Rhodes East Precinct

Community Workshops

Summary of Online Questions Results

June 2016
Introduction
The Department of Planning and Environment is working with the City of Canada Bay Council to investigate opportunities to revitalise Rhodes East and generate a 20 year vision for the area.

This process involves the investigation of Rhodes East as a Priority Precinct, which includes background studies and community consultation to inform potential plans for the area and future rezoning proposals.

Initial consultation was undertaken with the local community in late 2015 by way of an online survey and a drop-in information session. In March 2016 an additional three community workshops involving approximately 200 participants were convened to further explore community and stakeholder preferences and needs.

Following these workshops, the questions discussed were also placed on the Department’s website for four weeks between March and April 2016 to give community members who couldn’t attend the workshops an opportunity share their input. The questions centred on the three key themes of:
- Urban design and public domain
- Traffic and transport
- Social infrastructure.

Survey Summary
About respondents
A total of 57 survey responses were received from respondents who:
- Live in Rhodes East (69% or 34 people),
- Own or invest in Rhodes East (45% or 22 people),
- Go to Rhodes East for recreation (18% or 9 people),
- Work in Rhodes East (8% or 4 people),
- Other (24% or 12 people).
Urban Design and Public Domain

Respondents said that the locations suitable for greater density are:

- Near the station (61% or 35 people),
- Leed Street (53% or 30 people),
- East of Concord Road (53% of 30 people), and
- Other (23% or 13 people). This included 5 people who did not want any more density.

The majority (70% or 45 people) said there should be a local centre on the east side of the railway line.

The respondents who thought there should be a local centre said it should be located:

- Within the centre of Rhodes East (46% or 20 people),
- In the northern part of the investigation area, near the water (43% or 19 people),
- Close to the station, in the south of the investigation area (25% or 11 people), and
- Other responses (9% or 5 people) included near the existing community hall and Coptic Church.

Respondents would like the new local centre to be the kind of place with:

- Cafes, restaurants, and a supermarket,
- A centre with community amenities such as a community centre or community garden, and
- A centre with small shops a small supermarket, pharmacy, newsagent, post office, and bakery.
Respondent views about any future development east of Concord Road were:

- Supportive of development (approximately 40% of respondents),
- Opposed to development (approximately 25% of respondents), and
- Supportive of development provided it is properly planned for (approximately 30% of respondents), including addressing infrastructure needs and traffic concerns, and providing a mixture of development types.

The online questions included a number of precedent images showing different types of buildings, developments and settings. Respondent views about the precedent images were approximately evenly distributed between:

- Support for all high rise buildings, particularly the amount of space and light between buildings shown in the precedent images,
- Support for a mixture of building types, particularly with higher density around the station and medium/lower near the water, and
- Opposition to the low-rise apartment-style image, and support for the brick terrace-style low-rise building design.

**Traffic and transport**

Respondents saw opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycling connections, primarily:

- A pedestrian overpass or better timing of pedestrian lights at Concord Road and Llewellyn Street intersection,
- Accessible pedestrian underpasses to cross the train line,
- Improving the quality of the footpaths, and
- A continuous walking/cycling path along the foreshore, connecting to the Kokoda track (similar to the Bay Run).

Approximately 50% of respondents thought the station could be connected to the land east of the railway line via:

- A pedestrian bridge and pathway across the station, Blaxland Road, Concord Road all the way to Brays Bay Reserve.

Respondents said that the following would make them walk, cycle, and use public transport more:

- More frequent trains (approximately 30% of respondents),
- More undercover pedestrian links to the station, and
- Improve bike lanes with better connections between the existing paths.

Respondents said the other traffic issues that need to be resolved included:

- Congestion issues particularly on Concord Road, and
- Road widening was thought to be ineffective due the bridge continuing to restrict traffic flows.
Social infrastructure
Respondents thought that the future social infrastructure and open space needs for the community included:

- A library,
- A community centre, or enhancements to the existing community hall,
- More parks and public spaces,
- Local schools, and
- A swimming pool.

Approximately half of respondents provided examples of inspiring places including:

- Sydney Olympic Park,
- High-rise buildings at Central Park on Broadway,
- Chatswood, and
- BP Pedestrian Bridge in Chicago.

Respondents had differing opinions as to whether affordable housing was important (around 50% of respondents) or not important (around 40% of respondents). A few people suggested that the land adjacent to Concord Hospital would be an appropriate area of affordable housing.

Next steps
Feedback received during Rhodes East community consultation workshops will be used to inform the preparation of a draft Precinct Proposal Plan. The draft plan will outline how the feedback received was incorporated.

It is anticipated that a draft plan will be placed on public exhibition in late 2016. The public will be invited to comment during the exhibition period and feedback will be used to finalise rezoning plans for Rhodes East.