

Gosford City Centre

Statement of Strategic Intent

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For:





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1.0 Introduction & Rationale for Statement of Strategic Intent

1.1 Why a Statement of Strategic Intent is needed

Gosford City Centre is the regional capital of the Central Coast and as such its built, social and economic character must suitably reflect its role and function as a regional city as identified in the Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan (CCRGIP). Despite significant strategic planning effort over the years, including the following, revitalisation of the centre has been slow to eventuate:

- Gosford City Centre LEP 2005
- Gosford City Centre LEP 2007
- Gosford Challenge/Gosford City Centre Masterplan 2011-12
- Gosford Waterfront – State Significant Site 2014

However a new era of growth is on the horizon. Council remains committed to embracing new opportunities for economic stimulus and growth to ensure Gosford takes advantage of its location and strengthens its position as the regional capital of the Central Coast.

Over the six past months there has been an unprecedented level of renewed interest in development in the centre, with a significant number of development applications being lodged with Council, as well as renewed investment in properties by landowners within the Gosford City Centre. The renewed interest in building in Gosford has been to a significant extent a result of the bonus provisions in the Gosford Local Environmental Plan 2014 (GLEP 2014), however

a number a number of these are proposing variations to the GLEP 2014 statutory controls, including the 30% bonus incentive to building height and floor space ratio. These applications are reflective of increasing market confidence and new approaches to city planning, however this interest has occurred at increased heights and floor space ratios which reflect new trends for development and design within city centres.

The gap between councils controls (inclusive of the bonus) and industry trends has been an issue council has previously encountered, and whilst council in the past has reviewed planning controls to encourage development, their application in uncertain economic times have only supported land banking and property speculation including on selling of approvals.

Right now the Central Coast is entering a development revolution supported by population growth, improved economic times, interest from foreign investors, new economic support for the City Centre and people interested in the lifestyle on the Coast. This intersection of forces provides an opportune time to propose a contemporary revisit to Gosford City Centre principles and planning controls to ensure that the built form outcomes are platforms from which great development that improves the City Centre and results in population and employment growth. It is important to ensure that any additional height or changes to development is considered in the context of the revitalisation of the Gosford City Centre as a whole.

It is also noted that unless council strategically intervenes the gap between Council's planning controls and the market will grow and the opportunity for growth in accordance with regional and best practice guidelines for vibrant and active centres will be missed. Council must ensure that controls, market and community outcomes are achieved through our strategic plans and this implementation at a LEP and DCP level.

It is important that the planning controls for the Gosford City Centre capitalise on the renewed development interest in the city, are flexible to align with any emerging new strategic directions reflecting current market conditions. Whilst acknowledging the previous work undertaken for the Gosford City Centre, through the Gosford Challenge, it is now an opportune time to build on this work and review Council's strategic intent for the Centre to ensure that development opportunities are maximised and aligned to the current development market. The objective being to encourage revitalisation of the city centre through a high standard of development, active streetscapes and sustainable building design to carry Gosford into the future.



Tall skinny towers limit overshadowing, bulk and mass

1.2 What will a Statement of Strategic Intent achieve?

The “Review of Strategic Intent for Gosford City Centre” will:

- Provide Council with a roadmap for revitalisation of the city centre.
- Ensure the future direction for planning controls for the Gosford City Centre (with a focus on the city core) are flexible and align with Council’s strategic directions and current market conditions.
- With a focus on the city core, review the appropriateness of building heights, floor space ratios and building forms with a view to reframing the development capacity of the city and ensure Council has a planning system which will achieve its objectives.
- Provide a basis for Council to commence the preparation of a planning proposal
- Allow current development applications within the city centre to be assessed within the context of Council’s renewed strategic direction for the city centre.



Taller buildings on Main Streets add to the pedestrian activity, bringing in a vibrant local population

2.0 Background & Strategy Development

The envisaged growth of Gosford and Gosford City Centre is set out in a range of strategic and statutory documents and planning legislation. This includes:

- Central Coast Regional Strategy (2008)
- Central Coast Regional Growth & Infrastructure Plan (2014 - draft)
- Gosford City Centre Master Plan / Our City, Our Destiny (2010)
- Precinct Planning under the Master Plan – including The Waterfront Precinct (2014)
- Gosford LEP 2014, including provisions for the Waterfront Precinct facilitated via a State Significant Site listing
- Civic Improvement Plan - Gosford City Council Section 94A Development Contributions Plan - Gosford City Centre

The following summarises the key objectives, targets and directions required to facilitate growth and maintain Gosford as the Regional City for the Central Coast as well as the existing development controls.

2.1 Central Coast Regional Strategy (2008) / Regional Growth Plan (2014)

The 2008 Central Coast Regional Strategy remains the in-force strategic blueprint for Gosford and the Central Coast. Ambitious growth targets for housing (both greenfield and infill), employment, infrastructure and resources were all set in order to address anticipated population growth within the region.

The Government has reviewed and updated this strategy with the current draft Regional Growth Plan. The supporting *Your Future – Central Coast 2031* – Discussion Paper's key observations, considerations, objectives and targets are set out below in relation to Gosford and its City Centre.

- Gosford is the nominated Regional City
- There will be nearly 65,000 additional people in the region to 2031 bringing the population to 387,000
- Two thirds of the incoming population will be from outside the region, the rest through natural increase
- Nearly 37,000 new homes are required over the next 20 years or about 1,850 per year
- Growth in the Gosford City Centre is seen as critical to providing more new homes in the region
- Improved housing choice, diversity and affordability is required in the region

- More housing types in the right locations are required, such as near services and facilities as provided in the City Centre.
- Growth has been slower than required (both in greenfield and infill scenarios) and to cater for existing shortfalls and anticipated growth immediate responses are required. Only 4,000 dwellings have been built in the region in the last 5 years.
- Up to double the average annual target is needed immediately to make up for shortfalls over the last 5 years. Supply is not meeting demand, including demand for infill housing in established areas.
- According to the development industry, several factors have contributed to reduced housing production in greenfield areas. This includes reduced availability of finance for development in regional areas; higher land, construction and development contribution costs; and less demand for housing in greenfield areas.
- Reduced dwelling production has resulted in decreased affordability for low and middle income households resulting in increased housing stress.
- A trend to smaller household sizes means that additional dwellings will be needed to house the same anticipated population increase.
- The market appears to be geared to the development of “oversized” dwelling stock (three or more bedrooms) that is not in demand and is relatively expensive to purchase
- Flexibility and certainty for developers and regulators will be needed to allow appropriate ongoing decisions to be made in achieving housing targets and housing choice and affordability.
- Only 4% of people travel to work in the region via public transport and 26% of workers travel outside of the region daily, 72% of which do so by car. Transit-oriented developments near stations, particularly in the Gosford City Centre would greatly enhance public transport usage and transit choices in the region and support recent investments by government in provision of rail and bus infrastructure.
- Accordingly, the government is currently focussing on aligning and improving land use decisions with transport planning.
- Whilst housing production in the last 5 years has been below historic levels, 75% of new dwellings (ca 3,000) have been constructed in existing urban areas.

Gosford City Council is working toward a better future for its residents and is embarking on projects that not only inform how people should live and work, but how sustainable growth should occur and how it is managed. Council’s plan for the future is focused on principles that support existing infrastructure as well as celebrating the environment and people, our future growth is centred around, Re-thinking our Centres, Redefining the Urban Edge and Renewal of our Urban Areas. These principles establish a defined urban growth boundary and a structured hierarchy of key mixed-use, mixed-density, transit-oriented centres supported by rail and bus service networks. The urban

growth boundary, together with the hierarchy of strategic centres, forms the skeleton of our spatial strategy, to which we can plan for open space networks, movement patterns, social infrastructure and utilities.

The CCRGIS identifies a hierarchy of centres across the Central Coast, Gosford is identified as a Regional Centre. Council considers that the Gosford City Centre, as regional centre, is in fact a combination of Gosford City Centre (the heart of the city), East Gosford, West Gosford and North Gosford. Given the interrelationship between the regional city, and North, East and West Gosford it may be appropriate to consider the centre itself and these outlying “villages” as forming the regional capital. Together the City Centre and its edge centres create a regional centre that provides employment, social infrastructure, recreational activities and housing choice that extends across a variety of housing typologies.

In response to the CCRGIS one of Council’s key strategies for growth is “Rethinking our centres” this will involve:

- Ensuring our spatial structure defines how centres function in order to improve accessibility, sustainability, safety, social equity, cultural creativity and economics.
- Identifying principles supported by compact city models such as transit-oriented development, traditional neighbourhood development and liveable cities, to manage growth, foster social and community infrastructure, provide economic vitality and high-quality living.

- Establishing a hierarchy of centres and corridors supported by roles and functions to provide the focus for the provision, consolidation and growth of housing, employment and social interaction across the LGA.
- Defining a series of distinctive mixed density urban centres as the heart of communities and local identity.
- Establishing Gosford as a vibrant and interesting Regional Centre.
- Creating a recognisable identity for the Gosford City Centre.
- Promoting integration and coordinated development between private and public stakeholders.
- Promoting integration of housing, workplaces, shopping, recreation and community facilities, linked by movement networks and a level of activity that attracts people, creates a safe environment, stimulates interaction and provides a lively community focus.
- Using density to achieve a compact city with greater vibrancy, social cohesion, improved connectivity and public realm, and increased investment value.

The review of Strategic Intent for the Gosford City Centre is one action currently being undertaken by Council as part of the “Rethinking our Centres” strategy.



Century 21

Century 21
Real Estate
4321 1399

Indigo Cafe

coffee - breakfast - lunch

Exotic Lifestyles

Mannings Sports

WONGAI CHOICE
4322 3918

dutton's

NEWCASTLE PERMANENT

GREATER
ATM

2.2 Gosford City Centre Masterplan and Precinct Planning

The Gosford City Centre Masterplan was implemented with the instigation of the Gosford Challenge in 2008, a partnership between Gosford City Council and the community, which articulated the need and desire for Gosford to be recognised as the regional city of the Central Coast.

The Gosford Challenge was a process of community participation, which resulted in the production of the '*Our City, Our Destiny Masterplan*' (2010). This plan established the objectives which would guide the revitalization of Gosford.

The *Our City Our Destiny Masterplan* establishes how the city will encompass a wide range of uses, including business, government, retail, cultural, educational and recreational activities. It identifies 5 key precincts of activity:

- The Waterfront
- The Arts & Entertainment Precinct
- The City Core
- The Railway Precinct
- The Hospital Precinct

The Gosford Waterfront Precinct is the first strategy of '*Our City, Our Destiny*' to be implemented. A key objective is to link Gosford to its waterfront and be a catalyst project. By focusing first on the waterfront precinct, Gosford capitalises on its natural assets and emphasises the need for the city centre to reconnect with its waterfront. This connection and managed development is intended to restore confidence in Gosford as an investment proposition.

Under the Masterplan, it is anticipated that the City Centre will house some 10,000 new residents. At an assumed 1.8 residents per dwelling, some 5,500 dwellings will be needed to achieve this target.

The Masterplan provides a vision for each Precinct, including public domain and amenity improvements and conceptual future development scale and heights through rendered sections. The suggested scale and height of future development is generally taller than existing and focused along the central north-south Mann Street spine of the City Centre within the valley floor, and with stepping of multi-level developments up the slopes either side of the spine. Taller spot heights occur in various locations to emphasise connectivity nodes and places of activity and interest.

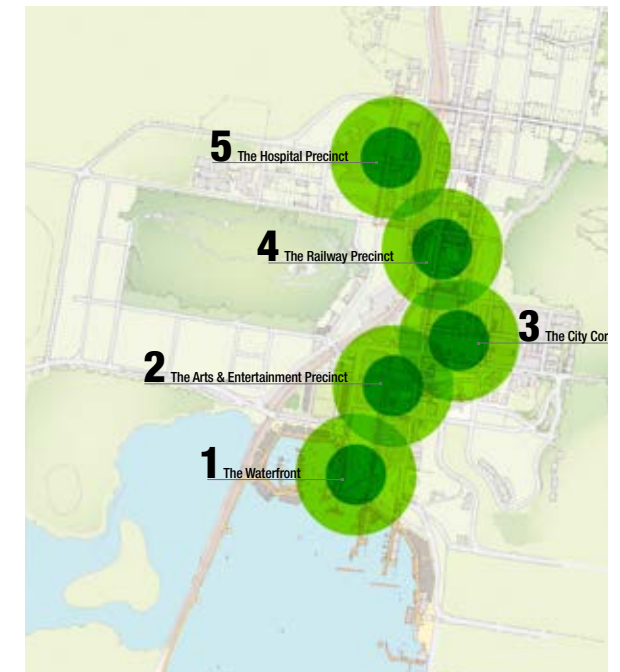
High rise development is generally focused upon the railway station in the City Core Precinct and along the north-south spine, with some high rise opportunity nominated to the south of the core and upon the slopes to the east. Views to the water from high points and the north-south spine are seen as important aspects of reinforcing connectivity with the natural environment and shaping built form.

A key aspect of the Masterplan is reinforcement of a walkable City Centre and development at a human scale, particularly at podium levels where mixed use developments would enhance amenity and activity and then allow for slender towers atop podiums or upper level setbacks or stepping of development.

Unfortunately the “Our City Our Destiny” Masterplan does not provide clear boundary definition of the precincts nor how these precincts communicate and transition between each other. Translation between the precincts and zone boundaries does not necessarily align. The storey of the journey from waterfront to hospital is key to the City Centre implementation. A component of the implementation of the Gosford Challenge is interpreting the essence of the plan and the community representation within its vision, into definable deliverables that respond, improve and enhance the City Centre.



Source: Our City, Our Destiny MasterPlan



Source: Our City, Our Destiny MasterPlan

2.3 Existing Key LEP and DCP Controls

Gosford Local Environmental Plan 2014 (LEP 2014) was gazetted in February 2014 and incorporates a State Significant Site listing for the Gosford Waterfront Precinct which sought to reinforce the City Centre's status as the region's city and provide incentive for growth.

Existing Principal Controls and Standards under the LEP relate to zoning, building height, development density (via FSRs), and heritage.

Generally, the CBD is zoned a mix of B3 – Commercial Core; B4 – Mixed Use; and peripherally R1 – General Residential. The B3 and B4 zones offer the greatest development opportunity which is reflected in higher building heights (ranging from 24m to 72m) and FSRs (ranging from 3:1 to 6:1). Listed heritage items (all local items) are scattered along the north-south spine, but mostly found to the south of the core in the Arts & Entertainment Precinct and The Waterfront.

City Centre-specific controls and standards apply to the City Centre, most notably in relation to building heights, FSR, car parking, activation of street frontages and development incentives. Design excellence is also required to be demonstrated under the LEP prior to any approval being granted.

Clause 8.9 of the LEP provides development incentives by allowing up to 30% additional height and FSR for development in the CBD / City Centre. With the combined use of clause 4.6 to vary a development standard (at a nominal 10%), this would allow up to 143% of the base controls.

Importantly, the gazetted clause 8.9 incentive provisions are subject to a sunset clause, limiting this clause to only developments lodged prior to 31 August 2014. In order to maintain the current development interest and momentum in the Gosford City Centre, Council has resolved to extend the 30% bonus control for another 12 months. The amendment is scheduled to be reported to Council on the 9th December 2014 for adoption.

The Gosford DCP 2013 also sets out further detailed and specific controls to support development under the LEP and for the City Centre. Controls specific to development types and locations apply. These include setbacks, parking rates, built form, building separation, landscaping, public domain, solar access and the like.



Key Sites Map Development Incentives Application Map Sheet CL1_015CA

Key Sites

- Gosford City Centre
- Somersby Business Park
- Ecologically Significant & Aboriginal Heritage Lands

Development Incentives Application

- Erina Town Centre, Refer to Clauses 4.3 & 4.4A
- Woy Woy Town Centre, Refer to Clauses 4.3 & 4.4A
- Ettalong Village Centre, Refer to Clauses 4.3 & 4.4A
- Terrigal Village Centre, Refer to Clauses 4.3, 4.3A & 4.4A
- Umina Village Centre, Refer to Clauses 4.3 & 4.4A
- Gosford City Centre, Refer to Clause 8.9
- Area 1, Karalta Rd, Refer to Clause 7.9
- Street Frontages, Refer to Clauses 4.3, 4.3A & 4.4A

Cadastre

- Base data 01/01/2005 © Land & Property Information (LPI)
- Addendum data 01/09/2013 © Gosford City Council

Source: Gosford Local Environment Plan 2014



Land Zoning Map
Sheet LZN_015CA

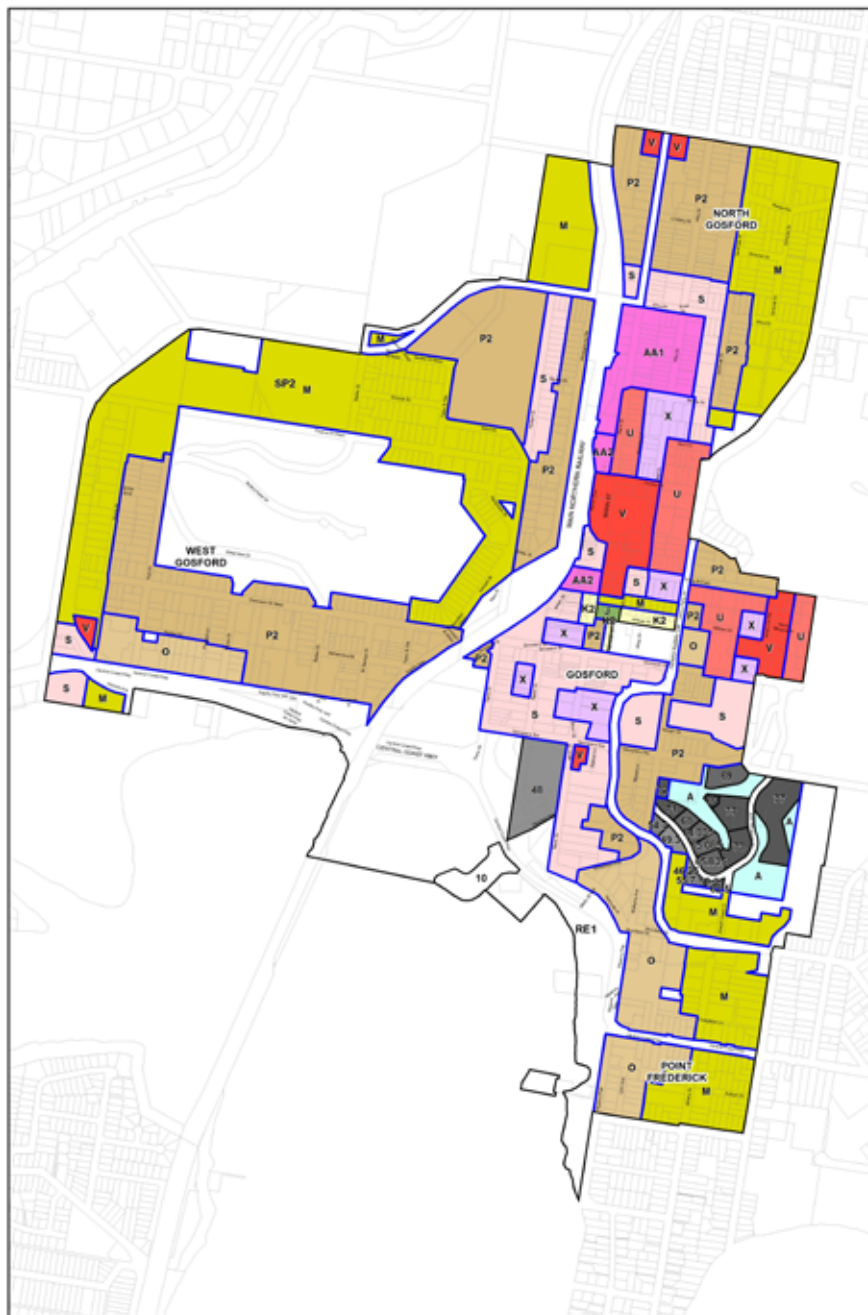
Zone

- B1 Neighbourhood Centre
- B2 Local Centre
- B3 Commercial Core
- B4 Mixed Use
- B5 Business Development
- B6 Enterprise Corridor
- E1 National Parks and Nature Reserves
- E2 Environmental Conservation
- E3 Environmental Management
- E4 Environmental Living
- E5 General Industrial
- E6 Working Waterfront
- R1 General Residential
- R2 Low Density Residential
- RE1 Public Recreation
- RE2 Private Recreation
- RU1 Primary Production
- RU2 Rural Landscape
- RU3 Forestry
- RU4 Village
- SP1 Special Activities
- SP2 Infrastructure
- UL Unzoned Land
- W1 Natural Waterways
- W2 Recreational Waterways
- DM Deferred Matter

Cadastre

- Base data 01/01/2005 © Land & Property Information (LPI)
- Addendum data 01/09/2013 © Gosford City Council

Source: Gosford Local Environment Plan 2014



Height of Buildings Map
Sheet HOB_015CAA

Maximum Building Height (m)

A	0
I	8.5
J	9
K1	10
K2	10.5
L1	11
L2	11.5
M	12
N	14.25
O	15
P1	17
P2	18
Q	19.75
R	22
S	24
U	30
V	36
X	48
AA1	60
AA2	72

Maximum Building Height (RL)

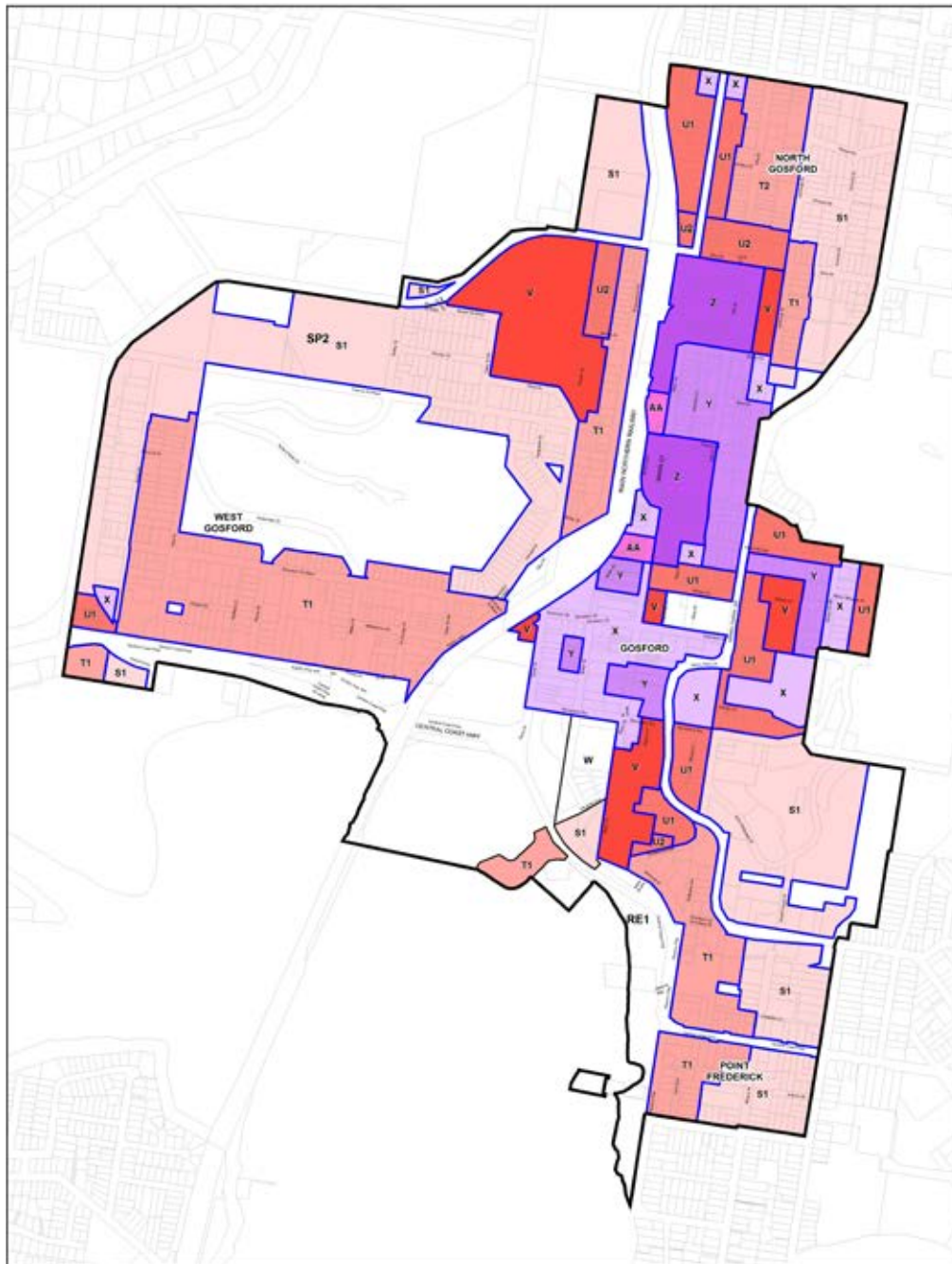
Height Shown on map in RL (m)

0-19.9
20-29.9
30-39.9
40-49.9
50-59.9
60-69.9
70-79.9
80-89.9
Refer to Clause 4.3, 4.3A

Cadastre

Base data 01/01/2005 © Land & Property Information (LPI)
Addendum data 01/09/2013 © Gosford City Council

Source: Gosford Local Environment Plan 2014



Floor Space Ratio Map
Sheet FSR_015CA

Maximum Floor Space Ratio (n:1)

D	0.5
H	0.7
I	0.75
K	0.85
N	1
Q	1.3
S1	1.5
S2	1.8
T1	2
T2	2.25
T3	2.3
U1	2.5
U2	2.75
V	3
X	4
Y	4.75
Z	5
AA	6
	Refer to Clause 4.4, 4.4A & 5.3

Cadastre

(Base data 01/01/2005 © Land & Property Information (LPI)
Addendum data 01/09/2013 © Gosford City Council

Source: Gosford Local Environment Plan 2014



Heritage Map Sheet HER_015CA

Heritage

- Conservation Area - General
- Item - General
- Item - Archaeological

Cadastral

- Base data 01/01/2005 © Land & Property Information (LPI)
- Addendum data 01/09/2013 © Gosford City Council

Source: Gosford Local Environment Plan 2014

All planning documents, instruments and strategies are generally aligned in seeking to promote new development, revitalisation of the CBD, enhance its amenity and connectivity and provide development at a human scale whilst taking advantage of views and promotion of taller denser development near services and infrastructure.

The LEP's objectives for the City Centre seek to:

- Promote the economic and social revitalisation of Gosford City Centre.
- Strengthen the regional position of Gosford City Centre as a multi-functional and innovative centre for commerce, education, health care, culture and the arts, while creating a highly liveable urban space with design excellence in all elements of its built and natural environments.
- Protect and enhance the vitality, identity and diversity of Gosford City Centre.
- Promote employment, residential, recreational and tourism opportunities in Gosford City Centre.
- Encourage responsible management, development and conservation of natural and man-made resources and to ensure that Gosford City Centre achieves sustainable social, economic and environmental outcomes.
- Protect and enhance the environmentally sensitive areas and natural and cultural heritage of Gosford City Centre for the benefit of present and future generations.

- Help create a mixed use place, with activity during the day and throughout the evening, so that Gosford City Centre is safe, attractive and efficient for, and inclusive of, its local population and visitors alike.
- Enhance the Gosford waterfront.
- Provide direct, convenient and safe pedestrian links between Gosford city centre and the Gosford waterfront.

The B3 zone objectives are:

- To provide a wide range of retail, business, office, entertainment, community and other suitable land uses that serve the needs of the local and wider community.
- To encourage appropriate employment opportunities in accessible locations.
- To maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.
- To strengthen the role of Gosford City Centre as the regional business, retail and cultural centre of the central coast.
- To encourage a diverse and compatible range of activities, including commercial and retail development, cultural and entertainment facilities, tourism, leisure and recreation facilities and social, education and health services.
- To provide for residential uses if compatible with neighbouring uses and employment opportunities.

- To create opportunities to improve the public domain and pedestrian links throughout Gosford City Centre.
- To provide for the retention and creation of view corridors.
- To protect and enhance the scenic quality and character of Gosford City Centre.

The B4 zone objectives are:

- To provide a mixture of compatible land uses.
- To integrate suitable business, office, residential, retail and other development in accessible locations so as to maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.
- To encourage a diverse and compatible range of activities, including commercial and retail development, cultural and entertainment facilities, tourism, leisure and recreation facilities, social, education and health services and higher density residential development.
- To allow development in Point Frederick to take advantage of and retain view corridors while avoiding a continuous built edge along the waterfront.
- To create opportunities to improve the public domain and pedestrian links of Gosford City Centre.
- To enliven the Gosford waterfront by allowing a wide range of commercial, retail and residential activities immediately adjacent to it and increase opportunities for more interaction between public and private domains.
- To protect and enhance the scenic qualities and character of Gosford City Centre.
- 2.4 Civic Improvement Plan – Gosford City Council Section 94A Development Contributions Plan – Gosford City Centre

2.4 Civic Improvement Plan – Gosford City Council Section 94A Development Contributions Plan – Gosford City Centre

The Civic Improvement Plan for the Gosford City Centre provides a description of the civic infrastructure needed to support the growth and development of the city centre, and outlines the framework for contributions to be made from development towards the funding and provision of the infrastructure in association with future development in the city centre.

The Civic Improvement Plan sets the contribution rate at 4% of the cost of the development. However, in order to provide an incentive to developers past resolutions of Council have seen this reduced to 1% and more recently increased to 2% to apply to all development applications lodged until 1 February 2015. Council has resolved that contributions foregone in this incentive be tracked and Council's long term financial strategy reimburse the contribution plan to ensure delivery of the plans objectives.

3.0 Redefinition of the City Centre

3.1 Gosford as Regional Centre

Gosford is the regional capital for the Central Coast. At the macroscale, its role is as a regional level city that provides a clearly defined and recognisable regional heart for the Central Coast. This is to be reflected in appropriate controls for building density, height and uses to create opportunities for development at a scale consistent with its regional status. The city centre provides a focus for and aims to meet the needs for the whole Central Coast – our residents, businesses, government administration, cultural and sporting interests.

Its regional role is reinforced by a concentration of tertiary activities. It is the home of regional level health, sporting and educational facilities. Gosford Hospital is the key health campus on the coast, offering higher order care, specialist services and allied health functions, including accredited training of health care practitioners. Central Coast Stadium is the premier sporting facility on the coast – it is home to the Central Coast Mariners, hosts international sporting competitions, peak community events and acts as a focus for regional-scaled events. Gosford High School is a selective high school that draws students from all over the Coast and parts of Sydney. There is also a concentration of other higher and non-government educational opportunities within and around the City Centre. It is also home to the regional command of police services and higher order court jurisdictions. Synergies and interlinkages are developed and can be further grown between these higher order “public” functions and related private sector activities to create a sustainable platform for revitalisation of the regional city and

leverage further growth. This is essential to position Gosford as the regional capital of the Central Coast.

Gosford is also the key attractor for government decentralisation initiatives, from Sydney and beyond, and a pivotal location for the consolidation of government services. The renewed interest in the city centre by developers is also demonstrative of private sector commitment to delivering a thriving regional capital.

The outstanding geographic setting on the foreshore of Brisbane Water and nestled between surrounding ridgelines and hills contribute to the identification of Gosford as the regional capital. This is reinforced by major transport corridors, both road and rail, that transect the city centre. Gosford Station is the busiest train station on the Central Coast, and is a key modal interchange for commuters.

With improvements to the regional road network, there will be better connectivity between Gosford and its region. Improvements to the Central Coast Highway along the coast linking Gosford to the The Entrance and scheduled upgrading of the Pacific Highway through the Narara Valley, will ensure that Gosford is readily accessible from all parts of the region.

Building typologies, in terms of height, scale and density, need to reflect Gosford’s role as the premier centre within region and as the capital of the Central Coast.

Gosford regional city is more than the just the core business area and mixed use precinct with fringing medium/high density residential

areas. As a regional city, it encompasses a greater spatial extent, and includes a diversity of land uses, densities and building typologies that create a dynamic, inter-related mix of activities that contribute to the overall primacy of Gosford. Satellite components of the regional city include West Gosford, East Gosford, Point Frederick and North Gosford. These areas support and build on core city centre functions, by providing smaller scaled activities that rely on ease of accessibility and convenience, or as a hub for activities (eg bulky goods at West Gosford and providores at East Gosford).

These specialist hubs act as adjuncts to the core city centre and contribute to its overall functionality and critical mass. These outlying components are also integrated to the core CBD areas through consistent landscaping themes in roadways and a continuum of building forms orientated onto major axial roads. Other activities within this broader city area are also supportive of the key core areas and reflect component elements that have not been able to be accommodated in the core itself. For example, parts of West Gosford have been developed for “greenfields” commercial/business park uses and regionally scaled building supply outlets, where these uses have not been able to be located in the core city centre due to large floor space and very high accessibility requirements.



Source: CCRS

Residential development within the wider regional city context also offers a variety of form and densities attractive to a range of household types, and across a range of settings and price differentials.

These “hub” components are part of an interconnected and interrelated mix of land uses that make up the regional centre.

Whilst other centres have emerged as specialist roles, such as Erina Fair, for retail activities, and The Entrance for tourism, and other relatively large centres providing nodal points as sub-regional centres, Gosford is the only multi-functional higher order centre that is capable of providing the full ambit of regionally-scaled services and facilities for the Central Coast.



Gosford City Centre



3.2 Gosford City- The Waterfront City

The waterfront at Gosford has long been recognised as a premier location on the Central Coast. Historically, this was where the township of Gosford became first settled and many of the remaining heritage items are located at this end of the City Centre. The waterfront has also played a critical role in the growth and development of the Central Coast, being a key location for regional community events, standout celebrations and as a central focal point of Brisbane Water. Its geographical setting, framed by ridgelines and fringing urban development, contributes to its pivotal role.

The completion of the Sydney to Newcastle railway line, and crossing of the Hawkesbury River, heralded increased growth and development on the Central Coast. Gosford Railway Station was constructed in 1887 and was located at the northern end of the town due to flooding and soil constraints. This had the effect of drawing growth northwards along Mann Street, away from the waterfront, and the railway station became the town's epicentre. Activities associated with rail freight and further lineal spread to the north (on to flood free lands and as the gateway town growth areas to the north) resulted in the creation of an extended central, main street, with shopfronts and buildings orientated onto the street. This lineal city form was further exacerbated by increasing vehicular mobility in the 50's and 60's, with Mann Street extending for approximately 1.8 Kms in the City Centre, and the opening up of more "intown" residential lots towards Wyoming.

With the growth of the town, activities spread onto cross streets away from Mann Street and the town eventually spread more laterally to the east. Housing or light industrial uses towards the back of the town were converted for commercial/retail and business developments and purpose built stand-alone shopping centres/supermarkets were retrofitted into the existing town subdivision pattern or as new buildings. The mid 1970's conversion of Kibble Park from a car park into a central parkland with community buildings, and fringing shopping centre activities, was a key determinant in providing a refocus of the core city centre. This produced a more compact city centre form, that encouraged pedestrianisation, maximisation of links between activity nodes within the centre and a focal point of public activity within the centre. Kibble Park remains a key structural element in the overall form, function and attractiveness of the City Centre.

As a consequence of historical development, the waterfront has become increasingly alienated from the town centre. This has been exacerbated by the reconstruction of Dane Drive/Central Coast Highway along the foreshore, as a divisive element between the land and the water and small scaled waterfront developments. A major element of the Gosford City Centre Masterplan was to reconnect the waterfront to the City centre and activate it through significantly scaled mixed use, including resident, development. This component of the Masterplan raised concerns within the wider community. With the former Gosford Primary School (the SSS site) being declared surplus, this land was zoned through a State Significant Site listing process and the land is now zoned and shovel

ready for development. Generous height and floor space ratio controls will ensure appropriately scaled buildings (up to a height equivalent to Council's administration building (RL 48) and with an FSR of 3.5:1). Urban design requirements embedded into DCP provisions will ensure development in this location achieves a very high architectural standard, reflective of its key location, and integrates with surrounding public areas.

With the rezoning of the former Gosford Primary School site (as surplus government land) there is an unprecedented opportunity to create opportunities to for this connection to be realised. This site has an area of approximately 10 hectares and is now zoned to allow:

- A combination of commercial, residential, hotel and conference facilities that could create up to 2000 jobs.
- New regional community facilities, including the opportunity for the Regional Performing Arts Centre and Conservatorium.
- Public spaces and recreational areas.
- New waterside restaurants and retail facilities on an expanded Breakwater.

Once established, these developments at the southern gateway of the city, will counter the lateral growth of poorer quality, smaller scaled commercial buildings that has occurred along the northern reaches of Mann Street. It will act as an attractor for redevelopment at the southern end of the street, and provide real opportunities to integrate city centre buildings with the foreshore.



There is the opportunity to strengthen the City Centre on the attraction of the waterfront

3.3 Role of Land Use Planning

The historical effects of patterns of development have created the legacy of a city centre that is ill-defined, lacks legibility and creates a juxtaposition of development. Where redevelopment has not occurred, main street buildings are typically two storey, on small long narrow lots. More recent 1970's and 80's larger commercial and "shopping centre" buildings are located either away from the main street, or on amalgamated or irregularly consolidated sites fronting the main street or other activity nodes. The history of development and redevelopment along main street has resulted in an inconsistent form, scale and variety of building facades and inconsistent streetscape.

3.4 Need for Redefined Core

With the evolving structure of the city centre, changing role of the Railway Station and new incentives provided by the SSS site at the southern end of Mann Street, there is an opportunity to redefine the core city area. This would allow a refocusing of planning and design effort. This can be used to harness opportunities that are offered in the current market and maximise opportunities to direct future growth commensurate with the scale of Gosford as a regional city.

The B3 Commercial core zone currently defines the business core and is generally bounded by Faunce Street, Henry Parry Drive, Donnison Street (including lots on its southern side) and the railway line. It has a gross physical area of approximately 17 hectares, including Kibble Park which is zoned for public open space. The Railway Station and Burns Park are located in the northern section of the B3 area. Conversely, the fringing area of B4 Mixed Use has an area of 55 hectares and extends from Duke Street at Point Frederick to Dwyer Street at North Gosford. It is generally extends out from the B3 core, and is elongated along the main north-south axial road links of Mann Street and east of Dane Drive/Central Coast Highway.

Much of the development in the northern section of the core near the Railway station has been for mixed use/residential units. Peripheral areas of B3 zoned land abutting Henry Parry Drive seem to be poorly located for core commercial uses, with a lack of street address, relatively poor vehicular and pedestrian accessibility and connectivity to the central core area. This is due to their fringe location, topography and isolation to main road frontage by road batters.

Some core CBD functions that act as focal areas are located in the southern section of Mann Street, with Council's Administration Building, regional Police headquarters (further south on B4 zoned land) and existing music Conservatorium.

The construction of Brian McGowan Bridge and the major arterial road along the waterfront have impacted upon the identity of the city centre. The southern "gateway" is however currently ill-defined and does not provide a sense of arrival, with building orientation facing onto Mann Street or otherwise internally focused and no links between built elements, parklands and the water. New buildings that are dual oriented and incorporate public spaces and interlinkages to open space and water would create opportunities for a "gateway" group of buildings at the southern end of the CBD to integrate key defining elements (ie, buildings, parklands and waterways).

There are also more advantageous prospects for redevelopment in the southern area of the CBD. Land is not unduly fragmented by small, separately owned lots and it is in a preferential location in terms of proximity to the waterfront, recreational opportunities and arterial road connections whilst still being able to walk to the railway station.

The age/state of repair and existing capital value of many buildings in the southern section of Mann Street also make this area more conducive to maximising redevelopment opportunities. With Council's Administration Building and other civic/community functions, there is capacity to create leverage for other complementary developments in this immediate area.

The impetus provided by the development of the SSS will create even greater opportunities to redefine the city core as a focus for redevelopment opportunities and act as a stimulus for growth and revitalisation.

Creation of the new core would require:

- Rezoning of the Baker, Georgiana, Mann and Donnison Street block so that it is all zoned B3;
- Rezoning of the Mann, Georgiana, Donnison Street and Henry Parry Drive block so that it is all zoned B3;
- Rezoning of two northernmost B3 blocks bounded by Faunce, Erina, Mann Streets and Henry Parry Drive to B4.

This transitioning of the city centre core to the south would involve rezoning of approximately 4 hectares of B3 land to B4, and 3 hectares of B4 zoned land to B3. It would better reflect the evolution of key city elements, allow the creation of new activity hubs, maximise opportunities created through the development of the SS site, and create more viable development opportunities to encourage redevelopment that will build on Gosford's role as a regional capital.



4.0 Built Form Scenarios

4.1 Introduction

RobertsDay has undertaken basic built form testing of a range of scenarios. These are set out below, and are based on the current base controls for the City Centre; the base controls with the incentive provisions; 20 storey height limit with an FSR of 6:1 and no limit to floorplate of tower; and 30 storey tower height limit, FSR of 6:1 and maximum floorplate of 20 x 20m. We have also reviewed and modelled current residential or mixed use DAs presently before Council which remain undetermined. To support this review of scenarios we have also considered the findings of the Department of Planning and Environment's Urban Feasibility Model (UFM).

4.2 What are the benefits of density in a Centre?

Density done well is what creates an active and attractive city centre. Locating well designed towers that provide for a mix of uses allows for the creation of pedestrian activity as a variety of people are drawn to the centre for a variety of reasons and at a variety of times. In addition to drawing people into a place increasing density within a city centre can add the following benefits:

- Facilitating more affordable housing choices
- Curbing the negative impacts of sprawl
- Mitigating climate change
- Dramatically decreasing energy costs
- Increasing energy independence
- Making walking, biking and transit more inviting
- Improving public health, diversity, creativity, safety and vibrancy
- Building social capital



Rouse Hill - Mixed residential retail provide affordable housing options



Soul Tower, Gold Coast - Significant residential tower supports retail precinct within the podium



In Miami mixed use, dense buildings support a vibrant street life that makes streets people places

4.3 Existing DAs / Approvals

A number of DAs have been lodged but not yet determined within the City Centre. These DAs have taken advantage of clause 8.9 – Development Incentives under LEP 2014. As noted, the incentive only applies to the City Centre and to DAs lodged before 31 August 2014. The incentive is no longer in force for new DAs and Council has reviewed its need by assessing its effectiveness in generating development in the City Centre and the locations and scenarios where it is likely to act as a catalyst for revitalisation and redevelopment. More on this below.

RobertsDay has been furnished with information about DAs lodged with Council in August 2014 for new residential or mixed use developments in the City Centre. A synopsis is set out below:

- 25 DAs were lodged for developments >\$2 Million
- 10 of these DAs were for a capital investment value of >\$10 Million
- The aggregate value of these DAs is \$375 Million or an average of \$37.5 Million each
- 5 of these DAs are for residential developments alone, with the balance as mixed use developments
- The total number of dwellings proposed by these 10 DAs is 1,142

- Some 4,500m² of non-residential GFA is proposed in the 5 mixed use developments, including sufficient space for one or two mid-sized supermarkets
- 134 serviced apartment rooms are proposed in one of the developments.

The above represents an important opportunity in the revitalisation of the Gosford City Centre and demonstrates that the industry (subject to incentives) is willing to invest in Gosford. Statistics on these DAs are set out in the table across.

Of note, 3 of the 5 DAs are located in the precincts south of The City Core.

As noted in an earlier section, clause 8.9 provides for incentive bonus for both height and FSR. Consent can be granted for up to an additional 30% height and FSR for developments in the City Centre. In tandem with a clause 4.6 variation to development standards to a nominal +10%, up to 143% of the base controls is possible.

Despite the incentive clauses and the ability to further vary development standards the heights of the developments generally still vary by between 20-45% where they do not comply, and by 20-35% in relation to FSR. Note that FSR is generally more likely to be complied with signifying that the height controls may be artificially low relative to the density controls and in turn this would promote squatter and wider developments, rather than taller slenderer built forms. The reasons for developers choosing to develop with greater development heights is articulated on the facing page.



DA	Key	Image	LOCATION (MASTER PLAN PRECINCT)	PROPOSAL	ESTIMATED VARIATION FROM LEP 2014 (with incentive control applied and clause 4.6 @ +10%)
46209/2014	A		27-37 Mann Street & 125 Georgiana Terrace Gosford (The Waterfront)	Mixed Use - Retail, Commercial, Restaurant, Residential Development 15 storeys, 1532m ² commercial/retail, 127 residential units and Demolition of Existing Structures	Part 24m / part 36m +30% + 10% Height Part 34.3m / part 51.48m Proposal = c 48.6m. Part compliant and some 14.3 greater than control (+42%) FSR 4:1 + 30% + 10% FSR 5.72:1 Proposal = 7:1, some 1.38:1 greater than control (+22%)
46238/2014	B		43-45 Beane Street & 2 Keevers Lane Gosford (The Railway Precinct)	Mixed Use Development Commercial & Residential 18 storeys, 98 apartments, 149m ² commercial	48m +30% +10% Height 68.64m Proposal = 62.4m and complies. FSR 4.75:1 +30% + 10% FSR 6.79:1 Proposal = 3.97:1 and complies.
46256/2014	C		108-110 & 120 Mann St Gosford (The Arts & Entertainment Precinct)	Mixed Use Development 134 room hotel, 276 apartments, restaurant 935m ² retail/ supermarket 1,527m ² in 2 Towers over 26 and 28 levels	48m +30% + 10% Height 68.64m Proposal = up to 98.2m and some 29.5m greater than control (+43%) FSR 4:1 + 30% + 10% FSR 5.72:1 Proposal = 7.7:1, some 1.98:1 greater than the control (+35%)
46272/2014	D		21-23 Mann Street Gosford (The Waterfront)	Residential Flat Building (140 Units) 16 storeys and Demolition of Existing Structures	24m +30% +10% Height 34.3m Proposal = 48.9m, some 14.6m greater than the control (+43%) FSR 3:1 + 30% + 10% FSR 4.29:1 Proposal = 3.84:1 and complies.
46274/2014	E		122-124 Erina Street East (corner Henry Parry Drive) Gosford (The City Core)	180 Unit Shop Top Housing 152m ² 15 storeys	30m + 30% + 10% Height 42.9m Proposal = up to 51.8m, some 8.9m greater (+21%) FSR 4.75:1 +30% + 10% FSR 6.79:1 Proposal = 4.88:1 and complies.

4.4 Sieving Potential Development Sites – Urban Feasibility Model (UFM)

The Department of Planning and Environment has developed the Urban Feasibility Model (UFM) which is used to develop a detailed assessment of development capacity and viability / feasibility under the new LEPs. The UFM is a GIS-based modelling tool which uses area specific sales data and has been developed in consultation with the development industry and Councils.

Although the UFM works at the site level, The Department advises that results are best interpreted when they are aggregated to the precinct, suburb, LGA or subregional level.

The UFM works by calculating what a developer can do with a site under a set of planning controls and whether it's economically feasible to develop. The methodology is similar to what a developer would use for assessing the return on investment of a development site.

Gosford City Council is currently reviewing development incentives provided under Clause 8.9(2) of the Gosford LEP 2014 in Gosford City Centre. To assist in this review the Department has been requested to undertake an assessment of the clause in regards to its impact on housing potential and development feasibility using the UFM.

The main findings of the Gosford UFM assessment include:

- The baseline Gosford LEP 2014 provides potential for 16,474 additional dwellings in the Gosford City Centre of which 19 per cent (3,073) are feasible to develop.
- Clause 8.9(2) provides potential for 20,266 additional dwellings in the Gosford City Centre. Of the 20,266 potential dwellings 23 per cent (4,684) are economically feasible to develop in the current market.
- Clause 8.9(2) results in an increase in potential of 3,792 additional dwellings and an increase in feasible potential of 1,611 additional dwellings.
- The largest increase in dwelling potential is in 4 storey or greater RFBs, increasing from 9,546 dwellings under the baseline LEP to 13,185 using Clause 8.9.
- RFBs in total make up 70 per cent (14,134) of total potential under Clause 8.9, (33 per cent economically feasible) and 70 per cent (11,575) under the baseline LEP (26 per cent economically feasible).
- Compared to the baseline LEP dwelling potential increases for RFBs 4 storeys or greater and decreases for RFBs less than 4 storeys under Clause 8.9.

In simple terms, the incentive controls provide for additional growth and act as a catalyst for growth in the CBD. Whilst it is noted that results are best interpreted when they are aggregated to the precinct, suburb, LGA or subregional level, it would appear the incentive operates at its optimum in areas outside of the 5 identified Precincts under the Masterplan. When comparing Dwelling Potential maps provided by the Department in its UFM, the greatest scope for uplift occurs in the outlying areas of Point Frederick – south of the Waterfront Precinct and in North Gosford – north of the Railway Precinct.

Similarly, in terms of development feasibility using the Internal Rate of Return (IRR) as the relevant measure, the greatest opportunities again lie in the outlying areas of West Gosford and North Gosford. Generally very few development opportunities existing in the City Centre and the 5 Masterplan Precincts with an IRR of greater than 15%, where an industry norm would be seeking a greater percentage in the order of at least 20-25%, particularly in the context of Gosford compared to other locations. At current feasibility rates the bigger market players and upper tier developers would be unlikely to develop in Gosford.

It is also interesting to note that the existing base and incentive controls would not only fail to achieve appropriately placed developments, the likely yield of dwellings would fall short of the Masterplan target and Regional Strategy objectives.

Three built form scenarios have been tested:

- Scenario A Existing Controls
- Scenario B 20 storey tower limit, FSR 6:1, no limit to floorplate of tower
- Scenario C 30 storey tower limit, FSR 6:1, tower floorplate limited to 20m x 20m

The scenarios have been compared, particularly with regard to solar access and internal and external views.

4.5 Scenario A Existing Controls

Broadly, the existing controls are likely to generate developments with the following characteristics:

- Mid-rise and bulky buildings where larger or amalgamated lots provide the opportunity.
- Canyon-like development at the human scale.
- Apparent walls of development when viewed obliquely.
- Fewer opportunities for views to sky or views through or past buildings to nearby hills at the human scale and from distant views.
- Large and long double-loaded corridor developments with single aspects only. Likely to generate blank walls at two out of four frontages if a mid-block development. Views and amenity would be reduced.
- Increased difficulty in DCP and SEPP 65 compliance in dwelling design and sustainability, eg southern aspect dwellings and natural cross ventilation.



Scenario A - Existing Controls



Existing development potential



30% Floorspace bonus



Street view of development potential including bonus

4.6 Scenario B

20 storey tower, FSR 6:1, no limit to tower floorplate

Broadly, a set of controls based on an a limit of 20 storey towers, an FSR of 6:1 and no limit to the size of the tower floorplate are likely to generate developments with the following characteristics:

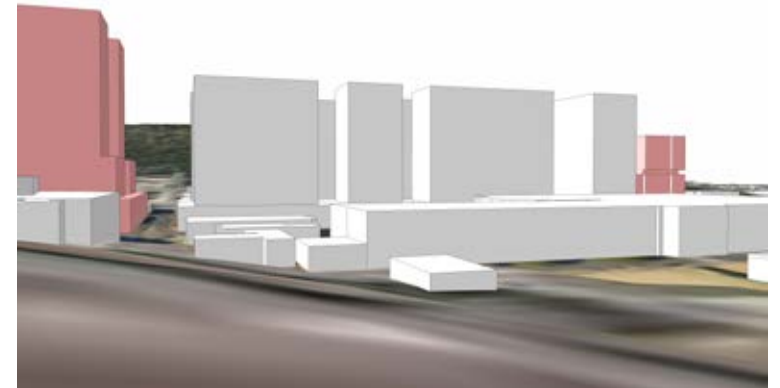
- Bulky buildings with large volumes.
- Blocked views through to surrounding ridgeline and waterfront
- Desired GFA targets.
- Large site coverage that limits the ability to provide adequate public domain and appropriate transitions to surrounding sites and existing development.
- Likely to produce uniform buildings with a monotonous outcome with limited facade articulation.
- Will only allow two building frontage views.
- Has the ability to produce apartments with limited SEPP 65 compliance on a range of matters including southern aspect dwellings, cross ventilation and others.
- Will significantly overshadow the public domain, streets limiting the ability to provide public and private open space with natural daylight.



Scenario B - 20 storey tower, FSR 6:1, no limit to tower floorplate



Development potential



Street view of development potential

4.7 Scenario C

30 storey tower, FSR 6:1, 20 x 20m tower floorplate

Broadly, a set of controls based on an increased height limit to a 30 storey tower (to 28-29 storeys plus plant, an FSR of 6:1 and an upper level limited floorplate of 20 x 20 m (25 x 25m including balconies) are likely to generate developments with the following characteristics:

- Slender forms and taller buildings incorporating podiums at a human scale.
- Enhanced views through taller slenderer buildings due to generous building separation.
- Desired GFA targets without excessive bulk.
- Modular forms to allow improved opportunity for finer grain elements, including laneways, secondary streets and further reduced bulk at the human scale.
- Allows for built form variety and typologies in tower elements and at the podium.

- Taller buildings inherently have a base, a middle and top and the capacity for design innovation to provide visual interest, whereas mid-rise and bulky buildings will contribute only regularity and uniformity.
- Allows for greater flexibility in dwelling design and provide opportunities for views and aspects from all four frontages.
- Provide for higher quality development by upper tier developers.
- Allows for a greater SEPP 65 compliance on a range of matters including southern aspect dwellings, cross ventilation and others.

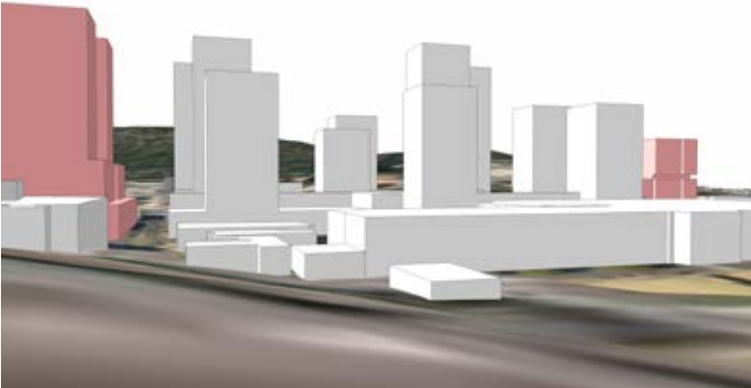
We note that another option may include performance based solutions to allow absolute flexibility. This would be based on no height or FSR control and being able to demonstrate design excellence and meet amenity, privacy, solar access, overshadowing, traffic, and the like objectives and guidelines.



Scenario C - 30 storey tower, FSR 6:1, 20 x 20m tower floorplate



Development potential

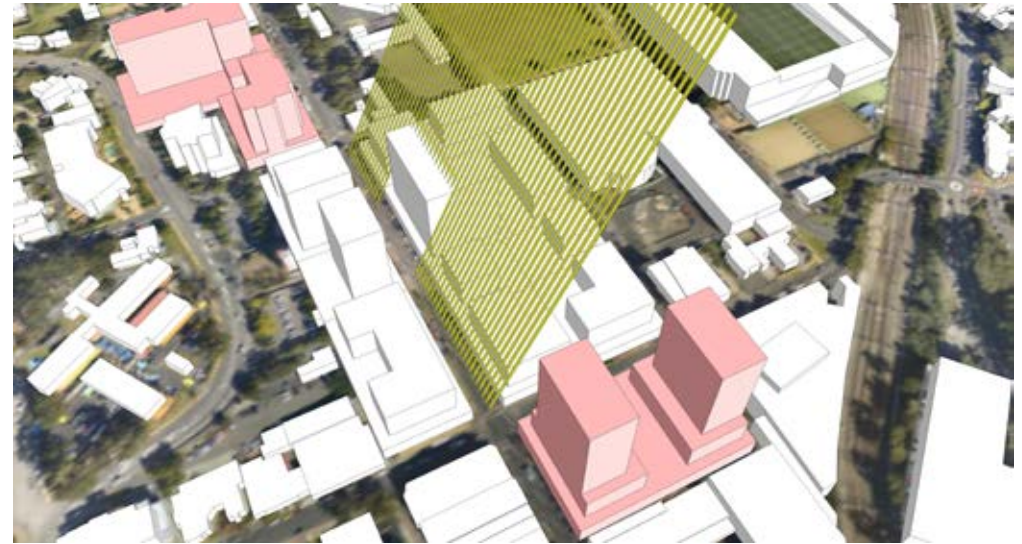


Street view of development potential

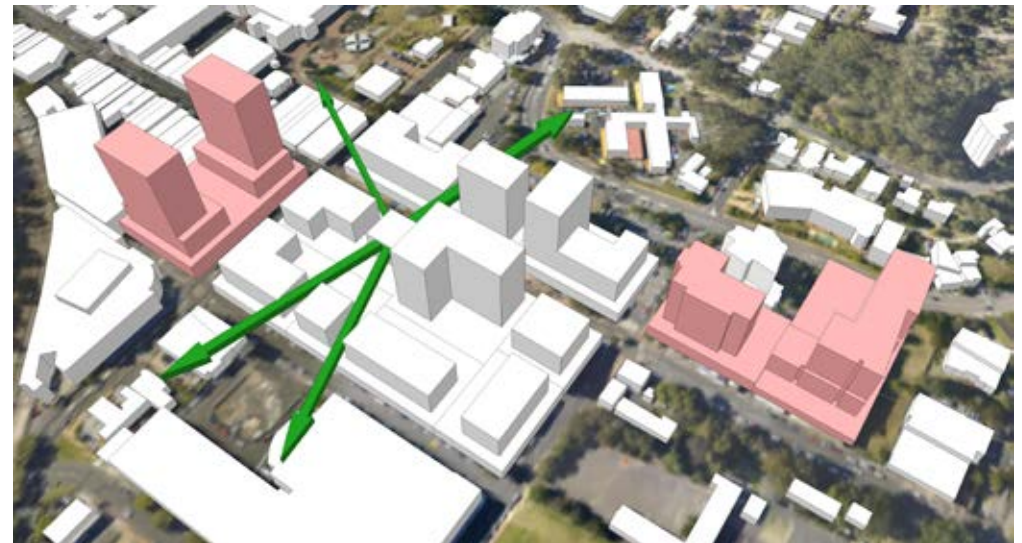
4.8 Solar Access and Internal View Sharing

Solar access has been modelled for the three scenarios on the diagrams opposite. Scenario C provides for good solar access whilst achieving density. Scenario A also provides for solar access, however, with limited development potential. Scenario B provides limited solar access and significant overshadowing of the street and public domain.

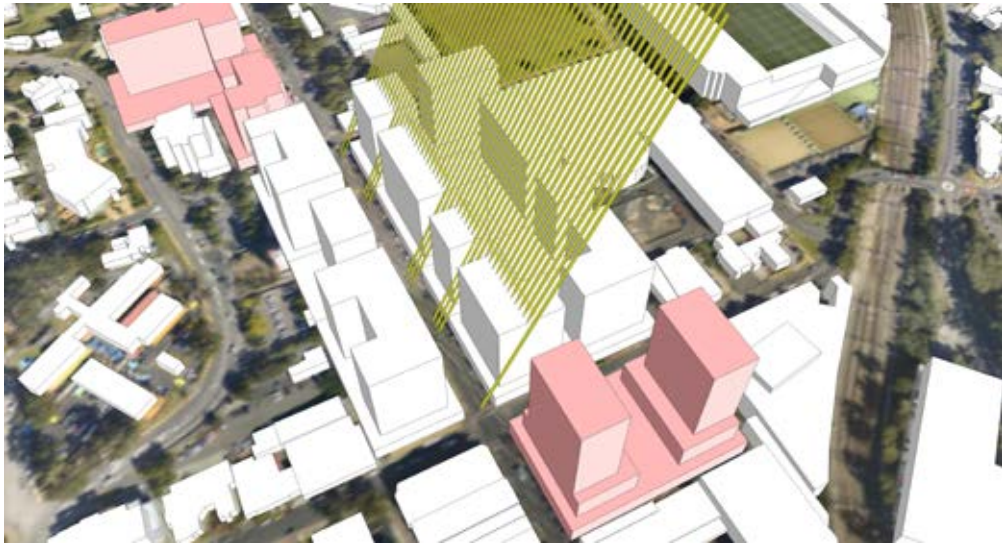
The diagram below demonstrate the potential for views from the building out to surrounding ridgelines and the waterfront. Scenario C provides the best potential for views from four sides of each building. Scenario A and B would result in a built form that only offers from two sides of buildings, limiting the potential for view sharing.



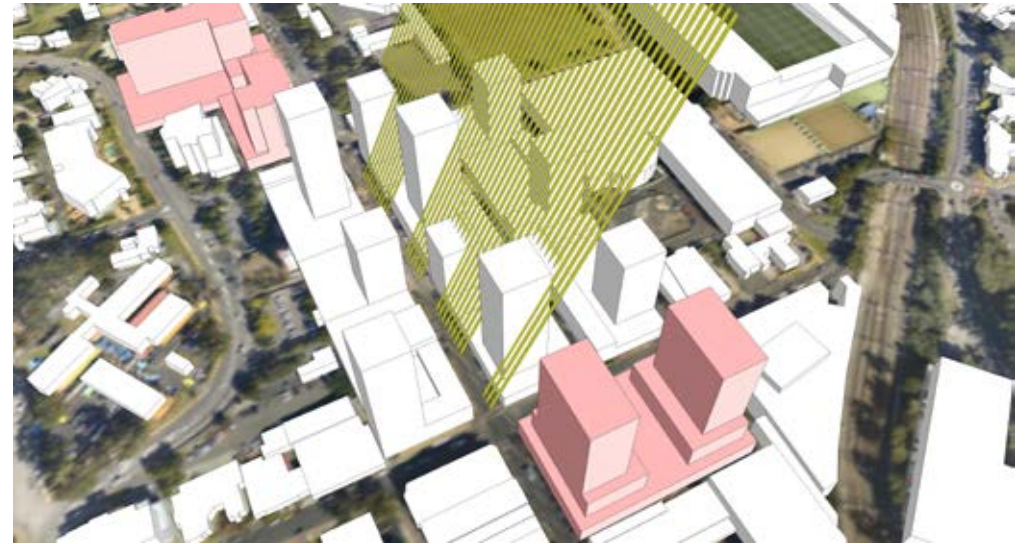
Solar Access - Scenario A



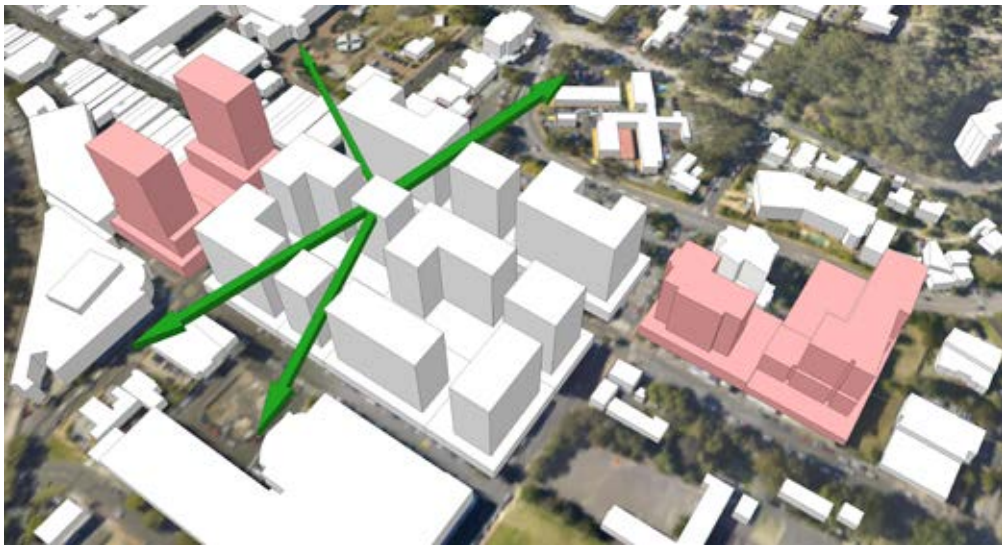
Internal Views - Scenario A



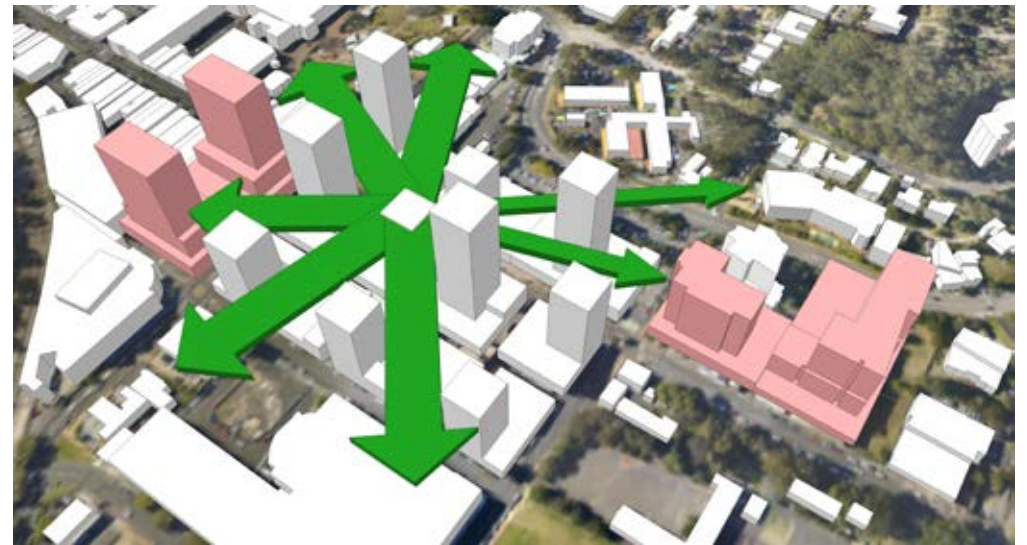
Solar Access - Scenario B



Solar Access - Scenario C



Internal Views - Scenario B



Internal Views - Scenario C

4.9 External View Sharing

The following diagrams model two view locations and the impact of the built form scenarios on views to the mountain ridgeline. Scenario C provides the best outcome in terms of maintaining views to the mountain ridgeline.

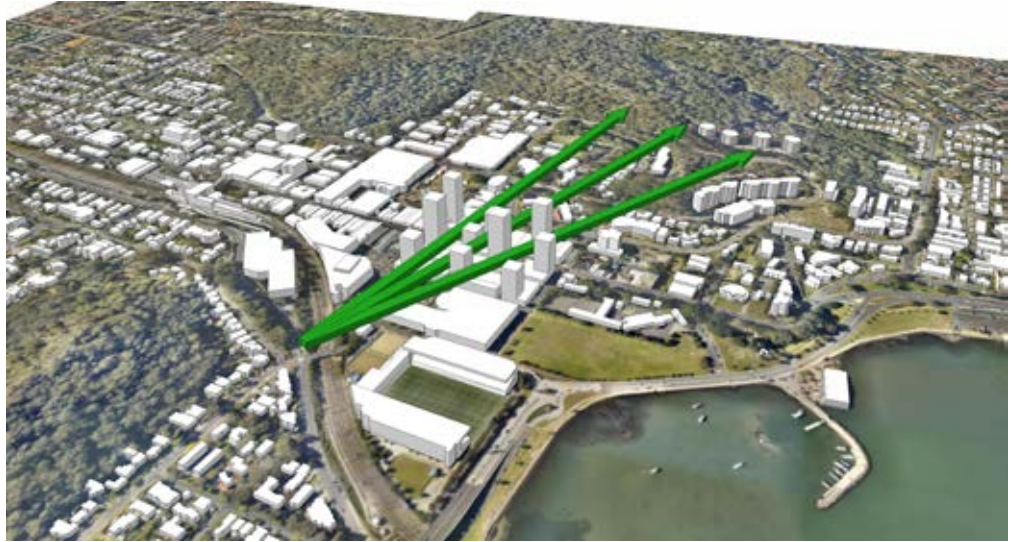
Tall slender towers provide visual breaks that maintain view sharing whilst still facilitating density. Shorter, bulkier buildings result in blocked views that limited visual connections in additional solar access as described previously.



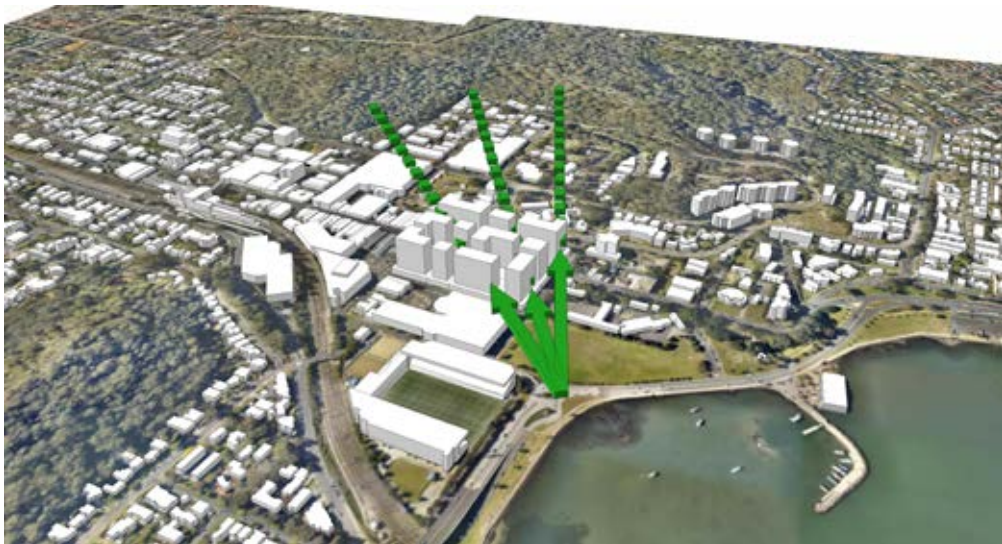
External Views - Scenario A



External Views - Scenario B



External Views - Scenario C



External Views - Scenario B



External Views - Scenario C

4.10 Design Excellence

Good building design should positively contribute to the overall architectural quality of the city and provide buildings appropriate to their context. In order to encourage quality architecture and public spaces within Gosford City, Council should investigate options whereby proposals over a specified height or floor space may be considered by Council as a “design excellence bonus” subject to compliance with a “Design Excellence” criteria/process. The criteria would consider issues such as the broader public benefit of the proposal and the contribution the building makes to the city in terms of:

- Innovative architectural design.
- Design of the components of the building - how the building addresses and improves streetscape amenity, design and location of the tower and the visual interest of the building at the skyline.
- How the design improves connectivity within the city.
- View impacts.
- Protection of heritage items.

Some design excellence processes that have been used within other NSW LGA's include open or limited design competitions, design alternatives, design review panels. Council should determine the process best suited to Gosford City and develop a design excellence process and design excellence criteria. Where buildings activate a design excellence bonus the applicant would need to consider issues relating capital value uplift and any Council policies in this regard.



4.11 Floor Space Outcomes

Scenario C has a distinct advantage to other scenarios in securing the necessary floor space and dwelling targets set by strategic planning documents. As stated elsewhere, taller buildings are likely to be more efficient to design and build at upper levels once a mid-rise form is established. At the same time a taller building will increase the viability of the development. Enhanced viability will attract upper tier developers into the Gosford City Centre and in turn enhance interest and renewal opportunities by others.

Increased revitalisation will bring added investment in public infrastructure, whether through contributions, affordable housing, or other private or public means.

5.0 Legislative and Statutory Context

To facilitate the revitalisation and renewal of, and investment in, the Gosford City Centre a clear and consistent statutory framework must exist that gives development clarity and certainty. Statutory and other policy/framework amendments would also be required to translate the Statement of Intent into deliverable planning outcomes as part of the development process.

It would appear that the existing statutory LEP controls, whilst aiming to revitalise and activate the City Centre, are unclear and potentially contradictory when measured against strategic planning objectives. This can hamper investment opportunities and interest in the development within the regional City Centre.

For the fringing residential areas, that are generally zoned R1 General Residential and currently enjoying the benefits of bonus provisions, existing statutory controls and DCP provisions are delivering appropriate densities and quality buildings to satisfy the needs of the market. This is evidenced by the number of applications received in these areas and general conformity with relevant standards.

Within the City Centre itself, including the commercial core, the market has expressed little interest for compliant developments – the only proposals that have progressed as applications are ones that are seeking major departures to existing standards, particularly height and FSR.

Whilst noting that LEP 2014 is in itself only new, city centre controls that are replicated in it have been in place since 2007. This should be sufficient time to allow industry response to these controls, allow for market cycles and result in actual construction projects. For the commercial core, it is only now that any meaningful development activity has emerged from the private sector however these proposals are divergent from existing statutory provisions. There is also a need to facilitate more flexibility and creativity in regulatory frameworks to accommodate innovative proposals that contribute to the public realm, deliver positive outcomes outside of conventional development forms and contribute to regional identity.

Landuse tables in LEP 2014 outline zone objectives and permissible forms of development, together with unique provisions for Gosford City Centre (Part 8 Additional Local Provisions – Gosford City Centre). In some instances these provisions may be difficult to interpret, lack clearly assessable measures and lead to an overly complex arrangement of statutory controls in the development process. There may also be misalignment between broad zone objectives and the detail of permissible/prohibited uses in the landuse tables. The use of umbrella “group terms” in the Standard Instrument LEP may result in a possible lack of clarity as development permissibilities and extensive listing of prohibited uses act may also as deterrents to development. Uses may need to be reviewed to ensure that there is alignment to zone objectives, to provide a clearer framework for permissible uses and classification of development types.

5.1 LEP/DCP

To achieve the new directions of this Statement of Intent, a new policy and statutory framework will need to be developed. A planning proposal would be required to achieve LEP amendments for zoning and development standards, and to simplify controls. Other legislative amendments may be required to pursue less conventional outputs, such as transferrable development rights, or otherwise examination as to how best to achieve outcomes such as securing public benefit through uplift incentives.

The existing statutory framework would need to be required to provide for:

1. Repositioning of the CBD commercial core further to the south to better align with improved civic form, leverage off new development and maximise opportunities for redevelopment.
2. Review and refine landuse table uses to ensure consistency and clarity of permissible uses, and align uses where required to achieve the objectives of zones;
3. Introduce new block based controls (height, FSR, building podium and floor plate controls for towers) for the repositioned core;
4. Review and formulate complementary DCP provisions for development within the city core;
5. Investigate a range of options (capital value uplift - voluntary planning agreements, transferrable development provisions) to secure public benefit from uplift of controls

5.2 - 30% bonus – what happens to it?

Bonus provisions were introduced to provide development incentives over the whole of the city, including the core area and surrounding residential catchment. These bonus provisions allowed an increase of 30% in floor space ratio and height across all development types for a period of 12 months. As a catalyst to generate development, the bonus provisions have been relatively successful for medium density unit developments in the residential areas. This will make a positive contribution to meeting strategic planning housing needs. A number of existing approved developments were also amended to take advantage of the bonus. Given this stimulus, Council has initiated a LEP amendment for a further 12 month extension across the whole of the city centre.

For the business zoned more central areas of the city, however, the bonus has failed to incite compliant proposals. Applications that have been lodged have sought significant increases that are outside of established controls, and far exceed the 30% bonus. Hence, the bonus has been of limited benefit for developments within the B3 and B4 zone. These non-compliant, market driven proposals have created the impetus for this Statement of Strategic Intent to review the appropriateness of controls as they relate to the city centre core. Once new controls are established for the core area, incentive bonuses should be extinguished as their effect will be essentially negated by the introduction of more generous development standards for the core.

The long term retention of the 30% bonus across the wider residentially zoned city is not justified, as it would produce overall densities higher than that planned for, and would remove the stimulus incentive to develop in the short term.

Given the timing of the current LEP to extend the bonus for another 12 months, and the more strategically based LEP amendment to introduce controls to encapsulate new outcomes for the core, the 30% bonus across the whole of the city can still proceed as an interim short term incentive, that will lapse after 12 months.

6.0 Assessment

The assessment criteria for the City Centre and taller buildings will ideally be simplified and be performance based around key design guidelines described in Section 7. The design guidelines would act in lieu of DCP controls for future development applications and would allow for the flexibility to achieve density done well.

Assessment would consider regional planning objectives and housing and employment targets and seek to ensure a transit-oriented response results. Updated to LEP zoning and land use objectives should ensure that they facilitate the feasible development of taller towers.

7.0 Design Guidelines

If Council is to consider introducing “taller” buildings within the core area of Gosford City Centre then it is essential that design guidelines are prepared to ensure that the resultant development meets Council’s objectives of good city form and amenity. Taller buildings should be considered in terms of their design and consequent impact within the broader context, their immediate surroundings, the site and the building itself and how it interacts with the street at a human scale. Overall principles for development include:

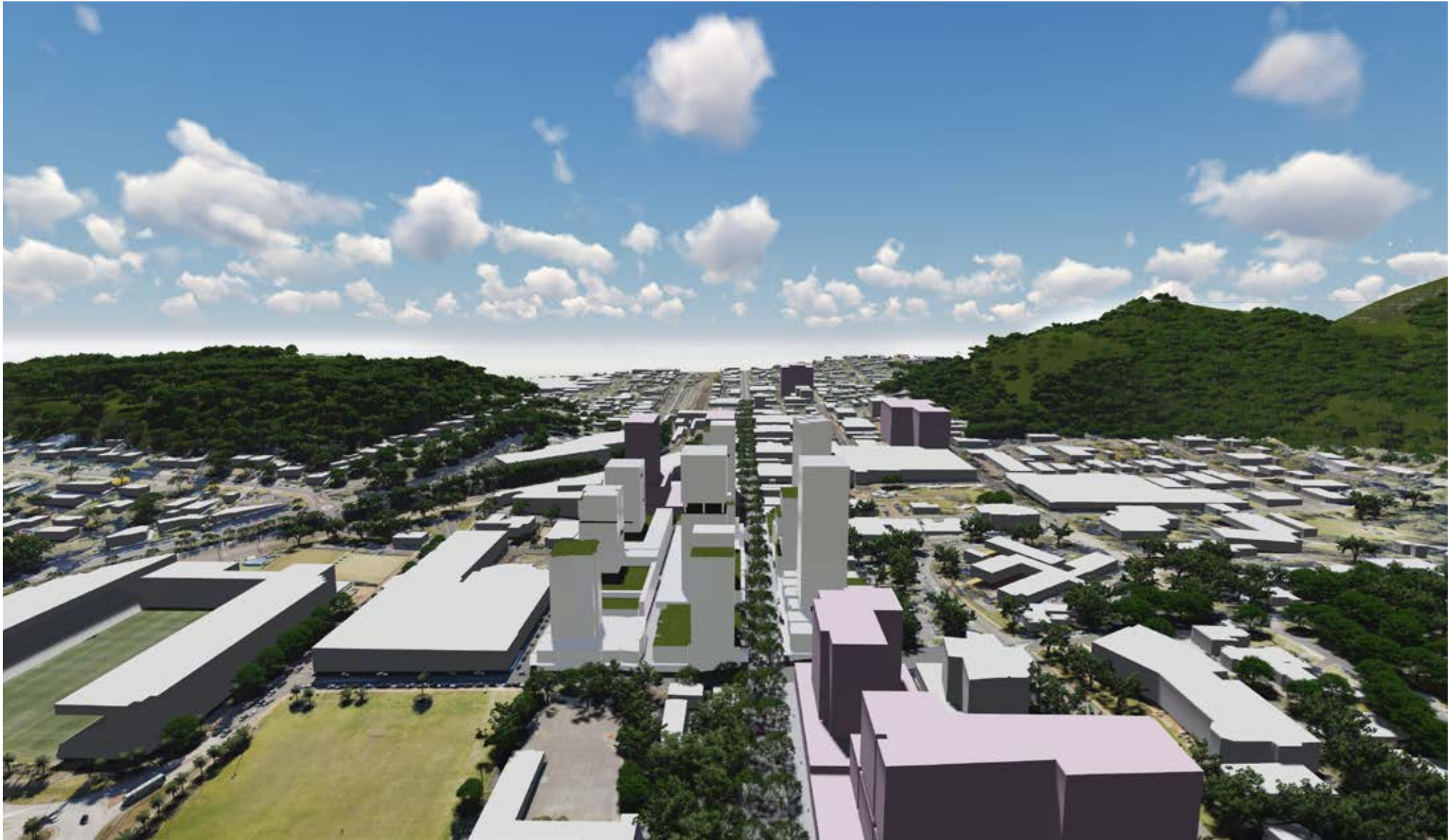
- Promote architectural and urban design excellence, sustainability, innovation, longevity, and creative expression.
- Promote a harmonious fit with the existing and planned context that maintains the ridgeline of the mountains.
- Locate taller towers on a fine grain podium that creates active pedestrian engagement.
- Consider relationships to other taller buildings, including the cumulative effect of multiple towers on solar access, views, amenity, comfort and a quality public domain.
- Encourage the amalgamation of lots to facilitate quality urban design outcomes and transitions to surrounding development.
- Create a safe, vibrant, accessible and attractive public domain and pedestrian environment.
- Minimise overshadowing and wind impacts, protect sunlight and sky view for streets, parks, public and private open space.
- Ensure high quality living and working conditions including access to private and public open space, privacy and natural ventilation.
- Locate taller towers on Mann Street, with surrounding streets decreasing in height.
- Consider the historic value of any existing heritage buildings within the design response.

7.1 Response – Scale to Precinct

- Evaluate the existing and planned context and demonstrate how the proposed tall building responds to the patterns, opportunities, and challenges within the surrounding area.
- Coordinate the development of larger sites with potential for multiple tall buildings, new internal streets, or parks through a site-specific Master Plan.
- Ensure tall buildings fit within the existing or planned context and provide an appropriate transition in scale down to lower-scaled buildings, parks, and open space.
- Locate and design tall buildings to protect access to sunlight and sky view within the surrounding context of streets, parks, public and private open space, and other shadow sensitive areas.
- Provide an appropriate, high-quality design response for tall buildings on or adjacent to prominent sites, and when framing views from the public domain to prominent sites.
- Locate and design tall buildings to respect and complement the scale, character, form and setting of on-site and adjacent heritage properties.



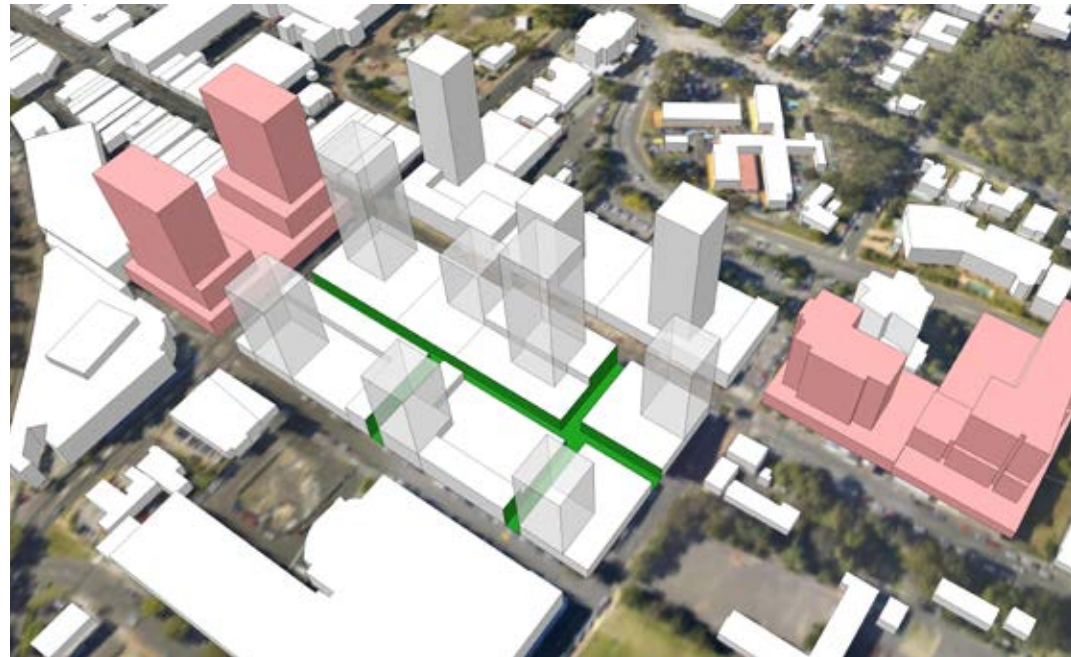
Human scale podium connect tall buildings to the street



The tall building guidelines reinforce Mann Street as the central spine of Gosford

7.2 Response – Scale to Site

- Locate the base of tall buildings to frame the edges of streets, parks, and open space, to fit harmoniously with the existing context, and to provide opportunities for high-quality landscaped open space on-site.
- Organise tall buildings to use existing or new public streets for address and building entrances.
- Ensure primary building entrances front onto public streets, are well-defined, clearly visible, and universally accessible from the adjacent public domain.
- Locate “back of house” activities, such as loading, servicing, utilities, and vehicle parking, underground or within the building mass, away from the public domain.
- Provide at-grade publicly accessible open space within the tall building site to complement, connect, and extend the existing network of public streets, parks, and open space.
- Provide comfortable, safe, and accessible pedestrian and cycling routes through and around the tall building site to connect with adjacent routes, streets, parks, open space, and other priority destinations, such as transport nodes.
- Design the base building to fit harmoniously within the existing context of neighbouring building heights at the street and to respect the scale and proportion of adjacent streets, parks, and public or private open space.



Amalgamation of sites offers the opportunity to create laneways and through site links

7.3 Response – Scale of Building

Objectives

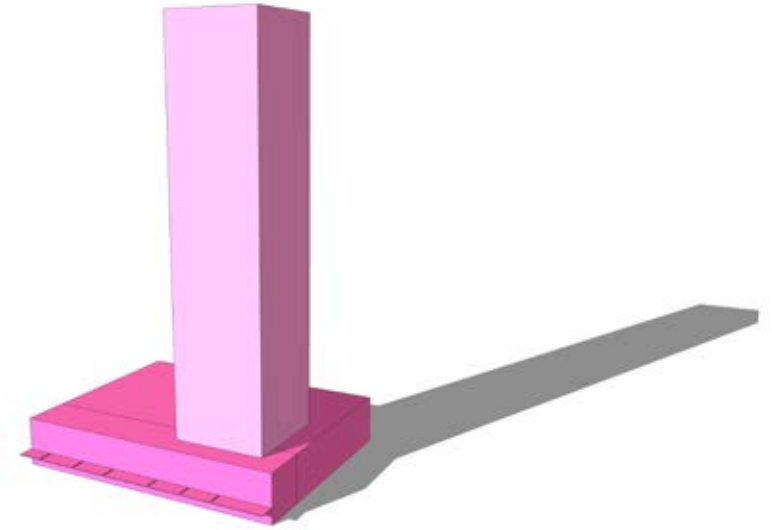
- Create a fine-grain and human scale city centre through building design and massing.
- Built form establishes an attractive public realm by defining streets, parks and other public spaces as outdoor rooms.
- Creating variety and not only one type of building style.
- Convert large scale podium and tower projects into smaller building structures.
- Respond to the tropical climate to maximise natural cooling and create an aesthetic that reflects the climate.
- Building design is consistent with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and enhances the safety of the public realm.

Guidelines

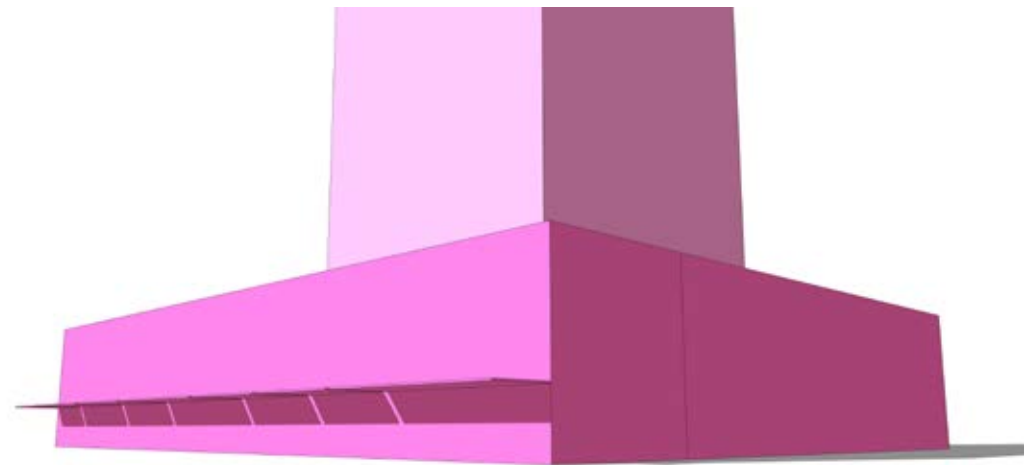
- Create step backs in building massing above the ground level to engage with the public realm to create the opportunity for positive, secondary spaces for people to linger in and activate.
- Provide narrow, deep tenancies rather than shallow ones to create a rich pedestrian experience, more entrances on the street and back-of-house functions occurring away from the facade.
- Use visual devices, step backs and building mass between the third and fourth floors to engage the human eye.
- Subdivide facades vertically, such as relating vertical breaks in the built form to stair cores.
- Encourage double height ground floor units.
- Visible vertical communication such as stairs being visible from the street.
- Avoid unnecessary blank walls especially on main streets.
- Separate buildings between 5 to 8 storeys by 18m between habitable zones and 24m for all taller buildings.
- Limit building depth to optimise natural lighting, cross ventilation and cross ventilation.
- The following diagrams illustrate acceptable design solutions based on the above guidelines.

Typical Podium + Tower

The diagrams opposite illustrate a typical podium with a tower setback arrangement. Setting the tower back, reinforces the base building as the defining element for the public realm, enhances pedestrian comfort by absorbing downward wind shear, and limits the visual impact of the tower at grade.



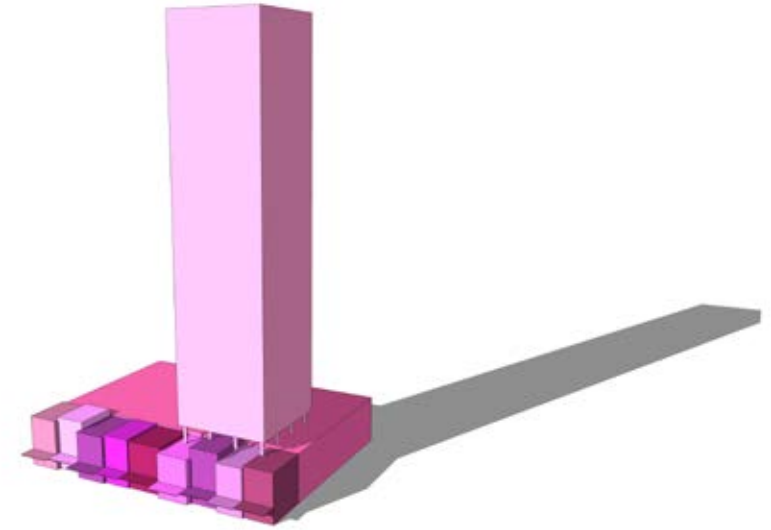
Birds Eye View



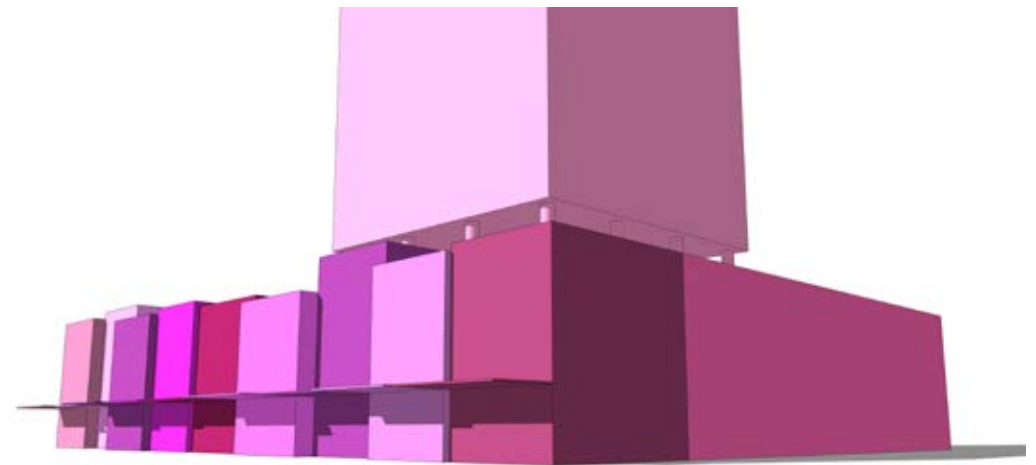
Street View

Fine Grain Podium

The diagrams opposite illustrate the principle of dividing the podium into a series of fine grain shopfronts to create active streetscapes. This is discussed further on the following pages.



Birds Eye View



Street View

7.4 Impacts of the Public Realm

Objectives

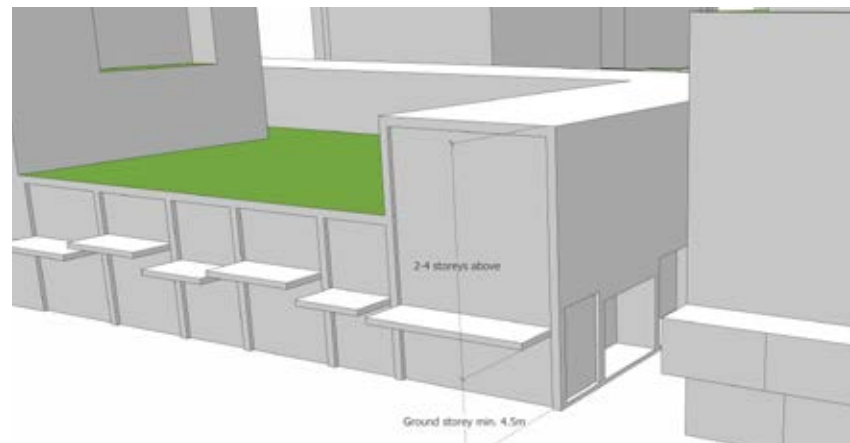
- Activate building frontages to maximise the pedestrian's pleasure and enjoyment of the city centre, thereby increasing opportunities for social interaction and street commerce.
- Create the most active facades along major pedestrian routes and public spaces, with secondary routes also fulfilling other roles important for the city centre, such as vehicle access and servicing.
- Provide continuous shelter for pedestrians from the elements.

Guidelines

- All building frontages shall have zero setbacks from the block, except for the creation of new public realm.
- Variation in function does not mean shops and cafes within every unit. Other ways to achieve an active frontage including a ground floor office with canteen and outdoor meeting space or a retail ground floor unit including an outdoor zone for street performances.

- Ground floor uses are at the same level as the footpath. Split level paths, arcades or open forecourts at a different level to the footpath are not permitted because they separate the ground floor uses from the public life of the street.
- Weather protection includes awnings and verandahs with a minimum depth of 3.5m. Awnings and verandahs shall be designed to project across the public footpath and do not restrict mature street trees.

The following diagrams illustrate the different types of facades envisaged for the City Centre.



Podiums are to be 3-5 storeys

Active Facades - Mann Street

- Small units with many doors (approximately 15-20 doors per 100 metres).
- Lots of vertical greenery (approximately every 15- 20m).
- Large variation in function and uses.
- Visual richness in façade details to engage the pedestrian.
- Primarily vertical façade articulation.
- Quality materials and details.
- Ins and outs (horizontal and vertical articulation of facades).
- Vehicle access and servicing zones prohibited.
- Integrate signage with unit design.



Street View

Friendly Facades - Secondary Streets

- Relatively small units (approximately 10-14 doors per 100 metres).
- Some vertical greenery (approximately every 20- 25m).
- Some variation in function and uses.
- Few blind and passive units.
- Facade relief.
- Many details.
- Limited vehicle access and servicing via tight, recessed openings.
- Integrate signage with unit design.



Street View

Mixed Facades - Lanes

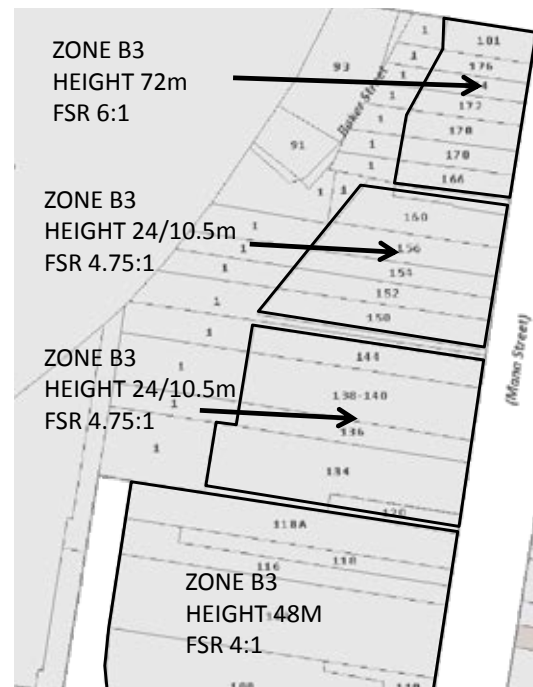
- Large and small units with many doors (approximately 6-10 per 100 metres).
- Model variation in function.
- Limited vertical greenery (approximately every 25m plus).
- Some blank walls and passive units embellished with façade art or greenery.
- Modest facade relief.
- Few details.
- Vehicle access and servicing permitted.
- Integrate signage with unit design.



Street View

8.0 Transfer of Development Rights

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a voluntary, incentive based program that allows land owners to sell development rights from their land to a developer or other interested party who can then use these rights to increase the density of development at another designated location. The intention of implementing this mechanism into planning for the City Centre is to enable lots where lot efficiency is such that realisation of the planning controls (height and FSR) on their land is not possible due to the lot sizes. It is acknowledged that lot consolidation incentives can in part reduce this conflict, however lot consolidation cannot always occur as lots can become isolated due to the life cycle of adjoining buildings or simply adjoining land owners cannot agree. Lot consolidation is also made more difficult within the City Centre as height and FSR controls are applied at the plot level (refer example superblock within the City Centre). This creates a disincentive for lot consolidation where a neighbouring property has less development potential as well as creating a planning and design headache in the application of controls across a consolidated land where a mix match of controls apply.



Lot #	Area (m2)	Lot Efficiency*	TDR Potential**
101	231	462	924
176	138	276	552
174	142	284	568
172	259	518	1036
170	217	434	868
170	221	442	884
166	205	410	820
Consolidated	1413m2	4239m2 @FSR 3:1	4239m2@6:1
Nb. Site consolidation achieves only one viable site			
Unknown	120	240	330
160	449	1347	785
156	389	1167	680
154	327	981	572
152	348	1044	609
150	501	1503	877
Consolidated	2134	7469 @FSR3.5:L1	2667m2@4.75:1
Nb. Site consolidation achieves only one viable site			
144	635	1905	1111
138-140	867	2601	1517
136	424	1272	742
134	1246	3738	2180
120	183	549	320
Consolidated	3355	15936 @4.75:1	0m2 @4.75:1
Nb. Site consolidation achieves two viable sites			
118A	1017	3051	1017
118	348	696	696
116	677	2031	677
114	1821	6373	910
110	196	392	392
108	1600	5600	800
consolidated	5659	22636@4:1	0m2 @ 4:1

The strategic intent for the City Centre is to define density and accommodate this density in a new building typology that respects the ground floor public realm with highly active non-residential fine grain podiums that engage and facilitate a vibrancy throughout the Gosford City Centre public realm. Above the podium slim line towers will accommodate both the employment and population growth envisaged to support Gosford as a regional City. However, this typology requires large lot assembly, which does require the consolidation of lots within the City Centre. Currently, due to the historic settlement and subdivision patterns in the City Centre, many areas where this form of development is best suited are constrained by narrow, short lot patterns, despite their afforded development standards (eg: 6:1 FSR and 72m height limits near the railway station).. The proposed TDR scheme would enable these lots to transfer (sell) their density potential to other sites where density can be achieved allowing these lots, without consolidation to continue to or be developed as low scale (2-4 storey) podium/shop top housing typologies that contribute to the interface between built form and public realm.

The TDR scheme if applied only within the City Core area will not affect the overall vision of the City Centre nor will it affect the overall density and population forecasts set for the City Centre. This scheme will remove the uncertainty in delivering population that currently relies as lot consolidation and will remove the consistent industry issues with planning control and lot design alignment. In addition this scheme would enable development to exceed statutory controls where the additional density results in design excellence in the built form.

The successful creation of a TDR scheme requires the following

- Identification of sending areas. Traditionally these are areas where due to constraints, urban design, environment or other issues) that development potential should be transferred. In the context of the Gosford City Centre, example areas would be areas where heights impact upon solar access to Kibble Park, views to the ridgelines, or simply areas where current planning controls cannot be achieved.
- Designated receiving areas. These are traditionally areas within the City Centre where additional density can be accommodated. In this respect, any areas within the City Core would be suitable for additional density given the strategic intent to promote a compact city form within Gosford.
- Determine a market for development rights. TDRs only work when a demand exists for development rights. In this instance the TDR are only considered for land within the City Centre area, with increased density being allocated within the City core.
- Define Transfer Ratio. Given that the intent of the TDR are only to apply within the Gosford City Centre that a direct transfer of density would apply.

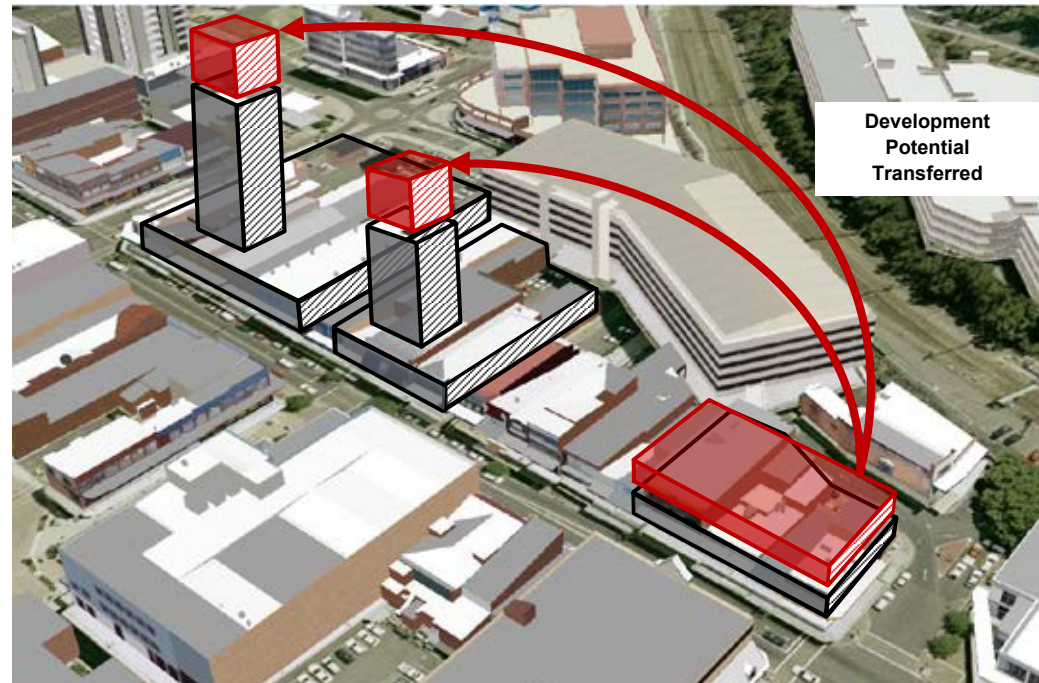
The administration behind the setting up of a TDR scheme needs further consideration including whether Council should be a TDR bank so as to control and regulate how densities are bought and sold as well as to planning mechanisms to ensure that transferred development rights are not double counted.

Affordable housing contributions form a condition of development consent. City West Housing is currently the recommended affordable housing provider for Ultimo/Pymont.

Affordable housing may be provided in-kind or instead as a monetary contribution. The contribution total is calculated on the basis of the total floor area that would otherwise be required to be dedicated for affordable housing. The total amount is calculated as follows:

- Residential uses: 0.8% of the total floor area
- Non-residential uses: 1.1% of the total floor area.

Monetary contributions are indexed yearly on 1 July, based on the Revised City West Affordable Housing Program.





9.0 Social Responsibility, Contributions, Share Uplift Value

A mechanism to share the value uplift which is created by increased building height will be critical in ensuring that Gosford can deliver the high quality urban amenity which is demanded by a regional city centre to be attractive as both a residential and commercial destination.

Key factors to the success of a value sharing mechanism include:

- To be brought in with the new controls to reduce land value speculation
- To be transparent and simple
- To minimise the need for protracted negotiation process for reach development by having a simple VPA process
- Only certain types of development contribute? Only Residential?

The existing Gosford Contributions Plan No 164 pre-dates the current LEP and DCP and the most recent update to the Contributions Plan is also not reflective of the operation of the incentives clause.

An update in approach and content is warranted and required to introduce alignment between Council policy and growth models for the CBD and the commensurate community need arising from a significant population growth. The existing suite of works may need revision to bring it in line with the Masterplan, the 2014 draft Regional Growth Plan, and any updated LEP controls.

A Council decision will need to be made on whether a section 94 or s94A plan is adopted. That is one on nexus and apportionment or a flat

1% rate on the capital investment value of developments, respectively. The flat 1% rate will automatically capture the value uplift achieved. For example, based on the 10 major DAs lodged in August 2014 the likely s94A contribution would be in the order of \$3.75 Million. This would appear on the surface to be a simple and transparent approach, but the real benefit of contribution to uplift over base controls will need to be tested. However, in simple terms, a viable development will bring infrastructure contributions.

A suitable alternative may be the uplift model applied by Ryde City Council for the Macquarie Park Corridor. We understand that this is in force and that its legality has been tested by the Department of Planning & Environment as part of the Ryde LEP Amendment 1 process. We can confirm this at a later stage if desired.

In short, this model seeks to capture value from bonus FSR and deliver it directly to tangible works adjacent the development in the form of infrastructure works to improve connectivity and provide a finer grain road network in Macquarie Park. This in part addresses existing deficiencies with the road network, the propensity for large development parcels in the Corridor, delivery of pocket parks, improved amenity and accessibility for pedestrians and additional stormwater drainage works.

Like in Gosford, significant development uplift is anticipated in selected locations in the Corridor to make improved use of public transport, meet employment targets set by Government, and reduce pressure on the already at-capacity road network.

Under Amendment No 1 to Ryde LEP the uplift possible was only achievable once the contribution had been locked in and confirmed via commitment to a VPA. A set rate per m2 and indexed quarterly to CPI would apply. However, this requirement for a VPA to be agreed to by Council before the site can be unlocked creates an undesirable situation where access to the new controls involves a process that is not appealable to the courts.

Key considerations for Council are:

- The legality of an uplift-based scheme under s94
- Whilst additional height and GFA may act as an incentive and make a development feasible, a high contribution rate for bonus floorspace may act as a disincentive and deliver no development and no contribution
- The limited range of works and nexus may result in double-dipping seeking bonus contributions for works that would otherwise already be catered for
- Any necessary offset schemes for in-kind contributions or compensation for land value or compulsory land takes

In terms of Affordable Housing, a pioneer scheme in NSW was the City West Affordable Housing Contributions Plan. The Plan is administered by the City of Sydney Council and by City West Housing. City West Housing was established in 1994 by the Department of Planning with a charter to provide long term secure Affordable Housing for rent in Ultimo/Pymont to people on low to moderate incomes.

As a result of its initial success City West Housing was invited to expand its operations to the Green Square area of South Sydney and then in 2009 through changes to the local planning instruments undertook a further expansion of its boundaries to encompass the whole of the City of Sydney Local Government Area.

As part of the long term strategy to redevelop the Ultimo/Pymont area the Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No. 26 City West set out the planning principles for affordable housing that enabled contributions from the private sector towards affordable housing in the area. The affordable housing contribution provisions are now covered in the Sydney LEP 2012.

The Ultimo/Pymont scheme aims to provide about 600 rental units for very low to moderate income households as development continues in the area over the next 15 to 20 years. The affordable dwellings are either scattered within private developments or developed as free-standing developments.

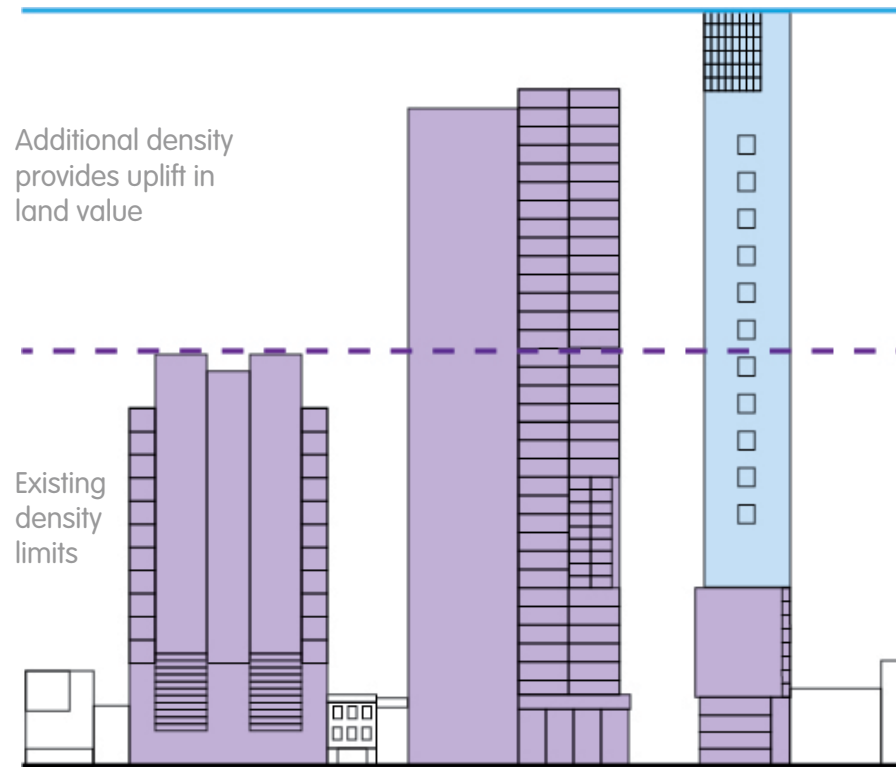


10.0 Contributions and Capital Value Capture

Council should explore a mechanism whereby the value of the capital uplift of land that results from any proposed “upzoning” of land (or increased height and/or FSR) is shared by the whole community. This can ensure that Gosford can deliver the high quality urban amenity which is demanded by a regional centre to be attractive as both a residential and commercial destination.

Council’s prepare development controls aimed at improving urban outcomes, amenity etc. Developers must demonstrate compliance with these rules. Regulation through the planning system limits access to development rights and this ‘scarcity’ makes them valuable. Access to development rights – and their inherent value – is bestowed by the broader community (via Council policies), they are not intrinsic to land ownership. Therefore it can be argued that some of the proceeds of the value uplift created by regulation should be “captured” by the community.

Where development potential is increased as a result of changes to planning controls (such as rezoning to a higher and better” land use and/or an increase in the permissible density or permissible height) Council would be justified in seeking to capture part of the value created by the changes. For example if Council were to increase the maximum FSR of a site from 3:1 to 6:1 it could seek to capture a portion of the value resulting from the additional 3:1 floorspace, to the extent that the additional development potential is taken up.



This approach is being adopted by Parramatta City Council in the preparation of new planning controls for their City Centre area.

Key issues to be considered in developing a value capture mechanism for the Gosford City Centre include the following:

- Charges should be a proportion of the value uplift not the full amount. Capturing the full amount removes the incentive to undertake additional development.
- Value capture rates should be pre-scheduled, that is, they should be published in advance so that proponents of development and landowners can factor these costs into investment decisions. A pre-scheduled approach is preferred as this promotes efficiency and transparency.
- The proceeds of value capture should be used for a range of tasks including upgrades to the public domain, public transport improvements, affordable housing, open space upgrades, public art etc. The intended use of the proceeds could be pre-notified to provide transparency and confidence that the broader community will benefit from the “upzoning” of land.
- To be brought in with the new controls to reduce land value speculation.

Similar approaches that have been undertaken by Council’s in order to “capture” some benefit for the community of the “upzoning” of land include the following.

Ryde City Council for the Macquarie Park Corridor – an approach tested by the Department of Planning & Environment as part of the Ryde LEP Amendment 1 process. This model seeks to capture value from bonus FSR and deliver it directly to tangible works adjacent the development in the form of infrastructure works to improve connectivity and provide a finer grain road network in Macquarie Park. This in part addresses existing deficiencies with the road network, the propensity for large development parcels in the Corridor, delivery of pocket parks, improved amenity and accessibility for pedestrians and additional stormwater drainage works. Like in Gosford, significant development uplift is anticipated in selected locations in the Macquarie Park Corridor to make improved use of public transport, meet employment targets set by Government, and reduce pressure on the already at-capacity road network.

Under Amendment No 1 to Ryde LEP the uplift possible was only achievable once the contribution had been locked in and confirmed via commitment to a VPA. A set rate per m2 and indexed quarterly to CPI would apply. However, this requirement for a VPA to be agreed to by Council before the site can be unlocked creates an undesirable situation where access to the new controls involves a process that is not appealable to the courts.

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- Residential uses: 0.8% of the total floor area.
- Non-residential uses: 1.1% of the total floor area.

Monetary contributions are indexed yearly on 1 July, based on the Revised City West Affordable Housing.

11.0 The Way Forward

The following next steps have been identified to progress the outcomes of this Statement of Strategic Intent. It is recommended that this document is adopted by Council and that Council endorses the progression of the following stages illustrated opposite.

STATEMENT OF STRATEGIC
INTENT GOSFORD CITY CENTRE



IMPLEMENTATION
ROADMAP



PLANNING
PROPOSAL



DEVELOPMENT
GUIDELINES



VPA / CONTRIBUTIONS
SHARE UPLIFT

Council adopt the directions outlined in the Statement of Strategic Intent and endorses progression to next stages of project

Economic Feasibility Testing based on built form testing, density and typology testing
Review LEP and DCP controls and boundaries to permit and encourage desired outcomes
Test the need for bonus provisions and transferable development rights

Prepare Planning Proposal to Amend the LEP with controls to allow for increased height with simple planning controls

Tower Slenderness Guidelines
Block Design Codes
Urban Density and Amenity
Design Excellence Guidelines

Investigate a range of options to secure public benefit from the capital value uplift of controls (voluntary planning agreements)
Review Civic Improvements Plan if required

