



Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

II. Green Square Town Centre: A Unique, Resilient and Welcoming Centre for the Green Square Community

Region	Asia and the Pacific
Award Scheme	Guangzhou Award
Sustainable Development Goals	Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Summary

Central to the 278 hectare Green Square urban renewal area there will be a new, resilient, lively and unique centre – the residential, commercial and cultural heart of the Green Square community. Green Square is Australia's largest urban renewal project, with a population to peak at 61,000 residents and 21,000 workers by 2030. The town centre will accommodate 6,800 residents and 8,600 workers.

Background and Objective

Given the availability of underutilised industrial land, transport infrastructure and synergies with adjoining areas, Green Square has been highlighted since the late 1990s in the City's and the NSW state government's strategies as an opportunity for considerable growth, infrastructure improvements and best-practice sustainable development. Central to Green Square is the 13.7 hectare site centred on the Green Square train station, which was earmarked for development of a new town centre during the process of defining the area. The site was mostly owned by state and local government entities and it was seen at the time that this would make redevelopment easier to coordinate and deliver the major infrastructure essential to support the higher order mixed land uses proposed. Green Square, once the industrial heart of Sydney's south, is transforming into a culturally vibrant, innovatively designed and connected place to live, work, socialise and shop. Its population is set to peak at 61,000 residents and 21,000 workers at 2030. The town centre will be the transport, retail and civic heart. Once fully developed by 2030, it is expected to accommodate 3,950 homes and 7,500 jobs. It is well located to existing infrastructure, on a major train line and at the confluence of three arterial roads. The development density and proposed land uses take advantage of the centre's proximity to Sydney CBD, Sydney Airport and Port Botany, the public realm, founded on progressive environmental principles will actively nurture a diverse, creative working community that will in turn make a crucial contribution to the economic competitiveness of Metropolitan Sydney. Significant contributions are also expected in renewable energy, water and reduction of greenhouse emissions, including developing programs and sites to generate local electricity and secure water supplies. Other key drivers are to create: high quality streets and unique public spaces fine grain architecture and a bricolage of commercial, retail and community uses, enabling human-scaled, active frontages, high permeability, and varied day and nighttime activities, reinforcing and enhancing the public domain strategically located tall buildings, street vistas, open space and diverse architectural characters providing important reference points for a legible and safe town centre places for relaxation, recreation and venues for community events new shops in a local 'high street' equitable access for walking, cycling and public transport adaptable buildings that can accommodate future land use changes a central civic place with diverse public uses, high public amenity and a distinct design. The City of Sydney has a critical role in implementing a range of projects, programs and services to deliver the vision for the Green Square town centre. This cannot be done alone, but by working with partners across the community, the private sector, business and government. The partnerships that apply to the wider Green Square renewal area also apply to the town centre, including: planning agreements that include contracts for civil works delivered by private developers and building design requirements for connection to the City's recycled water network consultative and advisory committees and networks including state government and technical experts to provide specialist advice, guide the renewal and in some cases jointly deliver infrastructure such as schools, major trunk drain and road works and health facilities a partnership with the state government's development arm to foster renewal and placemaking informal partnerships with stakeholders, business and the community to consult and liaise on implementation, place initiatives, manage development and construction impacts and build capacity and understanding in the community about city issues. The significant renewal in the Green Square town centre requires the City to make a major allocation of resources to support, deliver and maintain key infrastructure and community services as development progresses. This is a major undertaking for the City. The town centre's combined private and government investment value is \$A8 billion. In addition to private investment the City is investing \$A540 million in land purchases, new streets, drainage, community facilities and parks. Cash contributions from developers assist indirectly funding the City's capital works program for essential local infrastructure (roads, drainage, open space and traffic/access infrastructure) and facilities (childcare centres, libraries and recreational facilities).

Actions and Implementation



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The town centre is the most complex project the City has ever managed. The learnings from the City's experience in urban renewal would offer other cities insights on an approach that can be applied to regeneration of large scale and high density areas. Similar learning would apply to the town centre initiative, as detailed in the Green Square main initiative. Similarly, the City conducts many tours, receives delegations and makes presentations at many forums, and shares information on various aspects of the renewal project.

Outcomes and Impacts

Over the last three years, the town centre has undergone great transformation, significantly achieving realisation of the vision for a green and connected community. Some achievements include: new tree-lined streets offer improved connectivity and permeability, greater canopy cover, stormwater capture and local biodiversity 600 apartments are now occupied offering accommodation for about 1,200 residents and a further 700 apartments are under construction the City has delivered some major projects, significantly achieving realisation of its vision – the library and civic plaza, a new park and adaptive reuse of the former hospital site buildings for community spaces the trunk drain project is almost complete the recycled water network was turned on in mid-2018 supplying non-potable water to residents and the City's facilities solar PVs in the City's buildings supply the private wire network extremely popular place-making activities (such as jewelry making, musical workshops, knitting and wood carving) are being run in the new community facilities, some in partnership with developers. The same metrics used by the City to assess and document change in the Green Square renewal are used in the town centre: financial reporting to track expenditure and performance development approvals and construction data to measure rates of change and update population projections environmental sustainability progress reports research and review initiatives include: Gehl Architects' benchmark studies to map, assess and guide the usability and quality of the City's public spaces and architecture monitoring and measuring social cohesion through community surveys by the NSW University partnerships with health and transport government agencies to assess evolving conditions (such as public transport use, walking and cycling numbers)- a 5-yearly floor space and employment survey measures changes in job numbers and types of employment capacity studies measure take up of floorspace permitted under the planning framework and available floorspace monitoring media, social media and public feedback on the City's activities and issues of concern and progress reports. Similar to the wider planning policy and implementation framework in the wider Green Square, the town centre 'tool-kit' devised to ensure success of the initiative includes: a comprehensive package of detailed planning controls inextricably linked to an infrastructure strategy detailing a cost schedule and contributions to be made by developers dependent on level of value uplift legally binding deeds and planning agreements to seal developer and government commitments to contribute to infrastructure delivery detailed infrastructure design plans ready for construction transparent, open and consistent communication and engagement with all stakeholders to build trust and confidence in the realisation of the vision conditions of development approval requiring developers to set up 'construction liaison committees' with community representatives so as to manage and mitigate construction impacts an engagement program to support the community during renewal, hear and respond to local needs. The City of Sydney is a leader in making beautiful and sustainable places for people to live, work and visit. The City has a responsibility to strive for better outcomes with each successive development – constantly improving government and the private sector's understanding of best practice. For the first time in over 100 years, the City is designing anew town centre, revitalising the heritage and charm of this inner-city area using innovative design to create a great place to live, work and visit. The town centre initiative, as for the wider renewal area, is setting new benchmarks in renewal at a large scale. It contributes to the City of Sydney's reputation as a bold and visionary leader, who can demonstrate by doing how denser cities can be the healthiest, greenest, most stimulating places for people – with the least environmental footprint.

Sustainability and Scalability

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable Target 1: Access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums Target 2: Access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all Target 3: Participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management Target 4: Safeguard cultural and natural heritage Target 6: Improve air quality and manage municipal and other wastes Target 7: Universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces, in particular of women, children older persons and persons with disabilities Target 9: Improving resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters and implement holistic disaster risk management Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions for all

Initiative Contribution

Delivery of the town centre occurs within the New South Wales (NSW) state government planning, infrastructure and building legislation and regulations, which establish the controls, codes, standards, procedures and processes under which projects are conceived, approved and delivered. In addition, the City's delivery of its own projects occurs within local government legislation that requires annual reporting of councils' corporate plans – particularly relevant are a Community Strategic Plan and Resourcing Strategy, which includes a Long Term Financial Plan.



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Innovative Initiative

The Green Square town centre initiative is revolutionary in its conception, planning and implementation. Some key aspects include: • a radical value capture model designed to ensure contributions to deliver civil and public domain infrastructure are made in time to support development – the very final stage of the rezoning process is held back until the developer commits in an agreement with the City to develop and fund the infrastructure a heavily constrained site at the confluence of major regional roads requiring vast and costly flood management responses for which a unique state/local government partnership was set up – historically the site was the location of a dam in low lying swampland unprecedented local government commitment to forward fund works to deliver social, civic and public domain infrastructure for its community and boost private development –weaving in restoration and adaptive reuse of heritage buildings with a radical underground library defiant of hydrological constraints world-class sustainable infrastructure and spaces – Australia's largest residential stormwater harvesting and treatment scheme, community buildings powered by low carbon and renewable energy through a 'private wire' scheme unprecedented coordination of development and delivery of public domain and civil infrastructure across multiple landownerships. Strategic plans, planning controls, policies, design excellence processes, design codes and technical specifications guide the renewal of the town centre towards a green, global and connected city. As in the wider Green Square area, the renewal is informed and inspired by local and international best practice. However, the town centre as a cluster of capital projects and programs interconnected by a green grid of tree lined streets, services and utilities is uniquely innovative. In addition to innovation being applied in delivering the entire Green Square renewal area, innovation in the town centre is driven by design excellence and commitment to sustainability and is being applied in particular in: adaptation and re-use of buildings for community and creative uses in a former hospital site • radical competition-winning design for a new library and plaza that redefines the traditional idea of a library – by fusing the building and plaza to create multiple activity layers for play, work, to connect, learn and relax adaptation of the former hospital administration building, for a Green Infrastructure Centre, to house a water recycling facility that supplies treated stormwater in all town centre buildings for flushing toilets, laundries, irrigation and cooling towers. The water is stored in two tanks under a new park a new Gunyama Park Aquatic and Recreation Centre which is inspired by Sydney's famous ocean swimming spots. Heated and powered by its own locally produced energy system, the facility will offer indoor pools, a gym, a covered outdoor yoga deck and a crèche. In the park there will be outdoor space to relax and play in, including a skate bowl, barbecues, a fitness training circuit and a multipurpose sports field the City's co-generation plant will supply low carbon energy to the network and a battery will power the precinct's street lighting. Solar panels produce electricity for the City's local electricity network. Background to obstacles faced in the Green Square renewal is included in the main application. Specifically in the town centre, multiple ownerships split between state and local government and private landowners and complex land ownership patterns constrained coordinated development. Heavy contamination and significant flooding precluded development on many key sites. There was a lack of overall coordination and development was unfeasible as funding for critical infrastructure was unresolved. There was no funding stream from state government. In 2006 the City took the lead for the urban renewal, and developed a financial framework for delivering infrastructure to enable and support redevelopment. The City took control of coordinating the planning and now delivery of infrastructure for the area. Critical milestones were reached in 2009 when the state government's development arm, established a consortium to redevelop core sites in the town centre, and in 2014 when an agreement was secured for the 2.5 kilometre trunk stormwater drain to address flooding, a key impediment to redevelopment.

Resources devoted to delivery

BASIC CITY DATA Population size: 233,217 Population growth rate (%): 4.00 Surface area (sq.km): 26.72 Population density (people/sq.km): 8727.00 GDP per capita (USD): 139,488.00 Main source of prosperity: Finance, tourism, information/media/tech, digital economy, and creative and performing arts <http://www.guangzhouaward.org/a/932.html?lang=en&page=2>