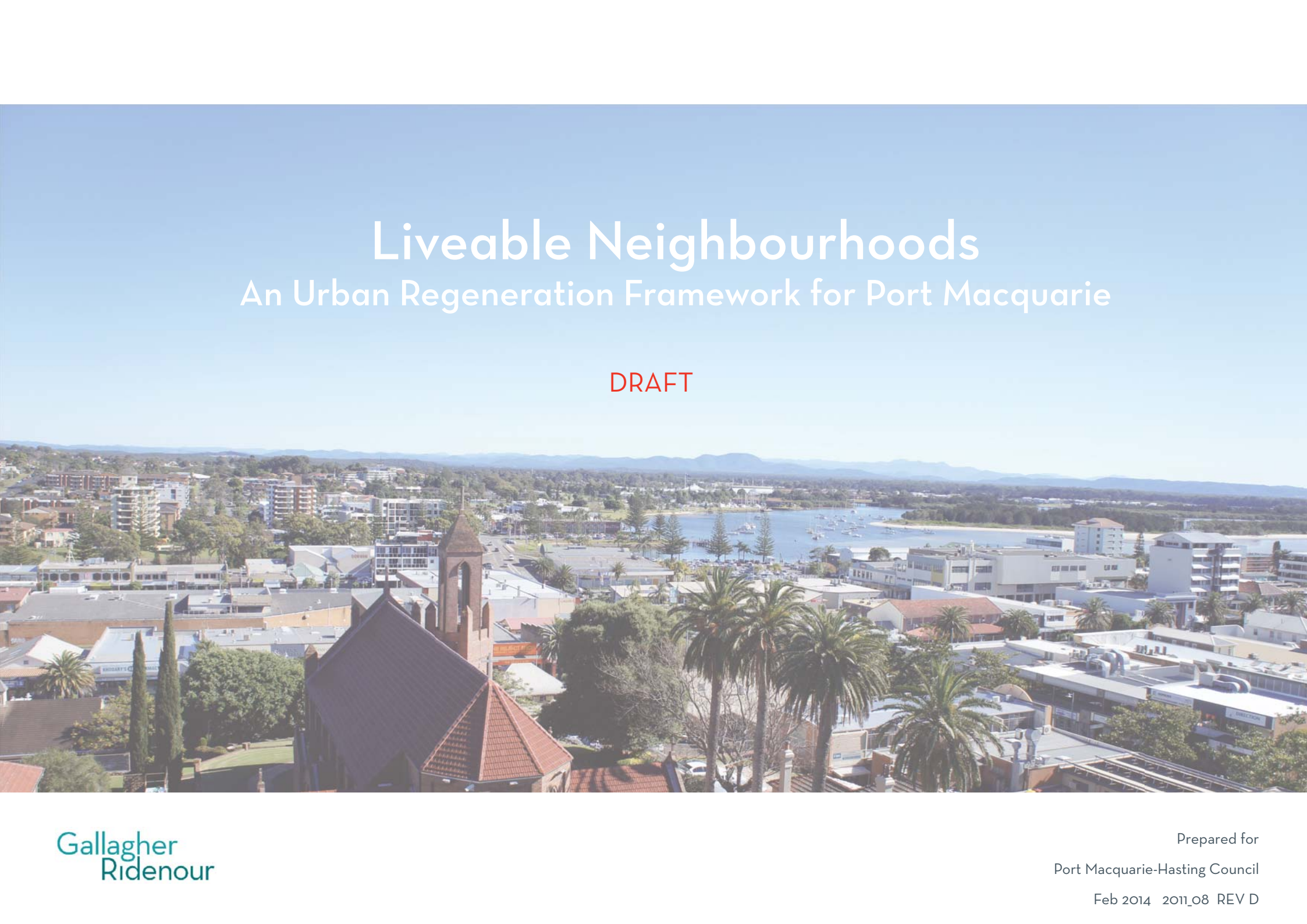


An aerial photograph of Port Macquarie, Australia, showing a mix of residential and commercial buildings, a prominent church with a tall steeple in the foreground, palm trees, and a harbor with boats. The background features rolling hills under a clear blue sky.

Liveable Neighbourhoods

An Urban Regeneration Framework for Port Macquarie

DRAFT

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1.0 Purpose and Background

1.0 Purpose and Background

1.1 Liveable Neighbourhoods

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council has commissioned a study to consider opportunities for urban consolidation in proximity to the Port Macquarie and Settlement City Town Centres. Urban consolidation has many meanings, but it generally means increasing housing capacity in proximity to centres, services, jobs and public transport to promote the efficient use of infrastructure. Urban consolidation policies are largely metropolitan centred in their application.

Applying urban consolidation objectives to Port Macquarie, a coastal regional town, needs to acknowledge the following:

- unique attributes of Port Macquarie's context - It's coastal and river setting, beaches and open spaces are a great asset and attraction.
- reduced economies of scale - A regional centre serving a dispersed settlement and population has less resources than a metropolitan area for delivering infrastructure to support urban consolidation. Prioritising areas for change will assist in delivering the greatest benefits for public investment.
- limited transportation modes - Public transport is bus based and there is a predominance of car use. The biggest transport gains within the study area are likely to result from facilitating walking and cycling.
- slow capacity for change - Existing areas change incrementally over a long time frame. Appropriate development controls will manage the transition of neighbourhoods by facilitating the amenity of both existing and future residents.

Early in the project, in response to these consideration,

the project was redefined from urban consolidation to urban regeneration with a focus on creating **liveable neighbourhoods**:

- places that people want to live and visit
- which builds on existing neighbourhoods and address the needs of current and future residents
- in proximity to shopping, services and jobs the Port Macquarie and Settlement City Town Centres and the Gordon Street local centre
- with easy access to the Hastings River foreshore, Town Beach, open spaces network, and cultural facilities;
- with attractive streets and useful public spaces;
- with reduced car use and a preference for walking and cycling;
- with increased housing capacity and diversity, which also supports a growing aged population.

1.0 Purpose and Background

1.2 Study Area

The study area comprises two areas adjacent the Port Macquarie Town Centre.

To the east of the town centre is the Town Beach West Neighbourhood bounded by Grant Street to the east, Murray Street to the west, the mid-block between Church and Gordon Streets to the south, and the rear of properties on the northern side of Clarence Street.

To the west of the town centre is the Westport Neighbourhood bounded by Kooloonbung Creek to the east, Morton Street and Park Street to the west, Table Street to the south and Buller Street to the north. The study does not include properties currently within the B2 Local Business Zone at Gordon Street. However, recommendations do address where properties at Gordon intersect with Gore Street and Hollingsworth Street to reinforce the urban structure and streetscape.

A third area adjacent the Settlement City Town Centre forms the edge of the Aston Hill Neighbourhood. While the whole neighbourhood is defined by land north of Hastings River Drive and east of Aston Street, this study is limited to properties along the south side of Warlters Street and properties along the western side of Park Street. (refer to map)

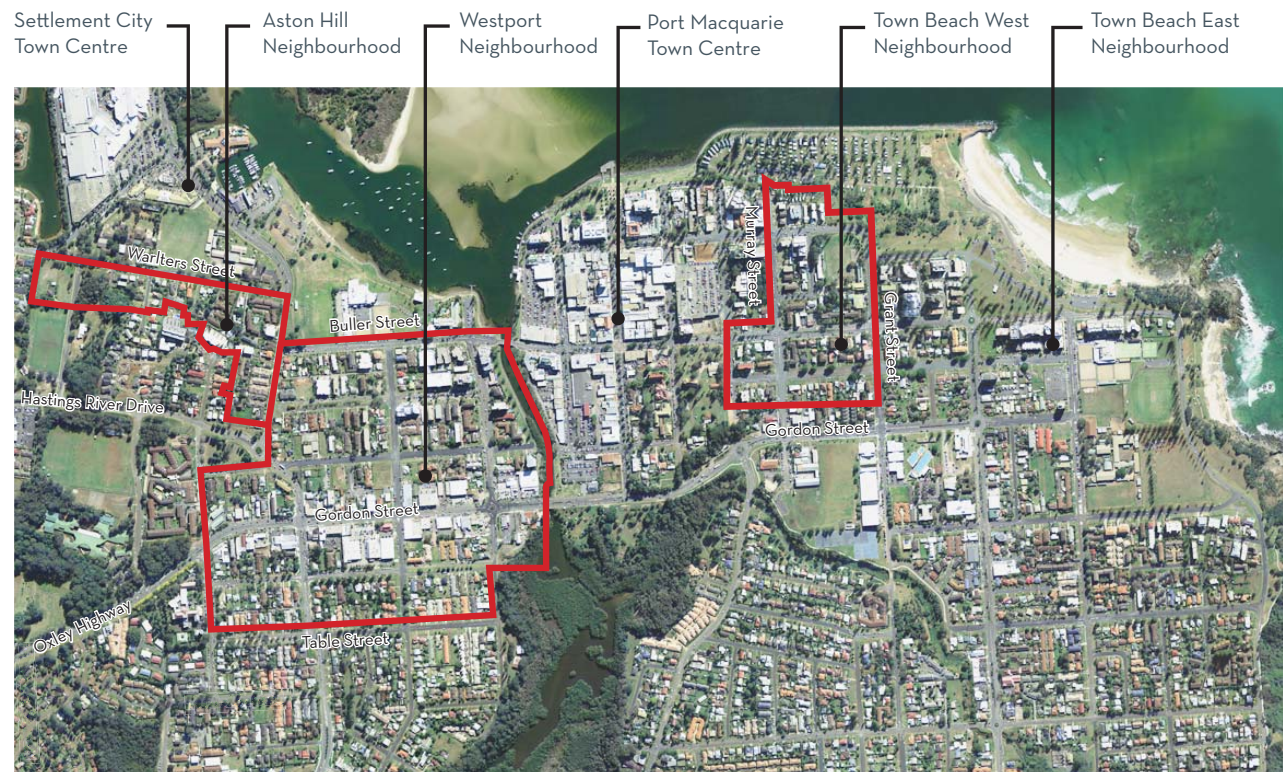


Figure 1: Study area boundaries and surrounding context

1.0 Purpose and Background

1.3 Planning Context

Existing Policy Framework

The following existing planning policies and studies inform the study:

Regional Context

- Mid North Coast Regional Strategy 2006
- North Coast Urban Design Guidelines

Local Government Area Context

- PMH Urban Growth Management Strategy 2011-2031
- PMH Community Strategic Plan 2030
- PMH Parking Strategy 2011

Background Local Studies and Policies

- Draft Port Macquarie Greater CBD Master Plan 2003
- Port Macquarie Greater CBD Beyond 2010
- Port Macquarie Foreshore Master Plan 2009
- PMH Development Control Plan – Town Centre 2009
- PMH Development Control Plan – Town Beach 2005
- Settlement City Precinct Structure Plan 2009
- Port Macquarie Town Centre Fringe Study - Westport 1997
- PMH Development Control Plan - Westport 2005

Current Planning Provisions

- PMH Local Environmental Plan 2011
- PMH Development Control Plan 2011

Urban Consolidation Research

- PMH Town Centre Urban Consolidation - Housing Needs Analysis 2012
- PMH Town Centre Urban Consolidation - Literature Review 2012

Placed Based Planning

The future context of the study area is described by a number of place specific planning policies including:

- Settlement City Structure Plan and Draft DCP
- Westport DCP
- Foreshore Master Plan
- Town Centre Master Plan and DCP
- Town Beach DCP

The urban regeneration study proposed revisions to the development controls within the Westport and Town Beach DCP areas with which it overlaps.

1.0 Purpose and Background

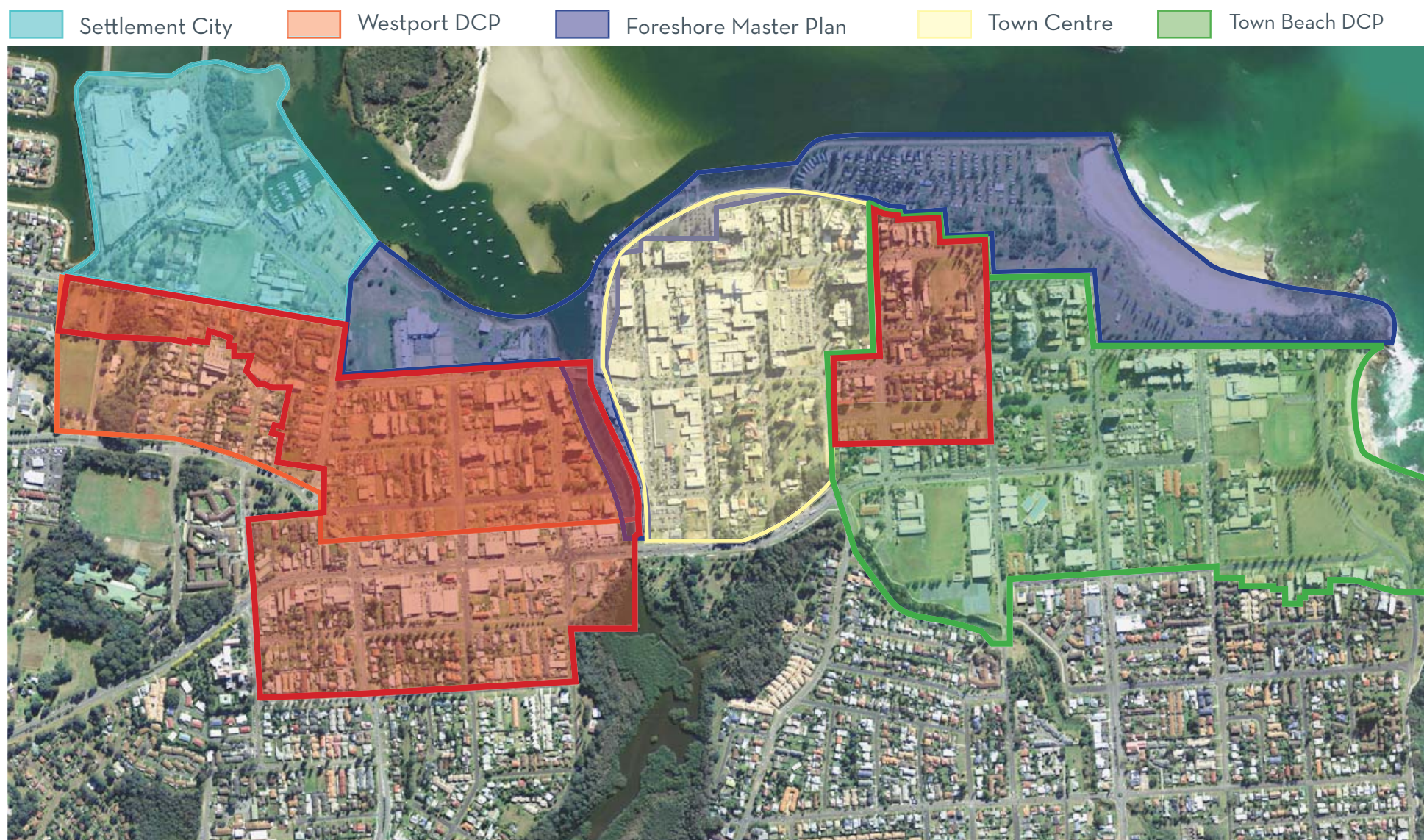


Figure 2: Existing Council policy extents

1.0 Purpose and Background

Population and Housing Needs

In 2031, the population of the Port Macquarie - Hastings Council area will be 104,589 with:

- an increase of 33,309 persons (46.73%) from 2006
- average annual growth rate of 1.55%
- 15,598 new households, an average of 624 per year
- 20% expected to be urban infill equal to 3120 households; an average of 125 per year

Over the period of 2001-2006, the greatest increase in population was in the 50-59 and 60-69 age cohorts. Population projections further reinforce this trend. The age structure for Port Macquarie-Hastings over the next 15 years is characterised by:

- A larger percentage of 70 to 84 year olds (14.4% compared to 8.2%);
- A larger percentage of 60 to 69 year olds (12.9% compared to 8.7%);
- A smaller percentage of 25 to 34 year olds (8.4% compared to 13.6%), and;
- A smaller percentage of 18 to 24 year olds (5.6% compared to 9.2%); when compared to the NSW average.

While a mix of housing types and lifestyle choices will continue to be important across the LGA, the growing population of older people will increase the demand for housing which is conveniently located and suitable for aging in place. The demand for both accessible and adaptable housing will also increase.

Council has recently been investigating the potential

for a university in Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA. A university could increase the retention of young adults and result in demand for student housing.

Source:

Port Macquarie Town Centre Urban Consolidations Project: Housing Needs Analysis March 2012

Port Macquarie Town Centre Urban Consolidations Project: Literature Review March 2012

1.0 Purpose and Background

1.4 Project Objectives

The following Project Objectives were established to guide the study:

- To locating more housing in central, well-connected locations that provides services and amenity for residents.
- To effectively utilise existing infrastructure and/or augment infrastructure where it is relatively cost effective.
- To increase the desirability for living adjacent the Town Centre and Settlement City.
- To acknowledge the aging population and their needs for housing diversity and accessibility.
- To improve housing and lifestyle affordability.
- To review uses and consider opportunities for home business and home offices and for mixed use in specific locations.
- To accommodate demand for tourist accommodation.
- To improve pedestrian and cyclist connectivity to the Town Centre, Settlement City and Foreshore.
- To improve the public realm including streetscapes, open spaces and new laneways.
- To align public domain opportunities with realistic implementation strategies.
- To review and simplify existing development controls.
- To give consideration of design quality outcomes. (SEPP 65)
- To promote viable development opportunities.
- To review parking requirements and explore alternative parking arrangements, including the relationship to the town centre parking strategy.

1.0 Purpose and Background

1.5 Key Considerations

During the Stage 1: Analysis and Review of the project, a number of key opportunities and constraints were identified to guide the project recommendations.

Opportunities

- Improve pedestrian connectivity from the neighbourhoods to key attractors, including the Port Macquarie and Settlement City town centres, the foreshore/ parklands and Town Beach. This may include pedestrian pathways, bridges and safe pedestrian crossings.
- Respect views from Westport Park and the foreshore to the Churches within the town centre and from Churches to the foreshore, river and distant hills to the west.
- Enhance view corridors to the foreshore/river and open spaces.
- Improve the quality of streetscapes and explore opportunities for new or enhanced public spaces within the neighbourhoods.
- Promote good residential amenity for both existing and future residents.
- Improve the relationship between buildings and the street to support activation, to promote safety and to create better quality streetscapes.
- Consolidate public works to deliver the greatest benefit for place-making and to maximise Council's investment.
- Increase housing diversity and capacity.
- Improve redevelopment potential by providing easier to use and coordinated development controls.

- Increase on-street parking capacity to support access to centres and to assist with housing affordability.
- Review future laneway locations to ensure they are beneficial and can be delivered.

Constraints

- Vehicle access priorities to Port Macquarie and Settlement City town centres are limited.
- Flooding along Buller Street and along Hollingsworth Street result in ground floor levels above the street level.
- Sloping sites and flood constraints may limit the accessibility of some housing. There is a demand for adaptable and accessible housing to support future population.
- Extent of footpaths is incomplete, particularly in the Westport Neighbourhood, which limits safe and accessible pedestrian travel to town centres and open spaces.
- Council has limited funding for public domain improvements.
- Narrow or shallow small sites require amalgamation to support apartment buildings and their associated parking.
- A diversity of lot sizes requires a diversity of building types, which may not deliver consistent floor space expectations.
- Perception that current development controls, both local and State, are complex.
- Lack of redevelopment activity in the study area

over the past few years.

- Popularity of villas has resulted in the under-development of some sites.

1.6 Project Approach

Guiding Principles

The project is organised around four guiding principles to facilitate the successful urban regeneration of the study area:

Neighbourhood Identity

- Acknowledge and build upon the unique attributes of each of the three neighbourhoods to create distinctive places within the broader Port Macquarie locality.
- Enhance public life, sense of community and belonging to each neighbourhood by facilitating opportunities for gathering, meeting, walking and relaxing within public spaces and streets.

Connectivity

- Increases the desirability to live in these neighbourhoods by leveraging each's proximity to the coastal and river setting and to the Port Macquarie Town Centre with its shopping, community services and cultural facilities.
- Ensure easy access, particularly for pedestrian and cyclist, within each neighbourhood and to centres and open spaces.

Livability

- Enhance each neighbourhood's streets and spaces to improve their use and amenity for residents and visitors.
- Create desirable places to live, by promoting high quality housing design which facilitates good amenity for residents.

- Support the needs of the existing and future community through appropriate housing types and tenures.
- Promote environmentally responsible design within the public spaces and streets and within buildings.

Delivery

- Prioritise recommendations to assist Council in targeting resources and to stage improvements in the public realm.
- Provide built form recommendations that are grounded in detailed testing of sites to ensure the best alignment between desired future form and its delivery.
- Assist in implementing recommendations through Council's planning policies.

Project Stages

The project has four stages:

Stage 1: Analysis and Review provided an understanding of Council existing future vision and policies for the study area; identified the housing demand and future population; and provided detailed analysis of the physical attributes for the study area. A summary of key considerations were discussed with the reference group and Council staff before being finalising.

Stage 2: Urban Structure and Development Scenarios explored the potential urban structure, opportunities for street improvements and new public spaces and tested scenarios for built form each neighbourhood. A reference group meeting and discussions with Council staff identified a direction for a preferred scenario.

Stage 3: Draft Recommendations consolidated the findings from Stage 1 and 2 into preferred scenario for each neighbourhood supported by design principals and draft recommendations for planning provisions. A third reference group meeting and further discussions with Council staff informed the exhibition draft.

Stage 4: Exhibition and Final Recommendations provides an opportunity to gain additional input from stakeholders and the community on the draft recommendations. Final recommendations will be prepared based on the exhibition outcomes and in consultation with Council.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

A Reference Group was established at the inception of the project. The purpose of the Reference Group was to:

- To provide input at key stages of the project.
- To help inform Council's review of policy options.
- To provide a cross section of views on behalf of the community.

Reference group members represented the following groups:

- Local Community
- Hastings Construction Industry Association
- Architect Profession
- Town Planning Profession
- Housing NSW, a large land owner in the study area
- Building Certifier/Surveyor Profession

1.0 Purpose and Background

- Real Estate Industry

Three Reference Group meetings were convened at key stages in the project. Refer to *Appendix C: Community and Stakeholder Engagement* for records of Reference Group Meetings.

The draft recommendations will be publicly exhibited before recommendations are finalised.

1.7 Structure of this report

This report is organised in six sections.

Section 01: Purpose and Background

The purpose of the project to promote urban regeneration and increased housing capacity in proximity to centres and services is explained. The study area is identified and an overview of the planning and social context is provided. The project objectives and key considerations for the study are stated. These were identified and discussed in the Stage 1: Analysis and Review consultation and subsequently agreed with Council. The project approach and consultation process is also explained.

Section 02: Neighbourhood Structure

The neighbourhood structure establishes the strategic direction for each neighbourhood within the study area by outlining the broad organising elements and by creating a framework for detailed neighbourhood character recommendations and supporting development controls. The neighbourhood structure defines the three neighbourhoods and their setting and addresses key structural elements including: vehicular connectivity, pedestrian and cycle connectivity, public spaces and streets, building uses and form, housing types and parking.

Section 03: Westport Neighbourhood

The existing Westport Neighbourhood is described and a recommended structure plan is supported by a future character statement and design principles. Improvements to key streets and an opportunity for new linear park and potential public car park facilities are also addressed.

Section 04: Aston Hill Neighbourhood

The existing Aston Hill Neighbourhood is described to establish a broader context for the neighbourhood edges included in this study. A recommended structure plan is supported by a future character statement and design principles. A special site is identified and design principles provide guidance for future redevelopment of the site.

Section 05: Town Beach West Neighbourhood

The existing Town Beach West Neighbourhood is described and a recommended structure plan is supported by a future character statement and design principles.

Section 06: Planning Provisions

Planning provision recommendations for both Council's LEP and DCP are included in this sections. Existing and proposed maps are provided for land use, height of building and floor space ratio. DCP recommendations include both place-based and generic provisions.

Appendices

The appendices provide supporting more detailed information including:

- Lot Testing - demonstrating the achievement of built form and parking recommendations
- Stage 1 Analysis Report
- Consultation - includes minutes from Reference Group meetings