To whom it may concern,

Regarding the proposal for St Leonards South - it makes no sense to have high rise next to low rise housing. The area’s natural boundaries are River Rd, Pacific Hwy, and Greenwich Rd. Why make half-hearted concessions to the residents who are complaining about rezoning? **It either needs to not be done at all, or done well in its entirety. However, to not go ahead with the rezoning means a sacrifice to the plans to make Sydney a more liveable city in the long term by allowing urban sprawl and growing traffic congestion.**

Many residents who are against the rezoning largely do not live in the immediate area under consideration for rezoning. Rather than fight them I believe they need assurances the rezoning will not grow further to beyond the area in future. That area should be extended to the natural boundary to the West – Greenwich Rd. As per guidelines from the government – walkability to major transport hubs is generally considered to be 800m. Why does the rezoning stop short of an 800m radius to St Leonards Station?

A larger area allows for better urban planning. It allows for more space to be properly considered for community space, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, open and green space. No matter what the concession to make a transition from high rise to housing between streets in the area – no matter whether it is Park Rd, Portview Rd, Anglo Rd – it will still be out of step. The natural boundary is Greenwich Rd which already has medium density apartment buildings. If the rezoning goes ahead as proposed – there will be high rise, low rise, high rise when viewed East to West. Will these low rise houses caught in the middle still be zoned in such a way in 30 years given the average 100,000 new residents to Sydney per year?

As it stands today there are tall buildings along Marshall Ave and the Pacific Hwy. There are houses that are next to these buildings today. Was this the result of poor planning? Are these buildings “out of character” from the perspective of the low density housing adjacent? It would make more sense if these were rezoned to high rise to allow better transition and cater for growth.

Some Lane Cove residents wonder why the areas North East and East of the highway are not rezoned to facilitate growth. I previously lived in one of those areas and know the North East within Willoughby LGA is a Conservation Area with land values exceeding St Leonards South. I understand given the land values it would be more difficult to transition that land than St Leonards South. These residents should be educated on the rationale for choosing St Leonards South.

Commercial viability remains a consideration to make the plan a reality. Despite some residents opposing the density – how will the plan become a reality without making it financially viable? The rezoning must still consider the commercial viability in order to transition. Concessions to stepped transition and setbacks to a boundary halfway through St Leonards South makes it awkward for landowners and developers to settle on transactions. Again, a better planning outcome would be to allow for the boundary to shift to Greenwich Rd, plan for more open/green space between buildings, and provide more community services (would moving the boundary to Greenwich Rd allow for sorely needed services such as schools and childcare with better traffic flow?).

There are pocket parks in existence today similar to the one proposed for Berry Rd/Park Rd. The existing parks are located at the bottom of Park Rd and the top of Portview Rd. How well used are they today? Rather than fund pocket parks that no one uses why not put the funds towards improving the existing Newlands Reserve with facilities that will make it more attractive such as toilets, a proper childrens bike path (that could link to future bike paths) and shaded picnic areas? Why not instead allow for more general open and green space between buildings within a larger area? Why not enforce contemporary building design allowing for in-built greenery such as on roof gardens and community spaces such as indoor sports courts and play areas?

The plans for St Leonards South have undergone numerous reviews and consultation sessions. The Council has consulted independent experts previously (Annand Report) who have stated a minimum Floor Space Ratio to make the plan viable. Have those figures changed to allow for a reduction in FSR? Appeasing a handful of residents by reducing FSR will mean the lots will remain undeveloped for years.

The State Government has called for higher density living along major transport corridors or risk further urban sprawl and traffic congestion. The Government has also invested heavily in public transport in the Metro line and other projects in the hope to reduce traffic. Why reduce the density around St Leonards given the future Metro station and proposed bus interchange? Reducing this density would further increase the urban sprawl and traffic in Greater Sydney.

In considering submissions for St Leonards South I strongly urge the planning panel to consider plans for Greater Sydney and the integration of St Leonards to the master plan, consider all the planning efforts by local Council and the State Government with the numerous checks and balances already undertaken. I understand some local residents are upset as they fear impacts to their land values and lifestyle changes. I do hope the planning panel consider Sydney’s future rather than the immediate present and allow for the growth of Sydney in a suburb that has close proximity to major strategic districts and excellent opportunity for public transport links to neighbouring districts. Sydney must adapt if it is to maintain high liveability standards, and this involves compromise to allow for greater population density in strategic centres such as St Leonards. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Derek Mock.