

The areas to be rezoned at Whitebridge for residential and commercial use are not subject to flooding, however there are nearby watercourses downstream of the sites to be rezoned and at the development application stage water quality controls will be required.

10. How has the planning proposal adequately addressed any social and economic effects?

Social Impacts

The rezoning of, and removal of acquisition liability from, the East Charlestown Bypass corridor will have a negligible social impact. Only a small pocket of the East Charlestown Bypass is proposed for rezoning to allow residential and commercial development with the remainder being rezoned to conservation. The scale of residential and commercial development the rezoning will enable is considered to be consistent with the character of the existing area and will occur in well-serviced locations. It is considered that the existing social infrastructure can support the level of increase in population that may result from the rezoning.

Economic Impacts

The rezoning and removal of acquisition liability will have a positive impact for the RTA. It will lessen the RTA's liability to acquire land that is no longer required for the purpose of a road, as well as enabling the RTA to develop or sell land that they no longer require.

The rezoning will also have a positive impact for several property owners in the Whitebridge area, as the rezoning will generate development potential. It is likely that the corridor's removal will have a positive affect on surrounding property values.

The rezoning will result in additional commercial opportunities within the Whitebridge shops complex. The additional population within walking distance will strengthen the economic viability of the existing and new commercial premises.

The rezoning may generate development potential associated with the proposed 6(2) Tourism and Recreation Zone at Redhead, however this would be only minor.

11. Is there adequate public infrastructure for the planning proposal?

The majority of the planning proposal will rezone the land to conservation use, however some land around the Whitebridge local centre will be rezoned to allow some commercial, low, and medium density residential use. Whitebridge is an existing local centre and is well serviced by public infrastructure.

12. What are the views of State and Commonwealth public authorities consulted in accordance with the gateway determination?

Following Council's resolution to prepare the draft amendment to LMLEP 2004, consultation occurred with Jill Hall MP, Matthew Morris MP, Robert Coombs MP, and relevant State government agencies and service authorities including:

NSW Department of Planning	Mine Subsidence Board
NSW Office of Water	NSW Rural Fire Service
Newcastle City Council	NSW Department of Lands
Energy Australia	Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council
AGL Energy Ltd	Bahtabah Local Aboriginal Land Council
Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority	NSW Department of Transport and Infrastructure
NSW Department of Education and Training	NSW Department of Planning - Heritage Branch

This consultation was undertaken in accordance with the former section 62 consultation provisions of the *EP&A Act 1979*. Given that there are no outstanding issues following consultation with relevant State government agencies and all relevant consultation has occurred, no further consultation is considered warranted under the new provisions of the *EP&A Act 1979*. The amendment should proceed to finalisation. A summary of advice received from government agencies and a town planning comment follows:

NSW Department of Planning – Heritage Branch

The Heritage Branch advised that no heritage items of State significance have been identified within the subject land. However, a number of local heritage items are identified in the vicinity of the East Charlestown Bypass corridor. The Heritage Branch recommends permitting uses that are compatible with the heritage items.

Planning comment

Draft Amendment No. 53 has consideration for the local heritage items located in the vicinity of the East Charlestown Bypass corridor. For example, in the Whitebridge area, the draft Amendment proposes a minimum 20 metre conservation zone buffer between the proposed urban areas (residential and commercial) and the Fernleigh Track (an item of local heritage significance).

The draft Amendment also considers the impact on Aboriginal heritage. The East Charlestown Bypass corridor (Stage One) is within 1km of approximately 24 known items of Aboriginal heritage significance. The draft Amendment proposes zones that will assist in the protection of those sites.

NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS)

RFS advised that any urban development proposed within or adjacent to the corridor would need to consider the requirements of *Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006*. It is also important to consider the bushfire risk associated with creating conservation areas adjacent to existing urban development.

Planning comment

Draft Amendment No. 53 proposes to rezone large areas of the East Charlestown Bypass corridor from 5 Infrastructure Zone to one or more conservation zones. The rezoning will not increase the risk of bushfire to nearby urban areas, as the hazard already exists. Where the draft Amendment proposes to expand existing residential and commercial zones in the Whitebridge area, it is considered that sufficient land is available to accommodate asset protection zones in accordance with *Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006*.

NSW Department of Transport and Infrastructure

The Department of Transport and Infrastructure requires the draft Amendment be consistent with the objectives of s117 Ministerial Direction No.3.4 *Integrating Land Use and Transport*, and with the *Outer Metropolitan Service Planning Guidelines* released by the Department of Transport and Infrastructure in 2009 by supporting development within walking distance to public transport services. The Department of Transport and Infrastructure also encourages Council to improve the connectivity of walking and cycling networks.

Planning comment

Draft Amendment No. 53 is consistent with the advice of Department of Transport and Infrastructure. Draft Amendment No. 53 proposes the extension of residential and commercial zones within walking distance of an existing bus service. It also encourages use of the Fernleigh Track as an alternative transport mode.

Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority (CMA)

The Hunter-Central Rivers CMA requests Council consider a number of principles for the management of natural assets, including:

- increase the size and connectivity of habitat remnants;
- establish buffer areas around wetlands;
- restrict future development to primarily cleared land; and
- consolidate development in existing urban areas and around existing transport infrastructure.

The Hunter-Central Rivers CMA highlights the following key areas for protection:

- the area linking Belmont Lagoon and Jewells Wetland;
- the narrow existing corridor between Redhead and Belmont North (where it crosses Kalaroo Road);
- all areas containing and buffering Jewells Wetland;
- the vegetated section between the Fernleigh Track and Flaggy Creek; and
- the narrow section between the Fernleigh Track and Lonus Avenue. T

The Hunter-Central Rivers CMA acknowledges the area between Lonus Avenue and Fernleigh Track may be difficult to protect given the multiple landholdings and proximity to existing development.

Planning comment

A key focus of draft Amendment No. 53 is to protect native vegetation and wetland environments and maintain vegetation corridors. All of the specific areas referred to by the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA will be protected using conservation zones. With regard to the land between Lonus Avenue and the Fernleigh Track, the draft Amendment extends the residential and commercial zones only where the land is predominately cleared. The draft Amendment proposes to introduce a conservation zone to act as a buffer between the Fernleigh Track and the urban areas adjacent to Lonus Avenue. The buffer has a width of between 20 metres and 80 metres (20 metres is the minimum width required to minimise edge effects such as weed invasion).