

7 PROPOSED RURAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUBDIVISION

Current villages within Singleton LGA are Broke, Bulga, Jerrys Plains and Camberwell, which are currently zoned 1(d) Rural Small Holdings under Singleton LEP 1996. There are also areas in rural locations zoned for rural residential development. Villages and rural residential areas currently zoned 1(d) have a total area of about 2,052 hectares, of which the 4 villages referred to above comprise about 30%. Villages and rural residential areas comprise around 7% of the total population of the LGA.

Apart from villages, which were created as part of historic subdivision patterns, current demand exists for two broad types of general rural residential development:

- Rural fringe, generally in estates adjacent to an urban area with services such as sealed roads, water and reticulated sewer, and lot sizes of 4,000 square metres to 2 ha (e.g. Retreat, Hambledon Hill and Branxton rural residential areas);
- Rural living lots comprising residential use within a rural environment, generally with no services and lots 2 ha or larger (e.g. 'concessional' and other lots of less than the current general 40 ha minimum area subdivided since 1966 in rural areas generally, and 1(d) zoned land at Bulga and land off Wine Country Drive south of Branxton with access through Cessnock City Council area).



Purchasers of rural lifestyle lots are seeking lifestyle rather than productive attributes of the land and are generally persons relying on employment in Singleton and adjoining LGAs, or moving from outside the area. Rural residential subdivision and land use is often considered to be in conflict with commercial agriculture, and separation from agriculture is normally desirable.

Rural residential subdivision and development is a key land use planning issue in the Singleton LGA. Demand for small rural subdivision is primarily related to road accessibility, specifically proximity to Singleton, Broke, Branxton and Maitland and to mining related employment opportunities west of Singleton. Its development can affect agricultural land uses and viability, and the provision of services and infrastructure. It can also result in a range of environmental impacts including water availability, traffic, and biodiversity impacts.

The Singleton Rural Residential Strategy has identified short term candidate areas for development and has formed the basis for the proposals in this Strategy for new areas to be identified for rural residential subdivision. As part of the community consultation undertaken in relation to the Situation Analysis, additional further areas for rezoning have also been proposed and require evaluation.

As outlined in Section 6, for planning purposes it is anticipated that around 35% of new dwellings to 2021 will be in rural areas (around 70 per year), but this proportion is substantially dependent on the provision of land for rural residential development. The current demand for rural lifestyle development suggests that demand for rural residential land will exceed supply in the short term, with little further land available under the current LEP and DCP provisions. Singleton Council (December 2005) has estimated a demand for rural residential allotments (as distinct from new dwellings) of 75 per year.

Key land use planning issues were identified in the Situation Analysis as follows:

- Provision of adequate land for rural residential development in suitable locations.
- Future use and development of villages and all 1(d) zoned land.
- Village service provision and maintenance (including roads, water, sewer, groundwater and surface water runoff).

Strategic directions for each of these issues are presented in the sections below.

Appropriate zones for rural residential purposes need to be determined, taking into account the Standard LEP requirements implemented by the Department of Planning. The available zonings need to be considered in conjunction with minimum subdivision sizes. Zone options are RU4 Rural Small Holdings (objectives mainly relate to primary production), RU5 Village (flexible zone allowing uses incompatible with existing rural residential character), R5 Large Lot Residential (primarily supports residential use), and E4 Environmental Living (for areas with special ecological, scientific or aesthetic values). The Large Lot Residential zone most closely reflects the character of most existing rural residential areas in Singleton.

7.1 Provision of adequate land for rural residential development in suitable locations

It is important to provide for certainty in relation to the location of rural residential development to prevent adverse impacts on primary production land and flow on effects of increasing land values for other rural land.

The Strategy recognises the need to provide additional land within the LGA to cater for rural residential purposes. It provides the framework for:

- (1) Determining areas for further investigation and rezoning.
- (2) The preferred LEP zones (Rural Small Holdings where intensive agricultural production is a key objective, Large Lot Residential, or Environmental Living).
- (3) Staging of rural residential development.
- (4) Providing criteria for future rezoning requests for rural residential development outside current investigation areas.
- (5) Flow on DCPs and Section 94 contributions plans required following rezoning.

The Situation Analysis identified demand and supply issues and future planning options. It is important to note that the drivers of rural residential differ between

Singleton and Branxton, and development rates may vary over the life of the Strategy depending on the availability of suitable land supply.

The Strategy determines what additional areas should be zoned for rural residential development, and the infrastructure servicing requirements for these areas. The proposed areas for rural residential development are shown on Maps 7.1A and 7.1B and in Table 12. These are based on the *Singleton Rural Residential Development Strategy 2005* and subsequent agreements between the Council and the Department of Planning. Based on the estimates in this table, there is a potential yield of 670 lots within these candidate areas, which would provide for just under 10 years demand based on 75 rural residential lots per year.

There is potential for expansion of the identified candidate areas, or for increasing the subdivision density to increase lot numbers. On this basis the Council would not need to consider additional candidate areas for rural residential development over the life of the Strategy.

The objectives, policies and strategic actions for rural residential development in Singleton LGA are as outlined below. This section includes infrastructure provision guidelines for new rural residential areas.

Table 12: Proposed candidate areas – rural residential

Candidate areas	Description
Lower Belford	Total area 277 ha in 17 existing lots. Proposed zoning Environmental Living, minimum average subdivision area 5 ha. Maximum potential approximately 30 lots. Potential occurrence of listed endangered ecological community requires detailed ecological investigation. Within proposed extension of Hunter Water Corporation service area and subject to service agreement. Consideration should be given to lower minimum lot size and potential reticulated water servicing, which would increase lot yield.
Jerrys Plains	Total area 20 ha. Proposed zoning Large Lot Residential, with minimum average subdivision area of 1 ha. Reticulated water available. Maximum potential 17 lots. Potential occurrence of nationally listed endangered ecological population may require detailed ecological investigation.
Wattle Ponds North East	Total area 88 ha in 4 existing lots. Proposed zoning Large Lot Residential, with minimum average subdivision area of 1 ha. Reticulated water to be provided. Maximum potential approximately 70 lots.
Wattle Ponds North West	Total area is 167 ha in 8 existing parcels. Proposed zoning Large Lot Residential, with minimum average area of 1 ha. Reticulated water to be provided. Maximum potential approximately 134 lots.
Sedgefield	Total area is 922 ha in 57 existing lots. Proposed zoning Environmental Living, minimum average area 5 ha. Maximum potential approx. 100 lots. Reticulated water not available. Rezoning should not progress until master planning of the area,

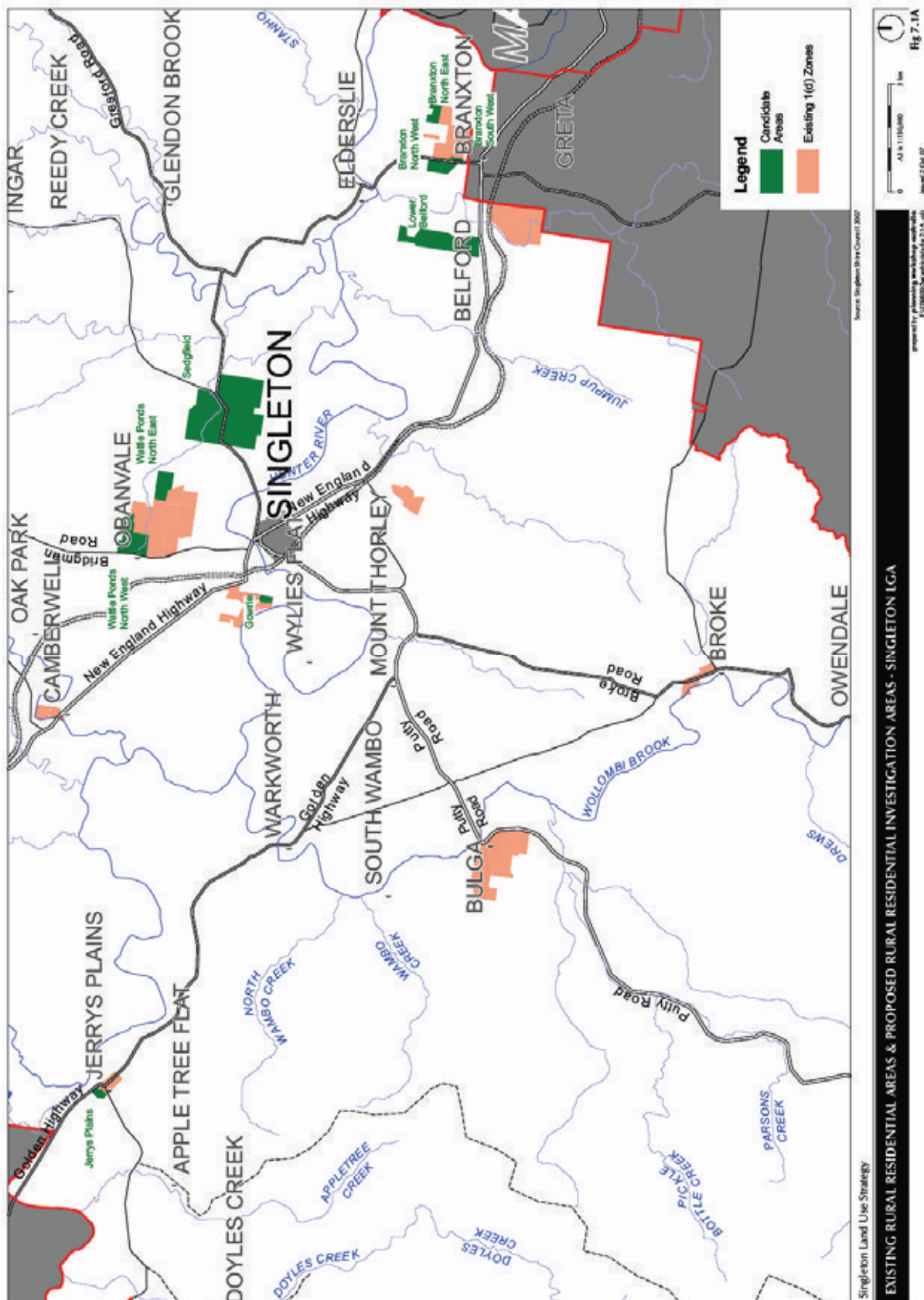
Candidate areas	Description
	required by DoP, is completed.
Gowrie	Total area 18 ha in 2 existing lots. Proposed zoning Large Lot Residential, with minimum average subdivision area of 4,000m ² with reticulated water and sewerage provided. Maximum potential approximately 35 lots.
Branxton North West	Total area 88 ha in 7 existing lots. Proposed zoning Large Lot Residential, with minimum average subdivision area of 4,000m ² (if sewer available). Full urban services required to be provided subject to service agreement with Hunter Water Corporation. Potential occurrence of listed endangered ecological community requires detailed ecological investigation. Maximum potential approximately 180 lots. Land adjoining to the south may have potential for rezoning to "Environmental Living" to provide a transition to agricultural lands.
Branxton North East	Total area 41 ha in 5 existing lots. Proposed zoning Large Lot Residential, with minimum average subdivision area of 4,000m ² (if sewer available). Full urban services required to be provided subject to service agreement with Hunter Water Corporation. Maximum potential approximately 87 lots. Potential occurrence of listed endangered ecological community requires detailed ecological investigation.
Branxton South West	Total area 8 ha in 8 existing lots. Proposed zoning Large Lot Residential, with minimum average subdivision area of 4,000m ² . Full urban services required to be provided subject to service agreement with Hunter Water Corporation. Maximum potential approximately 17 lots. Potential occurrence of listed endangered ecological community requires detailed ecological investigation.

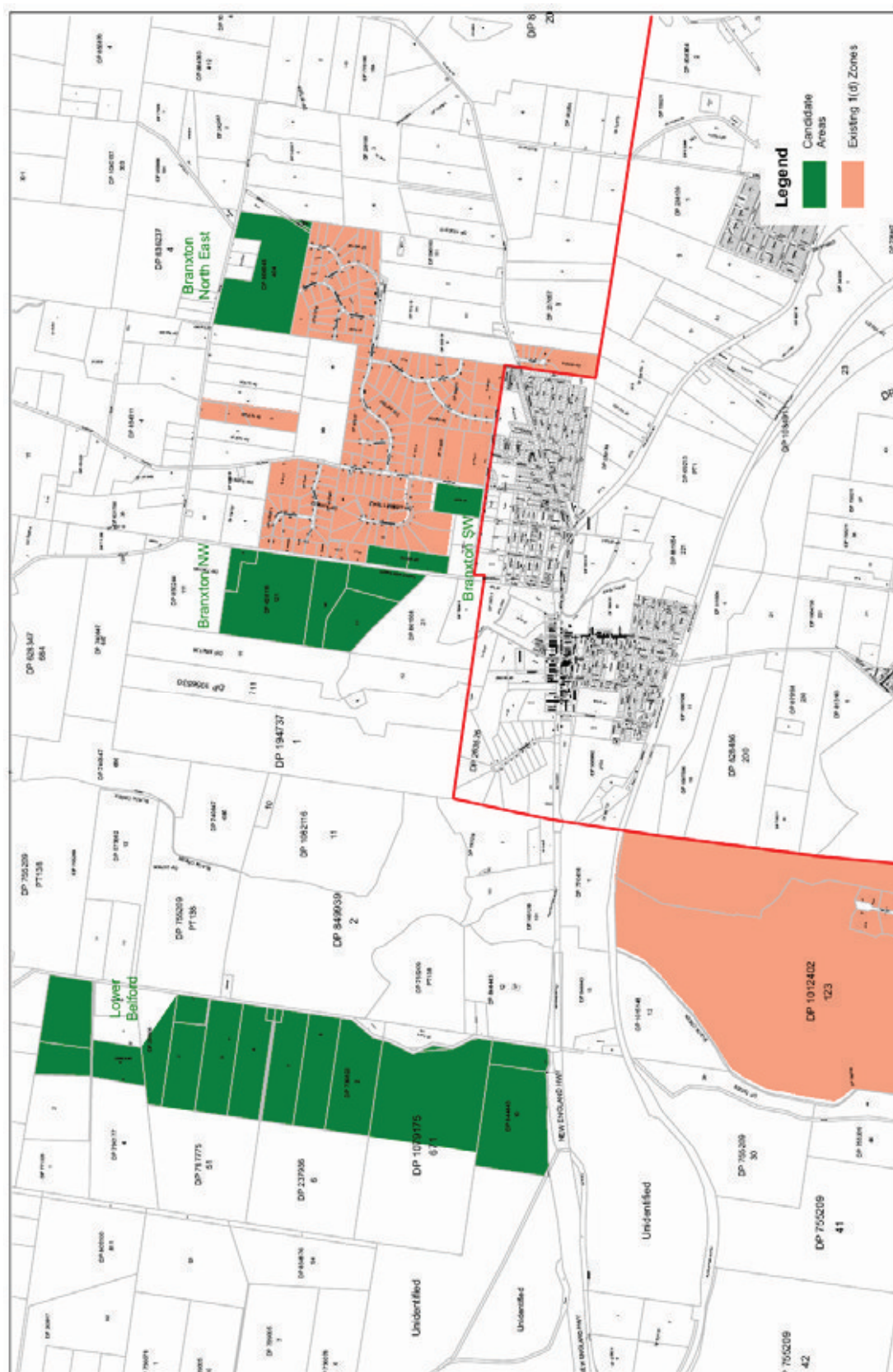
Objectives – Rural residential development

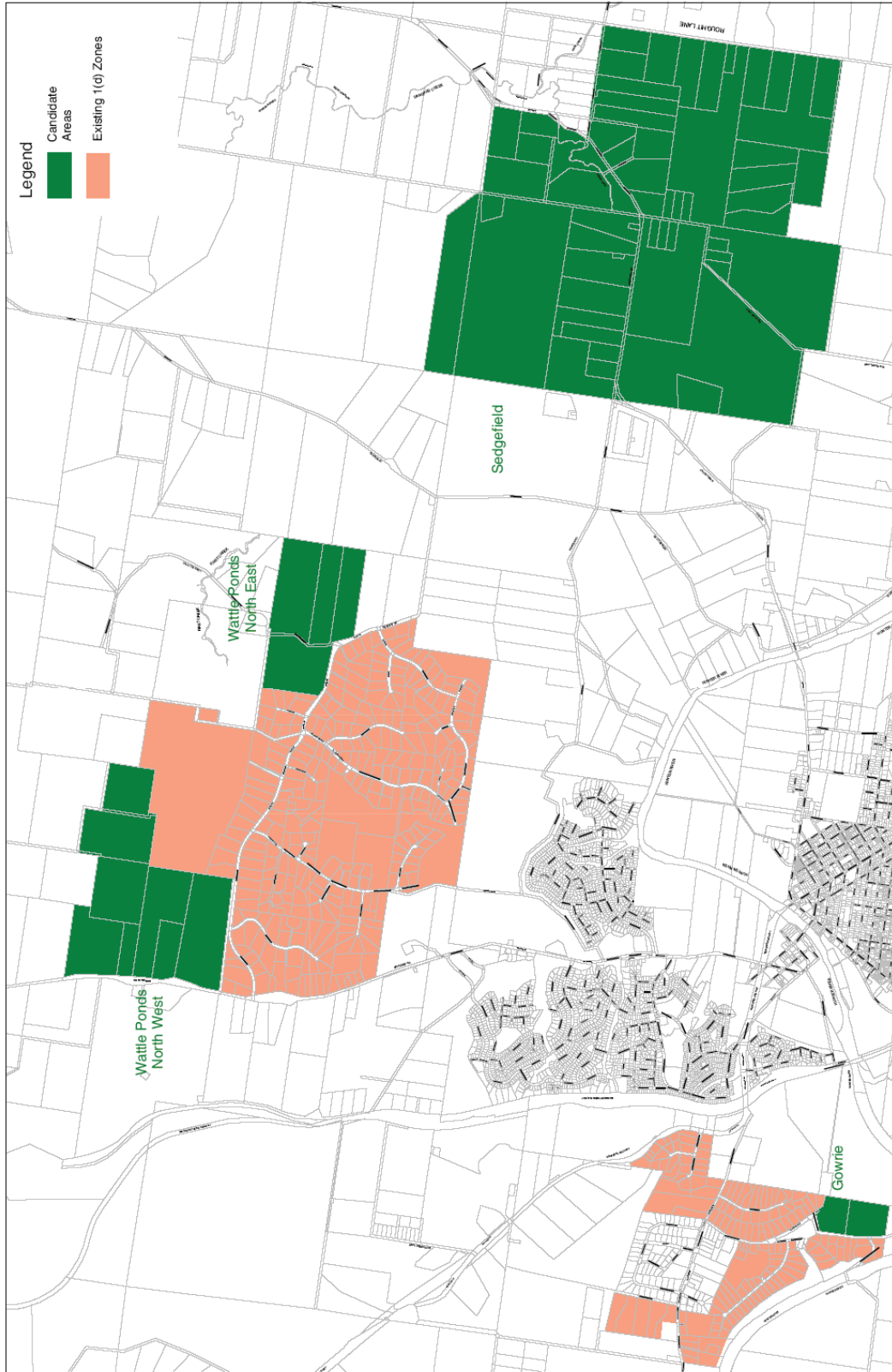
- Provide opportunities for additional rural residential subdivision and development in suitable locations, and enable a range of different types of rural residential development.
- Ensure that adequate services are available for rural residential lots.
- Ensure that the supply of zoned rural residential land does not unreasonably exceed demand.
- Apply criteria to identify the best location for rural residential estates and balance socio-economic goals associated with new rural residential development with the need to preserve areas of high agricultural, scenic or environmental value.
- Identify appropriate development controls for rural residential areas through DCP provisions.

Policies – Rural residential development

- Provide for a supply of up to 75 rural residential lots per year split 60/40% between Singleton fringe and Branxton.
- Zone adequate land for between 5 and 10 years supply (i.e. up to 400 lots around Singleton and 350 lots around Branxton), with review of land supply being undertaken every 3 years.
- New rural residential areas must relate to the long term preferred settlement structure (i.e. not be located on land with potential for urban development in the long term – 50 year + time frame), and provide adequate transport accessibility.
- The staging and sequencing of new rural residential areas shall be dependent upon the provision of adequate water supply, reticulated sewer (smaller lots less than 8,000m²) and other infrastructure such as electricity, telecommunications and bush fire services.
- Consolidate further rural residential development of this type of land use in only two locations for each locality within the LGA, so that further services are potentially economic to provide in the long term if sufficient demand exists (i.e. do not disperse areas).
- Propose additional LEP objectives for rural residential under the proposed Standard LEP zoning provisions.
- No rezonings for rural residential in identified constraint areas (use map layers as an overlay for LEP).
- All rural residential development should have a good quality and secure water supply.
- Smaller lots (less than 8,000m²) shall have reticulated sewer provided.
- Biodiversity and water and sewer infrastructure reviews be undertaken prior to determining final zoning boundaries and minimum lot sizes.
- Subdivision for the purposes of rural residential development should be undertaken in a manner that will not increase the potential for water extraction from streams or groundwater and comply with harvestable water rights requirements.







Source: Singleton Shire Council 2007

Singleton Land Use Strategy

EXISTING RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS & PROPOSED RURAL RESIDENTIAL INVESTIGATION AREAS - SINGLETON

Prepared by planning workshop attendees
 / Singleton Shire Council 2007

Fig 7.1C