehicle movements through the bottlenecks across the railway line at Balfour Street and Strickland Avenue.
5. Integrates the LVH with the Pacific Hwy and kick starts the redevelopment of the old, tired retail frontage
6. The LVH will increase pedestrian traffic across the highway
7. Building the bridge now as part of the village hub development will be more efficient and cost effective than later
8. Revenue from advertising on the bridge has been offered to Council by TfNSW
9. There are many other comparable locations in Sydney with comparable traffic and pedestrian loads which have pedestrian bridges

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The dangerous Pacific Highway crossing at Lindfield Station is on a crest on a bend



Caught halfway on a one metre strip between six lanes of traffic



In 2021 the 416 Group has engaged in correspondence with the two local State members of parliament highlighting the need for the pedestrian bridge and the unsafe crossing and urging a greater State contribution to the project to help resolve the current impasse.

The economic case for the bridge in adding value to the residential, retail and commercial development and so financial return to the project could be provided by an independent suitably qualified person.

Supplementary to commuter parking

Kiss and ride

Our observation is that kiss and ride is not restricted primarily to school children as suggested by the traffic engineer. We have observed upto six cars meeting passengers off trains from the city arriving in Lindfield between 5.30pm and 6.30pm. Kiss and ride should be undercover, well-lit and for the evening pick up provide seating. Kiss and ride activity for adults is driven by commuter parking being parked out before 8.30am and one car families. It has its place, but its downside is that it generates twice as many vehicle movements and kilometres travelled as commuter parking.

Bicycle storage

There is potential for more bicycle access to the station when storage is provided. Given the steepness of the hill up from Lindfield and Killara most cyclists don't tackle it however the increased popularity of electric bikes is an opportunity subject to secure storage being available for these more valuable machines. End of trip facilities might also contribute.

Conclusions

We urge Council to review the financial assumptions, reduce the height and bulk and return to the village concept whilst also negotiating with the parties for inclusion of the bridge. In particular the proposal for residential floor space of 14,460m² is excessive.

During the 2020/21 pandemic workers have been obliged to change their work and travel behaviour. The extent to which any of this results in longer term change is unknown but there is previous experience to indicate it will be less than might be imagined. Cities exist because concentration drives efficiency and productivity through human interaction. Demand for office space is not forecast to reduce. Council should not second guess future demand from commuters at a time when we are in the middle of the crisis and should base its decision making on previous trends and 2019 data.

As a general comment when Council uses its' funds to engage consultants, then it seems reasonable to expect that the consultants' brief should include to read, learn from and respond to the input the community has previously provided. The consultant reports will then be prepared not based just on a limited observation of the site and technical knowledge but also on the information and considered judgement of those who live and work in the area.

Yours Sincerely

**Julian Ledger
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