

# Waterloo Redevelopment: How Did We Get Here?

Capacity Building Workshop



**Counterpoint Community Services**

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## **Document Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to capture some of the discussion points made during the capacity-building workshop 'Waterloo redevelopment: How did we get here' which was held on Wednesday, March 9. You may find some information in this document helpful when forming your submission to the planning proposal.

## **Changes in proposals and density**

The Planning Proposal on exhibition is not the same as the original Council proposal. The Council increased the number of units to match the yield Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) said they needed to get affordable housing in the project. The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) has kept the same number of units that Council and LAHC had agreed. However, DPE further modified elements of the proposal to improve solar access and retain trees, such as moving some units to create a fourth tower to the east of the estate (currently Camilia Grove) in what will be a very dense development.

While DPE is saying that the total number of units of 3012 is not negotiable, this is the first opportunity for the community to comment on the proposed density. The proposal is supposed to offer at least 30% social housing. This is where allocations are given on a priority basis to people with the highest need.

This stage of the planning process focuses on rezoning the land and includes maximum building heights, floor space and building locations. While the City of Sydney Council may have agreed with LAHC and DPE about the density, it does not mean that the community has to agree. If the high density is to remain, submissions should also reference what needs to happen to make such high-density work, especially considering the social housing component will primarily comprise the most high-needs vulnerable tenants on the housing priority list.

## **History of proposal important to understand documents on exhibition**

The exhibition documents include LAHC's studies for its preferred masterplan of January 2019 and documents that deal with assessments of the Council's scheme (February 2021) and the changes made by DPE for the current planning proposal. The documents do not include an assessment of some aspects of the planning proposal. For example, the studies do not include key solar information on the proposal's impact on streets, parks, and public places.

This makes for a very complex set of documents. DPE has added to this complexity by not having all the information necessary about the planning proposal in the planning proposal document. Basic control information like Floor Space Ratios (FSR) is not dealt with for LAHC owned land in the planning proposal, nor does it contain the FSR map.

The DPE website does not correctly sort the documents by their age or relevance. As history is vital in understanding the reports and what is relevant and what is not, REDWatch has produced a guide to this on the [Waterloo Estate \(South\) Planning Proposal Exhibition March 2022](#) part of its website.

## **What got lost that the community Wanted?**

Waterloo Visioning (2017) and Options Testing (2018) consultations led to LAHC's preferred masterplan (January 2019). Residents raised that while the preferred option's density was too high and provided insufficient social housing, the plan more adequately reflected community feedback that arose during these consultations. The City of Sydney Council and DPE undertook no consultations on their plans.

The planning proposal on exhibition does not reflect elements that were overall preferred by the community during the above LAHC consultations. These included:

- A large park that is insulated from the Waterloo Metro Quarter and not directly across. A smaller but still significant park in the south of the estate.
- A community hub/centre located close to the large park.
- A bike path that did not run up George street and between Matavai and Turanga. LAHC moved the bike path via Cope Street and the Metro Station. Council moved it back in their plan.

### **The Sale of Government Land**

The project is driven by the NSW Government policy of *Communities Plus* and *New Directions in Public Housing*, whereby new and replacement social housing is self-funded, meaning no direct investment by the government. This means government-owned land is sold off to developers and LAHC needs to get the highest possible densities to make money where it can to build new stock in the inner city and across NSW.

The Waterloo redevelopment offers a high yield due to the high land value in Waterloo. While Waterloo can self-fund more public housing, it is not getting these. The planning proposal does not deliver the 30% social housing promised. It only proposes to deliver about 28.2% of dwellings and 26.5% of residential gross floor area (GFA). This is because social and affordable houses will be smaller than private houses.

Irrespective of what is 'negotiable' during the statutory exhibition, if you think the density is too high or there should be more social housing, then say so. For example, submissions can argue that the government should not sell public housing land but instead fund new social housing on land it already owns. Submissions can also argue that the government should deliver the maximum possible social housing on the site. The minimum should be 30% as promised by LAHC and as detailed in the *Communities Plus* policy.

### **It is the Communities' time to say what it thinks**

You don't have to accept the 'alignment' achieved between levels of government without the community. Following LAHC's preferred plan in 2019, the community were kept out of alignment sessions between LAHC and the City of Sydney. The community was left entirely out of the process and was not invited to contribute. When these parties could not agree, an Independent Advisory Group (IAG) was established to advise DPE and decide an outcome.

If you do not like the outcome, then say so. Recognise also that there will be a wide variety of views among tenants about what is good or bad about the proposal. The important thing is to encourage people to have their say irrespective of if you agree with them or not.

The Inner Sydney Voice Magazine of 2018 about the Waterloo redevelopment contains valuable information about the issues addressed in this workshop. You can also download capacity-building materials from the 2018 Inner Sydney Voice website.

Counterpoint is running more sessions to help people understand and make their comments on the planning proposal. Contact Adam Antonelli [a.antonelli@counterpointcs.org.au](mailto:a.antonelli@counterpointcs.org.au) for details.

You can hear the presentation that went with the slides Waterloo Redevelopment: How did we get here? From the Counterpoint website.