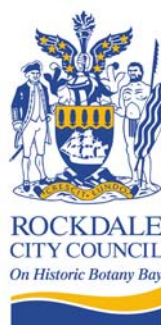


Destinations Rockdale

Planning and other background analyses



15 March 2006

Destinations Rockdale was released on 21 September 2005. The inherent planning approach and specific projects had been based on solid commercial, demographic and related analyses as will be shown in this document; but the release of the Metro Strategy was imminent. That was delayed; and now the Infrastructure Plan has been delayed. These were critical in some respects but this document need not be held back any further.

Destinations Rockdale if implemented will improve living and travelling conditions, jobs and services of many types, for residents and visitors. The Government expects local government to act and perform better especially in planning terms, like Destinations which is sophisticated and a challenge for the Government and community. Can Destinations Rockdale be done in the prevailing local government environment in NSW? and if not, what changes to relations between the State and local governments would be justified in the public interest and as contributions to Sydney's future?

This document is part of the Destinations Rockdale suite: an illustrated 28-page brochure, a 20-minute DVD and 3-minute short DVD, a website (www.rockdale.nsw.gov.au/destinations), and this background research and methodological report. There is an additional Implementation Report and related papers. This Background Report is just that.

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Introduction

A hundred years ago Rockdale was a resort town, like Manly's "9 miles from Sydney and a million miles from care". Brighton-le-Sands had baths, piers, tramway and a boulevard down from the Railway – the Bay Street. There was no nearby road bridge over the Cooks River so the many visitors came by rail and walked and caught the local trams – road traffic was on a friendly scale. Brighton had classy hotels and plain pubs. It was a fun place and a working class residential suburb, both. It had character.¹

Nowadays the Grand Parade, West Botany Street, Bestic Street, President Avenue, Forest Road and the Princes Highway are dominated by floods of cars, trucks and buses. Sydneysiders using those roads see many tired buildings and traffic queues; plus some possibly interesting restaurants and shops but which are not priorities for most. The magnificent Lady Robinson's beach in Cook Park is deserted most of the time

¹ Rockdale's history is described more completely later.

and the whiteness and breadth of its sands are not generally known. Brighton is still just as close to the City, the Airport and many large suburbs as it was a hundred years ago but is now rarely a destination in itself.

Much the same applies to Rockdale town centre which has the Princes Highway funnelled through its concentration of small businesses. On the quieter side of the Station, the western, there are remnants of past glories, grand halls and theatres which have been converted to lesser purposes. The area has many small shops but little window shopping. On the other side, the eastern, business is much brisker but several government agencies have left altogether or re-located down the Highway - regional shopping centres threaten to suck life out of all traditional mainstreets. Road traffic is the dominant environmental factor. There are many small cafes and restaurants but no fine dining establishment - this major population centre doesn't have a swimming centre or cinema complex.

This does not mean that Rockdale has a lack of civic pride, it has plenty. There are major new residential towers springing up in Wolli Creek and around Rockdale's town centre. Greece's ascent in the European Soccer League finals in 2004 saw a spontaneous demonstration of pride and the occupation of lower Bay Street; and Rockdale's streets are full of contented people at most times of the day. There is a wide diversity of nations represented in the shops and populace. Rockdale's workers travel into many other areas - indeed they are the third largest source of workers for the massive Sutherland Shire.

This area which is so close to Sydney, the Airport and the Bay has not kept up with the transformation of Sydney generally. Rockdale's vigorous businesses have developed within a very limited environment. High-quality architecture; al fresco dining; specialist retail shops; and professional services for the aware and the aged have developed elsewhere, perhaps in areas not so well endowed with natural advantages. But not so much in Rockdale. The F6 road corridor has been left in a bureaucratic drawer, with traffic problems (including air pollution, noise and road accidents) at high levels if not increasing.

This planning process started in early 2005. The Council adopted strong ethical procedures and engaged the best talent in Australia to see what can be done, and the Mayors and the delegated Councillors on the Mayoral Task Group worked closely with the team to develop really exciting visions - *world-class options* which they believed will engage and excite the community and wider Sydney.

There is a *social balance sheet* to be discussed - while traffic will be reduced at hot spots, no community land will be lost and there will be a new park in the town centre and greatly improved community space and facilities, some people will have noise and visual effects. The Bay area will be opened up for community access and this will be at a high commercial level - generating local jobs and reinforcing local sustainability. Some retailers will be affected by proposed community space and housing initiatives but the amount of retail space will be generally greatly increased - 30 per cent or more in Rockdale Town Centre - and improved quality. Affordable housing prospects will be improved through a better mix of housing types and the Government's policies.

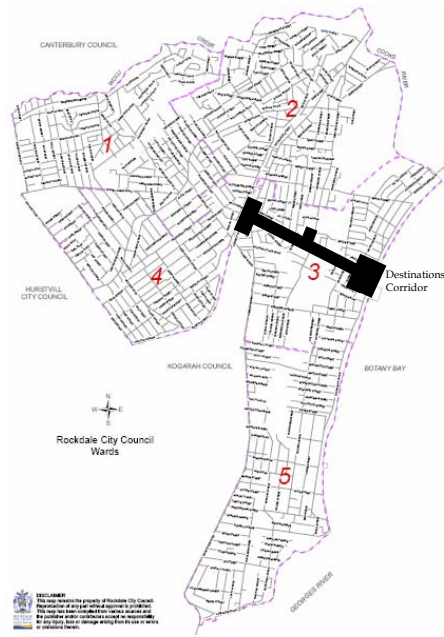
Such strategic plans elsewhere in Sydney are often not balanced but this one genuinely meets community needs. Some of the visions are startling in their imagination and not implementable in the short term - *but appropriate in the longer term.*

Methodology

The Destinations corridor is the focus of this planning review. This encompasses Brighton-le-Sands, Bay Street and the Rockdale town centre, and the areas immediately contiguous with them. The Destinations documents are generalised to allow the community to discuss broad planning ideas and architectural visions, so that the City Council can formulate specific proposals. The boundaries are not precise in this phase for this reason.

Rockdale City Council is the responsible authority for planning the Destinations corridor; with specific State agencies being responsible for such elements as Botany Bay and its foreshores, State roads and the railway system.

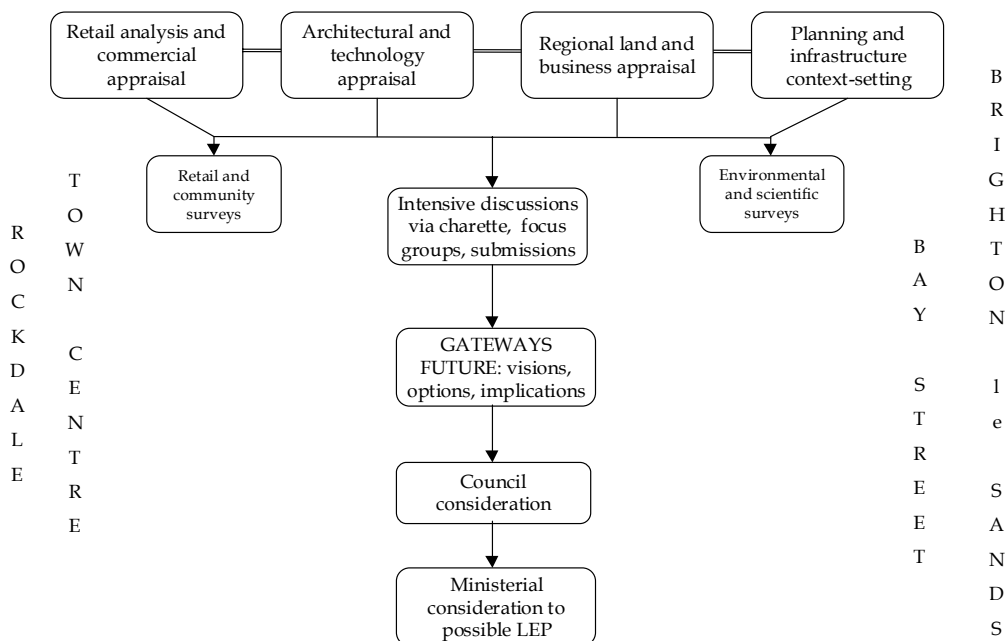
The following graphic illustrates this corridor:



The City Council engaged consultants to prepare Destinations Rockdale (which will be abbreviated to Destinations in most cases in the following) for two reasons. First, it covers issues of technical difficulty and historical complexity and the highest level of expertise was required. Secondly, the highest ethical standards were applied and a degree of independence over the future of the Council’s property, rezonings and other issues was essential. The selection of consultants was done in accordance with the Local Government Tendering Regulation.

The team included the NEO Group (internationally renowned mainstreet and retail consultants), Project Architecture (building and street architects experienced across major world cities), TTP Associates (road planning), Waterway Constructions and Patterson Britton (Bay/wharf-marina), SGS Economics and Planning on the metropolitan planning context, and PWC Legal on governance issues (late in the process, as probity advisers); with Robert Gibbons being the concept initiator and project manager.

The process developed in January 2005 and subsequently implemented was as follows:



Note: the original program title was "Gateways".

This process was re-focussed as time went on especially in relation to "visioning" – the Council's priority was very strong in relation to a better future and professional concepts consistent with but not tied to current practice or sectional interests. The skills and experience of the team were devoted to ensuring that the concepts were of the highest quality and originality but still practical. The need for and cost of additional environmental and scientific surveys – over and above the information held within the Council – were deferred.

The combinations of Destinations Rockdale and the subsequent visioning exercises over the East and West components will be entitled "Rockdale Futures" as a generic name. The current document applies to the whole of Rockdale to a large extent and is relevant to all three visioning streams.

Rockdale – planning context

This section describes the situation up to the release of Destinations. The Metro Plan was released several months after Destinations became public; see the second last section.

Rockdale City Council covers an elongated section of Sydney's south-eastern region, an area of about 28 km² running south from Sydney Airport down to the George's River's mouth; and westwards to Kingsgrove due to the earlier absorption of Bexley municipality. It is centrally located being less than 15 minutes from the CBD by rail and road, and encompasses much of the southern shoreline of Sydney's widest water body, Botany Bay.

Rockdale's population is about 93,000. Its economic catchment is massive due to its proximity to and road and rail links with the North Shore, CBD, inner and middle west and east, and south-eastern suburbs. The area is predominantly residential, recreational and light commercial. Like other Councils with responsibility for Botany Bay's catchment, Rockdale is experiencing pressure for open space, infrastructure and environmental improvements. Recently it contributed to the cost of five groynes in the Bay which were designed to relieve sand retention problems which arose after the construction of the north-south runways at the Airport.

Through Rockdale run several of Sydney's busiest roads and railways - the Grand Parade around the Bay and the Princes Highway through Rockdale being notoriously congested and in conflict with pedestrian movements and local retail environments. The pattern is shown on page 22 of the brochure.

250,000 vehicles per day cross the Cooks River on three bridges. The Grand Parade started as a scenic local road before a bridge was built over the Cooks River but became a *de facto* highway, now carrying 67,000 vehicles per day. The Princes Highway runs through many industrial areas but also town centres like Rockdale, with the flow of 50,000 vehicles reflecting intersections and turning movements as well as on-street parking. The M5 East is above capacity (105,000 vehicles against the expected 70,000); and trucks carrying dangerous and other non-standard loads have to use Forest Road. Each truck is equivalent to 8 cars in terms of road damage.

The Illawarra Railway is the highest utilised section in the metropolis and is at 130% of capacity during peak periods. Duplication of track between Kingsgrove and Revesby is part of the Rail Clearways Plan but this needs to be extended to Riverwood. Residential growth in the southern areas (say Miranda to Cronulla) and extra services associated with rail amplification will put more pressure on the line. The privatised Airport Link imposes high station access charges.

The regional bus system is low-frequency and suffers all the disadvantages of ageing vehicles, indirect routes, conflict with cars in congested sections and fragmented ticketing as the rest of the metropolis's fleets. A review of regional bus services based on route intensification and tripling of the population within easy walk of an integrated service is to be a priority for the St George area. This will not reduce the main flows of cars and trucks on the arterial roads (it is growth in car usage that will be moderated). There is some price sensitivity to petrol price but this is similar to the congestion cost sensitivity already evident – such that

traffic levels (Average Annual Daily Traffic or AADT counts) have not increased on the main arteries (below).

The task of estimating likely demand for the development in Rockdale requires an understanding of the likely population growth pressures facing Rockdale. It is not sufficient to develop population forecasts based on historical population growth as other factors are likely to play an important role in driving demand. In particular, Rockdale will experience housing demand resulting from significant population growth rates in the Sydney Metropolitan region.

The table below outlines population growth for the St George sub-region (Rockdale, Hurstville and Kogarah) for the intercensal period 1996-2001.

Recent Population Growth

Total persons	Rockdale	Hurstville	Kogarah
1996	84,847	65,392	47,618
2001	88,523	70,642	50,340
% Change p.a.	0.9%	1.6%	1.1%

Growth has been stable at around 1-1.5% pa in recent years, but of course this is no guarantee that growth will remain at such low rates. Future population growth will be largely driven by the amount of development allowed within the study area as Sydney's overall growth is substantial. Much of Rockdale's recent growth has been accommodated in medium and high density developments around the Town Centre and in Wolli Creek. (Some of the former has been criticised as being too close to main roads.)

DIPNR² developed population projections for each LGA within the Metropolitan boundary based on indications from local councils on levels of development and expected vacancy rates. The table below outlines the projected population for a range of LGAs including and close to the St George district.

DIPNR Population Projections

	2001	2031	Increase	Total % rise
South Sydney (C)	56,860	118,950	62,090	109%
Sydney (C) - Remainder	67,570	121,590	54,020	80%
Rockdale (C)	92,680	128,050	35,370	38%
Hurstville (C)	74,090	97,220	23,130	31%
Strathfield (A)	29,430	51,230	21,800	74%
Canada Bay (A) - Concord	27,630	48,300	20,670	75%
Randwick (C)	125,220	144,900	19,680	16%
Bankstown (C)	171,990	186,940	14,950	9%
Botany Bay (C)	37,190	51,500	14,310	38%
Canterbury (C)	137,490	149,720	12,230	9%
Kogarah (A)	52,460	63,440	10,980	21%
Burwood (A)	30,580	41,220	10,640	35%
Marrickville (A)	76,740	87,130	10,390	14%
Sutherland Shire (A) - East	100,010	107,090	7,080	7%
Sydney (C) - Inner	5,270	11,920	6,650	126%
Canada Bay (A) - Drummoyne	34,700	39,390	4,690	14%
Ashfield (A)	40,520	44,620	4,100	10%
Leichhardt (A)	50,460	54,070	3,610	7%
Woollahra (A)	53,000	55,400	2,400	5%
Waverley (A)	63,240	62,840	-400	-1%
Sutherland Shire (A) - West	113,820	111,750	-2,070	-2%

Note: Brackets refer to the Department of Local Government's LGA classification groups.

² Now the Department of Planning.

The total population increase for the St George SSD is shown at around 70,000 people by 2031. Rockdale would carry half of this load (an increase approaching 40%), a rate shared with several other middle band suburbs. The growth in Sutherland, Canterbury and Marrickville among others is much lower.

Whilst there is no obligation for Rockdale Council to approve developments necessary to accommodate such a large level of population, SGS suggested that market demand would probably exist for any development that reasonably provides accommodation for this number of people. (The final Metro Strategy confirmed these numbers - see below.)

The next table provides a summary of the occupancy rates for separate houses and apartments/units in each LGA within the St George area.

People per Dwelling

	Rockdale	Hurstville	Kogarah	St George SSD
Houses	2.22	2.30	2.29	2.25
Apartments/ Units	2.09	2.12	2.18	2.12

The average occupancy rate for the St George SSD is around 2.12. If we apply the current rate of occupancy to DIPNR's population projections, we can derive the number of dwellings implied by population forecasts, as outlined in the table below. The analysis has been adjusted to take account of forecasts to 2026 rather than 2031 (for comparability with the later retail and office market analysis).

Estimating dwelling requirement implied by DIPNR population projections

	Rockdale	Hurstville	Kogarah	St George SSD
DIPNR Extra Population Forecast- 2026	30,300	19,800	9,420	59,520
Apartments -People per Dwelling	2.09	2.12	2.18	2.12
Implied Number of Apartments	14,483	9,326	4,312	28,047
M ² per Apartment	100	100	100	100
Implied Residential Floorspace	1,448,304	932,565	431,209	2,804,698

Source: SGS Economics and Planning

The 59,520 people forecast for the St George SSD translates to around 28,000 additional apartments for the area (until 2026), which implies residential floorspace demand of around 2.80m M² in the period 2001-2026.

On the qualitative side, SGS did market survey work for Council and found:

- Rockdale is experiencing a high level of in-migration, particularly from segments such as those of Greek, Chinese, and Lebanese origin, elderly, and people moving from the south, east and inner west.
- The area attracts a lot of people who are in transit, i.e. they come to Rockdale initially because of the coastal location and then move on.
- Buyers are generally singles and couples. They tend to be from the local area or St. George. However, renters are generally young families (aged 25-40 years old) and single.
- Brighton-le-Sands attracts a lot of people who would otherwise seek to locate themselves in Maroubra, Matraville, Mascot, or the southern end of the Eastern suburbs. A key driver of demand is the water front location. Other drivers of demand include:
 - Relative affordability
 - Proximity to the Sydney CBD
 - Transport connectivity (trains and road) to the Sydney CBD
- Buyers tend to look further south if they cannot find what they are looking for in Rockdale.
- Houses are generally owner-occupied, however approximately 75% of units are investment properties. The area has traditionally been strong for investment. However, at the moment buyers tend to be owner-occupiers, and particularly first home-buyers.
- Generally speaking, commercial office space in Rockdale is of a poor quality with poor facilities although with adequate car parking and competitively priced.
- The proximity of the M5 is a major draw card. As such, key stakeholders believe that if an appropriate commercial development (in size and quality) was available, then the study area would attract businesses from across Sydney CBD looking for cheaper rental prices. Other drivers of demand include:
 - Commercial property in Rockdale will be more attractive to investors if other pre-conditions are met,

such as day-care, retail, leisure etc.

- Disadvantages of the area include the lack of developable space for commercial and retail provision because of the recent concentration of residential development in the City. Other weaknesses include historically poor architectural qualities.
- The Chamber is trying to encourage anchor tenants to the town. In particular government departments/agency tenants. However, large quality commercial office space is limited in the study area, and as such there is nowhere to accommodate them.
 - Hurstville and Kogarah have been identified as the main competitors to Rockdale in a commercial sense. If investors cannot find what they are looking for in Rockdale, they tend to look in these areas.
 - Density and size of population;
 - Affordability;
 - Clustering of certain industries
- The demand in Rockdale generally tends to be from professional businesses such as lawyers, solicitors and accountants.
- Agent consultation in Brighton-le-Sands indicated that office space is currently 80-90% occupied in that part of the study area. Most businesses in Brighton-le-Sands are population related services such as real estate services, cafes, hair salons etc. Most office demand is for units of approximately 100m² in size
- One agent revealed that they receive approximately 10-15 enquiries per month for office accommodation; however interest has waned in recent times.
- Currently there is a limited amount of commercial space in Rockdale town centre. Apartment blocks have been developed in mixed use zones and Council have encouraged commercial properties on the ground floor of these buildings. However, these are generally fairly small (approx. 100m²) and there is a relatively high level of vacancy in these developments.

The UTS Centre for Local Government prepared *Rockdale Futures – Scenarios for 2021* based on the ABS's projection of a population of 108,000 by 2021: slower or faster rates were examined. The implications were:

- Higher income groups will become more prominent, there will be fewer recent arrivals but there will be more children as well as more aged, and traffic congestion will get much worse
- Services in more demand will include indoor recreation, libraries and cultural facilities, adult education and planning changes (more al fresco and other dining etc). The challenge of planning for Wolli Creek, Cooks Cove, Rockdale Town Centre, Ramsgate town centre (with Kogarah), shopping centres, the land take by public transport schemes, residential character aspects, regional open space, Botany Bay, affordable housing and the F6 Corridor should not be under-estimated
- Rockdale will face serious difficulties in maintaining and renewing ageing infrastructure that will struggle to cope with population growth and the extensive redevelopment that is already going on
- There is a need to upgrade important corridors such as the Princes Highway, Forest Road, Rocky Point Road, Bay Street, President Avenue and the Grand Parade, to improve amenity, the City's image and safety/security
- Replacement open space will be needed for the displacement effect from Cooks Cove, the development of public transport corridors in lieu of the F6 extension, and damaged remnant bushland.

Further discussion is summarised in the following:

Port traffic is a steady stream of long trucks, mostly B-doubles, gaining direct access through the Airport Tunnel and onto the M5 East Motorway where there is an increased proportion of heavy vehicles in the flow. Heavy vehicles are restricted to the left hand lane only, and move at the speed of the slowest truck in the traffic stream. Cars heading south from Southern Cross Drive bank back up as they slow to merge into the remaining single traffic lane to enter the Motorway. The pressures on the primary roads network have redistributed traffic onto other routes such as Forest and Stoney Creek Roads and reintroduced traffic onto the local rat-runs.

Along the main roads, air quality has deteriorated and traffic noise increased to levels which emulate the oppressive conditions previously endured at Bexley shopping centre. The additional restrictions imposed in efforts to reduce the use of rat-runs impacts upon local residents. Access to local neighbourhoods and streets is limited to a few intersections and locals experience substantial delays and inconvenience. Parking in the commercial and residential neighbourhoods adjacent to the airport will be used by persons accessing the airport. The Unsworth review of bus operations did not produce an improvement in regional services (below).

Looking forward ten years, if one assumes that the airport passenger throughput expands and the container throughput at Port Botany are as predicted, *then traffic levels around Arncliffe and Kyeemagh will be double current levels*. Rockdale City Council will have substantially increased funding requirements in implementing local traffic, community safety and environmental management schemes.

Subsequent to the UTS study, port traffic predictions have increased. In particular the Minister for Planning has announced the maximum expansion of Port Botany's land area and port capacity and although the

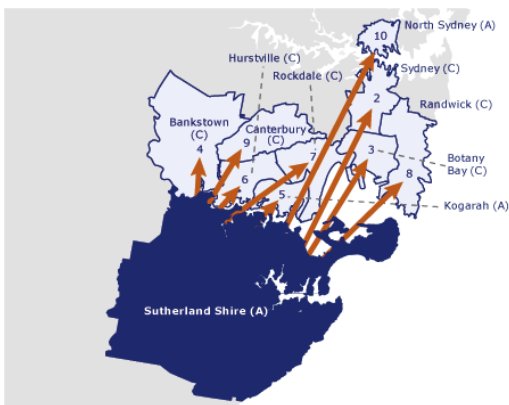
intention is to increase rail's modal share, road traffic will increase dramatically. Sydney Ports' traffic analysis in 2002 of such a scenario predicted an approximate doubling of truck numbers in Rockdale's streets. While SACL's development plans for Sydney Airport have changed, they indicate a significant growth in commercial competition against regional shopping operators and increase in traffic loads.

Across Sydney, car ownership and car use (VKTs) have increased by up to double the rate of population over the last decade. In 1991 about 39% of car trips were work-related and that fell to 37% in 2001 even though it had grown at 1.4% annually (trips to serve passengers had increased faster). Trip lengths grew by 5% reflecting the spreading of Sydney and dispersal of jobs from the centre.

Geographically Rockdale sits between Sutherland and the central and eastern suburbs of Sydney. Most of the traffic generated in Sutherland moves through Rockdale if it crosses at Taren Point; a high proportion if it crosses at Tom Ugly's (the rest heading west at King George's Road); and nearly none if crossing at Alford's Point.

Sutherland's residents impact heavily on sub-regional traffic due to their collective bulk. The population is about 215,000 and it sends out about 62,500 workers each day (with an extra 40,000 or so employed within its boundaries). Almost 14,000 workers come into Sutherland from other LGAs especially Wollongong (with Rockdale ranked third).

Population growth has been well under 1% per annum (and negative in 2003 and 2004), with an increase overall of just over 10,000 since 1996. The Sutherland commuting situation is illustrated in the following graphics:



Distribution of workers exported from Sutherland 2001
(No. 1 is Sutherland itself c 39,000; total of others is 63,000.)



Distribution of workers coming into Sutherland 2001
(No. 1 is Sutherland c 40,000; total of others is 14,000.)

It can be seen that four of the major external flows (on the left) are to or through Rockdale. The bulk of Sydney City and North Sydney flows are by rail. Rockdale's patterns look like this:



Distribution of workers exported from Rockdale 2001
(No. 2 is Rockdale at c 6,000; total of others is 29,000.)



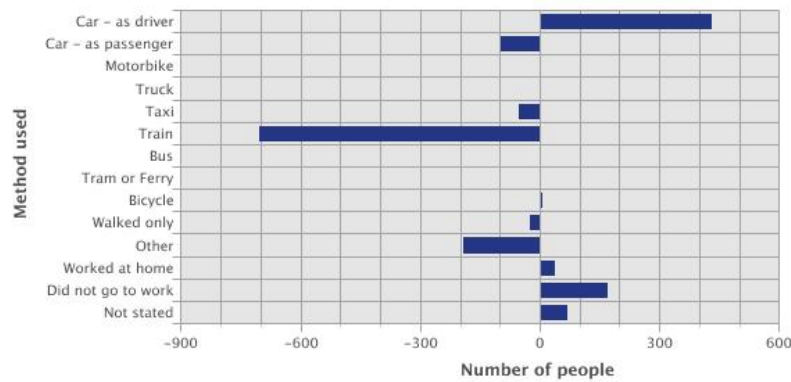
Distribution of workers coming into Rockdale 2001
(No. 1 is Rockdale at c 6,100; total of others is 14,000.)

The modes of transport for Rockdale's workers are summarised in the following table and it is noted that dependence on cars *as driver* has increased and *as passenger* fallen (a perverse result considering congestion as well as petrol and other costs).

Travel to work (includes multi-mode journeys)	2001			1996		
	number	%	Sydney Statistical Division %	number	%	Sydney Statistical Division %
Car - as driver	19,044	51.8	53.2	18,611	50.9	53.1
Car - as passenger	2,421	6.6	5.7	2,519	6.9	6.3
Motorbike	138	0.4	0.4	134	0.4	0.5
Truck	580	1.6	1.7	--	--	--
Taxi	165	0.4	0.4	216	0.6	0.5
Train	6,548	17.8	11.3	7,251	19.8	12.7
Bus	1,109	3.0	5.4	1,106	3.0	5.2
Tram or Ferry	15	0.0	0.3	11	0.0	0.3
Bicycle	122	0.3	0.5	116	0.3	0.5
Walked only	1,239	3.4	3.9	1,264	3.5	3.7
Other	391	1.1	1.1	583	1.6	1.7
Worked at home	988	2.7	4.2	948	2.6	4.0
Did not go to work	3,238	8.8	10.0	3,068	8.4	9.9

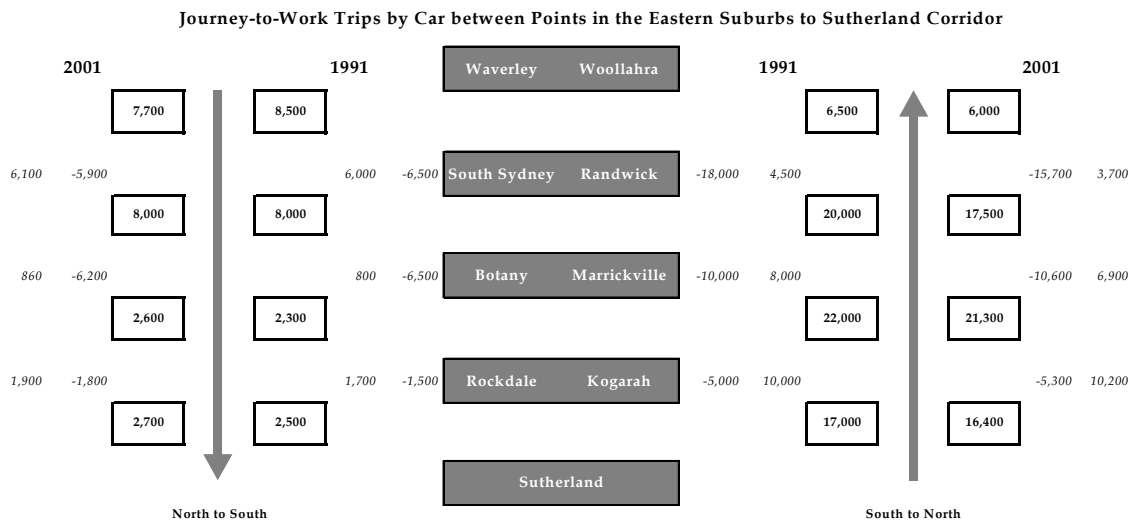
There have been minor changes in the pattern of mode use, the main one being reduced usage of trains.

Change in mode of travel to work, Rockdale City, 1996 to 2001



Almost 20,000 drivers and passengers come out of Sutherland every day heading towards the Eastern Suburbs, with their destinations being Rockdale and Kogarah as neighbours on the north of the Georges River, then Botany and Marrickville as neighbours; then Randwick and South Sydney, and finally Waverley and Woollahra. The main north roads are the Princes Highway and Grand Parade/Southern Cross Drive.

Rockdale's location is central to many such flows. Congestion and related costs are already at a high level. The pattern over the last decade is shown in the following chart (this tracks the drivers/passengers exiting and entering at the various levels, the boxes showing the net flows in each direction).



The pattern is stable and even the levels are consistent over 10 years – the few changes reflecting changes in employment patterns in the old Central Industrial Area. Generally, there has been little growth in the total volumes of traffic presumably due to saturation of the road corridors but there has been an elongation of the peaks.

The only major alternatives available to reduce congestion effects along Botany Bay and through the Rockdale town centre would be local by-passes and more intensive use of public transport especially on existing and new road routes. In this context, the Unsworth Review did not change the key parameter, the intensity of bus routes in suburbs; and a further supportive review has been proposed by the St George Councils.

The plan to build a high-capacity road link away from Bay and town centres was proposed by the Department of Main Roads in the early 1950s and the corridor now known as the F6 Extension was reserved. Sections of the corridor are environmentally and politically sensitive and it was easier to muddle-through on the existing links. This topic will be discussed a little more later.

Policy instruments relevant to the area covered by the Destinations vision document include local and State documents, such as:

Rockdale DCP 18 Brighton Town Centre	– The DCP aims to stimulate economic growth and development within Brighton Le Sands town centre. Of particular note it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages additional residential floorspace in the form of mixed use development • Encourages innovative design • Promotes Brighton le Sands town centre as a hub for leisure and tourism associated activities • Bay Street will remain the principle shopping precinct within the town centre • The supply of office space within the town centre will be monitored • A pedestrian bridge will be developed between Brighton Hotel and the south side of Bay Street
Rockdale Social Plan 2004	The plan provides the framework for Rockdale City Council to improve the well being of Rockdale residents over the period from 2004-2009. In particular, the Council aims to: <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Ensure that physical and social infrastructure is spread equitably Ensure all residents can participate in local democracy Ensure that services are accessible to those that need them.</p>
Rockdale City Council Environmental Policy	This policy outlines Council’s approach to environmental management. In particular, the plan is committed to: <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Promoting a healthy, safe and accessible lifestyle for the community Building a liveable city Providing quality recreation opportunities Facilitating economic prosperity</p>
DCP 34 – Villa and Townhouse development	The study area offers opportunity to increase density in the activity centres, including medium and high density. This policy relates to medium density. In particular, the policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages a higher standard of architectural merit • Stimulate and promote the orderly and economic use and development on larger consolidated sites • Provide a range of housing types
Rockdale City Council Section 94 Contributions Plan	This policy provides the legal and administrative mechanisms to require cash contributions or in-kind works including the dedication of land, towards the embellishment of public amenities and services that will be required to serve the needs of future development over the next ten years. Strategies have been developed for Open Space, Town Centre Improvement, and Car Parking to project the likely demand for each service and establish a basis for levying of Section 94 contributions.
Rockdale City Council Management Plan 2005- 2008	Rockdale commercial centres represent major community investment and resources. Council to investigate rejuvenation of shopping centres and policies that are permissive and flexible to encourage mixed commercial and residential development in centres. Rockdale will also face serious difficulties in financing and funding infrastructure, thus a need to upgrade major commercial centres including Bay Street and the Grand Parade.
Rockdale City Council LEP 2000	This plan establishes the framework for which all developments within Rockdale City shall be assessed. Relevant objectives include:

- Simplified planning for Rockdale City
- Rationalise land use zoning and development standards
- Provide direction for growth and change within Rockdale and the manner by which these changes should be managed.
- Maintain residential amenity and encourage a diversity of housing that can meet the needs of desired residents.
- Identifying major transport corridors, and their links to residential areas and open space.
- Facilitate economic activity within the city

The plan also states that according to Zoning, parcels of land shaded in its map along the eastern end of Bay street onto the Grand Parade, that the floor space ratio shall not exceed 3:1, and any excess over a 1.5:1 floor space shall be used for residential purposes.

Sydney Metropolitan Strategy Directions

The Sydney Metropolitan Strategy³ outlines strategies to respond to growth and change that is expected to occur in the greater metropolitan region of Sydney over the next 30 years. This includes deciding where to locate new areas for housing and jobs, providing public transport, with local schools and hospitals.

To support Sydney's economy, jobs will be encouraged to locate in centres, handy to transport. This will make best use of the transport system and make for more interesting and dynamic places. Major urban centres such as Hurstville will be nominated to provide different types of jobs, services and economic activities. Local councils throughout Sydney will be expected to provide guidance and develop strategies that will generate business investment and jobs growth.

There are streams applying to centres, corridors and release areas and the like, and further details have been extracted under the commercial and like headings below.

There are a number of other DCPs which are relevant to development in the Destinations corridor i.e. DCP 35 - Residential Flat Buildings, DCP 28 - Requirements for Access, DCP 29 - Outdoor Advertising, DCP 42 - Boarding houses hostels and group homes, DCP 46 - Amusement Centres, DCP 50 - Community Consultation, DCP 52 - Goods and Signs on Public Places, DCP 57 - Exempt and Complying Development, DCP 67 - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, DCP 70 - Telecommunications and Radio-communications and Draft DCP 71 - Landscape Design Principles and Guidelines.

Subsequently Ministers for Planning Knowles and Sartor re-emphasised the need for a centres-based approach in order to accommodate population growth near to essential facilities so that "wealth" can be re-distributed as the centres and their neighbourhoods become more attractive. Laudable and essential as this is, the seaside will always be highly attractive.

The Destinations Rockdale strategy is fully consistent with new urbanism and good urban design. Detailed work will be done on specific sites to ensure environmental, employment, lifestyle and similar standards are met (Rockdale having led Sydney in improving the liveability standards of apartment buildings).

Airport context

Rockdale's proximity to Sydney's Mascot Aerodrome poses sharp challenges. The traffic implications are severe as already explained - and the Airport should justly provide support for local infrastructure to relieve its traffic, noise and like effects. The new owner, Sydney Airport Corporation Limited (SACL) rightly uses Federal airport regulations to impose Obstacle Limitation Surfaces on surrounding LGAs - the theory is that a plane with difficulties may have to wander off its designated flight path and buildings higher than certain heights (given a distance away from the airport) might be a hazard. In most of Rockdale, that OLS height is 51 metres above sea level (the Australian Height Datum which is averaged over more than 30 sites around Australia). This means a building height at the Bay and other low points much higher than around the Rockdale Station and other high points.

There is a specific PANS OP control within the areas closer to the Airport where building height and location become more critical. This control is critical for routine aircraft operations. Local councils have been under

³ Draft at that stage

the impression that this was sacrosanct, and that impression was confirmed when RCC met SACL executives to discuss the Destinations strategy (which the latter supported in principle). The OLS height limits around Brighton-le-Sands – which is kilometres off approved flight plans – were accepted in Destinations Rockdale. PAN OPS was not involved.

RCC has had many concerns over SACL’s masterplan’s proposals to develop the area around the International Terminal No. 1 for commercial and tourism purposes. There is significant road infrastructure in that area but negligible public transport. Recently RCC was shocked to hear that SACL was proposing to develop some 60,000m² of commercial space including cinemas between the North-South Runways (therefore in extremely close proximity to the runways and vulnerable to aircraft just slightly off-course), off Foreshore Road using an access way built for construction purposes and left open for apron access. This reverses the public perception of risk based on PAN OPS and makes RCC wonder if the OLS restrictions at Brighton are valid. The access arrangements must exacerbate regional road congestion.

That recent SACL proposal was opposed by all affected councils, the State Government and the City of Sydney. Recently changes have been announced but this is a moveable feast, the Commonwealth being notoriously insensitive to local protests against commercial airport developments in all affected States.

Away from Brighton the alignment of the east-west runway in particular invokes noise restrictions based on the Australian Noise Exposure Factors map shown below (with interpretative text on the left). These contours were taken into full account in developing Destinations Rockdale.

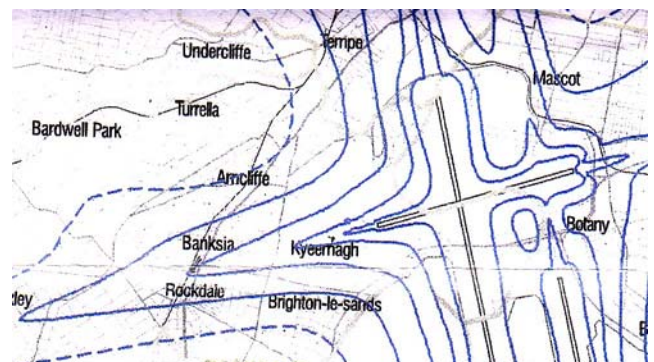
The dotted line at bottom left is the 20 ANEF contour – the next two unbroken lines are 25 and 30 respectively. All levels are as predicted for 2023/24. It can be seen that the 25-30 zone encompasses Rockdale town centre from about 7 Ways northwards, with the 30-plus zone making an incursion above the Town Hall and extending over the railway to the western side of the town centre. The proposed cinema/commercial complex is in this vicinity and the noise restriction was why a residential component was not included (see below).

BUILDING SITE ACCEPTABILITY BASED ON ANEF ZONES
(from Australian Standard 2021)

Building type	ANEF zone of site		
	Acceptable	Conditionally acceptable	Unacceptable
House, home unit, flat, caravan park	Less than 20 ANEF (Note 1 of AS2021)	20 to 25 ANEF (Note 2 of AS2021)	Greater than 25 ANEF
Hotel, motel, hostel	Less than 25 ANEF	25 to 30 ANEF	Greater than 30 ANEF
School, university	Less than 20 ANEF (Note 1 of AS2021)	20 to 25 ANEF (Note 2 of AS2021)	Greater than 25 ANEF
Hospital, nursing home	Less than 20 ANEF (Note 1 of AS2021)	20 to 25 ANEF	Greater than 25 ANEF
Public building	Less than 20 ANEF (Note 1 of AS2021)	20 to 30 ANEF	Greater than 30 ANEF
Commercial building	Less than 25 ANEF	25 to 35 ANEF	Greater than 35 ANEF
Light industrial	Less than 30 ANEF	30 to 40 ANEF	Greater than 40 ANEF
Other industrial	Acceptable in all ANEF zones		

NOTES:

1. The actual location of the 20 ANEF contour is difficult to define accurately, mainly because of variation in aircraft flight paths. Because of this, the procedure of Clause 2.3.2 of AS2021 may be followed for building sites outside but near to the 20 ANEF contour.
2. Within 20 ANEF to 25 ANEF, some people may find that the land is not compatible with residential or educational uses. Land use authorities may consider the incorporation of noise control features in the construction of residences or schools is appropriate (see also Figure A1 of Appendix A of AS2021).
3. There will be cases where a building of a particular type will contain spaces used for activities which would generally be found in a different type of building (e.g. an office in an industrial building). In these cases the above Table should be used to determine site acceptability, but internal design noise levels within the specific spaces should be determined by Table 3.3 of AS2021.
4. This standard does not recommend development in unacceptable areas. However, where the relevant planning authority determines that any development may be necessary within existing built-up areas designated as unacceptable, it is recommended that such development should achieve the required ANR determined according to Clause 3.2 of AS2021. For residences, schools, etc., the effect of aircraft noise on outdoor areas associated with the buildings should be considered.
5. In no case should new development take place in greenfield sites deemed unacceptable because such development may impact airport operations.



The SACL proposed development was said to offend against these noise standards.

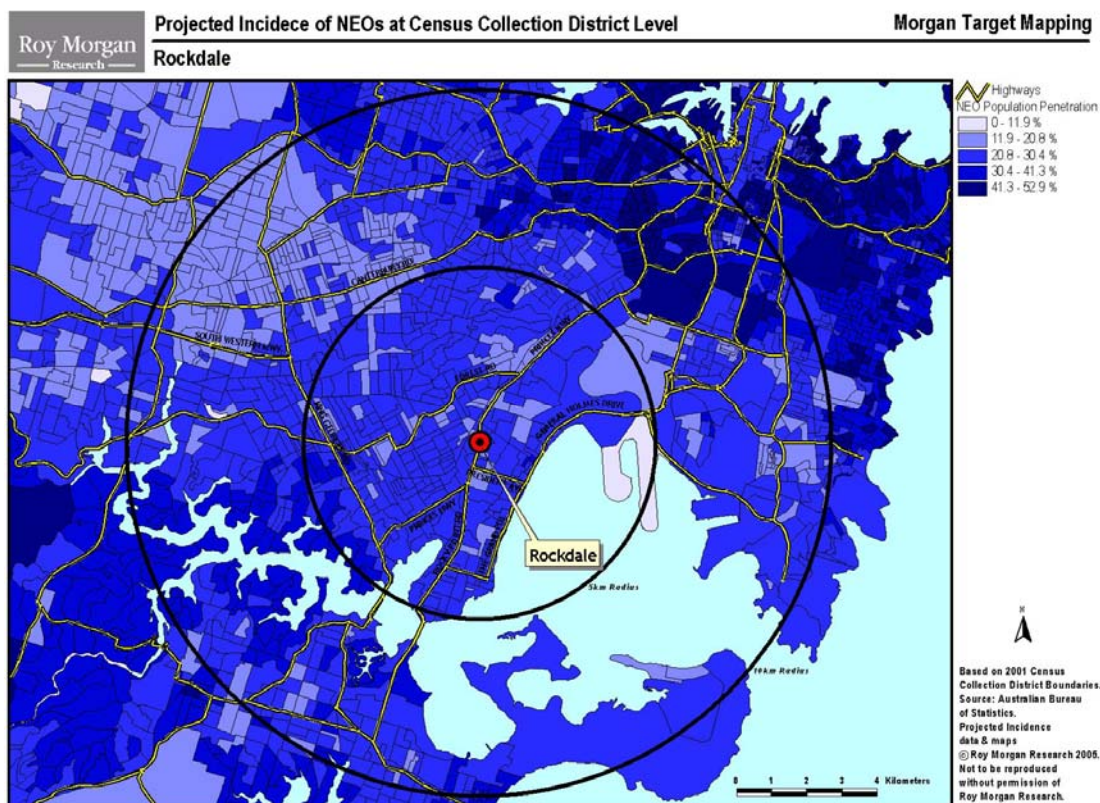
Commercial, Retail and Residential Development Context

The assessments of office, industrial and retail capacities and prospects undertaken during the preparation of the Metropolitan Strategy did not include Rockdale and most other council areas. The Government's reports focussed on the CBD, Surry Hills/Redfern and Green Square; industrial in Botany Bay City; and retail on Green Square, East Sydney, Surry Hills/Redfern and Alexandria/Rosebery.⁴ In Redfern the Minister for Planning has emphasised the need to generate employment rather than simply replace existing residential places.

Conventional retail developments (malls and mega centres) are not appropriate to mainstreet and suburban shops. There is a growing realisation in America and Australia (and elsewhere) that mainstreets better provide for the needs of most shoppers. Rockdale town centre and Brighton-le-Sands are not positioned to compete against mega-malls and CBDs; but are ideally placed to cater for the discretionary needs of the most profitable part of the population.

People in society are usually analysed in terms of their age or ethnicity or shared interest. Sometimes they are analysed in income or asset or privilege terms. "NEO" analysis is different. It takes people from all age groups, ethnicities, income bands and locations and analyses them according to the propensity to spend their income on disposable goods and in particular on the sort of products that they'd find in mainstreets. NEO is not an elitist term – it distinguishes the new economy from the old economy while emphasising the wonderful features of the traditional way (neighbourhood or pre-Mall) of doing things.

The most relevant focus is the *neo-consumer revolution* which focuses on the highest-discretionary spenders, the NEO consumers. These are not necessarily high-income people. There are one million of these high-spending NEOs in Sydney (and in Rockdale!) and 375,000 in central and South Sydney – this is the trade or catchment area that will make Rockdale a destination again. It is the largest such catchment in Australia (see the graphic below).



⁴ This was written on the basis of materials circulated by the Department of Planning prior to the release of the full Metro Strategy. The assumption were proven to be appropriate, see the later section on the Metro Strategy.

It is not just the spending behaviour that makes NEOs valuable, it is their mindset. After all not all consumers with money like spending it. NEOs have it AND like to spend it. They seek out authentic and interesting retail contexts which offer the products they want in an environment they enjoy. NEOs treasure rich information and memorable experiences ahead of price. They love authenticity and diversity. This knowledge underpins the current mainstreet and town centre planning for Rockdale. Rockdale can offer these qualities when you consider that the NEOs' needs are:

- Authenticity – imagination (no theme bars)
- Edgy – the path less travelled
- Human Scale – no high-rise canyons
- Natural – leave a precinct open to the elements
- Hand-Made – individual character
- Provenance – tell the story
- Rich Information – offer informed choices
- Diversity – a complex mix is best
- Food Rules – put food with everything
- Critical Intensity – fewer categories-more choice
- Individuality – no national chains
- Design – architecture, homewares, art
- Rich Content – intelligent movies, books, art
- Experience – walk, talk, sun, rain, eat, read

There have been other NEO-focused developments in Australia – the Neo-Neighbourhoods. A fine example of the Live/Work/ Play philosophy can be found in the James Street redevelopment in Brisbane’s Fortitude Valley; the next ones will be in Rockdale City. Rockdale’s geography opens up this market to future-proof the retailers of Rockdale and underpin small and medium enterprise commercial development, and community satisfaction of course.

The ease of access of such consumers to Rockdale’s neo-neighbourhoods depends on rail and road facilities, parking and walking comfort, and the intrinsic quality of the retail and community facilities. All are addressed in this strategy.

The limitations of conventional retail analysis did not prevent SGS from developing some background analyses. They pointed out that conceptualisation of the likely catchment area for the Rockdale development raises some difficult issues. The scale and character of the proposed development is such that demand is likely to be drawn from a wide area. While traditional demand from the local area can be forecast with reference to historical growth in employment or population, it is more difficult to identify the likely amount of latent demand that can flow from the rest of the metropolitan region. As a result, the following analysis of floorspace demand is limited in its application.

Demand for retail floorspace can be determined through analysis of retail employment trends. The table below illustrates the recent growth in retail employment between 1996 and 2001.

Historical Retail Employment Growth

Region	1996	2001	Annual Growth Rate
Kogarah LGA	1511	1677	2.1%
Hurstville LGA	4176	4037	-0.7%
Rockdale LGA	3801	3976	0.9%
St George SSD	9487	9690	0.4%

Source: ABS JTW data

There has been limited growth in retail employment in Rockdale with Kogarah growing more strongly and Hurstville displaying negative retail employment growth. These figures suggest that forecast retail employment growth would be fairly low. However, the limited growth may be linked to limitations in new supply of retail floorspace. Commercial agents suggested to SGS Economics and Planning that commercial floorspace has in general not grown with line with population growth over recent years.

Vacancy rates are currently reported to be around 5% for retail properties (compared to 10% for office properties). This suggests a strong demand for retail space much of which is food and clothing based. (Inspections show few vacancies on the eastern side of the Town Centre and in Brighton with consistent movement of people on the streets; but with less vigorous indicators on the western side of the Town Centre.)

While it is difficult to forecast an appropriate growth rate for demand in retail floorspace, we know that retail expenditure is a factor of population growth and growth in income expenditure per person.

Growth in household incomes is complicated by the fact that the ABS only provides data on the number of households within particular income bands. This makes it difficult to determine a precise average income. The growth in income per person is illustrated in the table below. The table is calculated by determining the proportion of people within each income band and then multiplying this proportion by the mid-point of each income band. The total of these figures provides an estimate of the average annual income level for each LGA.

Household Income Growth (median \$ per week)

	Rockdale	Hurstville	Kogarah
2001	440.4	470.9	512.7
1996	358.5	380.7	412.6
% change pa	4.2%	4.3%	4.4%

Source: ABS Data, SGS Calculations

Household incomes in the area have risen strongly at around 4.3% per annum. If we assume incomes continue to grow at this rate and population continues to grow at around 1% per annum, we have a conservative estimate of growth in retail expenditure of around 5% per annum.

Once again, this figure is a nominal figure and should be adjusted to take account of inflation. Even if we assume inflation of around 3% per annum over the period, it would not be unreasonable to estimate that retail expenditure in the region might rise by 2% per annum in real terms each year. These are strong drivers.

In this context, the region could be expected to provide additional floorspace to cater for this increased retail demand at around 2% per annum to ensure there is no 'restriction' on the supply of retail floorspace. Whilst figures for current retail floorspace are unavailable, we can estimate the current amount of floorspace with reference to employment figures for the retail industry. We know in 2001 there were around 9,690 retail employees in the St George SSD.

The city of Sydney floorspace ratios suggest that retail floorspace consumption per employee is around 24.22 m² per person in the CBD. If we assume Rockdale is likely to have a slightly higher rate of consumption (due to lower rents and floorspace pressures), we can use a figure of 27 m² per retail employee. This suggests that in 2001 there was around 261,000 m² of retail floorspace in the Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville LGAs. Assuming a 2% retail employment growth rate and floorspace consumption of around 27 m² per retail employee, the St George SSD region is likely to require around 159,185 m² of additional floorspace in the period 2001- 2025. Floorspace demand forecasts vary between 65,000 and 290,000 m².

Office floorspace demand has been estimated with reference to forecast growth in office employment in Rockdale. This approach assumes that historical growth rates in office employment will continue into the future at the same rate. Office employment is defined to include the following for ANZSIC industry categories:

- Government and Administration
- Property and Business Services
- Communication Services and,
- Finance and Insurance.

The analysis has included the three separate LGAs that make up the St George SSD, as much of the study area is split between these LGAs. The table below outlines the growth in employment in these categories between the 1996 and 2001 census periods.

Historical Office Employment Growth 1996-2001

	1996	2001	Annual Growth Rate
Kogarah LGA	3929	4610	3.3%
Hurstville LGA	4927	5059	0.5%
Rockdale LGA	4102	3737	-1.8%
St George SSD	12957	13406	0.7%

Source: TPDC JTW data 1996, 2001

Over the period 1996-2001, office employment grew at a rate of 0.7% across the St George SSD. Kogarah experienced the highest rate of growth with 3.3% pa whilst Rockdale experienced negative growth of around -1.8% pa. The table below shows which industries were responsible for these growth rates.

Employment by Industry 1996-2001

Period	Area	Communic Serv	Finan & Insur	Prop & Bus Serv	Govt Admin & Defence
2001	Kogarah LGA	59	2,086	1,532	932
	Hurstville LGA	230	1,472	2,770	588
	Rockdale LGA	316	347	2,102	972
	St George SSD	605	3,904	6,404	2,492
1996	Kogarah LGA	74	1,751	1,217	887
	Hurstville LGA	411	1,390	2,218	908
	Rockdale LGA	842	385	1,899	976
	St George SSD	1,326	3,526	5,333	2,772
% change pa	Kogarah LGA	-4.2%	3.6%	4.7%	1.0%
	Hurstville LGA	-11.0%	1.1%	4.5%	-8.3%
	Rockdale LGA	-17.8%	-2.1%	2.1%	-0.1%
	St George SSD	-14.5%	2.1%	3.7%	-2.1%

Source: ABS JTW data

While employment in the communications services industry declined over the period, this was off a comparatively small base. The property and business services industry was the major office employer in the region (although Kogarah displayed strong employment in the finance and insurance sector), and it generally grew strongly at around 4% pa across the 3 LGAs.

Also of interest was the fact that Government Administration and Defence employment was down by 8% pa (or around 320 jobs) in Hurstville LGA over the period, contributing to a fall of 2.1% pa. for the St George SSD. This may be due to Government departments relocating to designated regional centres like Parramatta although this is not proven.

Historical growth in the St George office employment market was not strong (0.7% pa compared to around 2.7% pa for the Sydney greater metropolitan region). It could be argued that this has been a result of limitations on available supply, but a more likely reason is that this is also due to the centralisation of Sydney Metropolitan office employment in either the CBD, North Sydney, Parramatta or one of the suburban business parks (like Norwest). The coastal location and proximity to markets and residences of Rockdale can turn this perception around.

While there has been a decline in floorspace consumption in recent years, consumption rates appear to have stabilised. The rationale is that many office workers now work in open-plan cubicles rather than separate offices and this conversion appears to have reached its practical limits. As such, we have assumed that the rate of floorspace consumption will remain steady at 25 m² per employee over the next 20 years.

The preceding analysis allows us to compile a quantities forecast for office floorspace demand into the future based on the previously outlined assumptions. While these forecasts are limited in their accuracy by the availability of data, they do provide a starting point for comparing relative demand for different categories of floorspace later in this report.

An expected, growth rate in office employment of 1% based on an initial number of office workers in 2001 of 13,406 in the St George SSD suggests the region could grow office employment to 17,022 employees by 2025. Using a figure of 25 m² of floorspace per employee, this translates to an additional 90,401 m² of floorspace required in the period 2001-2025. Floorspace demand will vary between 34,000 and 172,000 m² depending on the assumptions used in the model.

Unless the region can build a strong business profile and attract some high-profile anchor tenants, it appears unlikely that office employment will grow at more than about 1% p.a. The current strategy reflects that need. The cost of space in Hurstville and Kogarah was identified by the HillPDA study as a significant constraint on growth there. An excellent commercial environment and strong flows of people will make Rockdale shine like a light – through the Dome and nearby centres on Bryant Street and the Masonic site in particular. Retail employment will be the primary driver of employment for the increasing population in Rockdale and elsewhere, and this is the essence of the Destinations logic.

Social and Water Infrastructure

Rockdale City Council currently offers a central library on the corner of the Princes Highway and Bryant Street and satellite services; and co-operates with neighbouring Councils in the development of regional library services. Its Bryant Street headquarters has a suitable foyer on the Ground Floor for community enquiries and public liaison with developers/applicants. The Hall is an outdated venue for school and other groups. Staff facilities are minimal.

Local theatre and opera groups use the Guild Theatre on the western side of the railway line; and the Bryant Street Hall. Neither are particularly suitable for these or visiting performers and are well below the standard of other councils' entertainment centres.

There are clusters of sporting facilities in Scarborough Park and on West Botany Street. There are no parkland or play facilities in the town centre around which major residential developments have occurred.

The main parking facilities in the corridor are on the streets apart from Council carparks in Brighton-le-Sands and near Target. The SRA has allocated parking space on the eastern side of the Station.

The main community features of the past, the Bay pier, changing sheds and enclosed baths, are long gone. There is a netted swimming enclosure opposite the Le Sands Restaurant.

To explain some history, Muddy Creek begins in Hurstville Council's area and flows into the then Bexley Council area (long combined with Rockdale) and then into the original Rockdale Council areas. To avoid disputes over responsibility of stormwater between the then-three councils, the ownership of the channel was transferred to Sydney Water. In this area the channel is very flat and flood waters are impacted significantly by tidal influences. There is also currently no large scale treatment of stormwater within the Muddy Creek Catchment although there are some litter traps.

Rockdale LGA is divided *in toto* into 10 principal catchments plus some minor catchments along Botany Bay based on the existing creek and river system. The original formation of high wind blown dunes adjacent to Botany Bay and creation of the lower creek system behind forces the flow of stormwater back along Bay Street from the Bay to Muddy Creek near West Botany Street.

Destinations Rockdale is principally located in the Muddy Creek Catchment though there are elements of the minor catchments along Botany Bay and the upper reaches of the Scarborough Ponds Catchment. The flood plain analysis poses no problems for Destinations apart from the canal itself and some constraints adjacent to it.

There is no major sewer through the town centre (such as would affect road diversions and the like). None of the Destinations projects would affect water and sewer locations although there be local capacity aspects to be assessed at Brighton.

Heritage and Community

Rockdale's development started with land grants from the Crown in the early 1800s. Initial development comprised some farming along Wolli Creek and the establishment of Tempe House in 1836 on the banks of the Cooks River. The village of Arncliffe in 1868 was the first evidence of more consolidated development. Crown auctions placed the balance of the area in private ownership by the end of the century.

The building of Forest Road and Rocky Point Road enabled Sydney gentlemen to establish villas on large estates in the 1880s. The coming of the railway about the same time made the area attractive for the southern residential expansion of Sydney, mainly with detached housing stock. In 1885 Thomas Saywell linked the railway station at Rockdale with a tramway down Bay Street to Brighton Beach. At Brighton he built a hotel, sea baths and housing and a decade later he added a racecourse. Higher density development was mainly along the water front as in other suburbs.

Suburbanisation continued through to the 1950s by which time the LGA had been fully developed. Today the legacy is a significant number of Victorian style villas, Federation style houses and houses built between the Wars and in the Californian Bungalow style; with mainly ageing medium rise units along the Grand Parade.

Destination Rockdale focuses on the Rockdale Town Centre and Saywell's areas of Bay Street and Brighton Le Sands, bisected by Muddy Creek. Development in the Rockdale and Brighton town centres is mainly undistinctive low rise commercial buildings from the early and mid twentieth century, contrasting with more recent high rise apartments. Housing linking the two centres along Bay Street is of varying types and ages with a legacy of older terrace type housing adjacent to Rockdale.

The heritage study identified a number of items within the Destinations corridor including houses in Bay Street and Princess Street, however only the terraces in the Grand Parade are heritage items. Also in Brighton are the baths, the Cook Park along the beach and trees in the Grand Parade and the trees in Princess Street. In Rockdale the Railway Station, Town Hall, Bay Street Uniting Church and The School of Arts are heritage items. Natural areas and landscape include rock faces in Bay Street and George Street, and in both areas all sandstone and brick curbing has been listed. These are generally of local significance, not State.

The Government requires councils to acknowledge the need to provide affordable housing, mainly through a mix of housing types and grades and sometimes through the application of development levies to fund the acquisition of units for rental or purchase on a subsidised basis. Destinations Rockdale is based on extending the housing types in the corridor and the Council will have the chance to meet the Government's requirements at the time.

Metro Strategy – revised framework

The Metro Strategy was released in December 2005 and comprised the land use elements (centres, corridors, housing and the like) rather than transport and infrastructure which are expected to be available towards the end of 2006; and there were many proposed for new committees to investigate individual elements.

There were format and other changes in the final version compared with the material that had been coming out of DIPNR. The population growth figures given previously in this report had to be reconciled with the final version, with the result set out below.

The Strategy reviewed centres policies and placed great emphasis on Sydney's strategic centres which include:

- Global Sydney, encompassing Sydney City and North Sydney, with nationally and internationally significant businesses, entertainment and cultural facilities
- Regional Cities providing a focus for cultural, shopping and business services
- specialised centres of high value economic activity; and
- major shopping, civic and recreation centres around public transport.

It also identified

- economic corridors, which contain important economic activities in centres and specialized places. Sydney's economic corridors are the City to Airport, North Sydney to Macquarie Park, the M5, Parramatta Road and the emerging M7.
- Renewal corridors which are areas that are partly run down and/or have significant underutilized infrastructure. The Parramatta to City corridor is one example.
- Enterprise corridors which are the strips of commercial or industrial activity along busy roads. A corridor may be included in more than one of these categories. For example, Parramatta Road has the characteristics of all three types of corridors.

The Principles were stated to be:

INFRASTRUCTURE UTILISATION

Growth will be directed to those corridors where there is existing or future capacity along the main public transport systems. Development will need to take account of the existing and future capacity of other forms of infrastructure, including utilities, schools and hospitals and open space.

CONNECTING PLACES

The main public transport routes that connect strategic centres must operate effectively. Equally important are the local transport links which connect surrounding villages to the main public transport route.

RIPE FOR RENEWAL

A number of Sydney's declining corridors have the potential for additional growth due to their existing or proposed infrastructure investments.

PROTECT CORE ROLES

Corridor development will not be pursued at the expense of their existing economic roles. Protecting land for core and specialised employment uses and reinforcing clusters within economic and enterprise corridors will often be fundamental to the economic performance of the individual subregion.

It stated that successful centres:

- are accessible and pedestrian friendly;
- provide good public transport options;
- contain good jobs, learning opportunities and cultural activities; and
- have good, safe public domain spaces.

In these contexts, Rockdale was not mentioned even though it (as a place), its corridors and Destinations Rockdale as a strategy meet some or all of the various criteria. Its neighbours Hurstville and Kogarah were nominated as "major centres" with a criterion of a minimum of 8,000 jobs but without any discussion of the whys and wherefores of one against the others. Kogarah's Town Centre development (next illustration) has been praised but Destinations has arguably greater potential and Rockdale is more strategically located on the main road and rail corridors.⁵ The previous Metro delineation had Rockdale and Kogarah as District Centres with only Hurstville as a Regional Centre. It is interesting that the retail and commercial hierarchy is Hurstville (116,000 m²), Rockdale (28,000 m² plus 21,600 m² in the Plaza), then Kogarah (24,400 m²).⁶ Brighton has 13,000 m². Using the previously-stated employment-to-floorspace ratios (25 to 27 m² per employee – say 26 m²), the respective numbers of jobs are 4,500, 1,900 and 940. Brighton has 500 on that basis making some 2,400 in the Destinations corridor.

⁵ It is acknowledged that Kogarah has "specialist" characteristics related to St George Hospital, the HQ of the St George Bank and the TAFE.

⁶ Table 33 of HillPDA, St George Economic and Employment Strategy (2005).

CASE STUDY – KOGARAH

Kogarah is an excellent example of urban renewal in Sydney. Kogarah had a number of key elements including a major hospital, successful banking sector, a railway station; and perhaps most importantly a traditional main street.

New developments have provided an increased residential density and a new town square that supports these services to make a vibrant and successful major centre. New buildings such as Kogarah Town Square are five to seven storeys with basement car parking, and a mix of retail and commercial uses with residential above. The project is also outstanding in its environmental performance.



In fact, Rockdale’s only mentions were that it exists, has a population and is a member of SSROC. It was under-valued. It is placed for planning purposes in a different local government grouping, with Canterbury and Marrickville as well as Sutherland which is a region in itself. The list of centres is as follows (it should be noted that the employment do not appear to relate to centres but to the whole LGAs):

Centre Type	Centre/Precinct	2001 Employment	2031 Capacity Target	Change 2001-2031
Global Sydney	SYDNEY	331,572	380,000	14.5%
	NORTH SYDNEY	45,180	60,000	22.0%
Regional Cities	PARRAMATTA	41,862	60,000	44.0%
	LIVERPOOL	15,533	30,000	93.0%
	PENRITH	19,074	30,000	57.0%
	GOSFORD*	12,284	17,000	38.0%
Specialised Centres	MACQUARIE PARK	32,308	55,000	70.0%
	ST LEONARDS	25,166	33,000	31.0%
	OLYMPIC PARK/RHODES	13,867	25,000	83.0%
	PORT BOTANY AND ENVIRONS	11,264	12,000	6.5%
	SYDNEY AIRPORT AND ENVIRONS	36,063	55,000	52.5%
	RANDWICK EDUCATION AND HEALTH	9,790	12,000	22.6%
	WESTMEAD	13,267	20,000	50.1%
	BANKSTOWN AIRPORT/MILPERRA	16,225	20,000	22.5%
	NORWEST	4,651	15,000	322.0%
	Major Centres	BANKSTOWN	10,094	14,000
BLACKTOWN		10,220	15,000	46.8%
BONDI JUNCTION		9,821	14,000	42.6%
BROOKVALE/DEE WHY		9,863	12,000	24.1%
BURWOOD		9,525	13,000	36.5%
CAMPBELLTOWN		10,542	15,000	42.3%
CASTLE HILL		9,091	12,000	32.0%
CHATSWOOD		22,923	28,000	22.2%
HORNSBY		9,412	12,000	27.5%
HURSTVILLE		12,983	17,000	30.1%
KOGARAH		9,478	12,000	26.6%
WYONG/TUGGERAH*		8,417	12,000	42.6%
TOTAL			763,953	1,000,000

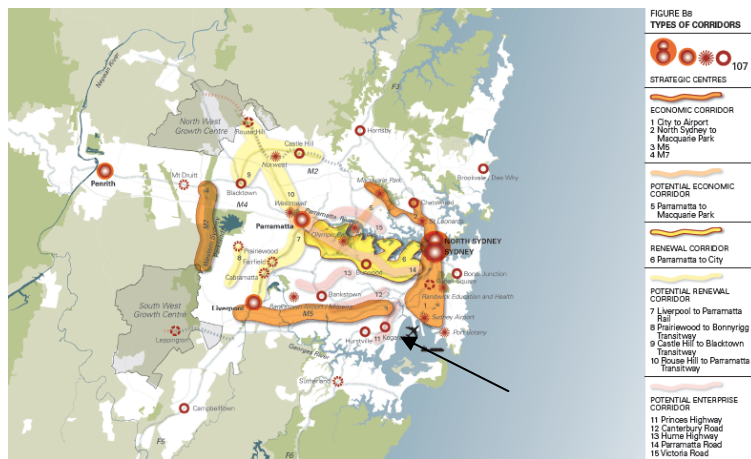
This is mapped:



Rockdale does not appear to be seen to have potential despite the massive increase in its population (next section):

Centre Type	Centre/Precinct	2001 Employment	2031 Capacity Target	Change 2001-2031
Planned Major Centres	GREEN SQUARE	5,827	14,000	140%
	ROUSE HILL	937	9,000	861%
	LEPPINGTON	1,520	9,000	492%
Potential Major Centres	FAIRFIELD	4,429		
	MT DRUITT	2,838		
	PRAIRIEWOOD	2,278	36,000	100%
	CABRAMATTA	4,198		
	SUTHERLAND	4,134		
TOTAL		26,161	68,000	

Rockdale’s proximity (and its neighbouring councils’) to several of the most strategic foci is illustrated in the following extract:



The positive steps identified to support the appropriate development of centres would be of assistance in achieving a sustainable future for Rockdale, such as:

B3.4.3 Identify, protect and promote sites for large scale development in strategic centres. In many centres development of key sites can act as a catalyst for additional development. Developers may be risk averse when it comes to being the first to undertake a significant development in a relatively untested market. As part of the Stronger Centres Initiative, sites which might have development potential will be identified.

The State Government can then encourage councils and owners to facilitate development on particular sites by, for example, preparing appropriate site development controls, assisting with architecture and design, preparing site development prospectus material, marketing to key property brokers or development interests and ‘fast tracking’ approvals.

Clear guidance is required as to where retail and commercial office activities should be located with a critical determinant being good public transport and boosting activity and vitality in centres across the spectrum to encourage and sustain investment.

Many more such extracts could be quoted (they have been collated in a background document which is available on request).

Rockdale’s omission appears to be a blind spot in the Strategy. Being nominated as a centre would assist in guiding the Government towards acknowledging its infrastructure, employment-generation and other needs and potential.

We shall now deal with the Strategy’s demographic content. On population, there was no breakdown of area-by-LGA population (as opposed to the numbers given earlier which were generated during the drafting phases). It was stated that with population growing to 5.3 million and average household sizes anticipated to fall from 2.65 to 2.36 persons per private dwelling by 2031, a total of 2.2 million homes will be required in Sydney. However, details were given of the broad projection assumptions, being at a “medium” level (10 to 15% higher than recent growth rates), and the practical implications for housing stock were explained:

Forecasts show that Sydney’s population will grow by around 1.1 million people by 2031 and will require a range of housing options that differs significantly from today’s housing stock. With the population growing to 5.3 million by 2031 and average household sizes anticipated to fall from 2.65 to 2.36 people per private dwelling, Sydney will have a total of 2.2 million dwellings.

Currently, Sydney has approximately 1.6 million dwellings but a proportion of the total is always vacant or otherwise not available. Making an allowance for this, and for residents of non-private dwellings (for example residential care facilities and boarding homes), means that Sydney would need an additional 640,000 new dwellings by 2031. Current forecasts are that 190,000 new dwellings will be built in existing areas by 2013 under current planning controls.

Over three-quarters of new housing will be located in strategic centres, smaller centres and corridors within walking distance of shops, jobs and other services concentrated around public transport nodes. As housing density increases in these places, the character of Sydney’s suburbs will be protected.

The pattern is shown in this table:

SUBREGION*	EXISTING DWELLINGS 2004	% IN 2004	NEW IN GREENFIELD AND RURAL AREAS	NEW IN EXISTING AREAS	TOTAL ADDITIONAL TO 2013	% CHANGE	TOTAL IN 2013	% IN 2013
SYDNEY CITY	76,833	5%	0	31,380	31,380	41%	108,213	6%
EAST	122,184	8%	0	12,960	12,960	11%	135,144	7%
SOUTH	248,629	16%	50	26,635	26,685	11%	275,313	15%
INNER WEST	95,198	6%	0	15,455	15,455	16%	110,653	6%
INNER NORTH	129,256	8%	0	11,552	11,552	9%	140,808	8%
NORTH	88,024	6%	690	10,010	10,700	12%	98,724	5%
NORTH EAST	90,081	6%	1,770	5,245	7,015	8%	97,096	5%
WEST CENTRAL	228,297	14%	235	35,665	35,900	16%	264,197	14%
NORTH WEST	250,924	16%	25,865	15,255	41,120	16%	292,044	16%
SOUTH WEST	128,570	8%	22,212	12,128	34,340	27%	162,910	9%
CENTRAL COAST	139,016	9%	5,265	13,130	18,395	13%	157,411	9%
TOTAL	1,597,012		56,087	189,415	245,502	15%	1,842,514	

*SOURCE: 2004 DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

The period was also different than in the earlier numbers which were for 2031.

Employment targets for 2031 are:

SUBREGION	LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	NEW DWELLINGS	EMPLOYMENT CAPACITY TARGETS*
SYDNEY CITY	City of Sydney	55,000	58,000 NEW JOBS
EAST	Botany Bay, Randwick, Waverley, Woollahra	20,000	17,500 NEW JOBS
SOUTH	Kogarah, Hurstville, Canterbury, Rockdale, Sutherland, Marrickville	35,000	21,000 NEW JOBS
INNER WEST	Achfield, Burwood, Canada Bay, Leichhardt, Strathfield	30,000	10,000 NEW JOBS
INNER NORTH	Lane Cove, North Sydney, Ryde, Willoughby, Hunters Hill, Mosman	30,000	54,000 NEW JOBS
NORTH	Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai	21,000**	8,000 NEW JOBS
NORTH EAST	Pittwater, Warringah, Manly	12,300**	16,000 NEW JOBS
WEST CENTRAL	Auburn, Bankstown, Fairfield, Holroyd, Parramatta	95,500	35,000 NEW JOBS
NORTH WEST	Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Penrith	EXISTING AREAS 60,000 NW GROWTH CENTRE*** 50,000 OTHER GREENFIELD 20,000	99,000 NEW JOBS
SOUTH WEST	Wollondilly, Camden, Campbelltown, Liverpool	EXISTING AREAS 40,000 SW GROWTH CENTRE*** 100,000 OTHER GREENFIELD 15,000	80,000 NEW JOBS
CENTRAL COAST	Gooford, Wvong SUBJECT TO A SEPARATE REGIONAL STRATEGY	EXISTING AREAS 35,000 GREENFIELD AREAS 21,000	55,000 NEW JOBS

*NEW JOBS FROM 2034 **INCLUDES A SMALL AMOUNT OF GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT ***INCLUDES DWELLINGS THAT WILL BE BUILT AFTER 2031
THESE TARGETS ARE SUBJECT TO PERIODIC REVIEW AS PART OF THE REGULAR METROPOLITAN STRATEGY REVIEWS.

The growth in the South grouping of 21,000 units compares with the proposed number of new dwellings of 35,000. At an average end average dwelling size of 2.36 persons in 2031 (the current levels are much lower as already shown), this implies roughly speaking an extra 83,000-90,000 new residents. Considering the initial Canterbury, Marrickville and Sutherland numbers we can calculate that the St George increase will be in line with the projections on page 5. Rockdale is clearly facing a substantial population increase of 30,000 to 40,000.

Fleshing out the Visions

The challenge that the City Council gave its professional consultants was to develop ideas and concepts which would improve Rockdale's prospects while keeping in mind the special qualities of its communities – its history, the ethnic population, the affordable clothes and food and housing providers, and the community facilities in an ageing society.

The NEO Group provided strategic retail and mainstreet advice and Project Architecture a sharp design capacity as well as visual presentation technology. There was strong interaction between those two groups and the City Council's executive and project manager. The purposes of the exercise were to solve long-standing problems and to excite community interest in options that could be implemented over 20 years. The following visions meet these criteria.

The overall strategy was to improve the retail (and community) environment in Brighton and the Town Centre; achieve new urbanism there and along Bay Street in an integrated manner; and implement iconic developments that will make Sydney sit up and realise that Rockdale is an exciting destination – with its Bay and beach access, its wonderful ethnic food, its affordable shops and dwellings, its central precinct and its canal.

In terms of detailing the logic, we shall start at Brighton-le-Sands and work westwards along Bay Street to the Rockdale town centre.

On the Bay, a marina and breakwater would be built on solid foundations (akin to the groynes in the Bay) and a pier would be built on piles. This arrangement was the outcome of preliminary investigations which would need to be better defined once the concept was either endorsed or rejected:

- The seabed, tides, wave and wind climate and market aspects applying to the marina and pier were examined by Patterson Britton & Partners in a pre-feasibility review for Council. Local waves have a period of 2 to 5 seconds and are not affected by water depth; but swell waves are and modelling for the Port Botany expansion indicated a wave height of 1 to 1.5 metres during a south-easterly storm which is a genuine concern. The Bay is comparatively shallow; and the main base pattern is of significant depths of sand overlying clays. Without dredging, the marina may have to move further from the shoreline.
- Australian Standard AS3962 applies to vessel berth widths, water depths and entrance widths, carparking requirements and the like. These were taken into account. Normal chandlery and commercial support arrangements were envisaged except for launching and retrieval facilities which might be inappropriate for the site.
- Floating breakwater structures were considered of pontoon and catamaran types (with the latter preferred) but they have limited wave attenuation performance in swell conditions, high maintenance costs and potentially serious problems if they fail. The engineers considered that a structure similar to the groynes in the Bay would be more efficient, cheaper and not interfere with sand movements – naturally subject to detailed investigation. An alternative would be a fixed structure with a wave screen/skirt.

There appears to be strong demand for marina facilities in the Sydney area partly due to constraints in Sydney and Middle Harbours. Moreover the pier would be highly commercial. The swimming area would be upgraded in accordance with the illustration on page 13 of the brochure.

Within the profile of the beach and Cooks Park, a number of low-profile buildings would provide café and lifestyle facilities (including an excellent boardwalk through the sand and exercise alcoves). These would be expected to meet high environmental standards and public accessibility.

The biggest challenge is the reform of the Grand Parade as it assumes and requires an alternative traffic corridor because traffic flows are inexorable and inevitable. The changes on the boulevard (page 12 of the brochure) are universally attractive and non-controversial. The details are:

- The vision is to close the Grand Parade down to two traffic lanes from its current six to seven, by diverting through traffic to a By-Pass Road. The place will be quiet with just local traffic moving through, with drivers driving and parking with care as they do in similar places such as Goulburn, Terrigal, Leura, Crows Nest and other such "by-passed" locales. Businesses will thrive as this area becomes known as the best beach-side environs in Sydney. The street will be dominated by pedestrians once again. The benefits will

be widely distributed through the community. This is consistent with the Premier's recent statement that road usage would be constrained by increased public transport capacity and coverage.

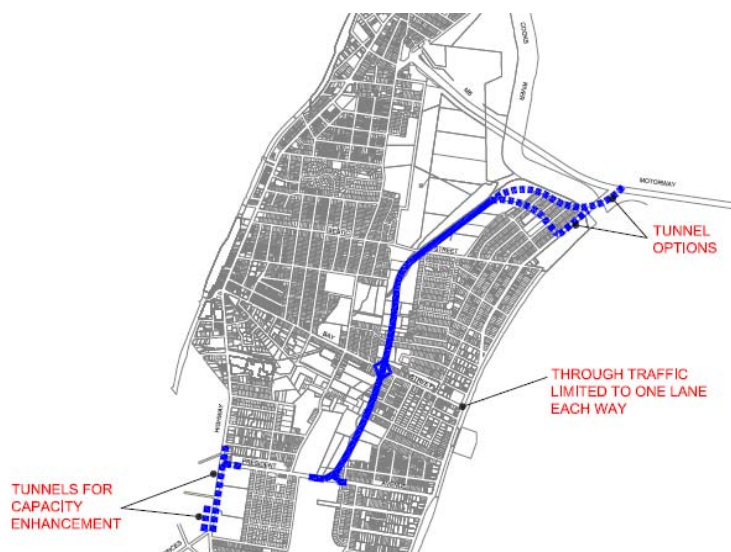
- Parking will be angled on one side, doubling capacity, but with green refuges along the road which would break down the appearance of a parking lot. The beach will be opened-up to locals (especially those walking down to the Bay) and visitors. Parking fees will be a minor revenue stream for the Council.
- At the same time, public transport would be promoted along the route. The beauty of the beachfront will draw commuters and walkers down to it. Buses are the obvious medium although light rail may be adopted after feasibility studies. The replacement road (in the F6 reservation) will carry longer-distance bus routes thus stimulating regional patronage; while local buses along the Bay will be less impeded by cars – enabling a higher frequency and greater patronage over time.

On the opposite corner of Bay Street to the Novotel, a new hotel will be built to the highest design standards. Market experience is that two hotels generate more business and consumer awareness than one. Part of the site is owned by Council and this will give it leverage to achieve its design targets. A PPP or conditional sale, both based on a Stage 1 DA, are the main prospects. Substantial development levies will be available especially if incremental betterment is allowed by the Government (below).

Council wants to achieve a major improvement in the design of the residential blocks along the Grand Parade. Conventional thinking is that a doubling or tripling of mass (lettable area) through height increases is required to justify demolition and rebuilding. That is not available here due to Airport OLS height limitations. The practical alternative is to limit development on the Parade to say 8 storeys but allow a densification in the hinterland, back say 700 to 800 metres from the Parade, all to a higher level than currently pertains. Commercial and retail uses would be included as well as public spaces. This would be the effective incentive to site consolidation and redevelopment, making the Parade redevelopment very feasible. This logic applies to the north and south of Bay Street to about 700 to 900 metres in each direction. (That is, as part of this corridor review: more extensive redevelopment may or may not be included in subsequent planning phases.) No resummptions are envisaged even for the road improvements.

Those new buildings would contain some retail and commercial space. Economic modelling will be done before detailed land use but it is expected that the increase in retail and commercial capacity including restaurants would exceed 40%. The residential retail spending (revenue and capital multipliers) would support the redevelopment along Bay Street, as appropriate. The increase in retail capacity is equivalent to 200 jobs on the previously-stated basis (26 m² per employee).

The conversion of the Grand Parade into a neighbourhood boulevard depends on the construction of the F6 or a more capacity-constrained By-Pass road. Council has developed an option that could be constructed as a lower-speed road (capacity is maximised at an average travelling speed of under 28 kmh). More detailed investigation is needed before the width and configuration of roads and ramps, the elevation (below ground, at grade or elevated) of specific sections, environmental and community impact and cost. There were strong signs of community support during the consultation phase.



A number of alternatives were considered. RCC had previously developed a short by-pass which would run off the Grand Parade in the same way as the full By-Pass option on page 23 of the brochure (see left), mid-way of Bestic Street or thereabouts down to President Avenue with a four-way intersection at Bay Street. This was ruled out on the grounds of undue expense relative to benefits, the costs of forcing north and south bound traffic on the Grand Parade to detour off the Grand Parade down President Avenue for such a short distance (leading also to driver resistance), and intensification of traffic on the Princes Highway. There would be

no benefits on Sandringham Street and similar. The F6 corridor is far more effective.

Under this scenario the existing traffic patterns would be maintained – the Grand Parade vehicles would be diverted to a non-stop road of equivalent capacity to the current flow on the Grand Parade (hopefully with increased capacity for emergency vehicle access given the contingencies of the Airport, Port and the petro-chemical complexes). The traffic using the M5 and Princes Highway would continue to do so – that would be an objective imposed on the RTA planners.

Bay Street is intended to achieve a transformation into a Norton Street-like mix of homes, private practices and boutique shops – to draw people from each end (Brighton and Rockdale). The built streetscape need not change much. The line of trees and street furniture along Bay Street would be Council's responsibility although there may be Federal and State grant money to apply to this urban design initiative. The trees will have to be positioned to not pose a road safety hazard. The RTA would contribute to agreed improvements. Substantial development levies can be expected from the intensification of commercial activity along its length.

The Canal traverses the corridor and is owned by Sydney Water. Substantial remodelling of its width, depth and course is proposed. The cost is likely to be modest in terms of Sydney Water's programs but the importance of its core functions is undeniable. The redevelopment is likely to be supported by levies on the residential components of the contingent estates and possibly more general corridor revenues if allowed by the State Government. Sydney Water should not expect to gain levies from adjacent development.

The creation of ponded areas within the channel to improve amenity will need to take into account possible increases in flood levels on adjoining properties. This may require the channel to be widened to compensate for the restricted flow (as illustrated in the brochure), or have other safety mechanisms put in place. Some of the area where the Civic Centre and Canal Residential is proposed is affected by overflows out of the Muddy Creek Channel during heavy storms and flood events. An engineering study will be undertaken to ensure that the locks on the canal will not impede flows during such adverse climatic events. The strong tendency towards on-site retention of stormwater on properties will make this strategy more feasible. The risk of increased siltation and accumulation of floatable litter will be overcome through flushing, maintenance and pollution control devices.

The mid-Bay Street section on West Botany Street has two sections. The Council relocation is largely Council's responsibility although there may be a housing component and a retail facility integrated with the staff cafeteria (as at Penrith City). Resumption of a small number of houses and relocation of the gym/PCYC may be required depending on lease expiries etc. The integrity of the design is critical.

50-metre pools cost around \$1 million to build and up to the same to operate each year (depending on staffing levels) in stand-alone situations but the incorporation of the pool into the new Civic Centre will reduce associated costs such as access ways and parking; and the covering will reduce operating costs. Sporting facilities' costs are notoriously difficult to estimate as the main ongoing cost is staffing level. Tennis courts are relatively inexpensive to install at around \$20-40,000 per court depending on surface, with grass being cheapest to construct and most expensive to maintain. Again commercial operators are aplenty. The commercial viability of the number of courts and hours of operations would be addressed during the detailed design stages. Council would probably outsource such activities.

Not only will no playing fields be lost and a pool, ball court and canal walkway/paddling course added, but the Bay Street frontage will be opened up. The poor orientation of the current fields and the fencing of the site to exclude community use now mean that the reforms will increase community use and access.

The residential component on the southern side has a public access component (canal and tennis or similar facilities) and public access along the canal is to be assured. There are private landowners who will either participate in the redevelopment or be compensated via site consolidation but not through Council resumption. The rezoning is expected to achieve the outcomes along with FSR bonuses depending on investigations.

The Masonic site will be the site of a major live/work/play redevelopment, an exemplar in Sydney. The site is owned by private home owners, the RSL Club, investors and Council. Consolidation will require complex negotiations along with a Stage 1 DA to ensure that design outcomes are achieved.

The 7 Ways has two main components. The road structure – an elliptical one-way circuit – is largely the RTA’s responsibility although both Council (and its commercial partners) and State Transit have a stake in subsidiary facilities such as busways, parking and acquisition of site residues. Other options were considered including vertical grade separation (overpass or undergrounding) of the main north-south traffic flows; but the expense was clearly excessive even though no critical Sydney Water sewer or water mains lie in the intersection. Any such scheme would involve complex, expensive and disruptive links with Bay Street and the rail bridge.

The road changes including scramble crossings could be expected to be RTA contributions to Highway improvements. There may be some money to apply to the service aspects from development levies on the developer(s) who come in, consolidate the site and build the markets. State Transit may supply waiting shelters – of superior quality – and the Council car parking bays and walkways. State Rail land is involved but their interest might be best realised through an airspace and ground sale or long-term lease.

The second component, the more important and complex one, is the main market development. This is not like Chatswood or Bondi Junction because the objectives are very different and the Airport restricts both height and the type of activity. The Dome will create the environment for commercial success but then open competition will apply to the providers so long as the service specification is met – slow food and quality service. The Dome and its concrete rafts, water features and escalators may be too expensive to be supported by a private developer or recovered through commercial rents on the site, but may be supported more widely. There may be Council and State Rail contributions. It’s possible that this site will not be viable by itself (in construction cost terms) but as the centrepiece of the zone bounded by the Masonic site, the cinemas and the Bryant Street zone, it will be supported by levies and ownership on the other sites. The rest will be privately paid. This would be an unusual but nonetheless feasible masterplanning challenge.

The two-level access for buses that is provided by the Dome will facilitate the expansion of bus services under the Unsworth (centre-to-centre) reforms which are minor in Rockdale’s situation, to date; and post-Unsworth intensification. The latter refers to the desire of the St George councils to see a doubling of the proportion of the population within walking distance of a bus route; and the restructuring of routes so that they mesh across the city, facilitated by integrated ticketing and real-time information devices on board, at bus stops and via mobile phones. This is potentially the only way to reduce or moderate traffic in Sydney’s circumstances.

The cinema complex is proximate to the station and carparks and is assumed to be totally commercial. It would be built to the limit of the permissible height but timed to be commercially appropriate (given local population increases and construction of nearby facilities). Its commercial content would complement the “James Street” style of the Bryant St work/play centre across the intersection.

The scramble crossings at 7 Ways and Bryant Street would be RTA responsibilities. These are major contributions to making the precinct more commercially friendly.

The new Civic Park involves existing leases over the Target store and carpark but there may be room to negotiate an earlier relocation and replacement approach given that overall retail capacity will increase. Other owners such as the Church of Christ would have to be compensated in accordance with Just Terms but perhaps through a land swap or occupation rights elsewhere. The commercial value of the shops on the Highway will increase and the underground carparking revenues would be taken into account. The site would probably be a commercial and Council responsibility and will require careful balancing of costs and revenues.

The Bryant Street live/work/play zone is relatively simple as it’s owned by Council. It is an intrinsic part of the critical mass in revitalising Rockdale’s retail capacity and enabling it to compete with malls. Conditional sale to a developer with a Stage 1 DA approval (to achieve design outcomes) is the likely path.

The removal of the Council from the Town Centre would be replaced by an overall increase in retail employment of at least 30% (320 jobs on the previous basis, page 19) – and add commercial and service jobs. The placement of Council jobs 10 minutes down Bay Street will help the transformation of Bay Street while not removing access backwards and forwards. The increase in activity in the town centre, along Bay Street and in Brighton will transform and revitalise Rockdale and go a fair way towards providing jobs for a 40% increase in population.

The increasing in housing capacity off Bay Street and the Grand Parade and in the Masonic Centre will more than meet the Metro Strategy's implicit targets while exceeding its employment targets. These judgements are to be tested through an independent evaluation.

The technical implementation considerations are described more completely in the Implementation Report.

Ecologically Sustainable Development requires the provision of employment, the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, the reduction of traffic congestion (related to stopping and starting as well as traffic volumes), and community engagement (think globally, act locally). RCC's intention was to construct a social balance sheet on each of the 16 elements of Destinations and overall, against economic, environmental and equity considerations. The necessary consultancy was not available but it is intended to collect the necessary information and place it before Council and the community. It will make the case all the more compelling.

Constraints and blockages

The Destinations Rockdale package is an imaginative and compelling example of local reform. It takes an existing situation with all its dynamics and complexities and turns problems into opportunities – the Dome and Canal are wonderful in these terms. It takes ethnic trades and uses NEO philosophies to dramatically increase employment without undermining local character. It provides an inner park and Bay facilities which will be valuable for existing and new residents as well as visitors, diverting traffic away from the Bay and park/beach into a long-reserved corridor. It increases community sporting and playing facilities while also contributing to the housing and other objectives of the Metro Strategy. Indeed, it matches a high rate of population increase with employment growth, which Sydney's planners would laud. It provides revenues to the Council to match its infrastructure contributions (especially the Dome).

Destinations Rockdale would be a challenging prospect for any council in any city of the world. The best quality of advisors has been engaged by RCC and the vision is achievable.

There are constraints.

First, the local government community lacks the ability of similar bodies overseas and interstate to fund reform. There is no ability to raise municipal bonds nor infrastructure levies. There are no betterment levies (to recycle a fair proportion of the value of capital appreciation) except in growth centres such as Redfern/Waterloo and Parramatta Road. Rate capping has inhibited Rockdale's and other councils' ability to maintain existing infrastructure let alone provide for the future needs of its residents.

Second, there are ambiguities in the Local Government Act regarding the separation of functions within Councils. RCC has received professional advice on separating Council policy against managerial implementation functions, and planning and commercial streams; and adopted policies along those lines. The PPP guidelines preclude contact with industry prior to submitting extensive information to the Department of Local Government; yet much of that information can only come from market sources (for example in relation to marina developments).

Third, the Metro Strategy excludes Rockdale from its centres programs which neglects Rockdale's significance and reform intentions. The Strategy needs to be amended so that Rockdale receives general support as well as in resolving issues of State significance – Botany Bay, the Grand Parade and the Princes Highway. Government Ministers have long sought solutions to these problems.

Fourth, Rockdale is impacted by the development of the Airport and Port. Both need to make contributions to local infrastructure improvement, directly or through Commonwealth and State funding schemes.

Finally, the community of Rockdale needs to be engaged in and committed to appropriate reform, not necessarily the Destinations package but the best ways of achieving sustainability. Local concerns are to be expected and honoured but ESD requires forward-looking as well. Effective community engagement is to be pursued.

Rockdale City Council has shown leadership in preparing Destinations Rockdale. The Council and the Rockdale community deserve to receive support in reforming this important and highly visible corner of Sydney, the world city. Rockdale is special and intends to show that to the world and thereby prosper.

