

**CITYPLAN GROUP SUBMISSION 1: DRAFT METROPOLITAN STRATEGY 2031 - FRENCHS FOREST SPECIALISED HEALTH PRECINCT (POTENTIAL) JUNE 2013**



# **CITYPLAN GROUP**®

## **SUBMISSION**

***DRAFT METROPOLITAN STRATEGY 2031: FRENCHS FOREST  
SPECIALISED "HEALTH" PRECINCT (POTENTIAL)***

**27 JUNE 2013**

**TO:** Department of Planning and Infrastructure,  
GPO Box 39, Sydney 2001.

**FROM: CITYPLAN GROUP P/L**  
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1. We thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Draft Metropolitan Strategy 2031.
2. This submission relates specifically to the:
  - Identification of Frenchs Forest as a **Specialised “Health” Precinct (potential)** in Draft Metropolitan Strategy, Sydney North (indicated on Subregional Priority map), and
  - Planning criteria pertaining to specialised precincts contained in the Draft Metropolitan Strategy 2031.
3. The draft Metropolitan Strategy identifies Frenchs Forest as a **Specialised Health Precinct (Potential)** as opposed to a **Centre**.
4. We refer to the recent decision of the NSW Government to proceed with the Northern Beaches Hospital (NBH) at Frenchs Forest (adjoining Forest High) as a PPP. We note the published preliminary hospital design concepts and project timetable. This significant decision, given the timetable, invites the timely strategic consideration of Frenchs Forest as a **Specialised “Health” Precinct**, already in the making, but at an appropriate scale of development, consistent with current and future development, accessibility constraints, available infrastructure funding and market place and political realities.
5. In December 2011 the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure rejected a State Significant Site (SSS) proposal for Frenchs Forest, that would have designated a large area of the Frenchs Forest including the whole of the Business Park (B7) zoned precinct as a State Significant Site (SSS) under the previous Government’s strategic planning framework. The detailed planning proposal, albeit a longer term plan, was most probably too ambitious, not well communicated and widely misunderstood by the community and local commercial landowners and businesses.
6. Significantly a part of the proposal was to also rezone a large area of adjoining low density housing at Frenchs Forest and Allambie Heights to medium density through a Ministerial SSS declaration. This met stringent opposition from the community and not endorsed by Council as it was inconsistent with the local housing strategy.

7. The Minister for Planning and Environment, Brad Hazzard said *"I now propose that the local community be consulted through the precinct planning process, and be given the chance to have their say on what development is appropriate in the area of the proposed new hospital"*.
8. Now that a decision has been made to build and operate a hospital at Frenchs Forest by the NSW Government there would now appear to be ample support from Warringah Council and stakeholders for the designation of the Frenchs Forest business precinct and hospital site to be designated as a Specialized Health Precinct but not a Center under the NSW Government's strategic planning framework. Such designation would need to be subject to measures to improve transport and accessibility to the precinct and adopt an alternative approach to residential planning in line with Councils housing strategy.
9. Clearly the Frenchs Forest Business Precinct (Zoned B7 Business Park) coupled with a new Northern Beaches Hospital, that the State Government has decided to construct and operate via a PPP arrangement, is likely to become a Specialised Health Precinct, in the normal course of events, once the hospital is constructed and operating. But planning is required urgently to ensure an orderly and staged approach to further precinct planning consistent with ownership patterns, constraints, accessibility and market realities.
10. It is considered that at this stage the Frenchs Forest Business Precinct itself is currently suitably zoned as B7 Business Park as this zoning is consistent with a likely future role with associated land uses as a specialised Hospital precinct once the hospital constructed and operational. It is noted that there are already numerous specialised health related businesses located in the precinct including diagnostic imaging, medical center and significant medical technology firms. However there seems to be an undersupply of a range of modern purpose built commercial office space for corporate HQs, medium sized and small business. Also more specialised medical technology and research related floorspace including laboratories would be required after the new hospital becomes operational. There is probably scope for shopping facilities

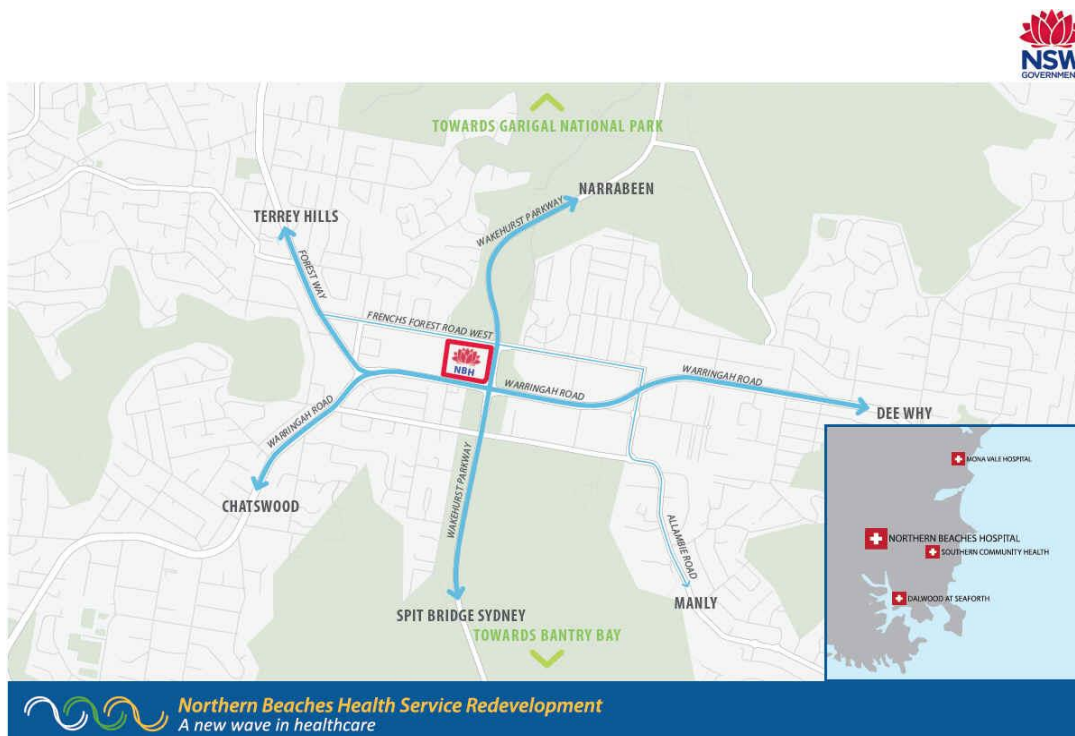
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combined with commercial office space at higher density and this requires a separate market feasibility and traffic study.

11. A detailed planning study of land use, ownership pattern, occupancy rates and age/condition of buildings needs to be carried out with direct involvement of landowners and businesses located at Frenchs Forest.



**Figure 20: North Subregion**

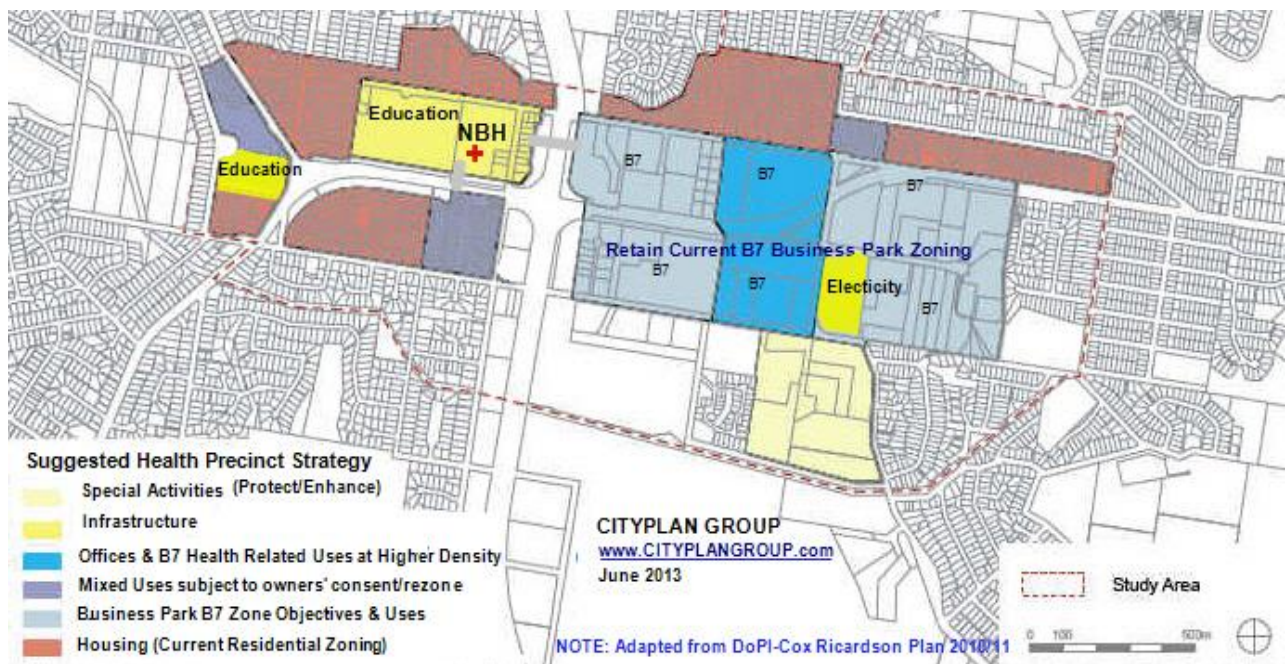




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## NBH Project Timetable

Event	Target Date
Ministerial Media Announcement of NBH Project	May 2013
Release of Expression of Interest	May 2013
Closing Date for receipt of EOIs	July 2013
Site Enablement Early Works start at Frenchs Forest	Late 2013
Release of Request for Proposal (RFP)	Late 2013
Selection of Preferred Respondent(s)	Late 2014
Start of Construction at Frenchs Forest	2015
Completion of Design and Construction	2018



“Specialised Health Precinct Strategy” suggested by CITYPLAN GROUP June 2013

NOTE: Base plan adapted from NSW DoPI, 2010, Proposed Land Use Plan (Cox Richardson)

12. Our suggested Precinct Strategy Plan, above, is adapted from one prepared by NSW DoPI, 2010/11 (Consultant: Cox Richardson). However the modified plan prepared by **CITYPLAN GROUP** is not a proposed zoning plan per se but a longer term strategic guide for long term planning and development and land usage within the precinct area consistent with the precinct evolving into a Specialised “Health” Precinct involving at least four stages.

13. We suggest that the immediate sub-regional planning priority is the rapid project planning and delivery of the NBH hospital itself with associated infrastructure. The supporting infrastructure that is necessary to improve accessibility will need to be fully funded by the NSW State Government and provided in a timely manner.

14. It is strongly suggested that a planned staged re-development of part of the existing Frenchs Forest “B7 Business Park” precinct at higher density with an increased office space and medico-technical support uses (colored light blue on the Precinct Strategy Plan) would need to be:

- Staged,
- Well designed,
- Satisfy the objectives of the current B7 Business Park zone and adhere to current permissible uses, and
- Any planned redevelopment at higher densities to be subject to improved public transport, accessibility and management of car traffic generation.

15. Cityplan Group considers that at this stage the most important strategic planning activity must focus on the planning and delivery of the Northern Beaches Hospital (NBH) itself together with the necessary funding and provision of supportive infrastructure. As such the planning and re-development of the surrounding “Specialised Health Precinct” cannot be allowed to detract from the delivery of the Hospital itself and associated infrastructure. Any precinct planning must be totally consistent with and supportive of the NBH project.

16. In recognition of these considerations CITYPLAN GROUP suggests the following new approach to a precinct strategy.

1. Cityplan Group recommends that the existing French Forest commercial area, as a whole, be retained as **“B7 Business Park”** zone and that all of the objectives of the zone and permissible uses be adhered to and delivered.
2. Cityplan Group recommends that at this stage Sunnyfield/Spastic Center be retained as **“Special Activities”** and be protected and able to be enhanced.
3. That the sites occupied by the planned Northern Beaches Hospital (NBH) and Forest High be identified as **“Social Infrastructure – Hospital and School”** and zoned **“Infrastructure”**.
4. That the area within the current commercial area previously proposed as a high density **“Commercial Core”** zone and colored light blue instead retain the current **“B7 Business Park”** zoning and the blue area be designated as future **“Offices and B7 Uses at Higher Density”** and staged. It is noted that the current hotel site, that appears to be one of the few potential redevelopment sites in the precinct, lies in the blue colored area. This site should be able to retain its existing use rights and perhaps be subject to a planning proposal for mixed office/shopping and gateway determination subject to detailed feasibility studies and traffic, accessibility and transportation studies. However the Hospital would need to be the priority project within the precinct.
5. The development of offices is currently permissible development. However possible development control changes to permit higher density commercial office development (possibly mixed with other uses permitted in the “B7 Business Park” zone) on these lands would need to involve detailed site analysis, detailed development control planning including height control, site amalgamations and be subject to detailed consideration of traffic generation impacts. Staged higher density office development on these lands would also be subject to upgraded precinct accessibility and public transport access. Public transport patronage patterns would also be an important consideration.

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17. The **CITYPLAN GROUP** submission is only a suggestion and has been prepared to help develop and deliver the final precinct strategy.

Please note that our submission is a technical submission consistent with the accepted public planning policy of balancing social, economic and environmental considerations in the broad public interest to benefit current and future generations. Planning is for people and the environment equally.

Planning must proactively and positively promote socio-economic development within a planned livable, equitable, functional, and attractive and quality environment.

Sincerely Yours  
Jason Li  
Executive Manager  
CITYPLAN GROUP P/L

