


STAGE 6: URBAN PLACES

SUSTAINABILITY – GREEN SQUARE



How to Develop a Sustainable Community in Australia's Fastest Growing City

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The way our cities and towns are planned, designed and built has a vast impact on the economy, the environment and our wellbeing.

Sustainability and liveability have become popular buzzwords over the past decade but developing truly sustainable communities that can thrive in Australia's most populated regions requires far more than a focus on their environmental impact.

The City of Sydney's Green Square development is a modern, commercial and residential precinct that demonstrates sustainable high density living in practice.



Green Square library Source: City of Sydney

Key to the goals set out in the council's Sustainable Sydney 2030 plan, 278 hectares of the city's industrial heartland are being transformed into a vibrant, sustainable and connected neighbourhood that utilises innovative design to create a community for the future.

The council's vision to build a cohesive and self-sustaining community in Green Square has been enabled through best-practice design principles, combined with sustainability innovations – creating the framework for a thriving community in the heart of Australia's busiest city.

City of Sydney chief operating officer Kim Woodbury says Green Square's success has come down to planning and cooperation with the local land owners, government agencies and developers as well as continual engagement with existing and incoming communities.

"The process is that you have to plan well for a future community, and you have to have a vision for what you are trying to achieve," Woodbury said.

"If you look at the scoring system for the Green Star – Communities rating, it talks about governance, it talks about planning; it's not just about environment.

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“Although there is a big environment component it [also] talks about bringing the community along with you.”

Green Square’s town centre, which is inner-Sydney’s first new town centre in over 100 years, was recently awarded a 6 Star Green Star – Communities rating from the Green Building Council of Australia.

The Green Star – Communities rating tool assesses the planning, design and construction of large-scale development projects using five impact categories across governance, liveability, economic prosperity, environment and innovation. Green Square’s town centre’s rating certifies it as meeting the world’s highest standards for each category.

An example of this is the Green Square community and cultural precinct, which opened in May 2018. This precinct is home to a new green infrastructure system with a water treatment facility that supplies recycled storm water to the town centre for flushing toilets, green space irrigation and cooling towers.



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Beyond its green infrastructure centre, Green Square’s layout fosters a pedestrian-friendly environment with low speeds and high visibility. The geographical placement of the town centre links residential and commercial areas with the station interchange and prevents existing through traffic from penetrating the core of the town centre.

These thoughtful design additions ensure local business owners and residents are connected to their community and environment – while remaining well-served and accessible through public transport.

As an urban community with over 60,000 future residents (half of whom have already moved in), the concept of social cohesion is also at the core of Green Square’s vision.

Creating a diverse, equitable and connected community is the key to success of any urban renewal project, and City of Sydney have featured this heavily in what they are trying to achieve at Green Square – integrating it at all levels within the development.

For example, Green Square utilises well-designed public spaces, which act like communal living rooms, to encourage locals and visitors to interact and get to know one another. These spaces and initiatives work to aid quality of life in the high density urban area and to ensure the wellbeing of residents.



A significant public art investment will also support the social and cultural growth of Green Square and tell the story of the area’s history through interactive public artworks. Source City of Sydney

Green spaces in particular are intended to help the community instinctively come together and develop bonds with one another. A significant public art investment will also support the social and cultural growth of Green Square and tell the story of the area’s history through interactive public artworks.

Over a 10 year period, the City of Sydney is investing \$540 million to develop landmark facilities to underpin the emerging community – including a new library and plaza, aquatic and recreation facilities, a childcare centre and a community and cultural precinct.

These facilities have all been carefully thought-out to ensure they become places for residents to be with each other as a community and are the product of extensive community engagement that featured heavily in the development phase.

The council also undertakes a survey every two years through the University of NSW to study the social cohesion and community aspects within the Green Square urban renewal area. The survey gauges the community’s views and concerns, their wellbeing, any plans for the future and their sense of attachment to the area – with their feedback guiding future decisions for

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the area to ensure an ongoing sense of community and cohesion within development.

“We also utilise pop-up events to engage the community, whether it’s to do with new infrastructure and new developments coming up or to see what residents would like,” Woodbury said.

“From a placemaking viewpoint I think it’s important to know that governments and developers can build certain things, but they can’t make a community.

“You can provide a framework and encouragement for the community, but it has to build itself up naturally.”

When fully developed, Green Square will accommodate close to 61,000 people living in 30,500 new homes and provide around 21,000 permanent jobs.

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To find out more about Green Square’s 6 star Green Star – Communities rating follow the City of Sydney’s latest news updates.

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Project benefits



Green Square Town Centre will benefit the community by providing:

- urban transformation
- housing options
- retail opportunities
- employment opportunities
- transport accessibility
- affordable housing contributions
- sustainable town centre public domain
- community infrastructure.

LEFT: Project benefits: Screen Capture. Source: <https://www.landcom.com.au/places/green-square-town-centre/>

BELOW: Green Square Snapshot –Screen capture. Source: <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/green-square>

Green Square snapshot
3.5km from the city and 4km from the airport
278 hectare urban renewal area
\$13 billion urban renewal construction
30,500 new residential dwellings
\$540 million contribution from the City over next 10 years
61,000 people are expected to live in Green Square by 2030

RIGHT: Promotional billboard, Green Square station. Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4a/Green_Square_10_minutes_from_anywhere.JPG

From the Editor: Inquiry, weblinks and facts for further investigation.

Potential Inquiry Questions:

- Does the vision for Green Square match the reality of the development?
- Will Green Square be the most liveable community in Sydney?
- What sustainability strategies for Green Square are transferable to other precincts / suburbs within Sydney and smaller urban places?

Weblinks

- City of Sydney: Green Square <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/green-square>
- Green Square visualisation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHBZXS0-SFo>
- Six Stars for Green Square Town Centre <https://news.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/articles/6-stars-for-green-square-town-centre>
- Green Square Town Centre Project <https://www.landcom.com.au/places/green-square-town-centre/>
- Welcome to the Green Square Town Centre (YouTube) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8E6Hkdghj84>
- Move over Suburbia Green Square offers new norm for urban living (The conversation 2016) <https://theconversation.com/move-over-suburbia-green-square-offers-new-norm-for-urban-living-57633>
- Green Square is Sydney’s ‘public transport disaster’ even before apartments built <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/green-square-is-sydneys-public-transport-disaster-even-before-apartments-built-20170523-gwazy9.html>
- ‘Transport mess’: Passengers at one Sydney station nearly double in three years (Nov 2018) <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/transport-mess-passengers-at-one-sydney-station-nearly-double-in-three-years-20181119-p50gwf.html>
- Green Square History Booklet https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/195642/8928_Green-Square-History-Booklet-A5_FA1.pdf

