



North Coast Settlement Planning Guidelines 2019



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- ***Part 1 – Purpose of this Guideline***

Part 1 Introduction

The NSW North Coast is one of the most ecologically diverse and environmentally rich areas in Australia. It is important that the region's environment be protected and enhanced by directing development to appropriate locations that can deliver a sustainable and resilient built environment.

The North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (the Regional Plan) recognises that the region's historical low-density settlement pattern has placed growth pressure on sensitive environments. It is projected that the North Coast will need to accommodate an additional 76,200 residents who will generate a need for 46,000 new homes by 2036. To minimise this impact, and maximise the use of services and infrastructure, new urban development will be directed to existing urban growth areas mapped in the Regional Plan. However, in some instances it may be necessary to identify new urban areas located outside the existing mapped urban growth areas to accommodate the growth expected in the region.

New residential and employment areas will be identified and investigated through a council's strategic land use planning program which is required to include a Local Strategic Planning Statement and may also include a local growth management strategy or local housing strategy. Taking a strategic approach enables councils and communities to assess the broader implications and consequences of identifying locations for proposed residential and employment land. It also ensures the best use of available land.



New residential area at Cumbalum in Ballina local government area

What the Guidelines do

1. The North Coast Settlement Planning Guidelines 2019 (the 'Guidelines') have been produced to provide councils with guidance when considering the most appropriate location for future residential and employment land when preparing or reviewing land use planning strategies. The objectives of the Guidelines are: to ensure that residential and employment land uses are located on the most appropriate land; and
2. to focus demand for additional housing in established centres and only consider new greenfield release areas where sufficient demand and the need for additional capacity can be demonstrated.

The Guidelines comprise three components designed to guide the planning of land for future urban development. These components are:

- growth management principles;
- land release criteria; and
- minimum requirements for local strategic planning programs.

Growth Management Principles – these broad principles guide consideration of whether new residential or employment release areas are necessary in a particular local government area and if so where these new release areas should be located (refer to Part 2 of this guideline).

Land Release Criteria – these criteria specify the characteristics of land which may make it unsuitable for new residential or employment land uses and require the consideration of the provision of infrastructure to service new urban areas (refer to Part 2 of this guideline).

Minimum Requirements for Local Strategic Planning Program – a council's local strategic planning program is the preferred means of identifying and assessing the need and location of new urban areas. Since the Department has a role in approving local strategic planning statements, local growth management strategies and local housing strategies, the Guidelines specify the Department's minimum requirements for a land use planning strategy which identifies new land for future residential or employment purposes (refer to Part 3 of this guideline).



Where the Guidelines apply

The Guidelines apply to the North Coast Region of NSW being the local government areas of Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Lismore, Kyogle, Richmond Valley, Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, Bellingen, Nambucca, Kempsey and Port Macquarie - Hastings.

When the Guidelines apply

The Guidelines are to be used when a council prepares either:

- a local strategic planning statement;
- a local housing strategy;
- a local growth management strategy for employment land or large lot residential land; or
- an amendment to a local growth management strategy or local housing strategy to include a specific site.

The land release criteria should also be taken into consideration when preparing a planning proposal for the rezoning of land mapped as an investigation area which is already located within an urban growth area mapped in the Regional Plan.

The growth management principles and land release criteria in the Guidelines will need to be addressed if a proposed site is being considered as a variation to an urban growth area through a council's strategic land use planning process.

If a variation to an urban growth area is proposed in a planning proposal, then the Regional Plan includes Urban Growth Area Variation Criteria which are to be addressed. The land release criteria in the Guidelines have been aligned with the Urban Growth Area Variation Criteria to ensure consistency between these documents.

Strategic Planning Framework

The North Coast Regional Plan 2036 is the primary strategic planning document for the North Coast. The Regional Plan contains **action 1.4** to

Prepare land release criteria to assess appropriate locations for future residential, commercial and industrial uses.

These guidelines deliver on the action and replace the Settlement Planning Guidelines – Mid and Far North Coast Regional Strategies, 2007.

The update of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* in March 2018 introduced provisions which recognise the importance of strategic planning and require councils to prepare Local Strategic Planning Statements.

The strategic land use planning framework for a local government area will be based on its local strategic planning statement. A council's local strategic planning statement will set out the vision for a local government area, the characteristics which contribute to its local identity, the shared community values to be maintained and enhanced and how growth and change will be managed into the future.

If a local strategic planning statement proposes to identify new land for future residential or employment purposes it will need to contain the technical demographic analysis of the growth and change expected for the local government area and provide analysis of the land and infrastructure needed to accommodate this growth.

This level of detail and the consideration of new land for future urban development may also be addressed separately through a local growth management strategy or local housing strategy.

Regardless of the strategic land use planning approach taken by a council, the Guidelines provide direction on the need for, and location of, suitable land to accommodate the growth expected in a local government area and the region. They also detail the Department's minimum requirements for the preparation of a strategic land use planning document that identifies new land for future residential or employment purposes.

In relation to residential land the Guidelines are intended to complement and expand on section 1.3.4 of the Department's Local Housing Strategy Guideline.

Where a new urban area is identified in a local growth management strategy or an existing urban growth area is varied, the changes will be reflected in future updates of the maps in the Regional Plan. The Regional Plan is reviewed every five years. This process will maintain consistency between regional and local planning documents and assist in confirming compliance with local planning directions.

North Coast Housing and Land Monitor

The North Coast Housing and Land Monitor reviews progress against the projected housing and employment land estimates identified in the Regional Plan. The Monitor enables analysis of trends in residential dwelling approvals and commencements and the mix of housing being provided. It also enables forecast of annual lot releases and provides a regional picture of where additional urban land is required land. The Monitor also informs Local Government and State agency priorities for future service provision and infrastructure investment for the North Coast. What the Guidelines do not do

The Guidelines do not provide guidance on the design of the built environment nor review the content of existing policies that deal with this aspect of urban planning. Other publications produced by the State Government such as *Better Placed*, and the *North Coast Urban Design Guidelines* should be referred to for detailed information on the design of the built environment.

These publications inform how land should be developed once zoned for urban purposes. They guide the layout and design of the urban area and the built environment that will result.



The Guidelines are intended to inform that stage of the strategic planning process that identifies where growth should be located in the first place, be it in existing urban areas through intensification of development or in new greenfield release areas.

What types of land uses do the Guidelines apply to

Throughout this document a reference to 'urban' may refer to residential, employment and some tourism development. The Guidelines apply to all of these forms of development unless otherwise indicated.

Generally, in relation to the location of new urban areas, a reference in this document to residential development will include large lot residential development, commonly known as rural residential development. However, given the unique characteristics of large lot residential development the Guidelines contain a section on specific considerations for large lot residential development additional to the general land release criteria.

Employment lands are those lands where the permissible uses generate employment opportunities. They include the traditional commercial and industrial zoned land and also land zoned B5 Business



Development, B6 Enterprise Corridor and B7 Business Park in Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plans. The Guidelines also contain a section on specific considerations for employment lands additional to the general land release criteria.

The suitability of land for residential or large lot residential purposes is not significantly different to employment land uses. Physical constraints which make the land unsuitable for residential development are likely to also make it unsuitable for employment generating development.

It is the opportunities of the land, not its constraints, that determine its suitability for either residential or employment purposes. For example, the proximity of the land to a major road may make it unsuited to residential development because of road noise but may make it suitable for industrial development because of access to a major transport route.



Thrumster in Port Macquarie - Hastings local government area





***Part 2 – Growth
Management Principles
and Land Release Criteria***

Part 2 Introduction

The most important task of strategic planning is to establish a broad picture of the preferred growth scenario for a local government area. This work will be undertaken through a council's local strategic planning program. Once this is established, determining the most appropriate type of development and finding the right location for that development to support the expected growth is essential. A council's strategic land use planning process will outline how growth will be managed throughout the local government area and on which land it will be located.

Growth may be facilitated by increasing the development potential of existing urban zoned land by allowing increased density or identifying new land to be developed for future urban purposes.

It is recognised that existing urban areas may not be appropriate for increased development potential due to hazards, physical constraints or limitations in infrastructure capacity.

The decision to identify new urban areas to accommodate future growth should only occur if investigations into physical land constraints or infrastructure capacity conclude that it is not feasible to increase the development potential of existing urban land.

If it is determined through the strategic land use planning process that new areas of residential or employment land are needed, then the attributes and suitability of available land needs to be assessed.

The four growth management principles contained in this guideline provide broad guidance on whether new urban areas are necessary and appropriate and if so, where they should be located. If it is determined that new urban growth areas are necessary, the land release criteria will guide decisions on the suitability of land for future urban development based on its physical characteristics.



Low density housing at Pottsville

Growth Management Principles

Principle 1: Avoid New Urban Growth Areas in the Coastal Area

The Regional Plan identifies that the coastal area of the North Coast covers 12 per cent of the region and accommodates 49 per cent of the population. Consequently, development pressure is expected to continue in this area and a balanced approach to the use of this land is necessary to protect the sensitive coastal environment.

New urban growth areas will generally not be supported in the coastal area.

The Regional Plan permits only minor and contiguous variations to the existing urban growth areas in the coastal area. These variations are only available if the proposal can satisfy the Urban Growth Area Variation Principles (Appendix A of the Regional Plan).

This Guideline has been aligned with these variation principles for consistency and to ensure that, whether a variation to an existing urban growth area is proposed or a new urban growth area is envisaged, the criteria for considering its suitability are the same.

Where it is proposed to amend an urban growth area in the coastal area, and the amendment is not of a minor scale, it may still be considered providing:

- it should result in no net increase in the size of urban growth areas in the coastal area of the local government area because other existing urban growth area land is to be removed because it is unsuitable for urban purposes; or
- it maximises opportunities for increasing development potential of land which is already zoned for rural residential purposes and is suitable for more intensive urban development.

In these instances, the proposed amendment to an urban growth area must firstly be identified through a Department approved strategic land use planning process or addendum to an existing strategy.

Principle 2: Consider a regional approach to land supply

The Regional Plan identifies that the North Coast needs to accommodate an additional 76,200 residents who will generate the need for 46,000 new homes by 2036.

It is important that when planning for the identification of land to provide housing and employment for this increased population that a sub-regional approach is taken by councils.

Each local government area may not be able to provide the full range of land use types (greenfield residential, industrial, commercial and rural residential). Councils should consider the broader view of land within their local government area and focus on providing land for the most appropriate land use at a regional or sub-regional level. Councils should remain open to demand for certain types of land uses being met by adjacent local government areas if their land has a higher or better use. Information on forecast future land supply and demand for all local government areas is provided in the North Coast Housing and Land Monitor.

Some local government areas may have land which has better access to regional infrastructure or has less physical constraints. There are significant efficiencies to be gained from avoiding development on constrained land and these efficiencies can result in reduced development costs which may make business establishment on this land more economically viable or reduce the cost of housing.

When considering the need for new residential or employment land (particularly industrial land and large lot residential land), councils should work together with adjoining councils to determine:

- the availability of this land type in neighbouring local government areas and whether other council areas have land better suited to delivering this type of development in a more sustainable manner in terms of balanced social, economic and environmental outcomes;
- whether options for local expansion have been explored and found to be unsuitable; and
- whether the development potential of existing land has been maximised to respond to local needs.

Principle 3: Prioritise increased housing diversity and choice in existing urban growth areas

The Regional Plan sets a target of 40 per cent of new housing to be in the form of dual occupancies, apartments, townhouses, villas or dwellings on lots less than 400m² by 2036.

When assessing the need for new areas of residential land a council should first assess the potential for redevelopment or intensification of existing land within the urban growth areas of the Regional Plan to determine if it is feasible to increase density and housing diversity to meet the above target.

Increasing housing diversity and choice does not have to mean compromising the local character of an urban area. Greater housing yields can be achieved through many different built forms and a council's local strategic planning program can be used to consider the character of localities and the values that will need to be protected for existing urban areas undergoing increased housing growth.

Areas of increased densities are to be located within, or in a manner which will reinforce an existing social catchment where people congregate to satisfy material, social and cultural needs and optimise the use of existing infrastructure.

When planning an increase in the density of existing residential land, councils are to consider the natural hazard constraints of the land.

If hazards can be appropriately and economically managed and the risk can be mitigated through an appropriate planning response, then it is preferable for this land to continue to be developed more intensively rather than directing development to greenfield sites where higher environmental and infrastructure costs may arise.

Existing urban development on land subject to natural hazards is not reason enough to enable increased density on that land if it will result in an unmanageable increase in risk to life or property from natural hazards.

Principle 4: Planning for future growth shall reflect different urban contexts

Planning for future population growth needs to account for the development needs of different urban contexts. The scale and form of a new urban area needs to take account of the size and character of any existing adjoining urban area and be aware of the expectations of the local community for their locality.

The impacts on character and public expectations for the expansion of a rural village will be different to those for the expansion of a regional city. It is important to maintain the distinct urban fabric and settlement hierarchy of the North Coast by ensuring new urban areas do not overwhelm existing rural and coastal villages.

A council's strategic plan use planning program should include consideration of local character in consultation with the community. A defined local character analysis can assist in planning for future growth so that it does not have a negative impact on the attributes and identify of an area which are valued by the community.

Land Release Criteria

Consideration of the suitability of land for future residential or employment land uses must account for the appropriateness of its location in the broader landscape, the natural constraints of the land, and the viability of accessing and servicing the land.

1. Hazards and Constraints

Natural hazards and physical constraints may make some land on the North Coast unsuitable for residential or employment land uses. Climate change is likely to worsen the severity and risk of some of these hazards. The Guidelines establish a hierarchy of physical constraints for land in the North Coast region.

- Primary constraints are generally considered to make the land unsuitable for all types of residential and employment development and should be avoided in most instances when considering land for new urban areas. Councils should adopt the precautionary principle when considering land with primary constraints for urban development.
- Manageable constraints may require significant mitigation measures before the land is suitable for residential or employment land uses. Where the land contains multiple manageable constraints, the cumulative impact may make it unsuitable for residential or employment purposes.

The following Tables detail what are considered to be primary and manageable constraints.



Clarence River at Grafton in flood January 2013

Table 1 – Primary Constraints

Primary Constraints
Land subject to coastal hazards identified in an environmental planning instrument, coastal zone management plan, coastal management program or development control plan.
Land within the 1:100-year floodplain.
Bushfire prone land.
Land where there is no available safe evacuation route in the event of flood or bushfire.
Land of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance where it is inappropriate for it to be developed for urban purposes.
Land identified as Important Farmland.
Land of high environmental value ¹ .
Land containing acid sulfate soils.
Steep land being land with a slope of over 33% (18 degrees).
Strategically identified transport corridors

¹ The North Coast Regional Plan 2036 maps Potential High Environmental Values at a regional scale. This map is generally not suitable for individual site scale investigations. If it is necessary to verify the presence of high environmental value on land when identifying land for new urban areas, Appendix A provides a list of high environmental value attributes for this purpose and details of how these attributes can be identified.

Table 2 – Manageable Constraints

Manageable Constraints
Contaminated land.
Land that constitutes a biodiversity link between natural areas.
Other land uses which are likely to result in land use conflict with some urban land uses such as sewerage treatment facilities, airports, intensive agriculture operations, offensive or hazardous industries and waste facilities.
Land possessing Aboriginal cultural heritage value which is to be protected and managed.
Land containing or in the vicinity of significant natural resources such as extractive mineral resources.
Land in drinking water catchments.

It is acknowledged that certain local government areas may have land with additional physical constraints which make it unsuited to urban development. The above tables are not intended to be an exhaustive list of land constraints. Similarly, the data which identifies these hazards and constraints has not been referenced to ensure councils can use the most relevant and up to date information for their local government areas to guide decision making.

Some physical land characteristics such as scenic quality or European heritage, may not necessarily prevent the use of the land for urban development. When planning for the development of land containing such characteristics a council should consider whether it is necessary to adopt specific development controls to address these features.

It is acknowledged that in some instances land has been broadly identified as having specific significance or constraints based on regional scale investigations. Where this has occurred, further investigations at precinct or site level may be necessary to determine the actual suitability of the land for urban development. Such investigations must be completed before the land is identified for future residential or employment purposes in the local strategic planning program. A council must have identified the relevant hazard or risk and any mitigation measures must have been resolved before the land is nominated for urban development. For instance, where a council proposes urban development on flood prone land it must have an adopted and approved Floodplain Risk Management Plan that is not more than 5 years old which covers the land.

Investigation Areas – In some instances, a council may seek to identify land in a strategy that requires further investigation before it is determined to be suitable for residential or employment purposes. The inclusion of such investigation areas will only be supported if it has been demonstrated that the land is not subject to any of the primary constraints identified in Table 1 of this guideline.

Flexibility when considering constrained land – Where it is necessary to enable the expansion of an existing urban area to take advantage of existing infrastructure and services, it is recognised that flexibility is necessary to enable the development of land with the least restrictive constraint. In such instances, where a council proposes the development of land containing a primary constraint it will need to justify the development of this land through its local strategic planning program.

2. Location and Settlement Form

The location and form of new urban areas has an important role in the functioning of an urban environment, and how a particular urban area relates to other urban centres in a local government area or the region.

New urban areas are to be either associated with an existing urban area which can provide the day to day needs of the residents, or the new urban area is to be of a suitable scale to permit an appropriate land use mix to provide the day to day needs of residents, such as shopping, recreation, employment and child care.

The Regional Plan establishes a hierarchy for cities, strategic centres and centres. When planning for a new urban area, consideration is to be given to the following matters when determining a suitable hierarchy for a local government area:

- the ultimate geographical extent of each existing urban area;
- the population growth predictions and desired population target for each community;
- the time frame by which it is expected to reach that position; and
- the relationships between the specific urban areas of a local government area.

The criteria for the location and form of future urban areas are as follows.

Location – Future urban areas are to be located so as to:

- confirm a hierarchy of settlement that guides future growth by giving consideration to the scale, nature and type of development being planned for;
- support and maintain strong multi-functional business centres;
- minimise urban sprawl; and
- maximise infrastructure and service efficiencies.

Settlement Form – future urban areas are to:

- provide for a mix of houses, jobs, local services and open space where appropriate;

- in the case of residential development, provide for a variety of dwelling types and a choice in location, form and affordability; and
- be structured so as to promote public transport, cycling or walking links within the new urban area and that connect with existing urban areas or centres;

Where future residential areas are proposed to be located adjacent to agricultural or industrial land uses, they should be carefully planned to avoid land use conflict between the adjacent land uses. Where potential land use conflict may occur, it must be managed so any potential conflict is minimised.

3. Physical and Social Infrastructure

The efficient provision of necessary infrastructure is essential for new residential and employment areas. To achieve future environmental, economic and social sustainability, new urban areas need to maximise infrastructure efficiency and service provision and consider servicing viability.

The criteria for the efficient provision of infrastructure for new urban areas are:

- **Capacity to service expected population** – The available infrastructure and natural resources must be adequate to service the expected population of the urban area. Future urban development is to strengthen the efficient use of existing infrastructure, services and transport networks, though must not overburden existing services in other areas.
- **Avoid fragmented urban areas** – Fragmented development has high infrastructure costs and should be avoided. Where proposed new urban areas are isolated they will need to demonstrate they can feasibly provide stand-alone services and infrastructure or be suitably connected to other established urban areas which will provide these facilities.
- **Avoid motor vehicle dependency** – New urban areas which are not associated with an existing village or town should not be considered if residents would be heavily dependent upon motor vehicles to access basic social services, infrastructure and employment.
- **Consider social interaction** – New urban areas need to be located within or connected to an existing settlement in a manner which will reinforce the existing social catchment and minimise service costs and travel distances. Alternatively, they need to be developed as a defined urban or rural village with its own heart that includes adequate public space where people can congregate to satisfy material, social and cultural needs.

Local strategic planning programs are to detail the available infrastructure for new urban areas and specify where upgrading or augmentation of the infrastructure will be necessary and where capacity limits may exist.

Local strategic planning programs are to include details of any required staging of new urban land to ensure land is not released until the necessary infrastructure can be provided. Sequencing and staging of release areas shall generally prioritise those closest to existing infrastructure to maximise cost efficiencies in the future development of the land.

If infrastructure appropriate to the scale of the proposed release area is not available, then mechanisms are to be put in place to provide this infrastructure in a timely and efficient way at no cost to government. If infrastructure cannot be feasibly provided, future development within that service catchment should not be identified.

Councils are to consult with state agencies which provide infrastructure early in the process of their local strategic planning program to determine existing infrastructure deficiencies and identify necessary infrastructure improvements or additions to service any new identified urban areas.

4. Access and Transport Infrastructure

Access to new urban areas and their connection with existing urban areas and local road networks is an essential component of choosing the right location for new urban areas.

When considering the location and general configuration of new urban areas it is important to consider the population densities and land use mixes that will facilitate the critical mass needed to support viable public transport. Successful public transport services deliver high quality and short, efficient routes. Good public transport has to be explicitly planned for and the quality and efficiency of the services are dependent on the location and form of new urban areas.

The overall urban form is an important consideration in encouraging active transport opportunities, facilitating connections with existing public transport services, improving road safety and urban amenity and reducing the need for private car travel.

The important access and transport criteria for new urban areas are:

- **Integrate with the local network** – New urban areas are to be located and designed to be well connected and integrated with the existing local transport network. They should not rely solely on regional highways to access town centres and should not contribute to ribbon/strip development nor impact on the safety and efficiency of major or arterial roads.
- **Provide alternative transport modes** – If the release area is to use facilities and infrastructure in neighbouring existing urban areas then alternative transport modes, such as separate cycle paths, direct walking tracks, and public transport facilities, must be available to reduce reliance on car travel to access these facilities.
- **Increase opportunities for cycling and walking** – New urban areas are to be located to increase the opportunities for cycling and walking for residents and visitors.
- **Mitigate impacts of transport infrastructure** – Where new urban areas are proposed in the vicinity of existing or proposed major infrastructure, including rail corridors and airports, sufficient buffering distances and/or technological solutions will be required between the infrastructure and the proposed urban area to mitigate adverse amenity impacts.

5. Specific Considerations for Employment Land

Location of Employment Land – Employment land should be made available in a variety of locations within each centre, strategic centre or regional city to encourage new employment opportunities as they arise and reduce vehicle usage.

The location and availability of employment land should recognise the linkages between the employment land and:

- settlement areas;
- markets;
- transport and access; and
- cost-effective provision of necessary services and infrastructure.

The location of employment land, especially industrial land, must also take into consideration potential land use conflict.

Certain industries, such as heavy or rural industries, may need to be located away from existing centres due to their type, scale and nature. For instance, marine based industries require access to navigable waterways. Where marine based industries are being considered, councils should refer to the Department's Marine Based Industry Policy – Far North Coast and Mid North Coast.

Consider necessary infrastructure – Planning for employment lands also needs to involve planning for improvements to the related road network or other transport infrastructure and the local power and water supply to create or improve the viability of employment land.

Live/Work development – Planning for employment land should address the trend towards live/work style developments and distinguish them from traditional industrial land uses. This form of employment land comprises small scale light industrial and other employment generating land uses which are compatible with co-located residential land uses. This form of development provides lower cost overheads for start-up businesses and helps to introduce vitality into industrial estates or commercial areas.

Such live/work style development may not be suitable in established traditional industrial estates due to land use conflict with existing industrial land uses, however where there is an opportunity for new precincts or the revitalisation of existing underutilised industrial land, live/work style development could be considered if supported by a development planning framework that addresses potential land use conflict.

Location of commercial land – New commercial land is to be located so that it is accessible to, and consistent in scale with, the settlement it serves or is planned to serve, and so that it can be conveniently serviced.

Where new commercial land is proposed in a location which is not adjacent to, or adjoining, an existing centre then it should be at a scale and location only to serve the target neighbourhood so as to not undermine the existing commercial centre/s.



Employment development at South Tweed Heads

In considering commercial land needs, a council's local strategic planning program should take into account trends and projected changes in employment and retail and the subsequent changes in the demand for employment lands such as location, scale and infrastructure needs. A future economy based on the service industry is likely to have very different needs to more traditional commercial land uses. In this regard, specific consideration should be given to internet availability.

6. Specific Considerations for Large Lot Residential Land

Large lot residential development, commonly referred to as rural residential development, is a widespread form of housing in the North Coast region. Large lot residential development, while a relevant part of the housing mix, should not be considered an essential component of a local government area's future housing needs, the majority of which should be provided in urban areas.

Large lot residential development does not provide an efficient use of land for residential purposes and has the potential to conflict with valuable agricultural or environmental land and requires services and infrastructure which are not as cost effective to deliver as in urban residential areas.

Consider the need for large lot residential development – Planning for the provision of large lot residential land should consider the need for this form of development and the sub-regional context. Where a local government area does not possess land that is well suited for large lot residential development, a council should consider the availability of this type of land in neighbouring local government areas and whether other council areas have land better suited to this land use.

Plan strategically for large lot residential development – Large lot residential development needs to be strategically planned for through a council's local strategic planning program. The Regional Plan does not permit new large lot residential development in the coastal area unless already identified in a land use planning strategy endorsed by the Department. New large lot residential areas will generally not be supported in new land use planning strategies for land in the coastal area unless a specific need for such areas can be demonstrated through a council's strategic planning program.



Rural housing Richmond Valley local government area

Location of future large lot residential areas – New large lot residential release areas are to have a direct relationship with a town or village or be clustered with existing large lot residential land to achieve a more resilient community and efficient provision of infrastructure and services. Fragmented large lot residential development across rural areas will not be supported.

Future large lot residential development should be located close to existing centres and away from areas that may in the future be needed for urban expansion of those centres.



- ***Part 3 – Components
of a Local Strategic
Planning Program***

Part 3 Introduction

The first step in the preferred process for land release involves the investigation and identification of suitable land through a local strategic planning program.

For the purpose of this guideline a local strategic planning program will comprise land use planning strategies which are considered to be:

- a local strategic planning statement;
- a local housing strategy;
- a local growth management strategy for employment land or large lot residential land;
- an amendment to a local growth management strategy or local housing strategy to include a specific site.

The Guidelines are intended to inform this first step by providing guidance on which land is considered to be suitable for future development in a local strategic planning program.

Content and scope of a land use planning strategy

A land use planning strategy may comprise a local strategic planning statement or may be prepared afterwards to complement and expand on a council's local strategic planning statement.

A local strategic planning statement will contain the vision for the local area, details of the special characteristics which contribute to the local identity, the shared community values and how growth and change will be managed into the future (*'Local Strategic Planning Statements. Guidelines for Councils.'* Department of Planning and Environment 2018.)

The role of a land use planning strategy is predominantly to identify the need for residential or employment land. Where a need is identified the strategy will identify which land is suitable for residential or employment purposes with regard to physical constraints and appropriateness of its location and infrastructure.

A land use planning strategy does not need to include detailed precinct plans. However, the attributes of the land and how the form of future development on the land achieves sustainable development should be taken into account. While a land use planning strategy does not need to go to the detail of a structure plan for new urban areas, it should indicate the broad character, range of housing options and land use mix for nominated new areas. This will clearly explain to the community the expected density of residential areas and ensure that adequate infrastructure and services are planned to maximise the use of this land.

A land use planning strategy should articulate a clear link to any existing local character statements and the desired future character for urban settlements and identify the broader planning principles which influence the ambience or 'feel' of an area, and which are critical in creating its desired character. This may include broad principles relating to the landscape, streetscape and/or building

levels such as maintaining green breaks between urban areas. It is expected that more detailed design requirements would be prepared as part of the subsequent planning process.

A land use planning strategy will need to include:

- the technical detail relating to the demand and supply of particular land uses;
- opportunities and constraints for increasing the capacity of existing urban land or enabling the development of new urban zoned land; and
- the need for, availability, constraints and opportunities of new urban areas.

A land use planning strategy can, but does not need to, be separated into component strategies for each particular land use (residential, large lot residential or employment land) provided a council has undertaken the necessary work to understand the relationship between the particular land use types in the local government area through its local strategic planning statement.

Minimum requirements for a land use planning strategy

A land use planning strategy submitted to the Department for approval is to contain, or be accompanied by, the following information.

Strategic Context – A clear link to the local strategic planning program and the local strategic planning statement if the strategy is being prepared separate to a local strategic planning statement, which will include the vision, regional context and influences and the role of the local government area in the region.

Sustainable Development – A commitment to achieving the principles of sustainable development and a statement of how the strategy addresses this.

Consultation – A summary of any community consultation and any significant changes made to the strategy as a result of the consultation.

Growth Management Principles – Information addressing the principles in Part 2 of these guidelines, including the existing services and infrastructure network and future infrastructure needs.

Land Supply Audit – A land supply and demand audit for land uses covered by the strategy and a demographic profile and population projections summary to support future residential and employment land requirements.

Discounting – Details of where existing urban zoned land has been discounted from calculations of land supply because of newly realised constraints. If land is to be discounted from the available supply, then the land use planning strategy must address the council's future intentions for this land.

Land Release Program – A land release program documenting the following information:

- **location** –map(s) and documentation identifying all land covered in the strategy and its proposed land uses;
- **land characteristics maps** – an analysis of the constraints of the land in the local government area including maps which show the land subject to each constraint and the remaining unconstrained land or that land identified in the local strategy as considered suitable for assessment. It is expected that councils will submit both electronic and hard copy maps with the land use planning strategy when seeking approval. Electronic format should be compatible with the digital requirements for the standard instrument for LEPs;
- **estimated yield** – the amount of land to be released for each type of land use (residential, large lot residential, commercial, industrial or tourism) and the justification for the amount identified in the strategy and any land agreed to be provided in adjoining local government areas. In the case of residential land, the expected lot yields and proposed densities, how they have been derived and an indication of how these lot yields relate to the dwelling targets and housing mix identified in the Regional Plan; and
- **timing** – expected staging and timing of land releases both across the local government area and within identified urban growth areas where appropriate, over the life of the strategy. If a land use planning strategy identifies more than 20 years supply of land for a particular purpose, then a staging plan is critical to ensure that the land is released in an orderly and logical manner to enable the efficient provision of infrastructure and services.

Infrastructure and Servicing Program – A servicing and infrastructure program summary for the supply of utilities and social facilities needed over the life of the strategy. If the provision of any of the facilities or services is the responsibility of another agency council should consult with the relevant service provider(s) to determine expected timing of the necessary infrastructure.

Review Period – A commitment to a nominated review period of no longer than seven (7) years. Local strategic planning statements are to be reviewed at least every seven years and a review of the land use planning strategy should occur after or concurrently with this local strategic planning statement review. The review may conclude that no changes are necessary, and no additional land needs to be released.

A council may include content in its land use planning strategy which deals with matters such as identifying local character and maintaining a sense of community however such content is not mandatory. However, it is expected that such matters would be addressed if the land use planning strategy is also to be a council's local strategic planning statement.

Approval pathway for land use planning strategies

The Department has a formal role in approving land use planning strategies to enable Council to be able to address the statutory requirements for the release of land.

The Local Strategic Planning Statement Guideline indicates that local strategic planning statements will be endorsed by the Department of Planning and Environment.

The Local Housing Strategy Guideline indicates that local housing strategies will be approved by the Department of Planning and Environment.

The *Local Housing Strategy Guidelines* include a process (Figure 1 on page 2) for preparing a local housing strategy which councils could adapt for preparing land use planning strategies which support a local strategic planning statement.

Changes to a land use planning strategy

It is acknowledged that once a land use planning strategy is finalised and approved, circumstances may arise where it becomes necessary to consider certain land for residential or employment land uses which had not been originally considered in the strategy.

Should this circumstance arise, and a council believes it is imperative that the land be considered for urban purposes before the next review of the strategy, then the land should be the subject of an addendum to the current land use planning strategy.

This approach will ensure that the suitability of the land is appropriately assessed in relation to the Guidelines and have consideration of the need for the release of the land established in the original strategy.

This approach will ensure the land use planning strategy stays current and relevant and also avoids the need for ad hoc planning proposals which do not have any strategic merit because they are not supported by an approved strategy.

Structure Plans/Precinct Plans/ Development Control Plans

Once land is identified for urban purposes in a land use planning strategy a council should consider whether it is appropriate or necessary for a further level of site-specific planning to be undertaken. For the purposes of this document this step in the planning process will be referred to as structure planning. This stage of the planning process may comprise a single structure plan for the site or precinct or specific development control plan (DCP) controls.

Structure plans reduce risk of land being zoned for urban purposes without detailed planning on how it will be developed and serviced. A structure plan is a worthwhile design exercise to maximise the opportunities of a site and address matters which may be of concern to the community.

The detail to which this level of planning occurs is up to the council and will depend on the scale and location of the new urban area. Smaller areas on the edge of rural villages will require a more modest structure plan than a large area isolated from a town centre.

The form of the detailed planning is at the discretion of the council. It is acknowledged that councils may have alternative processes, and this is acceptable as long as these alternative approaches result in an efficient and logically planned outcome for the community.

It is recommended that the final document is either incorporated into or supported by a development control plan to ensure it is given consideration when development applications for the land are being assessed.

Transitional arrangements

These Guidelines will apply to new land use planning strategies prepared by councils. Where a land use planning strategy has already been publicly exhibited compliance with the Guidelines will not be mandatory.

A council's existing land use planning strategy may still be used until a new strategy, consistent with the Guidelines, is approved.



***Glossary and
References***

Glossary

Term	Definition
Active transport	Includes non-motorised forms of transport involving physical activity, such as walking and cycling and also includes the use of public transport which often incorporates physical activity within the journey.
Coastal area	Comprises land east of the planned Pacific Highway alignment, plus the urban areas of Tweed Heads around the Cobaki Broadwater.
Employment land	Is land in a zone where the permissible uses generate employment opportunities. It includes commercial land zoned B1 Neighbourhood Centre, B2 Local Centre, B3 Commercial Core, B4 Mixed Use, B5 Business Development, B6 Enterprise Corridor or B7 Business Park as well as industrial land zoned IN1 General Industrial, IN2 Light Industrial, IN3 Heavy Industrial and IN4 Working Waterfront in Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plans.
Greenfield release area	A new development area that has not been previously developed or used for other urban purposes.
Important agricultural land	Land identified as State or regionally significant farmland under the Northern Rivers Farmland Protection Project (2005) and Mid North Coast Farmland Mapping Project (2008).
Large lot residential development	Is a form of residential development also known as rural residential development. Large lot residential development comprises estates of larger lots, generally between 4000m ² and 2 hectares in size, used primarily for residential development in a rural setting or on the fringe of an urban area.
Large release areas	Areas where the expected population will exceed the ability of existing services and infrastructure to service the population and therefore new neighbourhood centres or significant infrastructure will be required. This will depend on the context of the site of the new urban area. A new urban area on the edge of a small rural village may be considered large in its context while a similar sized development on the edge of a regional city is not.

Term	Definition
Land use planning strategy	A strategy that establishes a council's proposed approach for accommodating the expected population growth in a local government area. A land use planning strategy will assess the need for additional land to accommodate expected growth and if required will identify new areas of land to be rezoned and developed for future residential, rural residential, commercial, industrial or tourism purposes. In the context of these guidelines a land use planning strategy does not include a rural land strategy.
Sustainable development	Is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Urban growth area	Includes all land zoned for various urban purposes and all future potential urban land releases as illustrated on the Urban Growth Area Maps of the North Coast Regional Plan 2036. These areas will provide for housing, business, industrial, infrastructure and community facilities to accommodate the future regional population.



Other Reference Documents

Department of Planning and Environment 2018, *Local Strategic Planning Statements Guidelines for Councils*.

Government Architect New South Wales and Department of Planning and Environment 2018, *Draft Urban Design for Regional NSW - A guide for creating healthy built environments in regional NSW*

Department of Planning and Environment 2018, *Local Housing Strategies. A step-by-step process for producing a local housing strategy*.

Government Architect New South Wales 2017 *Better Placed – An integrated design policy for the built environment of New South Wales*.

Department of Planning and Environment 2015, *Marine-Based Industry Policy – Far North Coast and Mid North Coast NSW*.

Department of Planning 2009, *North Coast Urban Design Guidelines*

Appendix A – Attributes for Verification of Land of High Environmental Value

Attribute	Source or method of identification
1. Littoral Rainforest and Coastal Wetlands including proximity areas	Littoral Rainforest and Coastal Wetlands including proximity areas as mapped in State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018.
2. Areas of Outstanding Biodiversity Value	Areas of Outstanding Biodiversity Value declared under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> .
3. Nationally Important Wetlands	Nationally Important Wetlands listed in "A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia" Third Edition (EA, 2001), plus various additions for wetlands listed after 2001, including a 50 metre wide buffer.
4. Riparian zones	Riparian zones of third order streams and above including a buffer consistent with Appendix 3 of the Biodiversity Assessment Method.
5. Native vegetation in over-cleared (Mitchell) landscapes;	Native vegetation in over-cleared (Mitchell) landscapes.
6. Over-cleared vegetation	Over-cleared vegetation types identified in the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage Vegetation Information System database as more than 70% cleared.
7. Threatened Ecological Communities	Threatened Ecological Communities identified in the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage Vegetation Information System database or by comparison with the NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee's Final Determinations.

Attribute	Source or method of identification
8. Key habitats for threatened species	<p>Key habitats for threatened species;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Breeding habitats of threatened species (species credit species and ecosystem credit species) with known breeding occurrence – from existing Bionet records and/or field work. ii. Core Koala Habitat - from existing mapping in approved Koala Plans of Management and/or field work. iii. Important habitat of migratory and vagrant species mapped for the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme – from existing mapping. iv. Breeding, foraging and/or congregation habitats for migratory shorebird species with known occurrence – from existing Bionet records and/or field work. v. Known habitat for populations of species-credit species (species-credit species are identified in the Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection) – from existing Bionet records and/or field work.
9. Old Growth Forest	Old Growth Forest defined in accordance with a code of practice under Part 5 of the now repealed <i>Native Vegetation Regulation 2013</i> .