

Orchard Hills

This document answers frequently asked questions about planning for the future of Orchard Hills, including responses to questions asked during an online information session on 24 November 2022.

Topics

- **Orchard Hills and the discussion paper**
- **Boundaries and neighbourhoods**
- **Relationship with other plans, strategies and projects**
- **Impacts on your property**
- **Independent Community Commissioner**
- **Have your say**

Orchard Hills and the discussion paper

What is the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (the department) doing in Orchard Hills?

Orchard Hills is one of the key areas identified for growth in the [draft Greater Penrith Eastern Creek Strategic Framework](#). Future development in Orchard Hills will capitalise on the Commonwealth and NSW Government's \$11 billion investment in Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport line.

The department has begun planning for the Orchard Hills investigation area. The term 'Orchard Hills investigation area' is used to define the land we're looking at in our future planning to determine the potential for some areas to change and others to remain the same. The investigation area for Orchard Hills includes land north and south of the M4 Western Motorway, and does not include land affected by the current [Orchard Hills North planning proposal](#) (refer to **Figure 2**).

Why are you planning for the future of Orchard Hills?

The NSW government has recognised the strategic importance of Orchard Hills and is proposing to plan for the area through what is referred to as a state-led planning process. Traditionally, Council would take the lead (i.e. as Penrith City Council currently is with the Orchard Hills North Planning Proposal) but in this instance it's the department which is leading this project.

Orchard Hills has strategic importance due to its proximity to Penrith, St Marys, the developing Western Sydney Aerotropolis and the new Metro station will also provide a significant opportunity for Orchard Hills. Orchard Hills is also close to significant employment areas such as the Western Sydney University and Mamre Road precinct.

What is the Orchard Hills Discussion Paper?

The discussion paper is the first step in the precinct planning process. It will help the department collect feedback from the community on the early findings and ideas for Orchard Hills. The paper includes a draft vision and principles to guide our work. These ideas are preliminary only and will continue to be refined as we consider the feedback we receive and additional technical studies and analysis. The technical studies will investigate issues such as urban design, transport, infrastructure, servicing, land suitability and constraints.

Does the discussion paper rezone land in Orchard Hills?

The discussion paper does not rezone land in Orchard Hills. It identifies areas that will need further detailed planning, the technical studies required to support the project and the principles that will guide the identification of future land use zones, across the study area.

After exhibition of the discussion paper, the department will undertake technical studies to better understand the area and inform the development of a precinct plan and draft rezoning package.

What is the timeframe for planning Orchard Hills?

This public exhibition of this discussion paper is the first step in the precinct planning process. The further studies together with the feedback on the discussion paper will inform next steps in planning for Orchard Hills.

The proposed rezoning for Orchard Hills will be detailed in the draft Precinct Plan, which will be available for community feedback in mid-2023. The department aims to finalise the rezoning by the end of 2023. If the process is delayed for any reason, the web site will be updated with the new project timeline.

The current stages of the project and estimated timeline are as follows:

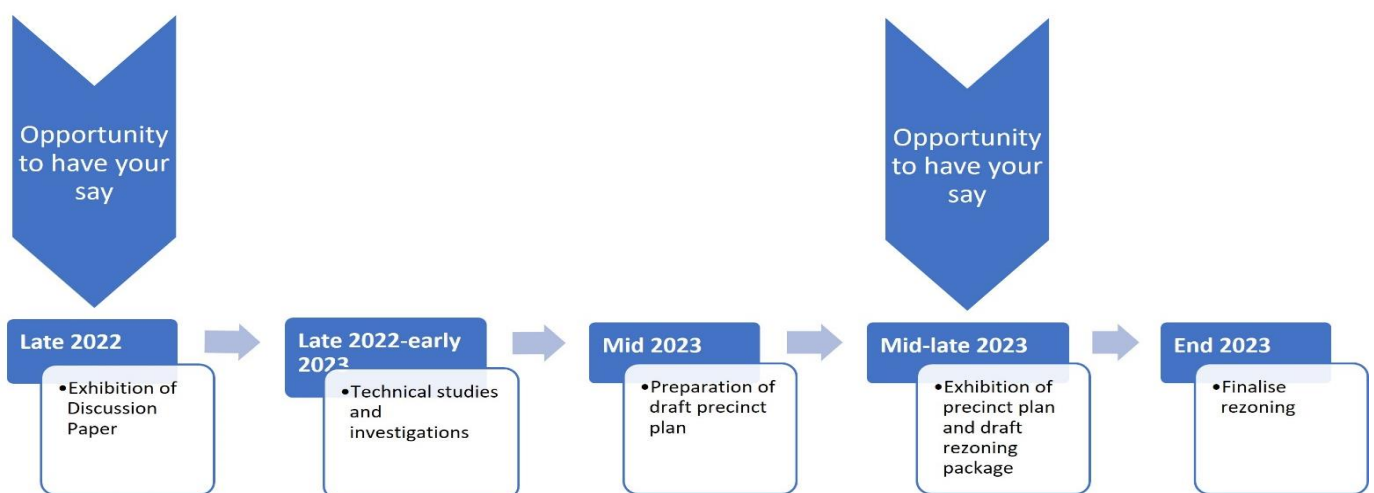


Figure 1 | Estimated timeline of next steps.

[Register here](#) to receive updates on the Orchard Hills precinct planning process.

What is the timeline for this proceeding after 2023?

Once the rezoning has been finalised, the timeframe for development after that could be determined by a range of things, including when enabling infrastructure such as water, sewer and roads, are available and when land-owners are ready to fund development of their land.

The fragmented land ownership in Orchard Hills will require a greater level of coordination across multiple landowners. Part of the work we will do is to investigate the potential infrastructure needs, staging options and potential funding and development contribution options.

Will Orchard hills be rezoned at once or in stages?

At this stage, the department is aiming to rezone the entire area. However, to do that we need to ensure infrastructure will be available, with the mechanisms to fund and deliver it. If the infrastructure such as roads, parks and schools is not in place, consideration will be given to whether the area should be rezoned in stages. Even if the area is rezoned in stages, there will still be an overall structure plan which outlines likely uses for the entire area – ready for future rezoning.

Boundaries and neighbourhoods

How has the Orchard Hills investigation area boundary been determined?

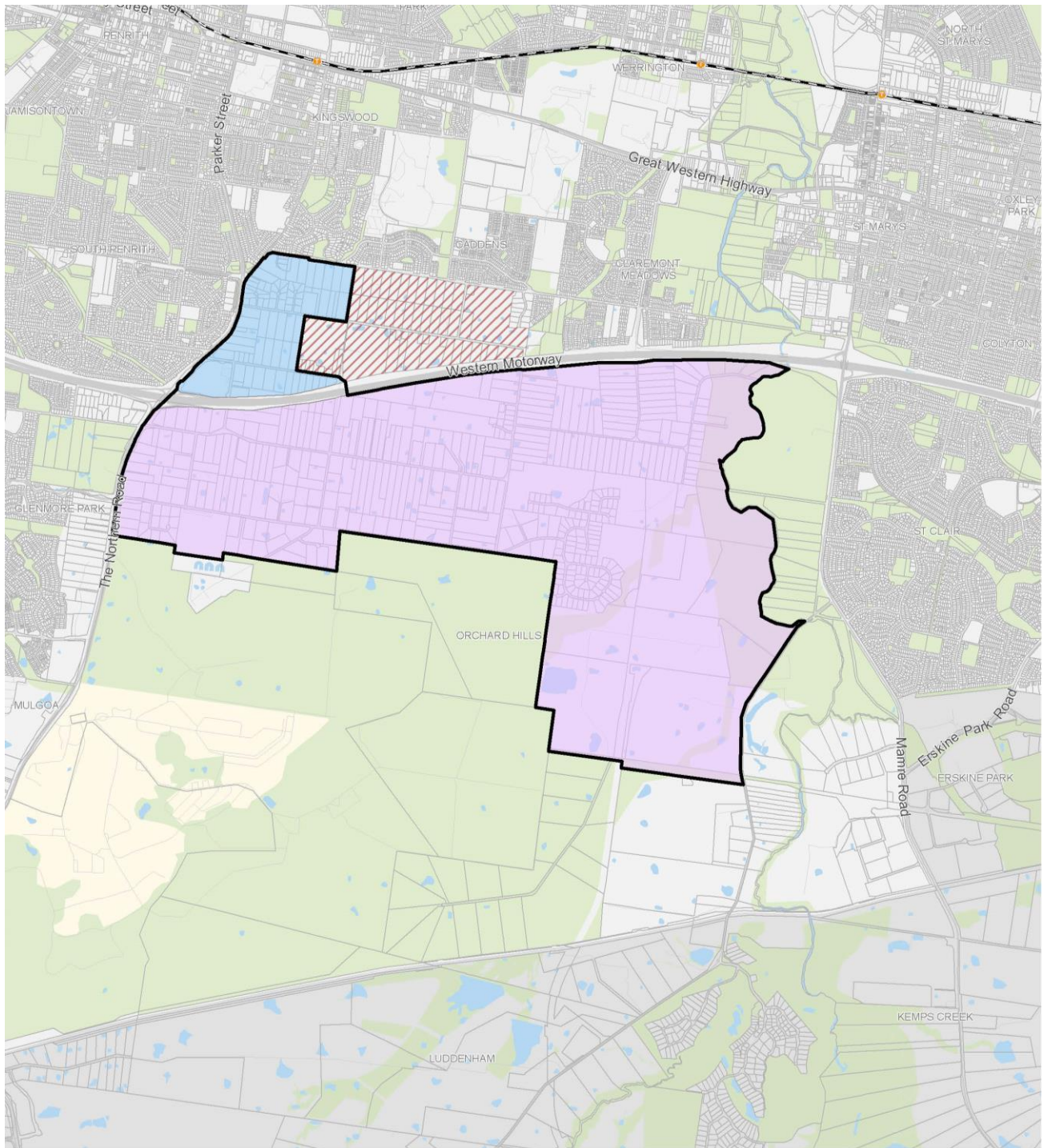
The boundaries of the Orchard Hills investigation area have been established through initial analysis of the area.

The northern boundary of the investigation area is defined by the edge of existing and planned residential development. This includes the existing residential suburbs of Caddens and Claremont Meadows, together with the area subject to the Orchard Hills North Planning Proposal.

The western boundary is set by The Northern Road, and the existing residential land and golf course beyond it.

The southern boundary is defined by the edge of the Defence Establishment site in Orchard Hills, which includes significant vegetation that forms part of the biodiversity offset arrangement for the Western Sydney Airport. The south-eastern corner of the investigation area includes the Patons Lane Resource Recovery Centre and TransGrid site, to allow their long term uses to be considered in the next stage of precinct planning.

The eastern boundary is defined by Luddenham Road and the Wianamatta – South Creek. The creek line has been adopted a part of the eastern boundary to ensure that future water cycle management and water quality measures associated with future precinct planning can be successfully implemented.



Orchard Hills

-  Orchard Hills Investigation Area
-  Orchard Hills North
-  Orchard Hills South
-  Orchard Hills North Planning Proposal Area
-  Cadastral Boundaries



Figure 2 | Orchard Hills Investigation Area boundary.

How have the proposed neighbourhoods within the boundary been defined?

The proposed neighbourhoods shown in the discussion paper have been defined by existing landscape features and creek lines. Also called green-blue corridors, these features provide opportunities to connect different areas of vegetation, enhance water quality and support the ecology of the area. Green-blue corridors also have the potential to be integrated into the future public open space network.

The definition of the proposed neighbourhoods and the green-blue corridors will be further explored as part of the next stage of precinct planning for Orchard Hills.

If you are not sure which neighbourhood your property is in, please email us on orchard.hills@planning.nsw.gov.au. Please note the neighbourhood boundaries are not set in stone, so if you have ideas on how they can be adjusted, let us know.

How many people are expected to live in the Orchard Hills investigation area?

This information is not currently available. Once the department prepares the draft Precinct Plan and rezoning framework, we will have a clearer idea of the forecasted number of dwellings and how many people could possibly live there in the future.

Relationship with other plans, strategies and projects

How does this work relate to the Orchard Hills North Planning Proposal?

Penrith City Council (Council) is proposing to change the planning controls applying to a 151.9 hectare area of land known as Orchard Hills North Planning Proposal Area.

The process to change the planning controls in this area began with the lodgement of a Planning Proposal by the major landowner Legacy Property. The Planning Proposal explains and justifies changes being proposed to the Penrith Local Environmental Plan 2010. The Planning Proposal was exhibited by council from Monday 25 July to Monday 22 August 2022. Council officers are currently considering submissions and resolving outstanding matters. This will result in a post-exhibition report to Councillors, for their consideration.

For more information about the Orchard Hills North Planning Proposal, please refer to the [NSW Planning Portal](#).

Council's assessment of the Planning Proposal is an independent process from the precinct planning being undertaken by the department. Because of this, the Orchard Hills North Planning Proposal Area has been excluded from the investigation area boundary. **Figure 2** shows the Orchard Hills North Planning Proposal Area.

The department will work closely with Penrith City Council to ensure the outcomes of the Orchard Hills North Planning Proposal align with the precinct planning within the Orchard Hills investigation area.

What is the status of the Sydney Metro – Orchard Hills Station?

The new metro station at Orchard Hills will service a future residential, commercial and mixed-use precinct, helping to transform the area into a compact, high-amenity and walkable new community.

Site preparation and establishment works are currently underway at Orchard Hills.

Further updates on the project and community notifications for construction works at Orchard Hills can be found on the [Sydney Metro website](#).

Please contact the Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport community information line – 1800 717 703 for more information, it's open 24 hours.

What does the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (CPCP) mean for Orchard Hills?

The CPCP supports growth in Western Sydney by identifying land that is capable of urban development and land that should be protected for biodiversity reasons. This will contribute to the Western Parkland City by supporting the delivery of housing, jobs and infrastructure while protecting important biodiversity including threatened plants and animals.

The CPCP streamlines the development process by providing strategic biodiversity certification under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. It will also provide strategic assessment under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, meaning no further biodiversity approvals are needed in certified areas in the Greater Macarthur, Aerotropolis and Wilton growth areas and the broader Greater Penrith to Eastern Creek investigation area.

To learn more about the CPCP, visit planning.nsw.gov.au/cumberlandplainconservationplan

How does this work relate to the draft Greater Penrith to Eastern Creek Strategic Framework? How is Orchard Hills part of this?

Western Sydney is growing and being transformed to meet the needs of a bigger and changing population. As part of this, the NSW Government is supporting the provision of new housing, jobs, and infrastructure in the Greater Penrith to Eastern Creek (GPEC) area. The GPEC area covers approximately 19,000 hectares where development will be guided by the draft GPEC Strategic Framework.

The [draft GPEC Strategic Framework](#) is a strategic planning document that will guide future detailed planning for the area. It consolidates and builds upon the strategic planning and infrastructure work already undertaken in the area to set a clear direction for future growth and development. The framework sets out:

- a vision for growth,
- planning priorities to deliver the vision,
- directions and actions to implement each of the planning priorities; and
- infrastructure that may be required at the regional and district level to support growth.

Orchard Hills is identified as a priority urban release area within GPEC. This means that it will be planned in the short-term to leverage the potential for growth and investment from the Sydney Metro - Western Sydney Airport line.

What is happening around flooding in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley and how will this affect Orchard Hills?

There is no simple solution to managing or reducing the valley's high flood risk. The NSW Government is delivering the Flood Strategy program, together with local councils, businesses, and the community. Managing existing and future flood risk in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley requires an integrated approach to infrastructure, land use and emergency management planning.

The NSW Government is committed to delivering growth in the right places putting the safety and resilience of the community at the heart of decision making, whilst providing opportunities for new jobs, housing, and public spaces in Orchard Hills.

We will continue to work closely with state agencies and flood experts to align the planning for Orchard Hills with the recommendations of the [NSW Flood Inquiry](#) and the NSW Government's response, which is currently in preparation.

Impacts on your property

What does planning for the future of Orchard Hills mean for you in the short term?

We encourage you to review the discussion paper and provide your feedback until 16 December 2022.

Over the next few months, you will see consultants coming out into the local area to inform their technical studies. If consultants need to access private property, permission will be sought from the landowner first.

When will I know the direct effect on my property? How will it affect my land value?

The impact on the value of land is difficult to determine at this early stage. A draft rezoning package will be exhibited in mid to late 2023 at which point more information will be available to determine the future land use potential of specific sites, at the property level.

Generally, land values increase after a rezoning that permits more intensive and profitable land uses. Even if land is not rezoned, the value of the property may also benefit from improved access to infrastructure and services, such as the provision of a new Metro station.

Will there be compulsory acquisition of properties?

As the precinct plan is developed, some land may be identified for public purposes that would require acquisition. In most cases acquisition occurs through negotiation and the timing for acquisition can be flexible, depending on the proposed land use and the rate of development in the area. As the plan for the area is developed those areas required for facilities like parks and community uses will be identified along with clarification regarding any acquisition.

More information regarding property acquisition is available on the [Property Acquisition in NSW](#) website.

How will properties with avoided land as identified in the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan, be considered?

There are planning controls in place to protect important biodiversity on avoided land. Development permitted under current zoning may still occur via an appropriate pathway.

If you have any questions regarding the impact of avoided land on your property, please email us and we will put you in touch with the CPCP team.

What will the lot sizes be?

The department will undertake technical studies to determine the most appropriate lot sizes and how and where these vary. We expect there will be a variety of lot sizes in each neighbourhood.

Will the rezoning make my Council rates go up?

A change in zoning can lead to an increase in the land value and therefore an increase in council rates. Councils are best placed to answer questions relating to any potential rate increases. Penrith City Council advises that if you own land which has been rezoned, you may be able to postpone part of your rates in certain circumstances. Details can be viewed on [Council's website](#).

What will the future road layout look like?

The future road layout has not been determined. The neighbourhoods map identifies indicative road connections but these are not final and are subject to further technical analysis.

Independent Community Commissioner

What is the role of the NSW Government's Independent Community Commissioner?

The NSW Government has appointed Professor Roberta Ryan as the [Independent Community Commissioner](#) to help with planning for the future of Orchard Hills.

The Community Commissioner is independent of government. Professor Ryan's role in Orchard Hills is to:

- help the community understand the planning process and what any proposed changes may mean, and
- help to raise any community issues and concerns with the Government during the process.

The Commissioner recently wrote to the Orchard Hills community to ask for their assistance by completing a short survey to help her to understand how best to support the community and how the Government can consult with the community on the future of Orchard Hills.

Have your say

How can I get involved?

We are encouraging community and stakeholders to provide feedback on the discussion paper by Friday 16 December.

Register your interest in attending an in person, drop-in session on Saturday 3 December.

Visit our website, planning.nsw.gov.au/orchard-hills to:

- view the recording of the webinar held on Thursday 24 November,
- find our more information and how to have your say, and
- sign up for email updates on planning for the Orchard Hills area.

Email the Orchard Hills planning team at orchard.hills@planning.nsw.gov.au