Wilton 2040: A Plan for the Wilton Growth Area

Finalisation Report
Department of Planning and Environment
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Wilton Growth Area

Wilton is an important location in the delivery of a 30-minute city for the Western City District of Sydney. Wilton’s strategic location allows for connections between future employment and commercial areas in Western Sydney Airport, Greater Macarthur, and the Illawarra.

The Wilton Growth Area (WGA) is made up of five precincts – South East Wilton, North Wilton, Wilton Town Centre, and West Wilton. Bingara Gorge was rezoned in 2005 and is being developed for low density housing. The Maldon employment area to the west is also part of the Wilton Growth Area.

A key attraction of the Wilton Growth Area is its setting in the natural and untouched river gorges of the Nepean River and Allens Creek. Biodiversity values in Wilton are high, and protection of significant areas for environmental conservation has been given high importance in the detailed planning of Wilton’s development.

The concept of a new town at Wilton was initially proposed in 2011. By 2015, the Greater Macarthur Land Release Investigation Preliminary Strategy and Action Plan was released by the State Government for community consultation.

Community Engagement on the Wilton Interim Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan (ILUIIP)

Community drop-in sessions and the opportunity for submissions on the ILUIIP occurred for six weeks from 5 August to 20 September 2017.

The Department has reviewed the 76 submissions received, including the advice of Council and State agencies, to update the ILUIIP. The prominent issues raised in these submissions include:

- the road network, particularly the alignment of local roads on individual properties;
- upgrades to public transport and the existing rail network;
- employment and business space;
- educational infrastructure;
- controls proposed for land including density and height with many submissions seeking increases to both; and
- location of open space.

The Progression of the Wilton Interim Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan to Wilton 2040: A Plan for the Wilton Growth Area

The ILUIIP has progressed since its exhibition in 2017 to become a comprehensive strategic planning document Wilton 2040: A Plan for the Wilton Growth Area (Wilton 2040). Wilton 2040 features an overarching strategic framework, precinct planning principles for staged development and provision of infrastructure in Wilton to establish a community of around 15,000 homes, open space, schools, employment areas, and a range of retail and commercial
It also sets out the NSW Government-endorsed vision and plan for the Wilton Growth Area to provide new homes for Sydney’s growing population. Additionally, Wilton 2040:

- develops a long-term vision for Wilton so that the community grows as planned;
- articulates the essential transport links for the WGA;
- provides an infrastructure masterplan and planning for community facilities, schools, open space and other public spaces;
- identifies areas for growth based on a detailed analysis of opportunities and constraints;
- develops a framework to guide future planning; and
- establishes an implementation and monitoring framework.

**Funding for State and Local Infrastructure**

The Wilton Growth Area will include a Special Infrastructure Contribution (SIC), which will enable full cost recovery of regional infrastructure required for the first 20 years of development. A draft SIC has been prepared for exhibition with the finalisation of Wilton 2040.

Wilton 2040 provides a basis for the regional level contributions, as well as a strategic framework for the growth area. It identifies new and upgraded regional infrastructure, such as major roads and land for education and health, to support development of the Wilton Growth Area.

Wollondilly Shire Council is preparing a Contributions Plan for developer contributions for local infrastructure (roads, drainage, open space and community facilities) required to service development in the Wilton Growth Area. The Contributions Plan will be exhibited in early 2019.

Until the SIC is in place, Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPA) have and will be executed for each development to provide certainty that funding from the proponent for regional infrastructure will be provided. The precinct proponents of each precinct will then need to meet any additional costs identified in the final SIC. VPA’s have already been executed for the South East Wilton and North Wilton precincts.

**Protection of Koala Habitats and the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan**

The Department is undertaking strategic conservation planning in Western Sydney to support the delivery of housing, infrastructure and economic development in the growth areas. This work will deliver a conservation plan that will help maintain and enhance the area’s important environmental values over the long term. The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (Conservation Plan), is being developed for Western Sydney and is one of the largest conservation
planning exercises ever undertaken in Australia, and will provide an enduring conservation legacy for Western Sydney.

The Conservation Plan will work to streamline environmental assessments and approvals under relevant State and Commonwealth legislation and conservation planning on a landscape scale. Final approval of the Conservation Plan will be administered by both State and Commonwealth governments.

The Conservation Plan will run concurrently with land use and infrastructure planning and precinct rezoning. The plan will seek to balance biodiversity impacts in the biocertified areas through a range of conservation measures, including protection of high conservation value core and corridor areas, revegetation and renewal, zoning protection and investment in species recovery initiatives.

The Conservation Plan will support a regional approach to maintain and protect the South Western Sydney koala population. The plan will seek to balance impacts to koalas from urban development through a range of conservation measures. This would include measures to protect koala habitat corridors in perpetuity and to restore land to augment and strengthen existing corridors. The plan would also support measures such as koala-proof fencing to reduce the impacts of vehicle strike and dog attacks.

The Department has carried out extensive field surveys to identify the biodiversity values in the Growth Area so that precinct plans can be developed that will avoid or minimise significant biodiversity impacts.

**Public Transport for the Wilton Growth Area**

The State Government’s recently released *Future Transport Strategy 2056* identifies two major public transport projects in Wilton for further investigation – the provision of enhanced rail services to service growth at Wilton, and the completion of the Maldon-Dombarton railway line. Discussions with Transport for NSW have confirmed that this is anticipated to be a freight rail link only.

In the initial stages of Wilton’s development, enhanced bus services will provide public transport for residents of the growth area. Detailed precinct planning will include bus capable routes and bus facilities at the Wilton Town Centre. Funding for bus facilities is included in the State level contributions.

**Strategic Road Network for the Wilton Growth Area**

The strategic layout of the arterial road network for the Wilton Growth Area has been resolved as part of the finalisation of *Wilton 2040* and the preparation of the SIC. This work has been informed by a traffic and transport study commissioned by the Department, and in consultation with Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), Transport for NSW (TfNSW), and Wollondilly Shire Council.

A range of scenarios for future transport provision and potential road networks have been investigated for the Wilton Growth Area to understand different
approaches for integrating transport and land use. These scenarios have been subject to a peer review, involving assessment of road geometry, traffic modelling, urban design, and cost, to provide an evidence base for decision-making on the optimal road network. This exercise has been jointly undertaken by the Department and RMS, with involvement from TfNSW, Council and proponents.

The peer review revealed that all scenarios were workable in terms of traffic and road geometry, though further refinement was required to provide a scheme that ensures homes, jobs and local facilities are well connected and accessible by various modes, including driving, bus / rail, walking and cycling. The final strategic road network therefore combines the favourable elements of each of the scenarios to provide a solution that performs optimally in terms of servicing the town centre and surrounding urban land over the planning horizon.

The traffic modelling undertaken as part of this assessment indicates that the connection will provide essential connectivity for Bingara Gorge residents to the Wilton Town Centre and proposed K-12 High School. The Hume Motorway and Wilton Interchange will continue to function as the major through route.

**The Urban Development Zone (UDZ)**

An innovative new zone, the *Urban Development Zone* (UDZ) will be applied to each of the five Wilton Growth Area precincts through the *Growth Centres State Environmental Planning Policy*. The UDZ allows for strategic planning directions to be given more prominence when detailed site, engineering and urban design work is undertaken.

The creation of this broad urban development zoning that links to strategic planning work and enables more detailed neighbourhood planning by the proponent is a feature of successful land release processes in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia.

A Line of Sight Diagram for the Wilton Growth Area at **Figure 1** illustrates the approval framework for the growth area.

**Mining**

Part of the Wilton Growth Area has approval for coal mining over the next 15 to 30 years. The Department is working with landowners and the mining industry to address the risks associated with building homes above underground mining. Coal mining in urban areas has the potential to damage building and infrastructure as result of subsidence, adding costs to building requirements. The co-existence of coal mining and urban development can incur high costs involved with managing mining impacts including mine subsidence and community intolerance.

Landowners of the North Wilton and Wilton Town Centre Precincts have reached agreement with mining company South32 that the mining lease over
the area will be relinquished when the area is rezoned. This enables development to proceed.

**Main changes to the Wilton Growth Area Structure Plan**

The main changes made to the Wilton Growth Area Structure Plan, arising from submissions received and consultation with State agencies are as follows:

- The finalisation of the strategic road network;
- Refining the development footprint and environmental conservation areas; and
- Preparation of an urban design concept for the Wilton Town Centre Precinct.

The Wilton Growth Area Structure Plan is shown at **Figure 2**.

**Further planning on the Wilton Growth Area in 2018**

More collaborative work will be undertaken by the State Government and Wollondilly Shire Council on the Wilton Growth Area to prepare for the next public and agency exhibition in late 2018. This exhibition will include the draft Wilton Town Centre Precinct Plan and the Wilton Growth Area Development Control Plan.

The attached timeline at **Figure 3** provides a snapshot of where we are in the planning of the Wilton Growth Area and some future objectives.
Line of sight diagram – Wilton Growth Area

- Global megatrends
  - State priorities
  - State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs)
  - EP&A Act
  - Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016

- Greater Sydney Region Plan
- Western City District Plan
- Western Sydney Environment Plan
- Western Sydney City Deal

- Urban Development Zone (UDZ)
  - Wilton 2040
  - Wilton Growth Area Structure Plan
  - Wilton Green Plan
  - Precinct Structure Plans
  - Special Infrastructure Contributions (Wilton SIC)
  - VPA’s with State Government

- Precinct Plan maps and development controls (in Wilton Growth Area DCP)
- Section 7.11 Plan and VPA’s with Council
- Approval by Council of neighbourhood plans and staging of precinct development
- Assessment of Development Applications by Council
- Development Applications to be consistent with Wilton 2040 and Precinct Structure Plan (referral to Secretary)

Figure 1: Line of Sight Diagram – Wilton Growth Area
Figure 2: Wilton Growth Area Structure Plan
Figure 3: Timeline for Planning of the Wilton Growth Area