

1.3 STUDY AREA LOCALITY & CHARACTER

The NWRL includes a new station at Bella Vista. The new train station will be located on an extension of Lexington Drive, north of Celebration Drive in Bella Vista within the area currently used by Totally Home and other retail outlets.

The NWRL has the potential to promote employment and residential development in Bella Vista, which will help achieve key policy settings for metropolitan planning in Sydney such as providing more jobs closer to home, building more homes in an existing urban area, and enabling residential and employment growth in areas where there is available or planned public transport capacity.

Bella Vista can become a prime example of 'Transit Oriented Development' (TOD) - a mixed use community within walking distance of the train station that provides a range of office, retail, residential, open space, and public uses in a way that makes it convenient to walk, cycle or catch public transport rather than to travel by private car.

The boundary of the Study Area is based on the nearest road boundary within a radius of 800m from Bella Vista Station, which is a distance normally considered to reflect a 10 minute walking trip. The boundary has also been defined by taking into account the existing character, predominant land uses, built form and natural elements of the area.

The Bella Vista study area has an area of 472 hectares, and is located within the Hills Shire and Blacktown Local Government Areas (LGAs).

The Study Area extends to Memorial Avenue in the north, along Old Windsor Road, Glenwood Park Drive and Meurants Lane to the west, Prestige Avenue to the south and Westwood Way, Edgewater Drive and Fairway Drive to the east.

The south-western portion of Bella Vista is essentially an extension of Norwest Business Park, as it contains a large number of bulky goods and commercial uses. The northern part of the study area is largely undeveloped.

Lands immediately north and south of Norwest Boulevard comprise large floor plate business park style and bulky goods developments with generous setbacks and high quality landscaping, 2-3 storeys in height.

The Study Area also includes Norwest Private Hospital, a shopping centre and Bella Vista Farm, an historical property set amid large grounds. Lands north of Norwest Boulevard contain business park uses, up to 7 storeys in height, with high quality landscaping, setbacks and high rates of surface car-parking.

The residential areas to the east, adjoining Norwest comprises 'executive' detached housing, which is a key attraction for professional employees of the nearby business park. To the north and north-west of the proposed station very low density housing, including detached dwellings on very large blocks with strong landscaped settings and extensive vegetation, incorporating Norwest Hilltop Park. The area currently lacks an adequate local street network, as most dwellings are arranged in a street layout that is dominated by cul-de-sac.

The Study Area contains the Anglican Technical College of Western Sydney on the western side of the station, a number of parks and proposed park sites.

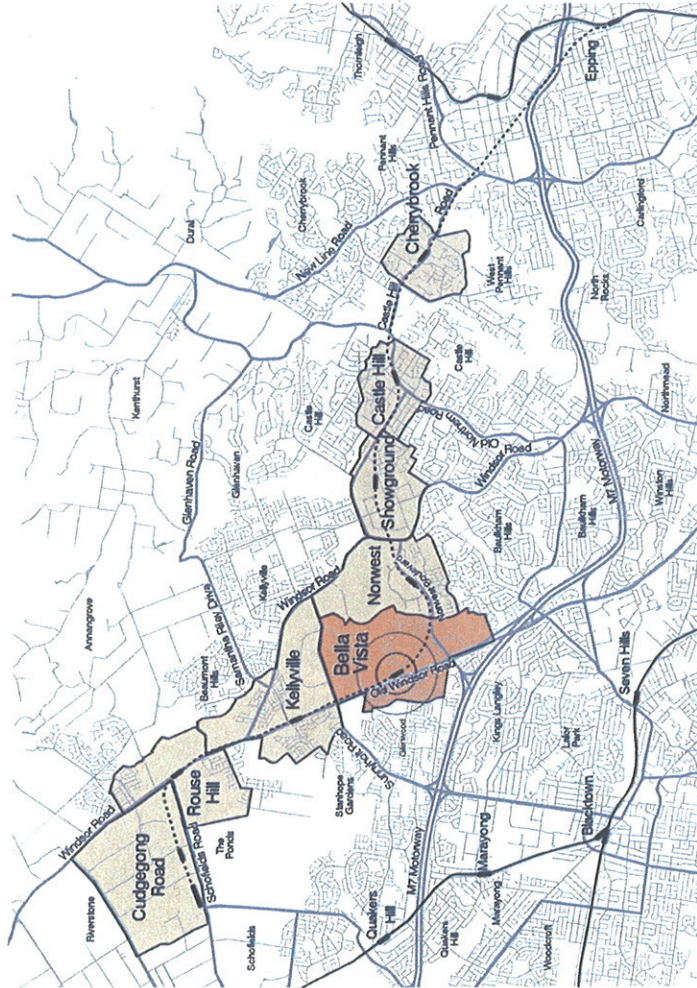


Figure 2: Bella Vista Study Area, in the context of the North West Rail Link.

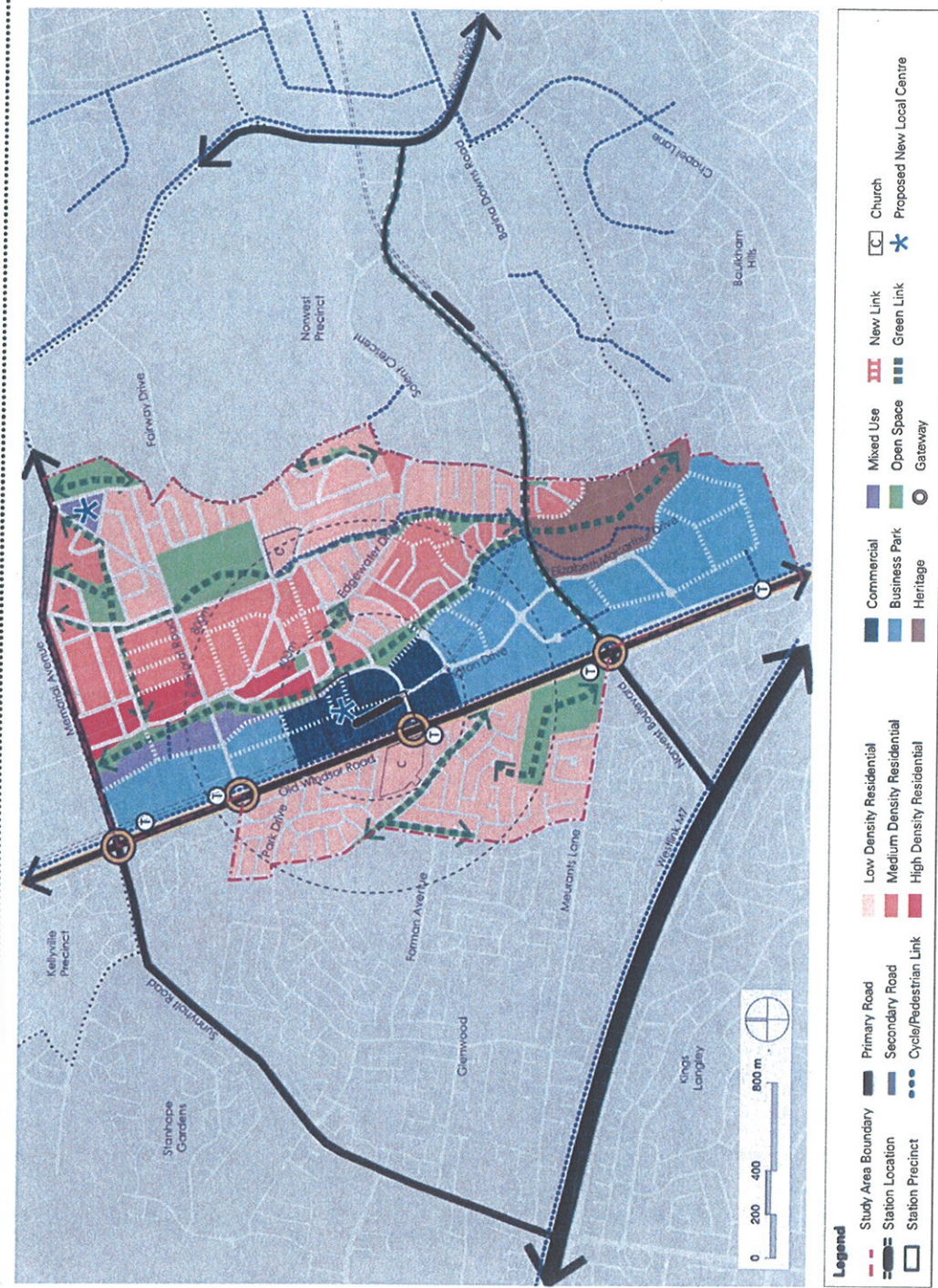


Figure 20: Draft Structure Plan for the Bella Vista Study Area

Critical to the successful development of Bella Vista will be the provision of east-west connections. Old Windsor Road, a four-lane State route that runs north-south represents a potential barrier to east-west movement. Similarly, Norwest Boulevard allows for east-west vehicular movement, however it also potentially severs north-south links in the south of the study area. To ensure ease of access from the west of the Study Area to the new station and to the rest of the Study Area, it is critical that an additional access point for all transport modes is provided close to the station.

Internally, the study area as a whole lacks an adequate secondary road network. Any increase in densities will put pressure on the existing arterial network, and thus the development of a local road network is crucial to future development.

Initiatives contained within the Environmental Impact Statement for Phase 2 of the NWRL include:

- Provision of kiss and ride spaces, bicycle parking, taxi spaces and bus bays at the proposed station.
- Lexington Drive and Celebration Drive will be extended north, including bus stops and kiss and ride parking located on the Lexington Drive extension, north of Celebration Drive.
- Provision of a pedestrian crossing across Tempus Street at Market Square to facilitate pedestrian access from residential areas on the western side of Old Windsor Road to the station precinct.
- Local bus services to Bella Vista would provide access from the Balmoral Road release area, Bella Vista and suburbs on the western side of Old Windsor Road.
- Construction of a local access road as an extension of Lexington Drive (new road) to the north of Celebration Drive
- Mid-block pedestrian crossings are proposed to be located near the station entry
- Signalisation of the Celebration Drive/Lexington Drive intersection to improve pedestrian access to and from the stations.

The rail alignment and station location may change post-exhibition of the Environmental Impact Statement for Phase 2 of the NWRL.