



19 January 2021

### **Western Suburbs Councils join forces to solve density problem**

Just as environmental impacts cross local government boundaries so too does traffic congestion which is usually an unwelcome side effect of density done badly. This is why a coordinated approach to density across all Western Suburb local governments is a must, particularly given their small size. It's also a way of tackling what many in the community keep asking; "What about Metronet and the rail line, why isn't there a more concerted effort to locate density there?"

Mayor de Lacy has lobbied fellow Western Suburbs Mayors and State government since being elected to take a collaborative approach to density in the western suburbs. "A strategic approach led by a regional density target is likely to deliver better outcomes and achieve the support of the community, than a piecemeal approach where cumulative impacts are ignored, and rules change when you cross a local government boundary."

Now the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage is convening a Western Suburbs Project Working Group comprising local government, Department of Transport, Public Transport Authority and Main Roads WA to advise WAPC on strategic plans for Stirling Highway (from Broadway to McCabe St) and the Fremantle Rail line (from Subiaco to northern boundary of City of Fremantle). Issues such as finding the right locations (and form) for density based on land tenure, transport options, heritage and land use for example will be front and centre.

"This is now more important than ever as we are no longer focussed just on townhouses, villas and small apartment blocks; we are now seeing 20+ storey development proposals which are a real game changer for the western suburbs."

Crucial to gaining public support for this high density will be quantifying infrastructure problems and opportunities including analysis of existing networks under a range of future scenarios as recommended by Infrastructure Australia.

"My hope is that this group will make good use of digital technology to communicate transport and built form impacts of various scenarios showing communities virtually what the costs and benefits of various options are", Mayor de Lacy said.

"I'd like to see early engagement with the community on this, to gain buy in to the problem and the solutions." This is critical as regional cooperation, cross-sector collaboration, and high and sustained levels of community engagement are key to successful cities according to a Grattan Institute report ("Cities: Who Decides?", 2010).

Another benefit of collaboration is the opportunity to investigate the need for a regional developer contributions plan to give back to the community what it wants most in community infrastructure provision across the western suburbs. Many western suburbs residents cross local government boundaries every day to do their shopping, play sport or walk the dog.

“Each local government has its strengths; none of us can meet all the community infrastructure wants our residents have due to our small size.”

Community support, cross government cooperation and a shared vision is also key to unlocking Federal funding opportunities like a City Deal. Eight local governments in NSW collaborated with the NSW Government and the Commonwealth Government to secure the 20-year Western Parkland City Deal where joint investment will occur on key infrastructure including a new airport and rail link.

With record low interest rates, huge government spending on infrastructure to stimulate our economy post COVID, and a State Government uniquely basking in a budget surplus, now is the time to get the planning right to fund long term infrastructure investment for future generations.

The way we live is changing; we need to unpack this and forge a future that respects the past while embracing the opportunities of change.

“With an aging population and many more women financially independent, the growth in single person households is expected to be 3 to 3.5million by 2041, up from 2 million in 2041.”

Safety and connectivity are vital to the success of lone person households, hence the need for more compact, communal and well-located forms of housing.

**Cilla de Lacy**  
**Mayor, City of Nedlands**  
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**ENDS**

**About the City of Nedlands**

The City of Nedlands is situated 7km from the Perth CBD and stretches from the banks of the Swan River to the white sands of the Indian Ocean. Covering the suburbs of Nedlands, Dalkeith, Mt Claremont, Swanbourne, Karrakatta and parts of Floreat and Shenton Park, the City of Nedlands is home to a population of approximately 22,000 residents.

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