

Item No: R1 Recommendation to Council
Subject: **REVIEW OF THE EDGECLIFF COMMERCIAL CENTRE PLANNING CONTROLS**
Author: Deeksha Nathani, Strategic Planner
Approvers: Kelly McKellar, Team Leader Strategic Planning
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File No: 20/10752
Reason for Report: To provide Council with the package of documents that form the Review of the Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning Controls
To obtain a decision of Council to publicly exhibit the package of documents which form the Review of the Edgecliff Centre Planning Controls.

Recommendation:

- A. THAT the report on the *Review of the Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning Controls* to the Strategic & Corporate Committee of 29 March 2021 is received and noted.
- B. THAT Council resolves to publicly exhibit the documents which form the *Review of the Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning Controls* which consists of the:
- i. *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy (Annexure 1)*
 - ii. *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Public Domain Strategy (Annexure 2)*
- and supporting studies being:
- iii. *SJB Planning and Urban Design Study (Annexure 3)*
 - iv. *JLL Market Analysis (Annexure 4)*
 - v. *SCT Transport Analysis (Annexure 5)*
 - vi. *GTA Transport Assessment (Annexure 6).*
- C. THAT the submissions received during the public exhibition are reported to a future meeting of the Environmental Planning Committee.

1. Summary:

The Edgecliff Commercial Centre (ECC) is an important local hub and gateway to the Woollahra Local Government Area (LGA). It helps to connect the LGA to the Sydney Central Business District (CBD) and more broadly to the eastern suburbs.

On 16 November 2015, the former Woollahra Urban Planning Committee (UPC) resolved (under delegation) that a review of planning controls for the ECC be carried out. In response to this resolution and the evolving character of the ECC, Council staff have prepared a comprehensive *Review of the Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning Controls* (the Review). This Review was carried out on a fine grained, block by block approach, as some areas and sites are more appropriate for increased density than others.

The Review provides a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the existing planning controls, and provides a clear and coordinated set of recommendations to guide the Centre's future built form.

The package of documents that form the Review are the:

- (i) *Draft Edgecliff Planning and Urban Design Strategy* (the Strategy)
- (ii) *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Public Domain Strategy* (Public Domain Strategy)

The following supporting studies have informed the Strategy and are part of the Review:

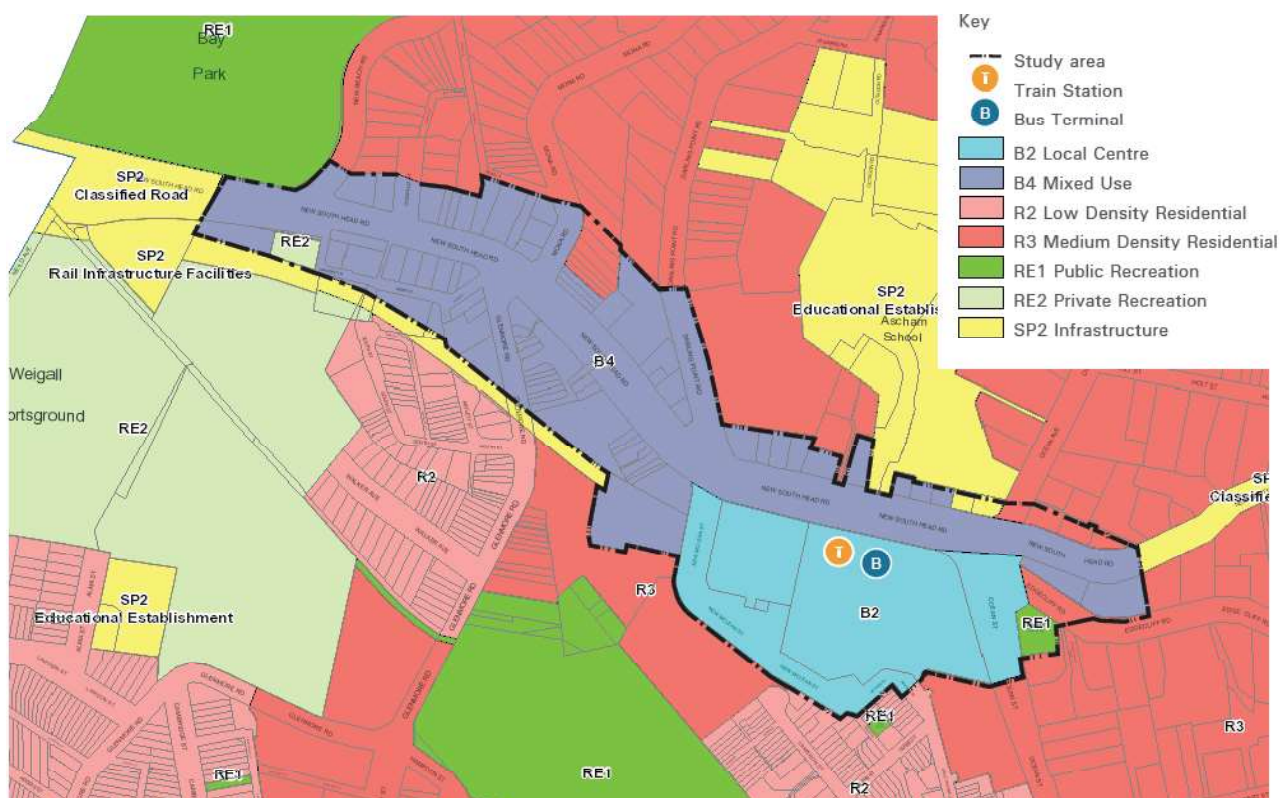
- (iii) *SJB Planning and Urban Design Study*
- (iv) *JLL Market Analysis*
- (v) *SCT Transport Analysis*
- (vi) *GTA Transport Assessment*

Based on the recommendations of each of these documents, Council staff have identified that the Centre is capable of accommodating the scale and density nominated in the Strategy.

Staff recommend that Council resolve to publicly exhibit the documents which form the Review. Staff will then report back to Council on the feedback received during the community engagement program, and identify the proposed implementation strategy which will ultimately seek to amend the provisions in the *Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014* (Woollahra LEP 2014) and *Woollahra Development Control Plan 2015* (Woollahra DCP 2015).

2. Study Area:

The ECC is located along New South Head Road from the intersection of New Beach Road in the west to the intersection of Ocean Avenue in the east (See **Figure 1**). New South Head Road is a major thoroughfare that dissects the ECC, and is an impediment to north - south pedestrian movement.



**Figure 1: Extract from the Land Zoning Map of the Woollahra LEP 2014
(with the Edgecliff Commercial Centre outlined in black)**

The Edgecliff train station is a key public transport interchange in the ECC and the eastern suburbs. It connects the LGA to Bondi Junction and the Sydney CBD along the Illawarra train line. The Edgecliff bus interchange is located above the train station and provides regular bus connections to Bondi, Rose Bay, Watsons Bay, the Sydney CBD and the North Shore.

The natural landform in the ECC rises from west to east along New South Head, with the Edgecliff train station located near the top of the ridge line. The topography then falls away moving to the east.

The centre's proximity to the Edgecliff public transport interchange, and proximity to the Sydney CBD, makes it an ideal location for promoting transit oriented development supported by well-designed public spaces and facilitating a vibrant local economy.

As shown in **Figure 1**, under the Woollahra LEP 2014 the review area is primarily zoned *B2 Local Centre* and *B4 Mixed Use* with a small number of lots zoned *R3 Medium Density Residential*. Also included in the ECC are two recreation zones. The surrounding area is predominantly residential but also contains key recreational areas and the Ascham School (*SP2 Special Infrastructure*).

3. Background:

In 2010, Council planning staff identified 24 sites to potentially increase dwelling capacity and meet the housing targets set out by the NSW Government in the *Draft East Subregional Strategy* (NSW 2007). However, in 2011 Council resolved to defer any further consideration of the proposed planning control changes for the opportunity sites. It is noted that there were four sites identified in the ECC:

- 203–233 and 235–285 New South Head Road (Edgecliff Centre building and train station)
- 240–246 New South Head Road (Thane Building)
- 73–79 New South Head Road (service station site)
- 2–14 New South Head Road (corner of New Beach Road).

The ECC has since been the subject of numerous planning proposal requests for increases to the maximum Height of Buildings (HOB) and Floor Space Ratio (FSR) standards in the Woollahra LEP 2014 to facilitate buildings with a dominant residential use. Ad-hoc planning proposal requests focus on a particular site, and this results in a fragmented and uncoordinated approach to planning.

In December 2014, the strategic plan for the Sydney metropolitan area '*A Plan for Growing Sydney*' (NSW 2014) was released. The Plan identified Edgecliff as part of the Global Economic Corridor between the Sydney CBD and Bondi Junction and set principles, directions and actions to promote the economic and residential vitality of centres located close to public transport nodes such as Edgecliff.

On 16 November 2015, the UPC considered a report on the quarterly progress of the Delivery Program 2013 to 2017 and Operational Plan 2014/15 (DPOP) against Goal 4 - *Well planned neighbourhoods* and Goal 9 - *Community focused economic development*. The report recommended that a review of planning controls for the ECC be carried out in alignment with the metropolitan strategy '*A Plan for Growing Sydney*' and to provide an integrated strategic approach in response to the ad-hoc planning proposal requests. The UPC resolved that Council should commence a strategic review of planning controls for the ECC to create a clear and coordinated framework to guide the future development of the ECC.

In September 2016, SJB and sub-consultants were engaged to undertake studies of the existing and potential future development in the ECC. This comprised:

- A Planning and Urban Design Study by SJB
- A Market Analysis undertaken by JLL
- A Transport Assessment by GTA.

On 4 April 2017, the preliminary findings of the consultants' review were presented to the Strategic Planning Working Party (SPWP). Generally, the SPWP was supportive of the proposed approach. Subsequently, on 21 November 2017 different development scenarios for uplift across the ECC were presented to the SPWP. This included a recommended preferred scenario.

Whilst generally supporting the work of the consultants, the SPWP requested that the preferred scenario should include a greater integration of active transport, recognising the benefits of walking and cycling. Further information on mechanisms to facilitate design excellence, value capture, infrastructure contributions, affordable housing, and community facilities was also requested.

Due to the potential traffic and transport implications of the proposed uplift in the preferred scenario, and a need to focus on active transport, Council staff engaged SCT Consulting in December 2018 to undertake a further transport analysis.

On 10 November 2019, a SPWP meeting was held to consider the *SCT Transport Analysis*. The SPWP generally supported the transport analysis, and requested Council staff investigate opportunities for urban greening along New South Head Road, further public domain improvements, integrating a cycleway along New South Head Road and road network improvements

In response to the issues raised, Council staff have since prepared the *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Public Domain Strategy* to identify opportunities for public domain improvements. This strategy further assists in guiding redevelopment in the ECC to ensure that future development facilitates a high quality and active public domain.

Based on the results on the consultants' studies and in parallel with the preparation of the *Draft Public Domain Strategy*, Council staff prepared the *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy* (the Strategy). The Strategy synthesises all the recommendations of the various consultant studies into a single strategy which will help guide the future revitalisation of the ECC.

4. The Review:

Consistent with the relevant Council decisions, this Review provides a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the strategic context as well as its consistency against Council's plans and policies. It provides a clear and coordinated approach to the future built form of the ECC. In summary, it is identified that the proposed changes to the planning controls will make the ECC a better place to live, work and visit.

The Review consists of two key documents which are:

- Draft Edgecliff Planning and Urban Design Strategy* (Strategy) (**Annexure 1**)
- Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Public Domain Strategy* (Public Domain Strategy) (**Annexure 2**)

The following supporting studies have informed the Strategy and form part of the Review:

- (iii) *SJB Planning and Urban Design Study (Annexure 3)*
- (iv) *JLL Market Analysis (Annexure 4)*
- (v) *SCT Transport Analysis (Annexure 5)*
- (vi) *GTA Transport Assessment (Annexure 6).*

A summary of these documents is provided below.

4.1. Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy (Strategy)

The Strategy (see **Annexure 1**) establishes a vision for the ECC and provides recommendations on proposed planning controls, urban design outcomes, public domain improvements and transport enhancements to guide future development. The Strategy aims to revitalise the ECC by creating a clear and coordinated framework to facilitate development that:

- Provides high quality transit oriented development with a suitable mix of uses that supports community needs,
- Displays design excellence,
- Upgrades and activates the public domain,
- Enhances active transport,
- Provides affordable housing, and
- Contributes to the delivery of community infrastructure that meets a range of community needs now and in the future.

Supporting this aim, the Strategy requires that any increased density is accompanied by community infrastructure and public domain improvements to support the long term liveability and sustainability of the ECC. This includes new public spaces, community facilities, affordable housing, urban greening, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and improved access to public transport.

The Strategy is the result of a fine-grained, site by site review of each site, block and street in the ECC and was informed by the supporting studies that form the Review. There are no recommendations for blanket changes to planning provisions. A summary of the key recommendations contained in the Strategy are summarised in Part 5 of this report.

The Strategy is broadly consistent with the directions and planning priorities in the Greater Sydney Region Plan '*A Metropolis of Three Cities*' (NSW 2018), the Eastern City District Plan (NSW 2018) as well as Council plans and policies. These include:

- Woollahra Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020
- Woollahra Integrated Transport Strategy (Draft)
- Woollahra Community Facilities Study (adopted October 2020)
- Woollahra Public Art Policy (Adopted October 2009)
- Woollahra Social and Cultural Plan (November 2018)
- Woollahra Disability Inclusion Action Plan (Adopted June 2017)
- Woollahra Street Tree Master Plan (April 2014)
- Woollahra Voluntary Planning Agreement Policy 2020.

4.2. Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Public Domain Strategy (Public Domain Strategy)

The Public Domain Strategy (see **Annexure 2**) identifies opportunities to facilitate a range of public domain improvements in the ECC. It responds to the desired future character of each precinct and recommends a range of projects on public and private land. In summary, the Public Domain Strategy identifies opportunities to:

- Reinforce the characteristics of gateway locations through high quality public art.
- Facilitate vibrant and inclusive public spaces.
- Support walking by providing high quality pathways and urban furniture.
- Enhance active transport connections along New South Head Road.
- Create opportunities for activation.
- Enhance urban greening and encourage environmental sustainability through high quality landscaping.
- Enhance existing parks and provide better connections to existing green open spaces.

It is noted that Council is currently preparing an Active Transport Plan for the Woollahra LGA. The outcomes of the Plan will be incorporated into the Public Domain Strategy as the concepts are progressed.

4.3. SJB Planning and Urban Design Study:

This study prepared by *SJB* (see **Annexure 3**) provided the baseline research and analysis in order to identify the preferred built form and urban design outcome for the ECC. It included a detailed analysis of the study area, identification of opportunities and constraints, design principles, scenario testing, development of the preferred built form and recommendations to achieve the desired future character for the ECC.

The study tested three unique development scenarios in order to develop a preferred scenario for the ECC based on themes emerging from the site testing. The minimum and maximum range of built forms recommended in each scenario was informed by the market analysis undertaken by JLL¹.

A summary of the three scenarios is discussed below:

- Scenario 1:* This scenario only considered existing or known proposed uplift. This consisted of three Opportunity Sites identified by Council in 2009, one approved development application and one approved planning proposal. The resulting built form was mixed use development with a height of four to 15 storeys scattered across a limited number of sites.
- Scenario 2:* This scenario considered a uniform increase in development potential across all sites in the ECC. It did not take into account the natural topography of the ECC, or the work of the Opportunity Sites. The resulting built form included commercial, retail and residential uses evenly distributed across the ECC with a height generally between six to eight storeys.
- Scenario 3:* This scenario focused the maximum employment floor space around the Edgecliff train station and distributed retail and residential uses across the rest of the ECC. The resulting built form was the greatest with a height ranging from four to 26 storeys, which include a mix of commercial and residential towers.

¹ It should be noted that none of these development scenarios envisaged uplift on heritage items or in heritage conservation areas (HCAs) or sites which are already developed to capacity.

Having taken into account the natural topography, heritage conservation, overshadowing, amenity and access, the preferred scenario combined elements from Scenarios 1, 2 and 3.

4.4. JLL Market Analysis

The study prepared by JLL (see **Annexure 4**) analysed the economic conditions and provided forecasts for future demand for retail, commercial and residential floor space in the ECC. In summary, the *JLL Market Analysis* identifies strong potential for residential growth in the ECC in conjunction with retail and office uses.

4.5. GTA Transport Assessment and SCT Transport Analysis:

The transport assessment prepared by GTA (see **Annexure 6**) assessed the traffic and transport impacts of the three development scenarios prepared by SJB. Due to the potential traffic and transport implications of the proposed uplift of the preferred scenario and a need to focus on active transport, Council staff engaged SCT Consulting in December 2018 to undertake a further Transport Analysis (see **Annexure 5**).

To minimise journeys by car, and improve the amenity and accessibility for active transport the *SCT Transport Analysis* recommended a number of strategic directions and infrastructure improvements. These include:

- Support mixed use development to reduce the need for car and public transport journeys.
- Reduce existing parking controls for studios and 1 bedroom units.
- Cap parking for the Commercial Core to be no more than currently provided.
- Investigate the use of car share schemes to reduce dependence on street parking permits.
- Amend the Woollahra DCP 2015 to require the allocation of one on-site car space for shared vehicles to offset 10 on-site parking spaces in new developments.
- Prepare a pedestrian wayfinding strategy for the Centre to identify pedestrian safety upgrades
- Provide dedicated cycling facilities with end of trip facilities
- Assess the available parking supply and anticipated future demand as part of a larger parking strategy.
- Introduce a green travel plan and a parking strategy to redistribute a proportion of the private vehicle trips to alternate transport modes.
- Encourage walking and cycling (recognising the limitations of these travel modes),
- Promote the use of public transport (even if new bus lanes displace car traffic).

5. Key recommendations of the Strategy:

Having considered all the documents and consultant studies that form part of the Review, the key recommendations of the Strategy are:

- (i) *Land use*: Promote mixed use development with a focus on commercial uses around the Edgecliff train station and non-residential uses along the length of New South Head Road (residential uses on upper levels of new development).
- (ii) *Building heights*: Concentrate the greatest heights around the ridge line to emphasise the sloping topography. The Maximum HOBs identified in the study range from 20 metres to 86 metres based on individual site merit and context. It is recommended that these height are only supported if the following criteria are met:
 - Site amalgamation
 - Design excellence

- Delivery of community infrastructure
- (iii) *Street wall heights*: Create upper storey setbacks to provide opportunities for private open spaces and urban greening. Upper storey setbacks also mitigate the perceived bulk and scale of development.
- (iv) *Floor space ratio*: Facilitate uplift through maximum FSRs ranging from 2.0:1 to 7.5:1 based on individual site merit and context. It is recommended that any increases to FSR standards are facilitated only if development meets certain criteria:
- Suitable site amalgamation
 - Design excellence
 - Delivery of community infrastructure
- (v) *Non-residential floor space*: Maintain and enhance the community and business role of the ECC through minimum non-residential FSRs (ranging from 1:1 to 3:1).
- (vi) *Amalgamation*: To encourage street activation, internal site efficiency, design excellence and appropriate access / servicing arrangements, the proposed uplift is only recommended if the suggested amalgamation pattern is adopted.
- (vii) *Built form*: Retain all heritage items and buildings in HCAs. Sensitively respond to heritage items and HCAs by lowering street wall heights. Encourage the location of vehicle entries on secondary streets rather than New South Head Road to minimise congestion and improve safety. **Figure 2** illustrates the indicative potential built form under the preferred development scenario.



Figure 2: Artist's impression indicating the potential built form under the preferred development scenario as viewed from New South Head Road opposite the intersection with Glemore Road looking East (SJB 2018)

- (viii) *Active street frontages*: Encourage active street frontages to activate the public domain, increase pedestrian amenity, create visual interest and increase passive surveillance.

- (ix) *Design excellence*: Require new development to deliver the highest standard of architectural and urban design to support the long term liveability and sustainability of the ECC.
- (x) *Community infrastructure*: Require new development to be accompanied by community infrastructure².
- (xi) *Affordable housing*: Require new development to provide affordable housing for a minimum of 5% of the additional residential GFA achieved.
- (xii) *Public domain*: Improve liveability via public domain improvements including a new linear park along the south side of New South Head Road (see **Figure 3**), a new public plaza at the Edgecliff Centre site (see **Figure 4**), and a rooftop public open space above the existing bus interchange.



Figure 3: Artist's impression of the potential linear park on the south side of New South Head Road

- (xiii) *Traffic and transport*: Mitigate the traffic impacts of development uplift through infrastructure upgrades, encouragement of active transport, car sharing and a reduction in car parking requirements.

Table 1 below provides approximate yields that could be facilitated by the Strategy, should 100% development occur consistent with the Strategy recommendations.

² The recommendations of the *Woollahra Community Facilities Study* (adopted October 2020) will be considered when determining what community facilities are required for the ECC.

Table 1: Approximate indicative yield based on 100% uptake

Land Use	Approximate existing GFA (m2)	Indicative GFA (m2)	Increase from existing GFA (m2)
Residential uses	60,500 (600-750 dwellings)	102,850 (1,000 –1,250 dwellings)	+42,350 (400 - 500 dwellings)
Non-residential uses	53,700	60,250	+6,750
Total	114,000	163,100	+49,100



Figure 4: Artist's impression indicating the potential public plaza on the Edgecliff Centre site viewed from New South Head Road looking South (SJB 2018)

6. Land reserved for acquisition

A key component of the Strategy is a linear park along the south of New South Head Road between New Beach Road and New McLean Street to facilitate urban greening and active transport in the ECC (see **Figure 3**).

The Woollahra LEP 2014 currently identifies land reservation acquisition for road widening (road reservations) which affect properties along the southern side New South Head Road in the ECC. These road reservations overlay sites containing heritage items, within heritage conservation areas, and would also overlay the proposed linear park.

The relevant acquisition authority for these reservations is the Roads and Maritime Services. These parcels were previously reserved for acquisition under the Woollahra LEP 1995, and at this time the land was identified for road widening purposes as part of the 1958 Road Alignment project. This project was superseded by the Cross City Tunnel project which was completed many years ago.

Council staff have been liaising with *Transport for NSW* (TfNSW) and the *Department of Planning, Industry and Environment* seeking the removal of the road reservations affectations. So far the requests from Staff have not been supported by the State Agencies. However, staff will continue to liaise with officers at TfNSW seeking support for the removal of these affectations. Ultimately, staff will be seeking support to prepare a planning proposal to remove the existing road reservations along New South Head Road.

7. Community Engagement Program

Subject to Council's endorsement of the Review package, Staff will commence an inclusive and representative community engagement program (in a COVID-19 safe manner). The proposed community engagement program was prepared in collaboration with Council's Community Engagement Coordinator. **Table 2** below outlines the proposed community engagement approach.

Table 2: Proposed community engagement program

Engagement activity	Recommended approach
i. <i>Community workshops</i>	Face to face meetings with the community which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drop-in sessions at Council's customer service area Pop-up displays in the ECC
ii. <i>Notices and Advertisements</i>	Facilitate engagement using the more traditional models of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters to owners and businesses An advert in the Wentworth Courier Posts on our social media A notice on Council's website homepage Notices on Council's Customer Service digital noticeboards Notices on Council's 'Out and About' posters
iii. <i>Online Publication</i>	Our online platform, <i>Your Say Woollahra</i> , will include all exhibition material.
iv. <i>On-line survey</i>	We will prepare a survey to be hosted on the online platform. Written submissions can also be uploaded.
v. <i>Public exhibition</i>	All exhibition material will be available at Council's customer service area.

8. Next Steps

After finalising the community engagement program, staff will report back to Council on the community's submissions as well as feedback from various stakeholders including residents, businesses owners, workers and visitors. The indicative timeline for the engagement program and reporting to Council is set out in **Table 3** below.

Table 3: Indicative Timeline

Key Step	Indicative Timeframe
(i) Report to Strategic and corporate Committee (S&C)	29 March 2021
(ii) Report to Council	April 2021
(iii) Community engagement program	May 2021
(iv) Review of submissions	June 2021
(v) Post-exhibition report	July 2021

Subject to the outcome of the engagement program, we will prepare an implementation strategy which will ultimately seek to amend the provisions in the Woollahra LEP 2014 and the Woollahra DCP 2015.

9. Conclusion

In response to a decision from the UPC, consultants were engaged to undertake a comprehensive and strategic review of the planning controls for the ECC. Informed by this work, Council staff have prepared the *Draft Edgecliff Planning and Urban Design Strategy* (**Annexure 1**) and the *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Public Domain Strategy* (**Annexure 2**).

These draft strategies seek to revitalise the ECC by creating a clear and coordinated framework to facilitate development that creates a new vision for the ECC which includes high quality public transport orientated development, urban greening and a range of uses including community infrastructure.

The Draft Strategy, is broadly consistent with Regional plans as well as Council's plans and policies and responds to the development constraints and opportunities in the ECC.

Staff recommend that Council resolves to publicly exhibit the documents which form the Review of the Edgecliff Centre Planning Controls which consists of the:

- i. *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy* (**Annexure 1**)
- ii. *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Public Domain Strategy* (**Annexure 2**)

and supporting studies being:

- iii. *SJB Planning and Urban Design Study* (**Annexure 3**)
- iv. *JLL Market Analysis* (**Annexure 4**)
- v. *SCT Transport Analysis* (**Annexure 5**)
- vi. *GTA Transport Assessment* (**Annexure 6**)

Staff will report on the feedback received during the community engagement program to a future meeting of Council.

Annexures

1. *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy (circulated under separate cover)*
2. *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Public Domain Strategy (circulated under separate cover)*
3. *SJB Planning and Urban Design Study (circulated under separate cover)*
4. *JLL Market Analysis (circulated under separate cover)*
5. *SCT Transport Analysis (circulated under separate cover)*
6. *GTA Transport Assessment (circulated under separate cover)*