

# Community Planning Update Report

Central Precinct

**Client:**  
Maryland Development Company

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# 1 Introduction

This report has been prepared for Maryland Development Company, to provide an update to the Community Plan prepared for the Central Precinct of the St Marys Release Area by Elton Consulting in July 2008. The need for the Update Report has been triggered by an incremental increase in the projected dwelling yield for the Precinct, and an associated amendment to the approved Precinct Plan for the Central Precinct.

## 1.1 Background and context

The Central Precinct of the St Marys Release Area lies between the Ropes Crossing Precinct and the Jordan Springs Precinct within the St Marys Release Area, to the north of the established suburbs of Werrington County and Werrington Downs, within the Penrith Local Government Area. It is separated from the other precincts within the St Marys Release Area by large areas of proposed regional park.

In 2008, a Community Plan was prepared by Elton Consulting for the Central Precinct, as one of the technical studies to support the Precinct Plan for that precinct. The Precinct Plan was subsequently adopted by Council in March 2009. The Community Plan described how a socially sustainable community would be created in the Central Precinct. It addressed the specific requirements and performance objectives for human services and open space contained within the Sydney Regional Environmental Plan 30 and the Environmental Planning Strategy for the St Marys site. It also considered the broader social objectives of the development, strategies for the achievement of social sustainability and requirements for community facilities, human services, open space and community development initiatives.

The 2008 Community Plan was based upon an expected yield of approximately 970 dwellings, forecast to generate a population of about 2,500 people. The Central Precinct was also zoned to include large areas for employment uses and regional open space. Given the small size of the forecast population, social infrastructure required within the Central Precinct was modest, with an expectation that the future population would rely primarily on facilities and services to be provided in the Jordan Springs Precinct and in the wider surrounding area.

Development trends and changing economic circumstances since 2008 have led Maryland Development Company to review the density and mix of dwelling types proposed for the Central Precinct, as planning and design of the Precinct has evolved. In line with a market preference for smaller and more affordable housing options, an increase in yield within the approved residential precincts of the Central Precinct is now proposed.

In September 2015, Elton Consulting provided advice to Lend Lease and Penrith City Council on the demographic and social infrastructure implications of the likely increase in dwelling yield for the Central Precinct. That advice has informed subsequent discussions between Lend Lease and Council on how the social infrastructure needs of the increased population may be met.

## 1.2 Purpose of this report

The proposed increase in dwellings will bring the total number anticipated for the Central Precinct to around 1,400 dwellings. This increase has triggered a need to revise and update the 2008 Community Plan to reflect the associated likely population increase.

The Update Report has been prepared to support the Amendment to the Precinct Plan and Development Control Strategy for the Central Precinct, dated May 2016.

This Update Report addresses three issues:

- » Revised population projections for the precinct, based upon revisions to dwelling yields
- » The implications of changes in population forecasts for requirements for community facilities, human services and open space
- » Any other implications in terms of proposed social sustainability strategies.

This report supplements and amends the 2008 Community Plan for the Central Precinct, and should be read as an addendum to that Community Plan.

## 2 Review of population projections

### 2.1 The 2008 Community Plan

The 2008 Community Plan was based upon an assumed yield of 970 dwellings and a mix of traditional lot, small lot and attached dwellings, apartments and some retirement self-care units. The average household size for different dwelling types across the City of Penrith, as indicated in the 2006 ABS Census of Population and Housing, was applied to the proposed mix and yield to derive a forecast population of 2,520 people. This would produce an average household size across the development of 2.61 persons. This was a relatively low occupancy rate because of the inclusion of a significant number of retirement units.

### 2.2 Dwelling and population forecasts

It is proposed now that the Central Precinct will contain a wide variety of dwelling types on lots of different sizes, including detached, semi-detached and attached dwellings, integrated housing, studio units, warehouse dwellings, apartments, urban sleeve dwellings, live/work dwellings and shop top dwellings. These have been described in the Precinct Plan report prepared by JBA (May 2016).

The dwelling yield and indicative mix currently proposed for the Central Precinct are summarised in the table below. This table shows that the yield has increased from 970 (2008 Community Plan) to 1,403 dwellings as a result of incremental master plan revisions and a market preference for smaller dwellings.

In the 2011 ABS Census of Population and Housing, average household sizes within the City of Penrith were:

- » Detached house: 3.0 persons
- » Semi-detached / townhouse: 2.3 persons
- » Flat, apartment: 1.9 persons.

These rates have changed slightly from those derived from the 2006 Census and applied in the 2008 Community Plan. The 2008 Community Plan also included a mid-point size for households in the smaller detached dwellings (2.7 persons).

When the updated 2011 Census occupancy rates are applied to the revised dwelling mix for the Central Precinct, the results are as follows:

**Table 1: Proposed dwelling yield and population numbers**

| Dwelling type  | Dwelling Number | Average household size | Number of people |
|--|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Traditional detached dwelling: 3 – 4 bedrooms on lots greater than 330 sqm | 804             | 3.0                    | 2412             |
| Villa, semi-detached dwelling: 3 bedroom on lots 300-330 sqm               | 351             | 2.7                    | 948              |
| Integrated/Terrace/Medium Density/Dual Occupancy on lots less than 300 sqm | 160             | 2.3                    | 368              |
| Apartments, studios  | 100             | 1.9                    | 190              |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>1,403</b>    | <b>2.79</b>            | <b>3,918</b>     |

This table shows that the 1,403 dwellings are likely to produce a population of around 3,918 people, resulting in an average household size of 2.79 people.

## 2.3 Likely community characteristics

The likely characteristics of the additional population will be the same as those for the balance of the Central Precinct, set out in the 2008 Community Plan. It noted that the population is expected to be quite diverse in terms of age and life cycle stage, household form and socio-economic characteristics, reflecting the mix of dwelling types proposed. It was expected to include:

- » Young and growing families with young children
- » Mature families with primary school and teenage children
- » Older families with tertiary students still living at home
- » Single parents with children
- » Young single people, living alone or in groups households
- » Young couples without children
- » Empty nester and retired couples and single people downsizing
- » Older people wishing to live close to their children and grandchildren.

Sales data for Jordan Springs confirms the forecasts made in the 2008 Community Plan for the profile attracted to the St Marys development. It also shows that the focus on housing affordability, through inclusion of a variety of dwelling types on smaller lots, is ensuring that the development is still affordable to young families, at a time when many are struggling to get into the housing market.

# 3 Revised social infrastructure requirements

## 3.1 The 2008 Community Plan

In terms of social infrastructure, the 2008 Community Plan identified requirements for the following:

- » A community activity centre of up to 450sqm, with maximum size based on a Council benchmark of 0.18 sqm per person. This benchmark included multi-purpose space and space for activities for young people and older people. It was felt that a facility of this size was unlikely to be viable as a stand-alone facility, and it was suggested that it might be co-located with other facilities, such as sporting facilities, with the population relying on facilities in Jordan Springs for most community activities and services
- » A temporary neighbourhood centre, to operate until the permanent facility could be constructed
- » Contribution of funds towards library facilities, based on Council's Section 94 contribution rates for libraries (\$211 in 2008)
- » Contribution towards district / city-wide cultural facilities, based upon the LGA rate at that time (\$76 per person)
- » Resident information packages, to be distributed to all new residents
- » A Community Initiatives Fund, based upon 3% of facility construction costs
- » Funding for community facilities studies
- » Funding for a community development worker, based on salary for full-time equivalent worker for 2 years (up to max. 3 years' part time)
- » Local open space totalling 7.6 ha, based on Council's benchmark of 3.04 ha of local open space per 1,000 people. This benchmark comprised 1.4 ha for unconstrained active open space and 1.64 ha for passive recreational open space. Of the 7.6 ha required, the Open Space Master Plan provided 4.1 ha as pocket parks, local parks and corridors. The active open space requirement of 3.5 ha was to be met through provision of sports fields within adjoining regional open space. In addition, the Central Precinct Plan endorsed by Council in 2009 recognised 17 ha with potential for use as passive open space within the immediately adjoining Regional Park.

These requirements were incorporated in the Planning Agreement between Maryland Development Company and Penrith City Council.

Consistent with its small size, the Central Precinct was assessed as not warranting any State Government facilities, but instead would rely on a primary school proposed to be located within the Jordan Springs and other education, health and support services in the wider area. It was also felt to be unlikely that the Central Precinct would be large enough to sustain much by way of social infrastructure to be provided by non-government or private sector providers, but would instead rely on facilities such as childcare/early learning centres and medical centres for GP's and allied health services in the Western Precinct and surrounding areas.

## 3.2 Requirements for Council community facilities

The St Marys Planning Agreement does not specify a maximum assumed residential yield, nor directly correlate identified contributions with specific population or dwelling yield assumptions. The maximum caps specified in the Planning Agreement are not linked to dwelling yields. However, yield and population assumptions were used to determine community facility requirements, as documented in the 2008 Community Plan, and so assisted in identifying the scope of agreed contributions.

Accordingly, the increase in population associated with the increased yield will generate a required proportional increase in those facilities planned on a population basis. The additional 1,418 people will result in requirements for:

- » Additional community facility floorspace. Application of the original Council benchmark to this revised population suggests that a community facility with maximum 705 m<sup>2</sup> floorspace would now be required, a notional increase of 255 m<sup>2</sup>.
- » Additional contributions towards library and cultural facilities provided by Penrith City Council
- » Additional resident information packages for all new households.

The other requirements of the Planning Agreement were not based directly upon population numbers. The requirement to provide a temporary neighbourhood centre until a permanent facility is constructed will not be affected by the population increase. The Community Initiatives Fund was based upon facility construction costs, not population size. Funding for community facility studies was based upon the cost of conducting studies, and remains unchanged by the population increase.

The funding for the community development worker, though not directly population based, was scaled to reflect the overall size of the precinct and likely timeframe for its development. The extent to which this may need to be extended will depend upon whether the Precinct will now take longer to develop to full capacity.

### Addressing community facility requirements

The floorspace benchmark for community facilities adopted in the 2008 Community Plan was intended as a mechanism in helping to determine an appropriate contribution cap (by multiplying the required floorspace by current construction rates). It was not intended necessarily that facilities be built according to particular size benchmarks, but rather that the funds derived through the Planning Agreement would be used flexibly to meet community needs, according to the "better outcomes" clause.

In this way, the requirement for 705 sqm floorspace for a community facility for the Central Precinct is a notional requirement for purposes of assessing contribution rates, but does not reflect a need to actually provide a facility of this size within the Precinct. The needs of the future population for access to community activity space may be met in a variety of ways, which will need to be agreed between Penrith Council and Lend Lease.

Options for the application of the funds derived for Central Precinct community facilities through any amendments to the Planning Agreement reflecting the increased population (including the contributions for library and cultural facilities) include the following:

- » Enhancing the capacity of the proposed Community Resource Hub in Jordan Springs, through increasing its size and/or the quality of its fitout. This recognises the outcome of the 2008 Community Plan, that a single community facility be built in Jordan Springs to serve both precincts. This is consistent with Penrith Council's direction to have fewer, bigger, better community facilities to serve larger population catchments than many small centres that are limited in the needs they can address. It is understood that a need to expand the proposed

Jordan Springs Community Resource Hub has been identified in order to accommodate the preferred anchor tenant, U3A. Any additional funds derived from the Central Precinct could be used for this purpose.

- » Providing a small community centre within the Central Precinct. While a facility sized to support a population of only 2,500 people was not considered viable, a larger facility for a population of 3,900 people may be more viable. However, it is understood that Council is currently undertaking a review of its community facilities with a view to rationalising its portfolio, reducing the number of small, under-utilised facilities and reinvesting in fewer, larger facilities. It is unlikely that a small facility so close to Jordan Springs and existing facilities in Werrington County would be supported.
- » Providing some form of community space within the proposed regional open space, either co-located with amenities / clubhouse facilities or forming part of a cultural / recreation space such as a pavilion / amphitheatre. The pavilion and amphitheatre at the Lizard Log picnic area at Abbotsbury, within Western Sydney Parklands, is seen as a model for consideration in the Central Precinct. There the pavilion features a large covered deck, opening onto a grassed amphitheatre area, with kitchenette, toilet facilities, power and water. The facility is able to support a wide variety of community, corporate and commercial events, including festivals, outdoor cinema and performances, as well as family celebrations. The Lizard Log Pavilion is located close to picnic and barbecue facilities, playground equipment and bushland tracks for walking and cycling, creating a major recreation destination and social meeting place for the region. This type of facility would complement the Jordan Springs Community Resource Hub, in catering for different types of activities and events. However, it is understood that the regional open space is unlikely to be owned or managed by Penrith Council. At this stage, arrangements for its planning and development remain uncertain, and this may create difficulties in planning a facility within the regional open space.

In summary, it is recommended that additional funds for community facilities derived from the forecast increase in population in the Central Precinct be applied to enhancing the Jordan Springs Community Resource Hub and/or providing an outdoor social / cultural event space in the Central Precinct Regional Open Space.

### 3.3 Requirements for open space

Based upon Council's requirements for local open space, the increased population of around 3,918 people would generate a requirement for:

- » 11.91 ha of public open space, to comprise:
  - > 5.48 ha of active open space
  - > 6.42 ha of passive recreational open space.

The Open Space and Landscape Masterplan prepared by Environmental Partnership provides the guiding principles, framework and details of proposed open space provision.

The Amendment to the Precinct Plan proposes that the open space needs of the Precinct be met in the following ways:

- » The requirements for active open space will be met through provision of sports fields in the adjoining Regional Open Space, consistent with the arrangements negotiated in 2008 for the sporting open space for the Central Precinct. This made allowance of 3.5ha for the Central Precinct Oval. This recognises that it is not efficient from land use or management perspectives to provide small, scattered local active open spaces within the Precinct in addition to the extensive sporting facilities to be provided within the adjoining Regional Open Space, which will

comprise 46 ha of land dedicated as Regional Open Space. Although catering to the wider region, this will provide ample active open space opportunities for residents of the Central Precinct.

- » Opportunities for active recreation such as walking, running and cycling (though not for organised sport) will also be provided within the network of paths and trails proposed within the Precinct and adjacent Regional Park.
- » 5.18 ha of passive open space will be provided within the Precinct, to include a local park, two pocket parks, and open space and paths linked to corridors
- » The development of riparian and vegetation corridors through the precinct provides potential for some recreational use, particularly walking and cycling
- » The transmission easement also provides opportunity for recreation uses, particularly walking and cycling
- » Some of the requirement for passive open space can be offset against proposed development of walking and cycling trails within the adjoining Regional Park. There is potential for the parts of the Regional Park adjacent to the Central Precinct to play a role in the local open space network as bushland type parkland. As noted above, the 2009 Planning Agreement recognised 17 ha with potential for use as passive open space within the immediately adjoining Regional Park.

The extent to which proposed embellishments within the Regional Park and Regional Open Space may be used to offset requirements for active and passive open space are matters for negotiation with Penrith Council, given that Council will not be the owners or managers of these open spaces.

### 3.4 State Government facilities

The additional population associated with the increase in dwellings will not change requirements for State Government human services outlined in the 2008 Community Plan.

In relation to schools, that study found that the Central Precinct would not be large enough to trigger a need for its own primary school. The additional dwellings will still not increase the yield to the threshold required for a primary school (which is generally now 2,500-3,000 dwellings). They will, however, strengthen the case for a new primary school to be provided in Jordan Springs, which will also serve the Central Precinct. The high school needs of the additional households will be met through existing high schools in the surrounding area (Cranebrook and Cambridge Park High Schools), where there is understood to be spare capacity.

In relation to health services, the proposed increase in population will be marginal and will not impact on the asset plans of the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District. The population of the Central Precinct will still not be large enough to warrant local delivery of community health services, and any sessional community health services that might be delivered within the St Marys development will be delivered from the hub in Jordan Springs.

Any services funded by Community Services or Ageing, Disability and Home Care for this part of Penrith would be delivered from bases in Jordan Springs or elsewhere within Penrith LGA. The Central Precinct will not be large enough, nor sufficiently central and accessible, to accommodate such district or regional support services.

### 3.5 Private sector facilities

Provision of any private sector facilities within Central Precinct, such as childcare or GP practices, will be subject to the commercial feasibility assessments of providers and cannot be ascertained at

this stage. However, the additional population arising from the increase in dwellings would help provide the critical mass to make such services viable. Sufficient land will be available within the proposed village centre to enable such commercial services to be established. Childcare and GP practices may also be provided within residential areas.

## 4 Implications for other social sustainability strategies

### 4.1 The 2008 Community Plan

Consistent with Penrith City Council's Sustainability Blueprint for Urban Release Areas, the 2008 Community Plan presented a set of objectives for creating a community that will be socially sustainable, and outlined the strategies for their achievement. Key social sustainability strategies included:

- » Providing a range of dwelling types and densities to promote housing choice and affordability
- » Creating a neighbourhood structure focused around an accessible village centre which acts as the focal point of the community
- » Creating a public domain which promotes social interaction and active neighbourhood life
- » Designing for safety and sense of security
- » Early provision of public transport and connectivity with the surrounding area
- » Promotion of community identity and sense of belonging, through design, public art and recognition of cultural heritage, and
- » Initiatives to promote physical and social integration with neighbouring communities.

### 4.2 Implications of the population increase

The strategies proposed in the 2008 Community Plan remain relevant and are supported by the Amendment to the Precinct Plan in terms of proposed urban structure, neighbourhood character, design principles, village centre, sub-division layout principles, access and movement plans.

The increase in dwelling yield will support the achievement of the social sustainability objectives by:

- » Increasing the population of the Central Precinct such that it will be better able to support the development of public transport services and the economic viability of the Village Centre
- » Providing a population large enough to support local services such as childcare and medical centres
- » Increasing levels of activity within the public domain associated with the increased population, thereby adding to levels of social interaction and safety
- » Supporting the provision of a range of densities, lot sizes and dwelling types, providing housing choice and a diverse community
- » Adding to the supply of affordable housing for purchase in the area, through provision of a variety of dwelling types on smaller lots.

# 5 Conclusions

This report has provided an update to the 2008 Community Plan for the Central Precinct to reflect a proposed increase in dwelling yields associated with changing market conditions and the evolution of the master plan.

Planning for the Precinct now indicates a revised yield of around 1,403 dwellings. This will create a population of around 3,918 people, an increase of around 1,418 people from the forecasts contained within the 2008 Community Plan. This population is expected to have characteristics consistent with those forecast in the 2008 Community Plan, and consistent with the emerging profile of the Jordan Springs community.

Based on the benchmarks for Council community facilities adopted in the 2008 Community Plan, this increased population will generate requirements for:

- » Funding for additional community facility floorspace, bringing the total for the Central Precinct to the equivalent of 705 m<sup>2</sup>. This should be applied in accordance with the “better outcomes” clause of the Planning Agreement on facilities to be agreed between Penrith Council and Lend Lease.
- » Additional contributions towards library and cultural facilities in the wider Council area
- » Additional resident information packages for all new households
- » An additional 4.31 ha of local open space, comprising 1.98 ha for active (sporting) uses and 2.32 ha for passive recreational uses.

No additional requirements have been identified for State Government or private sector facilities, although the population increase will support their provision within Jordan Springs, and may trigger sufficient demand within the Central Precinct for local services such as childcare and GP practices.

This Update Report has also considered the implications of the proposed population increase for the achievement of the social sustainability strategies identified in the 2008 Community Plan. The additional population will support the provision of local public transport services and the viability of the Village Centre, and enhance activity levels within the public domain. The increase in dwellings will also support objectives relating to community diversity, housing choice and housing affordability.



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