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Department of Planning
and Environment
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Via planning portal

UDIA NSW submission on the Bays West Stage 1 Masterplan

UDIA welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Bays West Stage 1 Masterplan. As the peak industry body representing the leading participants in urban development in NSW, Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) advocates for the creation of Liveable, Affordable and Connected Smart Cities.

Bays West is the last significant urban renewal site on Sydney Harbour. A stones throw to the Sydney CBD, the emerging Pyrmont Peninsula, new fish market redevelopment site and easy access to the inner west suburbs of Broadway, Glebe, Annandale, Lilyfield and Balmain. It represents an immense opportunity for our city and state to create an aspirational destination that rivals those of the great harbours of the world.

UDIA NSW have been extremely disappointed with the lack of ambition demonstrated in precinct and master plans across Sydney and NSW. This Government has made a record investment in infrastructure to improve accessibility and provide the opportunity for revitalisation of our urban areas. The time is now to seize this opportunity and make a lasting beneficial improvement to our city.

The Bays West Stage 1 Sub Precinct Master Plan will set the tone, ambition and opportunity for the remaining Bays West. The precinct benefits from significant investment in infrastructure, including WestConnex, Metro and Second Harbour Crossing. This will continue to enhance the connectivity to, from and around the site and broader Sydney.

UDIA are supportive of the Government's commitment to the renewal of Bays West, in addition to the mix of uses, extension of the foreshore walk, enhanced connections around the site, access to Roberts Road and the pursuit of precinct scale infrastructure opportunities. We contend however that the master plan must be more ambitious to achieve the desired principles and deliver on the once in a generation opportunity that the site holds.

UDIA recommends:

- 1. The scale of development be increased onsite given the location and access to a Metro Station which is two stops from the Sydney CBD.**
- 2. Define the purpose of the Commercial space onsite given the unresolved use of the White Bay Power Station and the existing and emerging precincts of Tech Central, Barangaroo and Central City.**
- 3. Coordinate the delivery of the Metro with development onsite. Ensuring when the station opens there is activation, patronage and safety immediately.**
- 4. Enhance the connections to Glebe Island, Rozelle Parklands and Rozelle Bay.**

Greater ambition is needed for Bays West to realise this once in a generation opportunity

The masterplan rightly acknowledges the unique heritage value of the power station and the importance of sight lines to ensure this unique structure does not lose its connection to the broader city. However, sight lines must be considered in reasonable way, retaining connection to the surrounding areas, while acknowledging that broader connections across the city are not stagnant and change, as the city does.

The wish to create a desirable, vibrant and safe place and leverage the investment already made in transport infrastructure would be bolstered through greater density. Including a higher component of mixed-use and residential development. This brings many advantages. It provides a residential population to patronise transport, food and retail, and cultural events. Creates a sense of community and place, through ownership and activation. Provides safety through passive surveillance. Provides an employment base for future business and helps support increased housing supply and affordability which Sydney so greatly needs.

UDIA recommends:

- 1. The scale of development be increased onsite given the location and access to a Metro Station which is two stops from the Sydney CBD.**

Planning for employment lands has undergone a drastic evolution over the past few decades. Moving away from outdated concepts of business parks and unviable ground floor retail requirements. Promoting greater flexibility, recognising the way people wish to work and business wish to operate. The pandemic further bolstered this evolution through the acceleration of technology and flexible working. From a land use planning perspective, it has made it more important for precincts to define their purpose to attract and retain businesses and ensure they complement the functioning of the city rather than compete with existing employment centres.

The Master Plan makes no comment on the purpose or function of the commercial premises in the precinct. This is concerning due to the close proximity to existing employment centres and future ability to attract and retain businesses. Defining a purpose will enable supporting government programs to be developed as well as place making programs.

UDIA recommends:

- 2. Define the purpose of the Commercial space onsite given the unresolved use of the White Bay Power Station and the existing and emerging precincts of Tech Central, Barangaroo and Central City.**

Work programs for the Metro and development should be timed to ensure they are finished concurrently. Creating a sense vibrancy and place for Bays West from day one. Completing the Metro with development, or development without the Metro jeopardises the success of the precinct. It reduces the productivity of the site and return on investment from both components. It also runs the risk of negative connotations being associated with the sense of place, making the precinct less desirable to live, work or visit.

UDIA recommends:

- 3. Coordinate the delivery of the Metro with development onsite. Ensuring when the station opens there is activation, patronage and safety immediately.**

Bays West encompasses more than just the Stage 1 masterplan boundaries. The success of the site will ultimately be measured by the success of the broader precinct outcomes. With this in regard it is important that the connectivity between the broader site is strengthened, improving accessibility and permeability. This includes walking, cycle, public transport and road connections enabling the free flow of people, goods and ideas throughout the precinct and beyond. Improving connectivity also enables strategic trade-offs between one site and another, potentially maintaining sight lines while delivering increased density on another site.

UDIA recommends:

4. Enhance the connections to Glebe Island, Rozelle Parklands and Rozelle Bay.

Conclusion

UDIA is supportive of the government's commitment to the revitalisation of Bays West and ongoing investment in supporting infrastructure. Bays West truly represents the last significant urban renewal site on Sydney Harbour. As such we implore government to not squander this opportunity, to think bold and to be ambitious. There is an opportunity to deliver a generational place, full of vibrancy and activity, strengthened through increased mixed use and residential density and with a focused and defined purpose.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Bays West Stage 1 draft Master Plan, should you have any further questions on the recommendations in this submission or to arrange a meeting, please contact Michael Murrell, Planning Policy Manager at mmurrell@udiansw.com.au or 0413 221 195.

Kind Regards,

Steve Mann
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