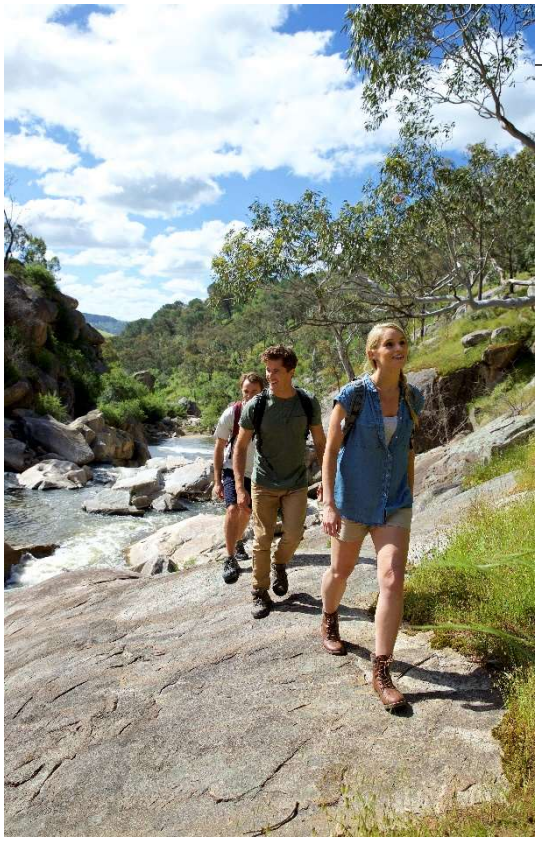

Wilton Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Wollondilly Shire Council

Adopted: 15 September 2020

Contact:

Steve Rossiter
[Elton Contact Email]
02 9387 2600

SYDNEY02 9387 2600

Level 6, 332 - 342 Oxford StreetBondi Junction NSW 2022

www.elton.com.au
consulting@elton.com.au
Sydney | Brisbane | Canberra | Darwin | Melbourne | Perth
ABN 56 003 853 101

This document has been prepared by Elton Consulting on behalf of Wollondilly Shire Council, with input from South Western Sydney Local Health District and the Health in Planning Working Group of the Wollondilly Health Alliance.

Prepared by	Jessica Noyes, David Hwang and Will Roden
Reviewed by	Steve Rossiter
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1 Executive summary

Wilton will be one of the largest new centres in South Western Sydney by 2040 with around 50,000 residents and 15,000 jobs (see map overleaf at **Figure 1**). Wollondilly Shire Council recognises there is a unique opportunity to plan a great new community at Wilton, a place everyone can be proud of.

A healthy Wilton

Our vision is that Wilton will be a thriving community where every person has the opportunity to live well. A healthy Wilton will be:

» **Connected** with physical links throughout neighbourhoods, reliable public transport connections, and connections to employment within Wilton and the region

» **Attractive** with visually appealing neighbourhoods and high quality green spaces

» **Inclusive** with opportunities for everyone to fulfil their potential, design that embraces the diversity of the community, and a commitment to building connections between residents of all ages and backgrounds

» **Resilient** with green infrastructure that cools the environment, and strong local communities and businesses that can adapt in a changing world.

We have developed the Wilton Health and Wellbeing Strategy to help us realise this vision in partnership with the community in Wollondilly, state government agencies, landowners and developers, and local organisations.

Making healthy easy

Our Strategy is structured around four focus areas for action:

» **Social infrastructure** is any space that provides opportunities for people to learn, eat, play and connect

» **Transport and connectivity** include public transport, private transport and active transport

» **Green infrastructure** is the network of green spaces and biodiversity corridors that support better quality of life

» **Housing** includes the design of dwellings and neighbourhoods as well as the cost and security of homes.

Our goal in each of these areas is to make healthy easy.

Game changers

We have identified three game changers with over 30 actions for creating a healthy Wilton. They are:

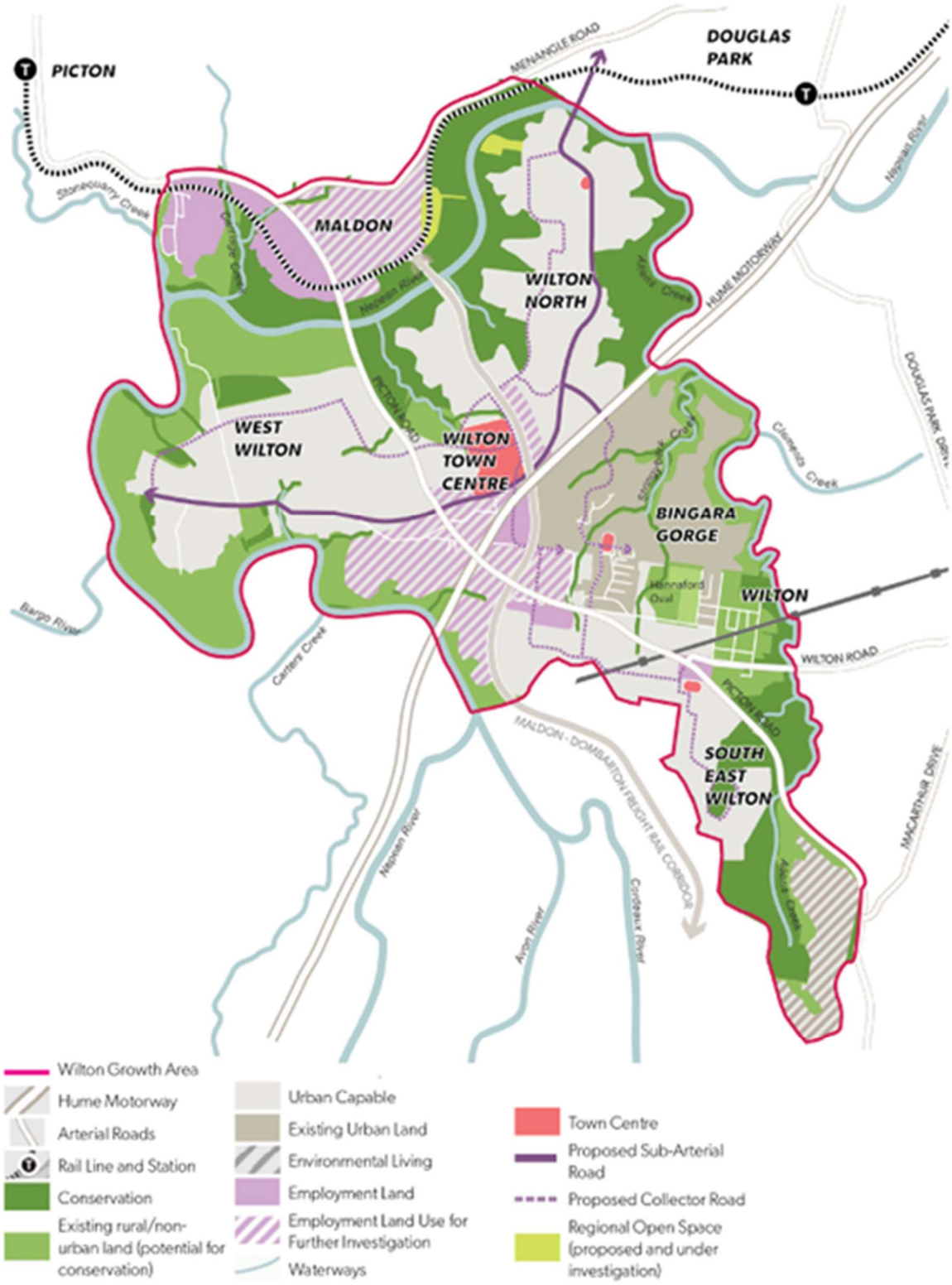
» **On time infrastructure** – critical infrastructure must be delivered to ensure that when people move into a new home they also move into a connected community. This means early delivery of public transport, including local buses, and regional connections. It also means social infrastructure delivery that is linked to population growth with schools, health and community facilities available to the growing community.

» **Connected and walkable places** – the development of the Wilton Way combined with compact mixed-use neighbourhoods provide the opportunity to make walking a way of life at Wilton. The Wilton Way would link Wilton from north to south, connecting parks and playspaces, shops and community facilities, via a greenway with continuous walking and bike trails.

» **Housing for life** – homes at Wilton must accommodate the diverse and changing needs of the community. It is important housing is socially sustainable by being affordable, safe and secure, and designed to meet the needs of people as they age. It must also be environmentally sustainable by being water, waste and energy efficient.

We will do everything in our power to work with our key stakeholders to create a healthy Wilton.

Figure 1 Wilton and its precincts



Source: NSW Department of Planning and Environment (2018), Wilton 2040 – A Plan for the Wilton Growth Area, DPE: Sydney.

2 Introduction

Wollondilly Shire Council recognises that we have a unique opportunity to plan a great new community at Wilton. By 2040 Wilton will have a population of 50,000 people and we want to make it a place our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren can be proud of.

The Wilton Health and Wellbeing Strategy is a critical part of our plan for creating a healthy Wilton. It:

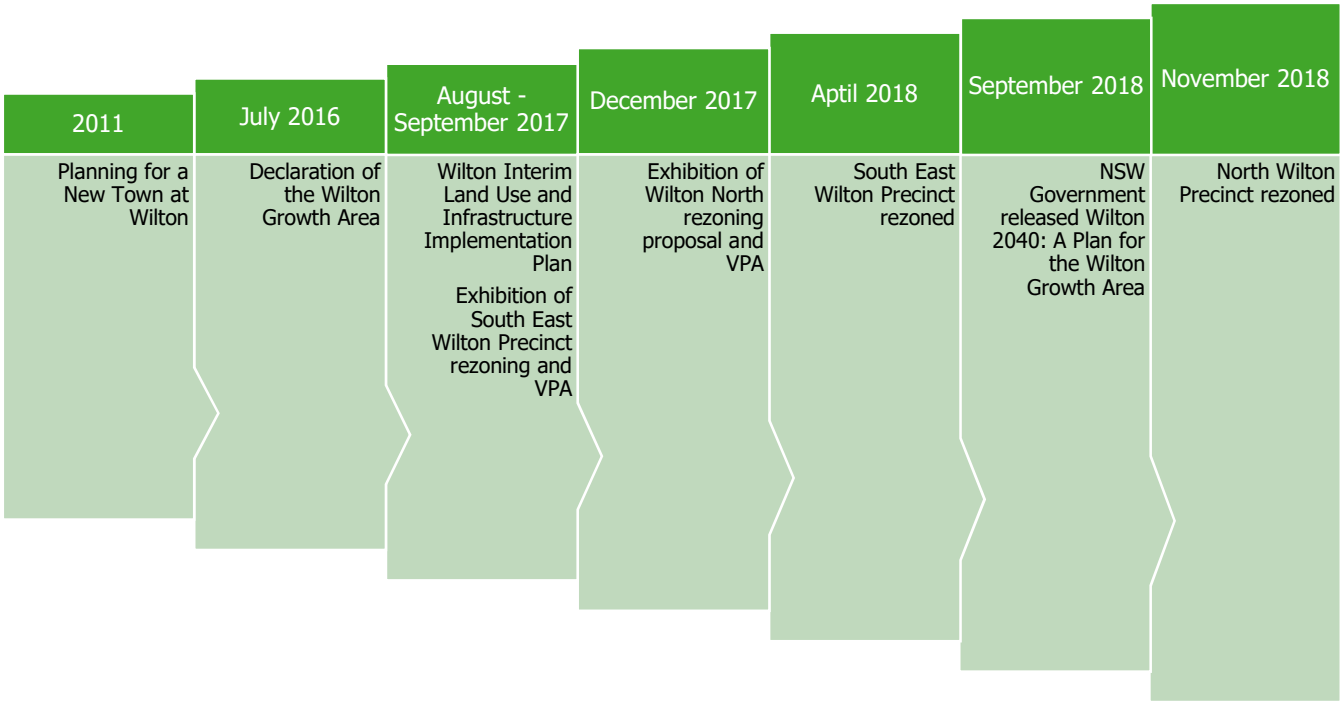
» Identifies game changers needed for Wilton to become a healthy and liveable place

» Creates an implementation plan for Council and our partners to deliver critical outcomes

» Provides an evidence base for decision-making on key planning issues.

The Strategy is part of a planning process for Wilton that has been in progress for a number of years (**Figure 2**).

Figure 2 Wilton timeline



2.1 Making healthy easy – Council's roles

Council is committed to taking action that will support the health and wellbeing of the new community in Wilton. We will work with communities, developers and government agencies to remove obstacles that stand in the way of making healthy easy.

Health is not just the absence of disease or illness. It is "a complete state of physical, mental and social wellbeing"[1]. Social and environmental factors such as income, education, employment, transport, social connectedness, open space and clean air will all contribute to the health of the Wilton community.

We recognise that the way we plan, design and build our communities will have a significant influence on shaping health and wellbeing outcomes for the people of Wilton.

This Strategy is therefore focused on making healthy lifestyle choices easy, accessible and attractive.

[1] World Health Organisation (1946), Constitution of the World Health Organisation

Council's roles in shaping a healthy Wilton include:

» **Providing** best practice infrastructure and services for which we are directly responsible

» **Facilitating** development of a healthy built environment through insightful planning

» **Partnering** with the community and key stakeholders in the private, government and non-government sectors to create a healthy Wilton

» **Advocating** to secure access to the resources required to deliver our vision.

2.2 Key stakeholders

Council cannot deliver a healthy Wilton alone. We will work with our stakeholders to achieve the best possible outcomes for the future community of Wilton and the whole Wollondilly community. Key stakeholders include:

» **Community members** – existing residents and the many people who will come to make Wilton their new home will shape this place. We will listen to community members, support them and work with them now and into the future to create a healthy new Wilton.

» **State Government agencies** – they will play key roles in leading planning, infrastructure delivery and service provision. *Wilton 2040 – A Plan for the Wilton Growth Area* outlines the NSW Government's vision and plan for the area. We will partner with and advocate to the NSW Government, particularly the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) and Transport for NSW (TFNSW), to deliver the infrastructure and services needed to support growth.

» **Landowners/developers** – these organisations will also have key roles in planning and delivering new housing and other infrastructure at Wilton. We will partner with and advocate to developers to deliver the housing and infrastructure needed by this growing and diverse community.

» **Local organisations** – business and non-government groups provide many of the day-to-day goods and services people need to live well. They can also play a role in advocating for the views of residents. We will support these organisations to continue playing their important role in the community.

» **Alliances** – existing alliances such as the Wollondilly Health Alliance (a collaboration between Wollondilly Shire Council, South Western Sydney Local Health District and South West Sydney Primary Health Network) and the Western Sydney City Deal Health Alliance (a collaboration between Federal, State and local governments) will strengthen advocacy and improve delivery of infrastructure and services by allowing the partner organisations to pool resources and share information. The Wollondilly Health Alliance will continue to champion positive health and wellbeing outcomes throughout Wollondilly and particularly in Wilton.

3 A healthy Wilton

3.1 Our vision for Wilton

Wilton will be a thriving community where every person has the opportunity to live well. It will provide the best of urban and rural living with access to jobs, services, shops and schools all within a natural environment that features bushland, rivers and gorges.

A healthy Wilton will be **connected** with:

» physical links that permeate neighbourhoods, encourage people to walk or ride, and bring everything close to home

» streets that are welcoming, shaded, safe, and easy to cross, walk and cycle

» reliable public and private transport connections to the town centre and beyond to Wollongong, Campbelltown/Macarthur and Sydney

» links to employment within Wilton and the region, and connections to lifelong learning through schools, TAFE and universities.

A healthy Wilton will be **attractive** with:

» visually appealing neighbourhoods featuring the best of urban design located within a unique and biodiverse natural environment

» high-quality green spaces linked by shared foot and bike paths that intersect with the urban environment to create a safe place where people throughout the region want to visit, work and live.

A healthy Wilton will be **inclusive** with:

» opportunities for everyone to fulfil their potential. Learning opportunities for children and young people, independent and supported living opportunities for older people, training and employment opportunities, and innovation and new business opportunities

» design that embraces the diversity of the community and homes suited to people of different ages, life stages and backgrounds, including liveable housing, universal access and affordable housing

» a commitment to making people feel welcome and building social connections between residents of all ages and backgrounds. The kaleidoscope of people and lifestyles, cultures and life stages makes this a vibrant and exciting place to be.

A healthy Wilton will be **resilient** with:

» green infrastructure that cools the environment, supports food production and security, and protects biodiversity

» strong local communities and connected neighbourhoods supported by a network of high-quality community facilities and programs, and local jobs and businesses creating a place that can adapt in a changing world.

A healthy Wilton will be consistent with the Wollondilly Health Alliance's *Wollondilly Wellbeing Framework* and make it easy for people to practice the *Five Ways to Wellbeing*. These are:

» Be Active – regular physical activity is associated with a great number of health and wellbeing benefits, and can result in a greater sense of wellbeing, lower rates of depression and anxiety, cognition development in children and protection against cognitive decline in later life.

» Connect – social connection with friends, family, acquaintances and strangers is associated with range of positive health and wellbeing outcomes and is a key component in developing healthy built environments.

» Give – acts of generosity can significantly enhance the wellbeing of the giver, as well as strengthening ties to the people around them.

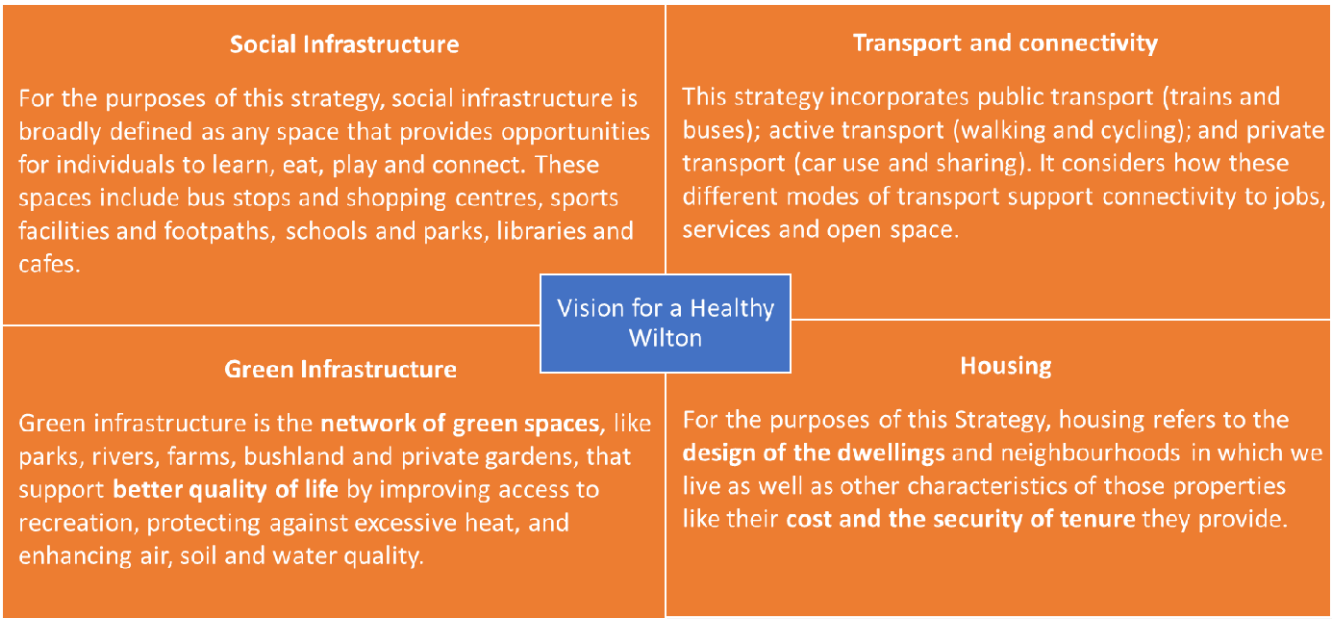
» Keep Learning – continuing to learn new skills is positively linked with life satisfaction, optimism and efficacy, and provides opportunities for social connection.

» Take Notice – curiosity, attention and reflection contribute to enhanced wellbeing, self-regulated behaviour and heightened self-knowledge.

3.2 Focus areas for action

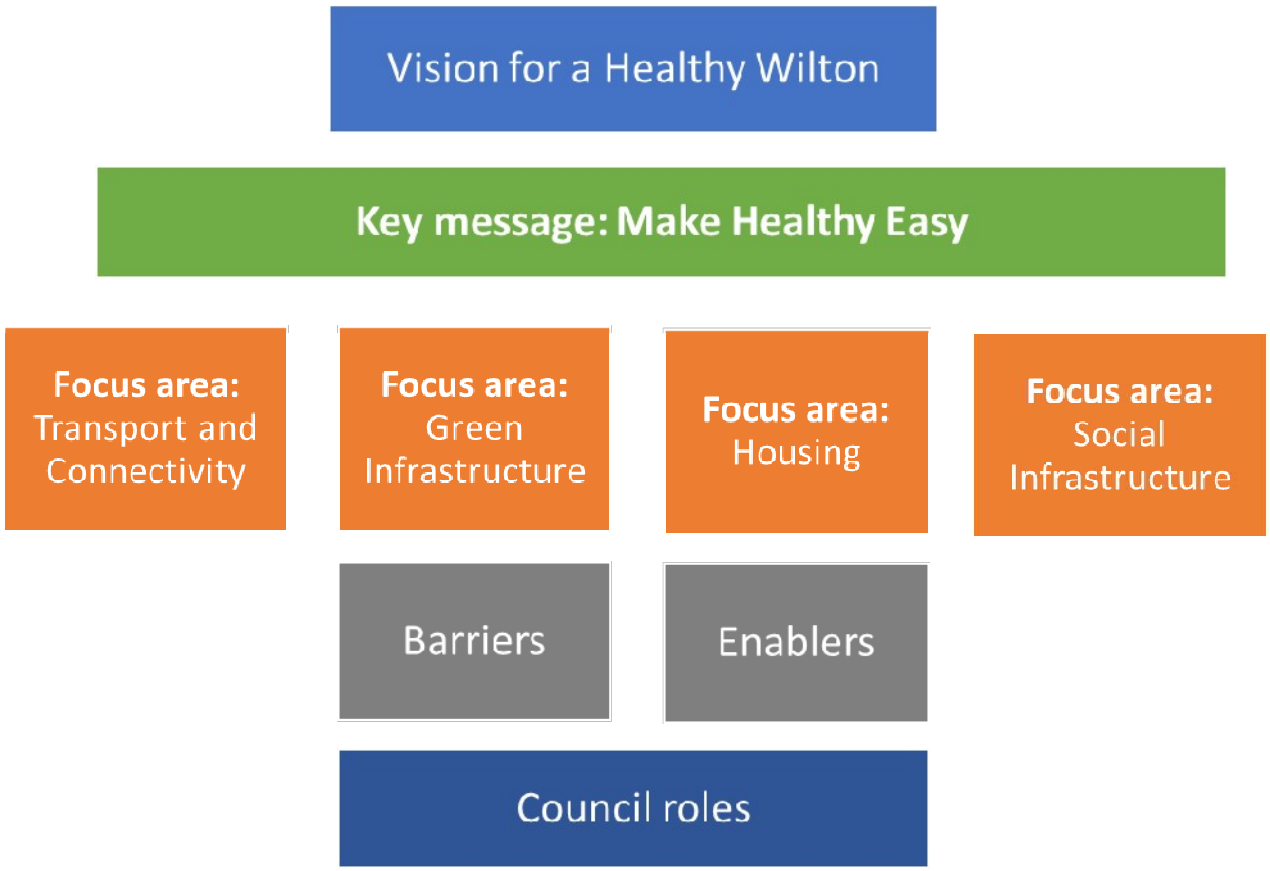
We have identified four focus areas for action to create a healthy Wilton (**Figure 3**) and help achieve our vision – social infrastructure, transport and connectivity, green infrastructure, and healthy housing. Our goal in each of these areas is to make healthy easy.

Figure 3 Focus Areas – Wilton Health and Wellbeing Strategy



The Strategy identifies why each of these areas is important, the barriers (what makes healthy hard) and enablers (what makes healthy easy), and concludes with priorities for Wollondilly Shire Council in each focus area (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4 From vision to action



Healthy built environment domains

Our four focus areas also relate to the following healthy built environment domains[2], which we have used throughout this document to ensure our priorities and actions are comprehensive and coordinated:

» **Physical activity –** only 45% of Australians aged 18-64 participated in sufficient physical exercise in 2017-18[3]. Healthy built environments can enable physical activity by planning and designing for physical activity. This could include creating active transport links that facilitate comfortable journey lengths and residential areas that are closely serviced by spaces for physical activity.

» **Social connections –** research indicates that insufficient social interaction may be worse than obesity and smoking[4]. Healthy built environments can make it easier to engage in social interactions with friends, family, neighbours and strangers through the delivery and activation of social and community infrastructure and designing more public spaces in a way that enables and promotes incidental interactions[5].

» **Healthy eating –** Australia is the fifth most obese OECD nation, and fewer than 1 in 10 Australian adults met the recommended daily vegetable intake in 2017-18[6]. Healthy built environments can encourage healthier options[7] through the creation of specific places such as community gardens, developing zoning to restrict fast-food outlets near schools and ensuring housing design contains a decent kitchen to cook meals at home.

[2] Kent, J. & Thompson, S. (2019) *Planning Australia's Healthy Built Environments*, New York: Routledge
[3] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2019. *Insufficient physical activity*
[4] Holt-Lunstad, J., Robles, T.F. & Sbarra (2017) Advancing Social Connection as a Public Health Priority in the United States, D.A. American Psychologist, Vol 72(6), 517-530
[5] Kent, J. & Thompson, S. (2019) *Planning Australia's Healthy Built Environments*, New York: Routledge
[6] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2019. *Poor Diet.* Accessed at https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/food-nutrition/poor-diet/contents/dietary-guidelines
[7] Kent, J. & Thompson, S. (2019) Planning Australia's Healthy Built Environments, New York: Routledge

» **Planetary health –** the profound impacts of climate change will also negatively impact health through rising temperatures and heatwaves, droughts, bushfires, sea level rise, air pollution and a worsening Urban Heat Island effect[8]. While these are global issues, local councils can develop responses to protect their communities against the health impacts of climate change.

[8] Kent, J. & Thompson, S. (2019) Planning Australia's Healthy Built Environments, New York: Routledge

4 Focus area: Social infrastructure

What is Social Infrastructure?

For the purposes of this strategy, social infrastructure is broadly defined as any space or facility that provides opportunities for individuals to **learn, eat, play and connect**. These spaces include bus stops and shopping centres, sports facilities and footpaths, schools and parks, telecommunications infrastructure, libraries and cafes.

4.1 Why is social infrastructure important to Wilton?

Social infrastructure is critical to building healthy and sustainable communities. It helps people to achieve the Five Ways to Wellbeing (Be Active, Connect, Give, Keep Learning, and Take Notice) by providing:

» Places to meet and connect – whether it's bumping into a neighbour at the shops, playing netball with a local team, or attending the parents' group at the local community centre, social infrastructure builds social capital and trust in communities

» Spaces to learn and grow – early learning centres, schools and universities, libraries and community centres, recreational facilities and parks are all spaces that support learning, social wellbeing and help people achieve their potential

» Access to services and support – essential community services like childcare, health supports, and aged care meet essential community needs, enable greater social and economic participation, and build community resilience

» Destinations to visit – careful planning and clustering of play and open spaces, community and cultural facilities, and shopping and retail services creates places people want to visit and builds community identity.

The evidence shows social infrastructure supports better health and wellbeing by creating a sense of belonging and security which encourages physical activity[9], and by creating opportunities for social interaction which builds civic trust[10]. To the extent that it helps develop connections between people and within communities, social infrastructure can also:

» Reduce mortality risk by developing social supports[11][12]

» Encourage healthy behaviour and improve access to health services[13]

» Improve physical health by reducing isolation and loneliness[14]

» Improve mental health and reduce psychological distress[15][16].

[9] Kent, J. & Thompson, S. (2019) *Planning Australia's Healthy Built Environments*, New York: Routledge
[10] Center for Active Design (2016), *Assembly: Shaping space for civic life – Research brief 1*. Retrieved from https://centerforactivedesign.org/assemblyresearchbriefone
[11] Zhang, X., Norris, S.L., Gregg, E.W. & Beckles, G. (2007) Social support and mortality among older persons with diabetes, *Diabetes Education*, vol.33, no.2, pp.273-281
[12] Orth-Gomer, K. & Johnson, J.V. (1987) Social network interaction and mortality, *Journal of Chronic Disease*, vol.40, no.10, pp.949-957
[13] Kawachi, I. & Berkman, L.F. (2001) Social ties and mental health, *Journal of Urban Health*, vol.78, no.3, pp.458-461
[14] Holt-Lunstad, J., Robles, T.F. & Sbarra (2017) Advancing Social Connection as a Public Health Priority in the United States, *D.A. American Psychologist*, Vol 72(6), 517-530
[15] Phongsavan, P. Chey, T., Bauman, A., Brooks, R. & Silove, D. (2006) Social capital, social-economic status and psychological distress among Australian adults, *Social Science and Medicine*, vol.63, no.10, pp.2546-2561
[16] Fone, D., Dunstan, F., Lloyd, K., Williams, G., Watkins, J. & Palmer, S. (2007) Does social cohesion modify the association between area income deprivation and mental health? A multilevel analysis, *International Journal of Epidemiology*, vol.36, no.2, pp.338-345

The 1995 Chicago Heatwave shows the difference social infrastructure and social connection make to good health and resilience.

Case Study - The 1995 Chicago Heatwave, Social Infrastructure builds resilience

The need for social infrastructure was demonstrated in 1995 in Chicago where 739 people died during a 5-day record heatwave. A demographic analysis revealed that you were more likely to die if you were living alone, in socially excluded neighbourhoods with little social infrastructure. Sociologist Eric Klinenberg conducted research into the heatwave and commented that while the heatwave may have been a natural disaster, "there's nothing natural" about hundreds of residents dying alone, out of contact with friends and family and without support from community and government resources.

In places and communities where social infrastructure facilitated connection and engagement, neighbours were more inclined to check on one another, share resources and provide shelter and safety for vulnerable elements of their community. These actions and this sense of community proved key to suburbs being resilient during times of disaster and led directly to positive health outcomes through lower fatalities and deaths.

Source: Klinenberg, E. 2002. *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago,* 2nd Ed, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago; University of Chicago, 2002. *Dying Alone, An interview with Eric Klinenberg,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, viewed 1 Oct 2019, <https://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/443213in.html>

The Wilton community will need the full range of social infrastructure to support social connection and enable service delivery, including:

» Schools – primary schools in Wilton South-East and Wilton North and a K-12 school in the town centre, and high schools as the population of Wilton grows

» Open space – two regional parks with one near the town centre, nine district parks close to the centres of each the five precincts, and 18 local parks providing a range of active and passive recreation opportunities

» Community facilities – one co-located library and community centre in the Wilton town centre and three multi-purpose community centres for West Wilton, South East Wilton and Wilton North

» Health facilities – an integrated community health facility

» Cycle and pedestrian links connecting homes within their neighbourhoods and to the Wilton town centre beyond.

4.2 What makes healthy hard?

New communities, like Wilton, need social infrastructure that is close to where they live and available when they need it. Social infrastructure can make being healthy hard if it is not delivered on time and is poorly located.

Slow delivery

Delayed delivery of key infrastructure like primary schools, childcare, shops, parks and playspaces not only makes it difficult for people in communities to connect, but means they have to travel outside of their local area, often by car, to access services they need. This increases commuting times, tends to limit time available for physical exercise and reduces the likelihood of incidental interactions with other community members.

Similarly, slow delivery of services and programs that build social connections makes healthy hard. Early introduction of these services is critical in enabling residents to be active participants in building their community. This is vital in developing a sense of identity and place for greenfield areas like Wilton.

Poor location

Ideally shops, parks and community facilities need to be accessible by active or public transport. If they are isolated and out of the way, at best they will be difficult for people to use and will most likely not be sustainable over time. At worst they can feel unsafe, provide opportunities for antisocial behaviour, and have a real negative impact on community identity.

Clustering of social infrastructure tends to improve its accessibility and utilisation, but careful planning is required. For example, positioning fast food outlets in close proximity to schools can make healthy hard.

Social Isolation

Poor social connection can lead to social isolation and loneliness, which is more harmful to health than obesity and smoking. With more than half (50.5%) of Australians feeling lonely for at least one day a week and almost half (45%) suffering a mental illness in the course of their lives, there is a pressing need for spaces and programs that support mental wellbeing and social connection.

Well-designed social infrastructure encourages social connection and physical exercise. Attractive and activated social infrastructure brings people out of their homes and into public spaces where it is more likely that they will be physically active and connect with friends, family and neighbours.

Source: Holt-Lunstad, J., Robles, T.F. & Sbarra (2017) Advancing Social Connection as a Public Health Priority in the United States, D.A. American Psychologist, Vol 72(6), 517-530; Australian Psychological Society, 2018, Australian Loneliness Report, Australian Psychological Society, accessed on 1 Oct 2019 at <https://psychweek.org.au/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Psychology-Week-2018-Australian-Loneliness-Report.pdf>; Black Dog Institute, No date, Facts & figures about mental health, Black Dog Institute, Sydney, accessed on 1 Oct 2019 at: <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/docs/default-source/factsheets/facts_figures.pdf?sfvrsn=8>; Sydney VicHealth, 2010. Opportunities for social connection. Melbourne: VicHealth.; VicHealth, 2016. Community Activation Program Evaluation Summary. Melbourne: VicHealth.

4.3 What makes healthy easy?

Careful sequencing of infrastructure for Wilton will facilitate social connections and support physical activity. It can make healthy easy by creating destinations people want to visit and activating communities through service delivery.

Creating destinations for Wilton

Clustering of places to shop, eat, learn and play within an attractive public domain creates destinations people want to visit. These destinations come to define places and will be critical in building Wilton's community identity.

Destinations provide opportunities for incidental interactions where strangers can spontaneously meet. They also provide places for people to relax and connect. Third places, the places where people spend time between home and work, are neutral locations where people from different creeds, cultures and ages can mix and build relationships. Cafes, libraries, gyms and parks will all play a role in building Wilton's identity.

Incidental interactions

Research demonstrates that incidental interactions are critical in community-building and in promoting good health for individuals. Studies show that:

- incidental interactions can deepen connections to place, increase a sense of community, safety and belonging and promote a sense of pride and care. This also serves to lower feelings of loneliness and isolation
- communities where incidental interactions are more common are more likely to be healthy
- third places are key environments to develop community because they facilitate incidental interactions.

Source: Kent, J. & Thompson, S. (2019) *Planning Australia's Healthy Built Environments*, New York: Routledge; Umberson, D. & Montez, JK. 2015 *Social relationships and health: a flashpoint for health policy*. Journal of Health and Social Behaviour 2010;51 Suppl:S54-66; Williams, P. & Pocock, B. 2010 *Building 'community' for different stages of life: Physical and social infrastructure in master planned communities*. Community Work & Family 13(1):71-87 · February 2010

Activating Wilton

Investment in soft infrastructure, such as community workers and social programs, is critical in activating new communities and is just as important as delivering the hard infrastructure needed in Wilton.

Community workers stimulate and support community-building in new neighbourhoods such as Wilton by connecting people and developing networks. They create opportunities for people to interact and for communities to work towards their own goals, building resilience and a strong sense of ownership and identity.

A lack of resourcing for community programs, sporting events and recreation activities can mean important connective infrastructure, like community centres, parks and sporting fields, is under-used and ineffective. This resourcing must be sustained over time to make good use of connective infrastructure, build strong community connections and create healthy habits.

Careful sequencing

The sequencing of infrastructure in new communities is vital in establishing patterns of healthy behaviour. This includes prioritising delivery of healthy infrastructure and incorporating 'meanwhile uses' to make sure community infrastructure is provided early in development.

Availability of healthy infrastructure is critical in creating healthy habits. For example, making sure shops that support healthy choices like grocers, butchers and supermarkets appear before fast food outlets makes it easier for people to eat well. Similarly, providing spaces for community gardening early creates opportunities for residents to build strong connections and enables local food production.

It might not be feasible to deliver new community facilities and libraries from the early days of a project, but it is possible to use existing spaces to deliver services. 'Meanwhile uses' have been used to successfully activate vacant property around the world. The concept involves developing underutilised spaces to enable short-term uses that can activate a space for interim periods, such as between stages of development. 'Meanwhile uses' develop an initial sense of place, destination and character while also providing much needed or desired services to the community.

4.4 Priorities for Wilton

Wilton will require critical infrastructure that is delivered early. Also, government, private and non-government stakeholders need to develop and implement a coordinated approach to providing the social infrastructure necessary for community-building in Wilton.

Early delivery of critical infrastructure

Our ambition at Wilton is to deliver community spaces and infrastructure that will set the foundations for a vibrant and connected community for new residents.

We believe it is critical to prioritise the early delivery of social infrastructure within the heart of the area in the Wilton Town Centre. Key infrastructure includes:

» Educational facilities, particularly the K-12 school

» Open space, playspaces and playing fields

» Shops and other retail facilities, together with third places such as cafes

» Community facilities, including a co-located library and community centre

» Health facilities, particularly the integrated Community Health Facility

» Cycle and pedestrian links connecting neighbourhoods in Wilton to the town centre.

Where possible, social infrastructure can be co-located to create a diversity of different interests and activities within the one place.

We also support 'meanwhile uses' and shared use to activate key locations and provide important services as Wilton develops. This may include allowing use of school facilities out of hours, or use by schools of public open space and playing fields.

Key actions for Council include:

» **Provide** a Section 7.11 plan that funds local social infrastructure and is structured to enable on time delivery of key facilities at Wilton

» **Partner** with developers to deliver required social infrastructure, including community facilities, local parks, recreational facilities and a library, using contributions provided through Section 7.11 and Voluntary Planning Agreements

» **Facilitate** early and sustained delivery of Council-delivered community services using 'meanwhile uses' where appropriate

» **Advocate** to the NSW Government to ensure the Infrastructure Phasing Plan for Wilton includes early delivery of social infrastructure including the K-12 school and health facilities within the Town Centre

» **Partner** with State Government to deliver fit-for-purpose and well-connected regional open space, including parks and playing fields

» **Advocate** for early delivery of telecommunications infrastructure to ensure that all people in Wilton have access to good mobile phone reception and fast internet

» **Facilitate** discussions with tertiary education providers about the opportunity to develop campuses within Wilton to support lifelong learning and higher education.

Coordinated community-building

Developing a Wilton that is inclusive and connected across the five different precincts will require a coordinated strategy aimed at building community identity, providing opportunities for community engagement and participation, and activating community spaces and other social infrastructure. Community-building activities at Wilton must:

» Be based on genuine engagement with an increasingly diverse community, including culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) households

» Have a long-term focus, including dedicated funding for soft infrastructure such as community workers and social programs

» Deliver a diversity of programs, events and activities for inclusion, recreation and lifelong learning

» Celebrate our existing Aboriginal and European history and significance to create a sense of place and attraction

» Leverage our location on Sydney's rural fringe and provide opportunities for local urban food production and healthy eating.

Key actions for Council include:

» **Partner** with the local community and other key stakeholders, including CALD and Indigenous communities, to develop an integrated community building plan for the whole of Wilton

» **Partner** with developers to provide funding for neighbourhood programs that support the community building plan for Wilton

» **Advocate** to the NSW Government for long-term funding for community development at Wilton

» **Facilitate** a sense of local character and place by taking opportunities to design with country, acknowledge Aboriginal heritage and to recognise the semi-rural context of Wilton

» **Leverage** the Wollondilly Health Alliance to advocate for an integrated care facility in Wilton.

5 Focus area: Transport and connectivity

What is transport and connectivity?

This strategy incorporates public transport (trains and buses); active transport (walking and cycling); and private transport (car use and sharing). It considers how these different modes of transport support connectivity to jobs, services and open space.

5.1 Why are transport and connectivity important for Wilton?

Good transport and connectivity are vital in creating healthy environments. They:

» Provide opportunities for social and economic mobility, through access to education, training and jobs – local pedestrian, cycling and bus connections to schools and shops are important in meeting day to day needs, and connections by road and rail to regional destinations like Campbelltown, Western Sydney and Wollongong enable access to jobs and higher educational opportunities

» Encourage physical activity and good health – providing ready access to public transport and designing local neighbourhoods that are compact and pedestrian friendly both support intentional and incidental exercise, improving health and wellbeing

» Build social ties and reduce isolation – whether it's walking up the street to the local shops or catching the bus in the morning to go to work, these activities provide the opportunity for incidental social interactions that are vital in building strong communities and improving mental health

» Are good for the physical environment – strong active and public transport connections reduce people's dependence on cars and this reduces levels of pollution and transport congestion.

The evidence shows transport and connectivity networks can support better health and wellbeing by encouraging active and public transport use. This has a range of benefits to individuals and communities including:

» Reduced mortality and better mental health – a 20-minute walk built into a person's daily routine reduces the risk of early death by 16% to 30% depending on their base level of activity.[17]

» Building civic trust – research suggests social ties are weaker when public transport is difficult to access or when people commute by car[18]

[17] Ekelund U, et al. (2015), *Physical activity and all-cause mortality across levels of overall and abdominal adiposity in European men and women: the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition Study (EPIC)*, The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Volume 101, Issue 3, March 2015, Pages 613–621.

[18] Boniface, S., Scantlebury, R., Watkins, S.J. & Mindell, J.S. (2015) *Health implications of transport: evidence of effects of transport on social interactions*, Journal of Transport and Health, 2(3), 441-446.

» Reducing isolation and providing greater equity – access to public transport is vital in building and maintaining social connections, particularly for groups like older people[19], and in providing access to services for disadvantaged or vulnerable groups[20]

» Creating cleaner and more attractive environments – green urban amenities like walkability and cyclability reduce air and noise pollution as well as greenhouse gases, and improve health. They can be a magnet for attracting and retaining the "creative class"[21].

5.2 What will make healthy hard in Wilton?

Healthy communities need to be connected by footpaths, cycleways, roads and public transport so people can easily access the services and facilities they need within their neighbourhoods and beyond. Transport can make healthy hard if major roads create barriers to connectivity and a lack of public transport limits mobility.

Major roads create barriers

Roads can form physical and psychological barriers that separate communities and reduce access to services. Wilton is currently divided by two major roads, the Hume Highway and Picton Road. These roads separate the new town and its five precincts into four major areas:

» The north east with Wilton Town Centre, Wilton North and part of Maldon

» The east with Bingara Gorge and part of South East Wilton

» The south east with the majority of South East Wilton

» The west with West Wilton and part of Maldon.

The roads play a regional role in providing access through Wilton to Picton and Wollongong (Picton Road), and to Goulburn, Canberra and Campbelltown (the Hume Highway). However, for Wilton they make healthy hard by:

» Limiting active transport across Wilton by creating physical barriers that are difficult to cross and by not including pedestrian or cycleways in their design

» Limiting access to the Wilton Town Centre and key social infrastructure it will provide

» Encouraging residents to drive to shopping centres, parks and other facilities within their own communities.

[19] Durcan, D. & Bell, R. (2015) *Local action on health inequalities – Reducing social isolation across the lifecourse*, Public Health England accessed at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/461120/3a_Social_isolation-Full-revised.pdf and Henkin, N. & Zapf, J. (2006) *How communities can promote civic engagement of people age 50-plus*, Generations, 30(4), 72-77

[20] Rosier, K. & McDonald, M. (2011), *The relationship between transport and disadvantage in Australia*, CAFCA Resource Sheet, accessed at https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/relationship-between-transport-and-disadvantage-austr

[21] Pojani, D. et al. (2018) *Australian cities are far from being meccas for walking and cycling*, The Conversation. Accessed at https://theconversation.com/australian-cities-are-far-from-being-meccas-for-walking-and-cycling-87331

Lack of public transport

Inadequate access to public transport, either through the non-existence of services or through infrequent and/or irregular services, undermines many of the potential health benefits transport can provide. It makes healthy hard by reducing walkability, increasing risks of isolation (particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups), and limiting access to jobs and higher educational opportunities available in large regional centres.

Public transport for good health

Research indicates that public transport promotes health outcomes through:

- greater levels of incidental exercise with 29% of public transport users achieving 30 minutes or more of daily physical activity solely by walking to and from public transport
- improving accessibility to work, education, health care and civic participation for whole communities
- supporting access to services for vulnerable groups such as older people and lower-income households.

Source: Besser LM, et al. (2005). Walking to Public Transit: Steps to Help Meet Physical Activity Recommendations. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 29(4): 273-280.; Christl, B. Harris, P. Wise, M. 2009. A review of the evidence of the impact of public transport on population health in Australia, University of New South Wales; Henkin, N., & Zapf, J. (2006). How communities can promote civic engagement of people age 50-plus. Generations, 30(4), 72-77.

5.3 What will make healthy easy in Wilton?

Transport can make healthy easy in Wilton by developing a public transport culture, creating active transport connections, and building interconnected green, social and transport infrastructure.

A public transport culture

Timing is critical in creating public transport-friendly communities and building healthy travel habits. Transport for NSW notes adequate public transport services need to be in place as the first stage of residents move in to "develop a public transport culture and avoid a strong reliance on cars"[22].

Other factors also important in building a reliance on public transport are[23]:

- Planning active and public transport networks that intersect with each other
- Delivering high-frequency services
- Optimising transport routes, particularly for bus services, so they provide coverage and reduce overlap
- Ensuring people are close to access points, for example by ensuring all residents are within 400 metres of a bus stop
- Temporary 'meanwhile' transport options such as community shuttles to bridge transport gaps during implementation.

Active transport links

Active transport infrastructure and programs improve health outcomes and promote healthy habits in communities. Active transport discourages reliance on cars, which leads to co-benefits for planetary health and promotes more financially accessible – and therefore more equitable – modes of transport. Walking and cycling also activate streets and improve social inclusion and opportunities for incidental interactions.

[22] Transport for NSW (2018), *Guidelines for Public Transport Capable Infrastructure in Greenfield Sites*, accessed at https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2018/Guidelines-for-Bus-Capable-Infrastructure-in-Greenfield-Sites.pdf
[23] C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, *How to make public transport an attractive option in your city*, accessed at https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/How-to-make-public-transport-an-attractive-option-in-your-city?language=en_US

There is a range of ways to encourage active transport including:

» Looking for opportunities to adapt existing transport infrastructure to support active transport connections, including developing cycleways on existing roads

» Addressing physical barriers by, for example, building overbridges across major roads to create pedestrian and cycling links

» Improving links to schools by building friendly infrastructure, such as better crossings, kerb extensions and traffic lights, around residential centres and schools, and by introducing programs that encourage active transport through walking groups and incentives.

Proximity is also important. Research shows that people are prepared to travel up to 10 kilometres by bike to access high-frequency transport services and around 1.5 kilometres by foot to reach desirable destinations, although 400-500 metres is generally accepted as a comfortable distance to walk[24].

The five Ds of active transport

Well-planned active transport systems incorporate a 'carefully tailored mix' of Distance, Density, Design, Diversity and Destinations:

Distance is about how far commuters are willing to travel by active transport to reach public transport and other services. Studies show that almost all (90%) of cycling trips were under 7km, however commuters make trips of up to 10km to reach high-frequency transport services

Density refers to the number of dwellings, services and businesses in a given area. There is clear evidence that density makes local travel more likely, reduces car use, and brings more people out onto the street, improving the perceived and actual safety of public spaces

Design can increase the likelihood of active transport. Residents are drawn to places that are aesthetically pleasing, for example with curving streets or green and natural features, or places that have utility by incorporating bike racks or other amenities

Diversity of uses (commercial, residential, retail, industrial, etc.) in one place increases the chance that what you need will be within walking or cycling distance

Destinations and their accessibility are key to drawing people into local centres. Great destinations meet a variety of needs to attract a diverse range of locals.

Source: Kent, J. & Thompson, S. (2019) *Planning Australia's Healthy Built Environments*, New York: Routledge; Udell T, Daley M, Johnson B, Tolley, R. Does density matter? The role of density in creating walkable neighbourhoods. Melbourne: National Heart Foundation of Australia. 2014.

Interconnected infrastructure

Developing environmental corridors with accessways that connect social and transport infrastructure will be a great way of encouraging walking, cycling and place activation in Wilton.

For example, the Goods Line in Sydney is a pedestrian and cycleway that links Central Station to Darling Harbour. It is only 500 metres long but provides access to educational, cultural and media institutions, including Sydney TAFE, the University of Technology Sydney, the ABC and the Powerhouse Museum. The Greenway in Sydney's Inner West is another example.

[24] Kent, J. & Thompson, S. (2019) *Planning Australia's Healthy Built Environments*, New York: Routledge

Case Study – The Inner West GreenWay

Local councils in Sydney's Inner West worked together to create a 5-kilometre light rail, active transport and environmental corridor that spans from Dulwich Hill to Leichardt called the GreenWay. The GreenWay supports multiple integrated uses including:

» active transport routes linking commuters to transport interchanges and between precincts

» passive and active recreation like sports fields, outdoor gyms, dog parks, playgrounds and picnic areas

» bushcare sites to maintain native vegetation and for use as outdoor classrooms to teach environmental and urban sustainability

» showcasing art and culture through cultural programs and public art.

The GreenWay demonstrates how multiple services and functions can be delivered though a single piece of well-considered and thoughtfully implemented infrastructure.

Source: McGregor Coxall 2018, Inner West Council GreenWay Master Plan 2018; Sydney; accessed on 1 Oct 2019 at <https://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/live/environment-and-sustainability/sustainability-programs/greenway>

5.4 Priorities for Wilton

Our transport and connectivity priorities for Wilton are early investment in public transport infrastructure, building the 'Wilton Way' to strengthen internal connections in the area, and developing links to regional destinations by road and rail.

Early investment in public transport

Access to public transport is currently limited in Wilton to one bus service linking Wilton with Picton and Douglas Park. Additional investment is proposed through the development of a bus interchange at Wilton Town Centre, but it is critical that bus services are improved early in the development of the new community to support healthy living and develop a public transport culture.

The bus network must provide services that connect Wilton's precincts with each other and particularly with the Wilton Town Centre, as well as services that connect Wilton within the region to other parts of Wollondilly as well as Campbelltown and Wollongong. As the community is developing, there may be a need to provide interim intra-Wilton transport options through the use of community buses.

Key actions for Council include:

» **Advocate** for early funding of public bus services, including on-demand services, within Wilton and Wollondilly, and from Wilton to Campbelltown and Wollongong

» **Partner** with developers to investigate the introduction of community bus services to operate within precincts and linking them to the Wilton Town Centre and other popular destinations like shops and schools.

Develop the Wilton Way

We plan to make walking and cycling a way of life at Wilton. We have the opportunity to develop a greenway connecting Wilton from north to south by continuous walking and bike trails. The Wilton Way will link parks, playspaces and other social infrastructure, like shops and community facilities, to create a central access way through the new community.

Key actions for Council include:

» **Facilitate** delivery of a connected and consolidated walking and bike trail across Wilton

» **Partner** with the NSW Government and developers to ensure that the proposed overbridges across the Hume Highway and Picton Road include cycleways and walking tracks

» **Advocate** for the early delivery of cycleways at both a regional and a local level

» **Provide** places of interest and curiosity throughout the Wilton Way, such as public art, community gardens, playspaces, community facilities and parks, to encourage people to walk and cycle

» **Facilitate** active transport within the community through events, information and promotions aimed at increasing use of the Wilton Way and other walking tracks and cycleways.

Develop regional connections

If the new community of Wilton is to have access to social and economic opportunities throughout Sydney, it must have regular and reliable public transport services to major centres including Campbelltown and Wollongong, and through them to the city network.

Plans to upgrade the road network through the State Infrastructure Contribution will support connections with major centres and development of reliable bus services to Campbelltown and Wollongong. However, given the scale of Wilton, direct connections to the heavy rail network through the proposed South West Illawarra Rail Link are also required. This would include:

» Developing a new railway station at Wilton integrated with the proposed bus interchange and providing commuter parking

» Providing express passenger services that connect Wilton to key destinations in the city network, including Campbelltown and Wollongong.

Key actions for Council include:

» **Advocate** to the NSW Government for the extension of passenger rail services to Wilton

» **Partner** with the NSW Government to preserve the rail corridor and provide appropriately zoned and suitable land for associated infrastructure, including a transport interchange.

6 Focus area: Green infrastructure

What is green infrastructure?

Green infrastructure is the network of green spaces, including parks, rivers, farms, bushland and private gardens, that support better quality of life by improving access to recreation, protecting against excessive heat, and enhancing air, soil and water quality.

6.1 Why is green infrastructure important for Wilton?

Well-designed green infrastructure will be central to healthy built environments in Wilton. It will:

» Provide places to relax and play – green spaces provide the context for a whole range of activity from walking, running and formal sport through to picnics, community festivals, and volunteering with the local Bushcare group

» Create interest and improve visual amenity – attractive green spaces and natural vistas add aesthetic value to places, increasing property values and resident satisfaction, and creating distinct local character

» Encourage social connection – quality and accessible parks and playspaces draw people out of their homes and into the public realm where they have greater opportunities to engage with their community. Spaces like greenways and sports fields are also important, creating spaces where people can connect informally

» Build environmental resilience – green infrastructure supports food production and food security, contributes to air quality, reduces heat island effects, protects biodiversity, and provides a carbon sink.

The evidence shows that green infrastructure supports child health[25] and healthy ageing[26], and enhances health and wellbeing across all socioeconomic strata and genders[27] by:

» Encouraging physical activity and reducing obesity – the presence of and proximity to neighbourhood green spaces helps to encourage and maintain recreational walking over time[28]. Several studies have also concluded that higher levels of green space are associated with lower levels of obesity[29]

» Reducing noise and air pollution – vegetation can significantly reduce noise pollution in areas with high volumes of traffic[30]. Trees can also decrease levels of air pollutants and reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide through carbon storage and sequestration[31]

[25] Dzhambov A.M. et al. 2014. *Association between residential greenness and birth weight: Systematic review and meta-analysis*. Urban Forestry & Urban Greening 13, 621-629.
[26] Takano, T. et al. 2002. *Urban residential environments and senior citizens' longevity in megacity areas: the importance of walkable green spaces*. Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 56, 913-918.
[27] Triguero-Mas M. et al. 2015. *Natural outdoor environments and mental and physical health: relationships and mechanisms*. Environment International, 77, 35-41.
[28] Sugiyama, T., Francis, J., Middleton, N. J., Owen, N. & Giles-Corti, B. (2010), Associations between recreational walking and attractiveness, size, and proximity of neighborhood open spaces, *American Journal of Public Health*, 100:1752-1757
[29] Davern M. et al. 2017. *Quality Green Space Supporting Health, Wellbeing and Biodiversity: A Literature Review*.
Lachowycz & Jones, 2011. *Greenspace and obesity: a systematic review of the evidence*. Obesity Reviews, 12, e183-e189.
[30] Pathak, V. et al. 2008. *Dynamics of traffic noise in a tropical city Varanasi and its abatement through vegetation*. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, 146, 67-75.
[31] Nowak, D. J. et al. 2013. *Carbon storage and sequestration by trees in urban and community areas of the United States*. Environmental Pollution, 178, 229–236;
Calfapietra, C. et al. 2016. *Removal of ozone by urban and peri-urban forests: evidence from laboratory, field, and modeling approaches*. Journal of Environmental Quality, 45, 224–233.

» Reducing heat-related morbidity – exposure to excessive heat is linked to increased morbidity and mortality, especially in vulnerable subpopulations, such as the elderly[32]

» Preventing or reducing health problems – there is an established association between green neighbourhoods in The Netherlands, Australia and the United Kingdom and lower levels of type 2 diabetes[33], as well as evidence that contact with nature is an important factor in avoiding health problems related to chronic stress[34]

» Supporting child health and development – greater usage of green and blue spaces is linked with reduced rates of emotional symptoms, peer relationship problems and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in children[35].

6.2 What will make healthy hard in Wilton?

Healthy built environments use green spaces to support physical activity and social connection. Green infrastructure can make healthy hard in Wilton if there is not enough green cover to cool the microclimate and if open spaces are disconnected and difficult to access.

Hot urban environments

A lack of green spaces and poor tree cover increase the temperature through the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect. This discourages physical activity, reduces opportunities for incidental interaction, reinforces social isolation, and increases the risk of heat-related health problems. The Western City District is particularly affected by the UHI and this contributes to a high level of urban vulnerability across the District[36].

Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect

An Urban Heat Island occurs when the effects of infrastructure and materials concentrate and retain heat in urban areas. This means that those urban areas are far hotter than surrounding peri-urban ones, creating an island of heat. This island can get significantly hotter, averaging between 2-5^{O}C, but in some cases being more than 10^{O}C hotter.

This trapped heat is further exacerbated by lower levels of green spaces and vegetation that naturally cool spaces. One study found that surface temperatures in areas without tree cover in Sydney were 12.8^{O}C higher on average than those with trees.

Urban green infrastructure is the most effective strategy to combat and mitigate these impacts for its ability to absorb heat, create shading, improve air quality, reduce noise pollution and enhance the safety and attractiveness of public spaces.

Source: Adams, M & Smith, P 2014, 'A systematic approach to model the influence of the type and density of vegetation cover on urban heat using remote sensing', Landscape and Urban Planning 132, 47–54; Adams, M, Duc, H & Trieu, T 2015, 'Impacts of land-use change on Sydney's future temperatures', State of NSW and Office of Environment and Heritage; Iping, A. Kidstone-Lattari, J. Simpson-Young, A. Duncan, E. McManus, P. 2019 (*Re)presenting urban heat islands in Australian cities: A study of media reporting and implications for urban heat and climate change debates*, University of Sydney.

[32] Smargiassi, A. et al. 2009. *Variation of daily warm season mortality as a function of micro-urban heat islands.* Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 63, 659-664.

[33] (Astell-Burt, T. et al. 2014. *Is neighborhood green space associated with a lower risk of type 2 diabetes?* Evidence from 267,072 Australians. Diabetes Care, 37, 197-201.

[34] Hartig, T. et al. 2014. *Nature and Health*. Annual Review of Public Health, 35, 207-228.

[35] (Amoly, E. et al. 2014. *Green and blue spaces and behavioral development in Barcelona schoolchildren: the BREATHE project*. Environmental Health Perspectives, 122, 1351-1358.

[36] Greater Sydney Commission, Performance Indicator: Addressing urban heat, accessed at https://www.greater.sydney/performance-indicator-addressing-urban-heat on 26 September 2019

Isolated open spaces

Parks and ovals that are difficult to access and poorly connected to transport networks not only discourage physical activity, but can feel unsafe and become a blight on urban areas. Isolated open spaces also inhibit ecological connectivity by making it difficult for wildlife to navigate urban environments.

The evidence shows that proximity to residential areas and size are other important factors in encouraging use of green spaces. People living close to attractive and safe green spaces, particularly larger parks and ovals, exercise more than those with limited access[37].

6.3 What will make healthy easy in Wilton?

Green infrastructure can make healthy easy in Wilton by providing tree cover to reduce the UHI effect, creating a network of green spaces that connect people and wildlife, and delivering diverse opportunities for play, exercise and exploration.

Tree coverage

Increasing the tree canopy in urban areas is one of the key ways to reduce the UHI effect, cool temperatures and encourage physical activity. Trees create attractive places and can increase property values, with a 10% increase in the street tree canopy increasing values by an average of $50,000[38]. There is also evidence that tree canopy cover builds social capital through the increased use of public spaces such as footpaths and parks[39].

Tree canopy cover in urban areas in the Western City District is just 16% on average compared to 21% across Greater Sydney[40]. There are opportunities to extend tree cover through increased planting in streetscapes, parks, private yards, schools, public plazas and other parts of our neighbourhoods. DPIE has recently announced its Five Million Trees for Greater Sydney initiative with the goal of increasing the urban tree canopy in Sydney to 40% by 2030. This target is also incorporated into Wilton 2040.

Green space networks

Linking high-quality open spaces by shared pedestrian and cycling paths and connecting them to the urban environment, including transport hubs and town centres, creates a network of green spaces that encourage active transport and support social connectivity. They can be used along with public art to focus attention on local heritage sites and highlight views and other features of the landscape. Green networks are also important in providing physical connections for wildlife and enhancing biodiversity.

Green networks can create aesthetically pleasing places that encourage people to go outdoors and walk, cycle or meet people. The Healthy Streets program in London highlights the use of natural spaces to encourage healthy living by providing things to see and do, and places to rest in shade and shelter[41].

[37] Giles-Corti, B., Broomhall, M. H., Knuiman, M., Collins, C., Douglas, K., Ng, K., Lange, A. & Donovan, R. J. 2005. Increasing walking: how important is distance to, attractiveness, and size of public open space? American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 28, 169-76.
; McCormack, G. R., Rock, M., Toohey, A. M. & Hignell, D. 2010. Characteristics of urban parks associated with park use and physical activity: a review of qualitative research. Health & Place, 16, 712-726.
[38] Moore, G.M. (2016). The economic value of trees in the urban forest as climate changes. Acta Hortic. 1108, 1-12
[39] Holtan et al., 2015, Social Life Under Cover: Tree Canopy and Social Capital in Baltimore, Maryland. Environment and Behavior 2015, Vol. 47. 502– 525
[40] Greater Sydney Commission, Performance Indicator: Addressing urban heat, accessed at https://www.greater.sydney/performance-indicator-addressing-urban-heat on 26 September 2019
[41] Saunders, L. An Introduction to Healthy Streets, Healthy Streets, accessed at https://healthystreets.com/home/about/ on 28 October 2019

Case Study - 'Cool Streets' – the benefits of street tree planning

Cool Streets is an award-winning project that demonstrates the values of planting and maintaining trees alongside Sydney's streets. First piloted in the Western-Sydney suburb of Blacktown, the project is based on Dr Libby Gallagher's research into climate adaption within suburban streets. The research found street trees have the potential to reduce CO2 emissions by almost 7 times, cool the street, and reduce electricity bills. Maintenance and watering of trees can also develop social connections between neighbours.

The community was initially sceptical, but considered the environmental, economic and social benefits of street trees and led their selection and planting. This community-led and informed approach built understanding of climate issues which then informed effective action.

Since 2016, the project has successfully been implemented in two other Sydney suburbs.

Source: Government Architect NSW, 2019. *Cool Streets Blacktown*, accessed 1 Oct 2019 at: <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/case-studies/2017/11/cool-streets-blacktown>; Gallagher Studio, 2019, Cool Streets Blacktown Pilot Project, accessed 1 Oct 2019 at: <http://www.gallagherstudio.com.au/blacktown-cool-streets-pilot-project>

Quality recreation opportunities

Providing a range of different options for exercise, rest and play in green areas in Wilton will support high use and participation by different age and cultural groups. The quality of public open space is as important as the quantity in supporting wellbeing[42].

Studies show that the mix of facilities provided in parks and sporting fields affect the level of physical activity:

» Paved trails, water areas, and playgrounds are more important for physical activity than amenities such as drinking fountains, picnic areas, and toilets[43]

» Walking and cycling routes, wooded areas, water features, lights, and pleasant views support higher levels of exercise[44]

» Playground use is associated with higher levels of physical activity among adolescents aged 11-14 years[45] and resting places support activity in older women[46].

6.4 Priorities for Wilton

Our green infrastructure priorities for Wilton are to extend the tree canopy, plan green spaces to support growth, and utilise our peri-urban context to create diverse green experiences.

Extend urban tree canopy

We will work with the NSW Government to achieve 40% urban tree canopy coverage in Wilton through:

» tree planting in and around public parks, plazas and sporting fields

» developing tree-lined streetscapes and shared pedestrian and cycleways

[42] (Francis, J. et al. 2012 *Quality or quantity? Exploring the relationship between Public Open Space attributes and mental health in Perth, Western Australia*. Social Science & Medicine, 74, 1570-1577.
[43] (Kaczynski, AT. et al. 2008 *Association of park size, distance, and features with physical activity in neighborhood parks*. Am J Public Health. 2008 Aug;98(8):1451–6.
[44] Schipperijn, J. et al. 2013 *Associations between physical activity and characteristics of urban green space*. Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, 12, 109-116.
[45] (Oreskovic, N.M. et al. 2015. *Adolescents' use of the built environment for physical activity*. BMC Public Health, 15, 251.
[46] Chastin, S.F.M. et al. 2014. *Determinants of sedentary behavior, motivation, barriers and strategies to reduce sitting time in older women: a qualitative investigation*. International Journal of Environmental Research & Public Health, 11, 773-791.

» encouraging retention of mature trees wherever possible

» encouraging retention and enhancement of biodiversity corridors as part of the green grid

» providing incentives for tree planting in private gardens.

We will use tree planting to support links to high-quality open spaces and develop a network of green spaces that are connected to each other and the urban environment.

Key actions for Council include:

» **Partner** with the NSW Government to promote, offer incentives and provide community information and education for tree planting and maintenance on private and Council property

» **Provide** additional tree cover through planting and maintenance in public areas

» **Facilitate** the development of tree-lined streetscapes by incorporating requirements in the Wilton DCP and other Council policies, including Engineering Guidelines.

Plan for growth

Green infrastructure planning for Wilton must strike a balance between protecting conservation areas, providing the open space for sport and recreation needed to support the growing population, and developing an environment that is resilient in the face of UHI and extreme weather events such as bushfire and floods.

We will work with the NSW Government in developing the Wilton Green Plan to:

» Create a connected network of open space throughout Wilton that links heritage items and features of the natural landscape with the urban environment

» Integrate rivers and creeks and stormwater infrastructure into green planning to protect water quality and mitigate the UHI effect

» Protect conservation areas, including koala habitats

» Support passive and active recreation by providing regional level sporting fields within Wilton.

Key actions for Council include:

» **Partner** with the NSW Government, the community and developers to create and implement the Wilton Green Plan

» **Facilitate** delivery of open space through the Wilton Section 7.11 Plan and Voluntary Planning Agreements

» **Provide** green infrastructure in Wilton to support delivery of the Wilton Green Plan and the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan.

Create diverse green experiences

Wilton's green spaces must reflect its unique characteristics and location on the fringe of Sydney. Wilton is surrounded by national parks, water catchment areas, agriculture, and small villages and towns. The area is rich in Aboriginal history and was also the birthplace of modern agriculture in Australia.

We will develop green infrastructure that reflects Wilton's rural context and provides for the future. It will support:

» Food production through community and private gardens

» Play and physical exercise through parks and playgrounds, sporting fields and shared access trails

» Exploration and preservation by providing protected access to conservation areas and waterways.

Key actions for Council include:

» **Facilitate** a mix of land uses including those that allow urban food production

» **Provide** a variety of experiences in the Wilton green space network through embellishment of open space and integrating open space with water infrastructure.

Case Study - Sydney Park, Water Re-Use Project

Sydney Park's award-winning re-design enables it to process some 850 million litres of stormwater per year through a system inspired by natural ecosystems. Managed by the City of Sydney, Sydney Park is surrounded by dense urban neighbourhoods, which drain stormwater straight into the park's Wetlands. This runoff is treated through the landscape via a series of wetlands, spillways and bioremediation 'paddies'.

Sydney Park serves the open space and recreational needs of the same dense urban neighbourhoods. It is an interactive and engaging environment with stepping stones, trails and public art integrated within bioremediation infrastructure. The project also incorporates urban habitats for wildlife, particularly native birds including 22 that are wetlands specific.

Source: Government Architect NSW, 2019. *Sydney Park Water Re-Use Project*, accessed 1 Oct 2019 at: <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/case-studies/2017/11/sydney-park>; City of Sydney, 2019, Sydney Park, accessed 1 Oct 2019 at: < https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/explore/facilities/parks/major-parks/sydney-park>

7 Focus area: Healthy housing

What is housing?
For the purposes of this Strategy, housing refers to the design of the dwellings and neighbourhoods in which we live, as well as other characteristics of those properties such as their cost and the security of tenure they provide.

7.1 Why is healthy housing important in Wilton?

Housing impacts health and wellbeing in a number of different ways:

» Housing quality and adaptability impacts physical health – whether a home does not meet a household's needs because it is poorly built or maintained, is not large enough, or is not flexible enough to provide access for older people or people with a disability, all of these factors make it more difficult for people to live healthy and active lives

» Housing security and costs can affect mental and physical health – housing that costs more than 30% of a lower income household's income creates housing stress, and more than 50%, acute housing stress. Also, people living in housing that is insecure, whether it is short-term private rental or more marginal accommodation like hotels, are more likely to experience housing-related stress[47]

» Housing location can influence access to social and economic opportunities – the housing market and the location of social housing restrict where people with lower incomes are able to live. Often lower-cost housing is less accessible to public transport and services and may also be stigmatised; this makes it more difficult for people living in those households to get jobs, travel for work and use the services they need to live well

» Housing and neighbourhood design impacts environmental health – sprawling communities encourage car use, leading to greater levels of noise and air pollution which affect people's health.

Clever design of Wilton's housing and neighbourhoods can change lifestyles and influence the way people interact in their neighbourhoods. The evidence shows:

» Higher-density neighbourhoods can reduce obesity – dense, well-connected and more walkable spaces promote physical activity[48], lower the risk of obesity and weight gain[49] and protect against cardiovascular disease[50]. Conversely, low-density areas encourage more driving and sedentary lives[51]

» Mixed land uses can build social capital – neighbourhoods with a mix of land uses exhibit elevated civic trust. People who live within walking distance of parks and retail are more likely to experience chance encounters with their neighbours, which have been shown to increase social connections and reinforce civic trust[52]

» Diverse housing is more cost effective – housing diversity caters to the housing needs of a broad range of people in different life stages. It enables older people to age in place[53] and to the extent that it enables

[47] Phibbs, P. and Thompson, S. (2011) The health impacts of housing: toward a policy-relevant research agenda, AHURI Final Report No.173. Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
[48] Maschke C, Niemann H. Health effects of annoyance induced by neighbour noise. Noise Control Eng J. 2007;55(3):348-56.
[49] Ruotsalainen R, Jaakkola JJ, Rönnberg R, Majanen A, Seppänen O. Symptoms and perceived indoor air quality among occupants of houses and apartments with different ventilation systems. Indoor Air. 1991;1(4):428-38.
[50] Kelly J-F, Breadon P, Davis C, Hunter A, Mares P, Mullerworth D, et al. Social cities: Grattan Institute Melbourne; 2012.
[51] De Rezende LFM, Lopes MR, Rey-López JP, Matsudo VKR, do Carmo Luiz O. Sedentary behavior and health outcomes: an overview of systematic reviews. PLoS One. 2014;9(8):e105620.
[52] Leyden, K. M. (2003). Social Capital and the built environment: The importance of walkable neighborhoods. American Journal of Public Health, 93(9), 1546-1551.
[53] Kahn EB, Ramsey LT, Brownson RC, Heath GW, Howze EH, Powell KE, et al. The effectiveness of interventions to increase physical activity: A systematic review. Am J Prev Med. 2002;22(4):73-107.

home modifications it reduces public expenditures by reducing time older people spend in hospital and institutional care[54].

7.2 What will make healthy hard in Wilton?

Housing will make healthy hard in Wilton if it is not connected to public transport and services, and when it is not designed to be environmentally sustainable.

Poorly connected and sprawling neighbourhoods

Housing that is not located within walking distance (around 800 metres) of public transport, shops and services discourages incidental activity and reinforces car use as the primary form of transport. Housing without ready access to open space, like parks and playspaces, also makes it difficult to get out of the house and exercise.

Additionally, low-density, disconnected neighbourhoods with housing on large residential blocks can undermine wellbeing by reinforcing isolation and reducing opportunities for social interaction.

Unsustainable housing design

Housing that is not well insulated or properly oriented, and is poorly ventilated and shaded, can directly impact people's health through poorer air quality. Housing that is too hot or too cold also discourages physical activity and the health benefits that result from it.

Unsustainable housing also increases energy demands for cooling and heating, which impacts household budgets and undermines resilience to changes in the climate.

Case Study - Designing 'Housing for Health'

'Housing for health' is a set of nine living practices developed by HealtHabitat to improve health outcomes for Indigenous communities. The practices link adequate housing infrastructure to supporting health outcomes, ranging from hygiene to healthy eating to increasing safety around electricity and gas usage.

NSW Health put this into practice and an evaluation in 2010 showed strong results with several outcomes significantly improving, such as a 9-times improvement to electrical safety. Households in the program also had a 40% reduction in hospital separation rates when compared to the rest of the Aboriginal population in rural NSW. This example of Housing for Health in practice demonstrates how important functional housing design and adequate household facilities are to enabling positive health outcomes.

Source: (HealtHabitat 2019, Housing For Health, The Guide; accessed on 1 Oct 2019 at <http://www.housingforhealth.com/the-guide/health-housing/>). (Health NSW 2019, Housing For Health; accessed on 1 Oct 2019 <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/aboriginal/Pages/housing-for-health.aspx>.

7.3 What will make healthy easy in Wilton?

Housing makes healthy easy when it is diverse enough to meet different people's needs across their lifecycles and when it is provided in neighbourhoods that are compact, include shops and services, and have public transport.

[54] Lux, M., & Sunega, P. (2014). The impact of housing tenure in supporting ageing in place: exploring the links between housing systems and housing options for the elderly. International Journal Of Housing Policy, 14(1), 30-55.

Housing diversity

Neighbourhoods that include a range of different housing types at different price points from separate houses and townhouses, through apartments and flats, to retirement living, provide communities in which people can change and grow without having to leave. This means, if they want to, they can stay near to friends and family remaining connected to their support networks.

Housing diversity in Wilton will support inclusive communities. It enables older people to age in place and younger people to transition to independence within their local areas. It creates the framework for intergenerational connections to be developed; these are critical in guarding against isolation and loneliness.

Security of tenure and health outcomes – it all starts at home

Affordable housing supports the ability to have long-term and secure housing tenure. In a study of public housing residents, housing-related stress was shown to be drastically reduced after residents were provided with secure housing.

The benefits of secure and sustainable housing are also echoed in Housing First studies. This approach provides early housing support, combined with wrap-around supports to those who are homeless and at risk of becoming homeless. International and Australian examples have shown strong positive outcomes due to the stability and security provided by having secure tenancy. In 2013, the MISHA project run by Mission Australia found that homeless men provided with early housing had a 59% decrease in the average number of days spent in hospital along with a broader range of health benefits.

Source: (Phibbs, P. and Thompson, S. (2011) The health impacts of housing: toward a policy-relevant research agenda, AHURI Final Report No.173. Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute; Wood, L., Flatau, P., Zaretzky, K., Foster, S., Vallesi, S. and Miscenko, D. (2016) What are the health, social and economic benefits of providing public housing and support to formerly homeless people?, AHURI Final Report No.265, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne, http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/265, doi:10.18408/ahuri-8202801. Accessed on 2 Oct 2019

Compact mixed-use neighbourhoods

Places that incorporate medium- to high-density housing around town centres with public transport encourage physical activity and social cohesion. They provide better access to community assets, allowing people to walk or ride to the shops, to school, to the library and to work. Research shows that those who live within 800 meters of school or other destinations are more likely to get there by active transport[55].

Denser, more diverse cities can enable people to live closer to where they work, leading to less time stress and more ability to engage in healthy activities and eat healthier. Greater walkability also supports social connection and better mental health.

[55] Merom D, et al. (2006). Active commuting to school among NSW primary school children: implications for public health. Health & Place. 12 (4): 678-687; Sallis, J. F., et al. (2012). "Role of Built Environments in Physical Activity, Obesity, and Cardiovascular Disease." Circulation 125(5): 729-737.

Case study - Lightsview, Adelaide – active medium density living

Studies show higher-density living is associated with greater physical activity (Svensson et. al 2016), but these health benefits can also be delivered in lower-density environments. The residential development Lightsview demonstrates how housing can be designed to encourage active living through a medium-density project. Located 8km north of Adelaide, Lightsview has incorporated guidelines to support active living within the urban planning and design such as mixed-use zoning within 400-800 metres of homes, a greenway active transport network and large parks within 500 metres and small parks within 150 – 300 metres of all homes.

Beyond the physical infrastructure, the developers of Lightsview also negotiated the early delivery of bus services into the area to encourage and establish public transport use. The development has since won a number of planning and development awards.

Source: Udell T, Daley M, Johnson B, Tolley, R. Does density matter? The role of density in creating walkable neighbourhoods. Melbourne: National Heart Foundation of Australia. 2014.

7.4 Priorities for Wilton

Deliver housing in Wilton that supports different people through their lives within communities that are connected.

Delivering housing for life

We want to ensure that a range of housing types and choices are provided at Wilton to accommodate the changing needs of the community over time. This will include affordable rental housing for people on lower incomes, low-rise apartments, free-standing homes for people raising a family, lower-maintenance housing, shop-top housing and aged care accommodation for older people.

It is important that this housing is socially sustainable in that it is safe, secure and designed to meet the needs of people as they age, and environmentally sustainable by being water-, waste- and energy-efficient[56].

Key actions for Council include:

» **Facilitate** adoption of energy-efficient housing design in new development through the Neighbourhood Planning process

» **Partner** with the NSW Government, developers and community housing providers to support, design and implement a range of affordable housing solutions in Wilton, including through an affordable rental housing scheme

» **Partner** with the NSW Government and developers to provide a mix of housing types in Wilton, including small lot housing, townhouses, terraces and low-rise apartments as well as detached housing and large lots as appropriate

» **Provide** a Housing Strategy for Wollondilly that enables energy efficient design, affordable housing solutions, and a range of housing types within Wilton.

Build connected communities

Wilton will be a network of connected local communities surrounding a town centre at its heart. Our local neighbourhoods will be connected internally via shared bike and walking paths to local centres with shops, open space and public transport. Smaller lots will be located to take advantage of public open space. Our

[56] Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works, Elements of Smart and Sustainable Housing, accessed at https://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/construction/Sustainability/SmartSustainableHomes/Pages/SmartSustainableHousingElements.aspx on 30 September 2019

neighbourhoods will also be connected to the town centre via public and active transport routes to provide access to regional level facilities and services.

Key actions for Council include:

» **Partner** with the NSW Government and developers to focus housing around local centres and open space

» **Provide** active transport initiatives in partnership with developers, state government agencies and local community groups to encourage walking to school and to work

» **Advocate** for early delivery of regular and reliable public bus services within Wilton.

8 Implementation

The Wilton Health and Wellbeing Strategy outlines Council's vision for Wilton that will be realised through:

» Providing best practice infrastructure and services for which we are directly responsible

» Facilitating development of a healthy built environment through insightful planning

» Partnering with the community and key stakeholders in the private, government and non-government sectors to create a healthy Wilton

» Advocating to secure access to the resources required to deliver our vision.

We recognise that we cannot deliver a health Wilton alone. We are committed to working with the community, state government agencies, landowners and developers, and local organisations to achieve the best possible outcomes for the Wilton community.

The Wilton Health and Wellbeing Strategy is a living document that will be updated regularly to make sure it remains relevant and responsive. We will align the Strategy with our integrated planning and reporting framework by linking actions with our Delivery Program and Operational Plan, and reporting on them in our annual report.

8.1 Implementation plan

We have developed an implementation plan for the Strategy which incorporates:

» **Actions** organised around the four focus areas of social infrastructure, transport and connectivity, green infrastructure, and housing

» **Responsibilities** including both lead and support roles

» **Timeframes** for short (0-5 years), medium (5-10 years) and long term (10+ years) actions

» Impacts on **healthy built environment domains** from each action, including physical activity, social connections, healthy eating or planetary health.

Table 1 Focus area – social infrastructure

Priority	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	HBE domain
On time social infrastructure	1. **Provide** a Section 7.11 plan that funds local social infrastructure and is structured to enable on time delivery of key facilities at Wilton	Lead – Council	0-5 years	Social connections
	2. **Partner** with developers to deliver required social infrastructure, including community facilities, local parks, recreational facilities and a library, using contributions provided through Section 7.11 and Voluntary Planning Agreements	Lead – Council Support – Developers	0-5, 5-10 and 10+ years	Social connections Physical activity
	3. **Facilitate** early and sustained delivery of Council-delivered community services using meanwhile uses where appropriate	Lead – Council	0-5 years	Social connections
	4. **Advocate** to the NSW Government to ensure the Infrastructure Phasing Plan for Wilton includes early delivery of social infrastructure including the K-12 school	Lead – Council	0-5 years	Physical activity Healthy eating

Priority	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	HBE domain
	and health facilities within the Town Centre			Social connections
	5. **Partner** with the NSW Government to deliver fit-for-purpose and well connected regional open space, including parks and playing fields	Lead – Council Support – DPIE	0-5 and 5-10 years	Physical activity Social connections
	6. **Facilitate** discussions with tertiary education providers about the opportunity to develop campuses within Wilton to support lifelong learning and higher education	Lead – Council	0-5 years	Social connections
Coordinated community building	7. **Partner** with the local community and other key stakeholders, including CALD and Indigenous communities, to develop an integrated community building plan for the whole of Wilton	Lead – Council Support – Community groups, developers	0-5 years	Social connections Physical activity Healthy eating
	8. **Partner** with developers to provide funding for neighbourhood programs that support the community building plan for Wilton	Lead – Developers Support – Council	0-5 years	Social connections Physical activity Healthy eating
	9. **Advocate** to the NSW Government for long term funding for community development at Wilton	Lead – Council Support – DPIE	0-5 years	Social connections Physical activity Healthy eating
	10. **Facilitate** a sense of local character and place by taking opportunities to design with country, acknowledge Aboriginal heritage and to recognise the semi-rural context of Wilton	Lead – Council Support – Tharawal LALC	0-5 years	Social connections
	11. **Partner** with the Wollondilly Health Alliance to deliver integrated care in health facilities at Wilton	Lead – Council Support – Wollondilly Health Alliance	0-5 years	Social connections

Table 2 Focus area – transport and connectivity

	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	HBE domain
Early investment in public transport	12. **Advocate** to the NSW Government for early funding of public bus services, including on-demand services, within Wilton and from Wilton to Campbelltown and Wollongong	Lead – Council Support – TfNSW	0-5 years	Social connections Physical activity

	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	HBE domain
				Planetary health
	13. **Partner** with developers to investigate the introduction of community bus services to operate within Wilton and designed to link residents to the Wilton Town Centre and other popular destinations like shops and schools	Lead – Council Support – Developers	0-5 years	Social connections Physical activity Planetary health
Create the Wilton Way	14. **Facilitate** delivery of a connected and consolidated walking and bike trail across Wilton	Lead – Council Support – TfNSW, DPIE, Developers	5-10 years	Physical activity Planetary health Social connections
	15. **Partner** with the NSW Government and developers to ensure the proposed overbridges across the Hume Highway and Picton Road include regional and local cycleways and walking tracks	Lead – TfNSW Support – DPIE, Council, Developers	5-10 years	Physical activity Planetary health
	16. **Advocate** for the early delivery of regional and local cycleways at both a regional and a local level	Lead – Council Support – TfNSW	0-5 years	Physical activity Planetary health
	17. **Provide** places of interest and curiosity throughout the Wilton Way, such as public art, community gardens, playspaces, community facilities and parks to encourage people to walk and cycle	Lead – Council Support – Developers, DPIE	5-10 years	Social connections Physical activity
	18. **Facilitate** active transport within the community through events, information and promotions aimed at increasing use of the Wilton Way and other walking tracks and cycleways	Lead – Council	0-5 and 5-10 years	Physical activity Social connections Planetary health
Develop regional connections	19. **Advocate** to the NSW Government for the extension of passenger rail services to Wilton	Lead – Council Support – TfNSW, DPIE	0-5 years	Physical activity Social connections Planetary health
	20. **Partner** with the NSW Government to preserve the rail corridor and provide appropriately zoned and suitable land for associated infrastructure, including a transport interchange	Lead – TfNSW Support – Council, DPIE	0-5 years	Physical activity Social connections Planetary health

Table 3 Focus area – green infrastructure

Priority	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	HBE domain
Extend urban tree canopy	21. **Partner** with the NSW Government to promote, offer incentives and provide community information and education for tree planting and maintenance on private and Council property	Lead – Council Support – DPIE	Ongoing	Planetary health
	22. **Provide** additional tree cover through planting and maintenance in public areas	Lead – Council	0-5 and 5-10 years	Planetary health
	23. **Facilitate** the development of tree-lined streetscapes by incorporating requirements in the Wilton DCP and other Council policies, including Engineering Guidelines and the Urban Tree Canopy Plan	Lead – Council	0-5 and 5-10 years	Planetary health
Plan for growth	24. **Partner** with the NSW Government, the community and developers to create and implement the Wilton Green Plan	Lead – DPIE Support – Council, Developers	0-5 years	Planetary health Physical activity Social connections Healthy eating
	25. **Facilitate** delivery of open space through the Wilton Section 7.11 Plan and Voluntary Planning Agreements	Lead – Council Support – Developers	0-5 and 5-10 years	Physical activity Social connections
	26. **Provide** green infrastructure in Wilton to support delivery of the Wilton Green Plan and the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan	Lead – Council Support – DPIE, Developers	0-5 and 5-10 years	Planetary health Physical activity Social connections Healthy eating
Create diverse green experiences	27. **Facilitate** a mix of land uses including those that allow urban food production	Lead – Council	0-5 years	Healthy eating Social connections
	28. **Provide** a variety of experiences in the Wilton green space network through embellishment of open space, provision of local biodiversity corridors and integrating open space with water infrastructure	Lead – Council Support – DPIE, Developers	0-5 and 5-10 years	Physical activity Social connections

Table 4 Focus area – housing

Priority	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	HBE domain
Delivering housing for life	29. **Facilitate** adoption of energy-efficient housing design in new development through the Neighbourhood Planning process	Lead – Council	0-5 years	Planetary health
	30. **Partner** with the NSW Government, developers and community housing providers to support, design and implement a range of affordable housing solutions in Wilton, including through an affordable rental housing scheme	Lead – Council Support – DPIE, Developers, CHPs	0-5 years	Social connections
	31. **Partner** with the NSW Government and developers to provide a mix of housing types in Wilton, including small lot housing, townhouses, terraces and low-rise apartments as well as detached housing and larger residential lots	Lead – Council Support – DPIE, Developers	0-5 years	Social connections
	32. **Provide** a Housing Strategy for Wollondilly that enables energy efficient design, affordable housing solutions, and a range of housing types within Wilton	Lead – Council Support – DPIE	0-5 years	Planetary health Social connections
Build connected communities	33. **Partner** with the NSW Government and developers to build housing around local centres and open space	Lead – Council Support – DPIE, Developers	0-5 and 5-10 years	Physical activity Social connections
	34. **Provide** active transport initiatives in partnership with developers, state government agencies and local community groups to encourage walking to school and to work	Lead – Council Support – Schools, Developers	0-5 years	Physical activity Social connection Planetary health
	35. **Advocate** to the NSW Government for early delivery of regular and reliable public bus services within Wilton	Lead – Council Support – TfNSW	0-5 years	Physical activity Social connection Planetary health

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