



ACTIVITY CENTRES and EMPLOYMENT CLUSTERS Strategy

January 2010



Activity Centres and Employment Clusters Strategy

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PART A: INTRODUCTION

Strengthening Maitland's activity centres and employment clusters is a critical building block in achieving Council's vision to create a vibrant, sustainable community for the residents, workers and visitors of Maitland.

According to their typology and scale, **Activity Centres** provide a diverse range of services, facilities and activities to enable residents, workers and visitors to participate in and be a part of the Maitland community. A strong sense of place and community is formed when activity centres, whether it be the Major Regional Centre or one of the many Neighbourhood Centres, are well designed, integrated and conveniently located to adequately service the local and regional community.

Employment Clusters are a concentrated area of economic activity usually located out of centres and focused on a particular type of activity. These clusters provide opportunities for industrial operations, bulky goods retailing and business activities to co-locate in a single location. This enables the sharing of facilities within a well designed environment, offering potential tenants and their employees with a pleasant place to work. Employment clusters can also offer a low-cost option in an accessible location to encourage new industries and enterprises to the Local Government Area (LGA).

Purpose of the Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to:

- Provide a logical hierarchy and network of activity centres and employment clusters which supports the growth of the local economy and employment in Maitland for the next 20 years;
- Provide clear direction as to the vision, role, function and potential growth for each activity centre and employment clusters to support the predicted population growth within the Maitland LGA over the next 20 years;
- Ensure all activity centres and employment clusters in Maitland are well designed and provide appropriate facilities and services in a pleasant environment for residents, employees and visitors;

- Guide future land use and development decisions which reflect the principles of this strategy, the vision of the activity centre or employment cluster, to support the residential growth within the Maitland LGA; and
- Ensure that future reviews of this strategy and future policies relating to activity centres and employment clusters are flexible and able to respond to the changing economic and social circumstances. This includes the recognition that the network and hierarchy of activity centres and employment clusters may change over time to facilitate new uses and working practices.



Figure ONE: Central Maitland Markets

Activity Centre and Employment Cluster Typology

Defining a typology of centres and clusters is critical to understanding its function, role and place within the established network and hierarchy of activity centres and employment clusters in Maitland. This section provides an explanation of the types of activity centres, range employment clusters and specific types of retailing which exist in the Maitland LGA.

ACTIVITY CENTRES

Activity centres are the local and regional hub for community activity. They are places providing a diverse mix of activities where people can socialise, shop, work, meet, relax and often live. Activity centres range in size, scale and development intensity from a neighbourhood centre, like Largs or Tenambit through to a major regional centre, like Central Maitland. Activity centres are usually well-served by public transport, offering a highly accessible location for commercial, personal and retail services, community, entertainment and recreational facilities as well as a mix of housing options to attract for a diverse population.

Major Regional Centre:

This activity centre is the community, cultural, civic and commercial heart of a sub-region and is the highest order activity centre for the LGA. It provides a diverse mix of uses which cater to the needs of the local and regional population in a location serviced by high levels of accessibility and where different modes of public transport interconnect.

A significant concentration of commercial offices, higher order comparison retailing and convenience shopping, employment, health and professional services are located within the Major Regional Centre. A range of entertainment, community, leisure and recreational services, along with local and regional educational, arts and cultural facilities are also offered in this activity centre. The Major Regional Centre is also the preferred location for civic functions, facilities and other government departments.

The inclusion of higher density residential development adds to the social diversity and mix of uses. It's inclusion creates a lively neighbourhood with high accessibility to public transport, facilities and services, supports activity outside 'business hours' and supports a thriving evening economy and vibrant activity centre.

Town Centre:

This activity centre is the community and commercial heart of a specific area within the LGA. Town centres provide a mix of uses in a highly accessible location which accommodates the needs of the local population within a specific segment. An indicative scale of this centre typology can range from between 80 and 150 establishments.

A Town Centre offers a range of convenience shopping and comparison retailing, health and professional services and commercial offices. It may also contain community and recreational facilities along with local educational institution. The location of restaurants and cafés, mixed with higher density residential development, provides a diverse range of activities, a strong local economy and supports activity outside 'business hours', which create a lively place to meet, socialise and live.

Local Centre:

This activity centre is the heart of a specific location. The function of a local centre is primarily to provide for the daily needs of the local residential population within a specific catchment located in close proximity. Residential development through shop top housing provides an alternative housing option in a accessible location and adds to the diversity of uses in this activity centre.

A Local Centre offers a range of convenience shopping with limited comparison retailing, local health and professional services along with a café, restaurant and/or takeaway establishment. A Local Centre may also contain local community facilities and can be characterised by a scale of between 4 and 12 establishments.

Neighbourhood Centres:

This activity centre is integrated within a residential neighbourhood to improve the walkability, provide for the convenience needs and create a place with a strong identity for the surrounding community. The scale of this activity centre is characterised by a small cluster of shops with the primary aim of providing convenience services and encourages a reduction in car use for short trips.

EMPLOYMENT CLUSTERS

Employment clusters provide an accessible location to accommodate a range of industries, bulky goods retailing and business activities. Employment clusters are usually located outside of activity centres however, due to the size, activity or

potential impact of the activity, it may be inappropriate for the particular industry or business use to be located within an activity centre. They range in size and intensity but all have a common aim to provide employment generating activities to encourage growth in the local economy and provide job opportunities to cater for a range of skills and qualifications.

Bulky Goods Retailing:

A large, stand alone store or a cluster of similar sized stores which are typically referred to as a 'homemaker's centre' and are usually located at the edge of or outside of existing activity centres. The types of goods sold within these stores varies widely from furniture, white goods and electronics to automotive parts and building supplies, however the defining feature is that the goods are 'bulky' in nature and can not generally be carried away without the use of a vehicle

Industrial Activities:

A range of business types including manufacturing, storage, warehousing, transport, engineering and general trades such as mechanics usually removed from activity centres and other locations where a sensitive interface is required.

Business Areas:

A concentrated cluster of similar business enterprises usually located outside of existing activity centres. These concentrations offer a range of business types including research and development, education campuses, storage, warehousing and logistics, office-based businesses and high tech industries. In some cases, businesses choose to co-located with others due to the similar type of industry or activity they are engaged in.

RETAIL TYPOLOGIES

Convenience Shopping:

The provision of everyday, essential items and services including food, drinks, newspapers and magazines as well as postal services and banking services.

Comparison Retailing:

The provision of items not obtained on a daily or frequent basis. These include items such as clothing, footwear, health and beauty, household and recreational goods.

Neighbourhood Shop:

A single shop located within a residential area or in other areas outside of activity centres and employment clusters, providing a convenience shopping function to the immediate residents. Areas for neighbourhood shops are not defined in this strategy as they are a single shop located within residential areas or as a result of an existing use.

Stand Alone Shopping Centre:

In line with the LHRS, a Stand Alone Shopping Centre is defined as being a privately owned freestanding format located away from other activity centres. Stand Alone Shopping Centres provide a focused retailing function in an enclosed format with associated car parking on a single site.

Planning Policy Context

The planning for future growth of activity centres and employment clusters is guided by a variety of state and local government's strategies and policies. The strategies and policies, as outlined below, provide the policy context for the preparation of this strategy to accommodate future growth of Maitland's activity centres and employment clusters.

DRAFT CENTRES POLICY

(NSW Department of Planning: April 2009)

The NSW Government's 'Draft Centres Policy – Planning for Retail and commercial Development' sets out the Department's (DoP) desired approach to the development of centres with a particular focus on retail and commercial activities. The aim of this policy is to "create a network of vital and vibrant centres that cater for the needs of business, and are places where individuals and families want to live work and shop" (DoP 2009: ii).

The principles of the Department's draft Centres Policy include:

- Retail and commercial activity should be located in centres to ensure the most efficient use of transport and other infrastructure, proximity to labour markets and to improve the amenity and liveability of those centres;
- The growth of centres and the creation of new centres are to be supported by

a flexible planning system, which should regulate the location and scale of development. While the market is best place to determine the need for retail and commercial development;

- Planning should support a wide range of retail and commercial activities, ensuring a competitive retail and commercial market and that there is available floorspace to accommodate market demand, help facilitate new entrants into the market and promote competition; and
- Retail and commercial development should be well designed and contribute to the amenity, accessibility and sustainability of centres.

LOWER HUNTER REGIONAL STRATEGY

(NSW Department of Planning: October 2006)

The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (LHRS) sets a collective future direction for the local authorities in the Lower Hunter (Newcastle, Maitland, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens and Cessnock) to 2031. The vision for the Lower Hunter is articulated through a number of strategies, which includes growth of residential development, employment and the regional economy. Along with a range of infrastructure investment priorities, to accommodate the region's projected housing and employment needs for the next 25 years.

Within its framework of centres and corridors, the LHRS identifies Central Maitland as a 'Major Regional Centre' along with Thornton, East Maitland, Rutherford and Lochinvar as 'Town Centres'. Greenhills, is identified as 'Stand Alone Shopping Centres' in the LHRS, recognising the significant retail offer concentrated in this location.

Of particular relevance to the Maitland LGA and for this strategy, the LHRS seeks to achieve:

- Strong and vibrant centres through a local hierarchy of centres framework which supports the order established within the LHRS;
- An additional 3,200 new jobs and 1,300 new dwellings within Centre Maitland, a Major Regional Centre by 2031;

- An additional 1,500 new jobs created at Greenhills by 2031; and
- 26,500 additional new dwellings within the Maitland LGA equating to an additional 55,650 new residents by 2031.

MAITLAND URBAN SETTLEMENT STRATEGY 2001-2021

(Maitland City Council: reviewed 2008)

The Maitland Urban Settlement Strategy (MUSS) 2001-2021 provides a framework for the long term urban growth in the Maitland LGA. The primary focus of the MUSS is investigation, sequencing and management of land release for residential and to a lesser extent commercial and industrial land uses.

The overarching principle outlined in the MUSS for employment land is to *"provide suitable commercial sites and employment land in strategic areas"*. The adopted key policy directions to achieve this include:

- Concentrate retail activities in centres and identify and strengthen industry clusters;
- A range of employment opportunities are to be provided in Maitland, considering emerging trends in job growth and economic change and to facilitate the renewal of employment areas through incentives for redevelopment in appropriate and identified locations;
- Centres are to be protected and strengthened with the use of development guidelines and incentives. The hierarchy of centres is to be maintained, but will be subject to review and analysis;
- Encourage employment growth in Central Maitland, whilst maintaining and facilitating specialized civic, educational, medical and entertainment functions. Also limit retail and commercial development outside Central Maitland and Greenhills; and
- Maintain a 10 to 15 year supply of zoned employment land and ensure sufficient zoned land and infrastructure provision for employment land, by concentrating activities near areas with existing services that are underutilized or easily expanded.

PART B: SHAPING HIGH-QUALITY PLACES

Key Principles for Maitland's Activity Centres and Employment Clusters

This strategy is based on a set of key principles which aim to strengthen the viability of the activity centres and employment clusters to support the Maitland community. The role and function of activity centres and employment clusters is very different, however their combined success is critical to the future growth and prosperity of the Maitland LGA.

The principles specific to activity centres and those specific to employment clusters reflect the different roles and their contribution to the social and economic success of Maitland. The overall aim is to create places which facilitate community exchange and enhance the 'everyday experience', strengthen activity centres and consolidate employment clusters, to provide services, jobs and activities within the Maitland LGA. This aims to facilitate active participation by the community and create high quality places for residents, workers and visitors.

ACTIVITY CENTRES

Key principles for activity centres are embodied in the vision and key policy objectives for each of identified centre, as outlined in Part C of this strategy. These principles will guide future development and aim to strengthen Maitland's activity centres and support their growth as vibrant, vital places.

This is achieved through the logical distribution of activity centres which vary in size and scale and are conveniently located for residents, workers and visitors. They will provide a range of health, community and education facilities, commercial and retail services as well as places which enable a range of artistic, cultural and civic experiences and to actively participate in the Maitland community.

These principles also ensure the creation of new activity centres will continue to support new and existing residential communities, providing access to 'everyday



Figure TWO: Temple Bar, Dublin

items' in a 'walkable' distance. Strengthening all activity centres aids growth of the local economy and access to jobs close to home for a variety of skills and qualifications.

The key principles for the future development of Maitland's **Activity Centres** are:

- Activity centres provide a range of uses and services to meet the social and economic needs for residents, workers and visitors in the Maitland LGA;
- Continue to strengthen the vitality and viability of existing activity centres and, where appropriate encourage the creation of new centres to support the growing population;
- The network and hierarchy of activity centres provides guidance as to the location and scale of Maitland's activity centres and to ensure out of centre

development does not adversely impact the vision, role and function of existing centres and consider the relationship and network of centres and clusters.

- The vision, role and function of all activity centres – from the Major Regional Centre to all the Neighbourhood Centres – is reflected through the future development and future revitalisation of activity centres;
- All activity centres, particularly the major regional centre and town centres provide high levels of public transport accessibility and provide safe, pleasant connections for pedestrians and cyclists which link residential and employment areas with the activity centres of Maitland;
- Encourage the integration of smaller scale activity centres with new and existing residential areas to reduce car dependence and create walkable neighbourhoods. They will provide high quality, safe public spaces to encourage a range of activities to take place, enhancing opportunities for the participation of residents, workers and visitors in community life; and
- All activity centres are well designed and integrate with the wider public realm. This can be achieved through a variety of elements such as the provision and access to green spaces, linking with existing LGA-wide cycle and pedestrian routes, high quality landscaping, sensitive reuse of heritage buildings and a variety of built forms which present high quality design outcomes

EMPLOYMENT CLUSTERS and CORRIDORS

Key principles for employment clusters and corridors are embodied in the vision and key policy objectives for each of type of cluster and corridor, as outlined in Part C of this strategy. These principles aim to support the continued growth of Maitland by providing opportunities for a diverse range of employment generating activities to locate in the Maitland LGA to provide jobs and contribute to a robust and thriving local economy.

The principles for employment clusters aim to ensure that sufficient land is available in appropriate, locations to provide for a mix of employment generating activities ranging from research and development operations, light industrial and trade activities through to professional and office based enterprises.

Employment clusters are usually disconnected from activity centres located in out of centre locations. Therefore, it is critical that future development in employment clusters provide a pleasant amenity for their tenants, employees and customers and improved links to provide a high level of accessibility is equally critical to the viability and sustainable development of employment clusters.

The key principles for the future development of Maitland's Employment Clusters and Corridors are:

- To protect the viability of employment clusters in Maitland and to ensure that its location, role and function is strengthened and compatible with the network of clusters and corridors;
- To provide a range of employment generating activities within accessible locations that grow collectively with Maitland's activity centres to ensure the network and hierarchy of centres and clusters is robust and responsive;
- To protect and provide well-located industrial and employment land to meet the needs of a broad range of employment generating activities and to promote innovation and new industries to diversify and grow the local economy and contribute to the creation of jobs for a variety of skills and qualifications;
- All business activities within an employment cluster or corridor support the stated vision, role and function of the location. The co-location of business, industry and other enterprises which have similar operational characteristics builds on the symbiotic relationship enabling the sharing of facilities, services and support activities;
- Future development in employment clusters, whether industrial activities, bulky goods retailing or business uses, is well designed, respects sensitive interfaces with other land uses and provides a pleasant environment and appropriate ancillary uses to support their employees and customers; and
- Businesses located in employment clusters encourage the use of public transport by providing safe routes in a pleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists to connect with public transport infrastructure, and where appropriate, to the activity centres and residential areas of Maitland.

PART C: MAITLAND'S NETWORK of ACTIVITY CENTRES and EMPLOYMENT CLUSTERS

Set within the local and regional context, this strategy presents a proactive approach to the planning and development of activity centres and employment clusters to manage growth over the next 20 years.

The definition of a network (*the pattern of provision*) and hierarchy (*the role and relationship*) ensures that growth in centres and clusters consider the overall network and how they interrelate. Figure 4 illustrates the network of activity centres and employment clusters in the Maitland LGA. This approach will positively contribute to the prosperity of the local economy and support the residential and working communities, helping to create a more sustainable future for Maitland.

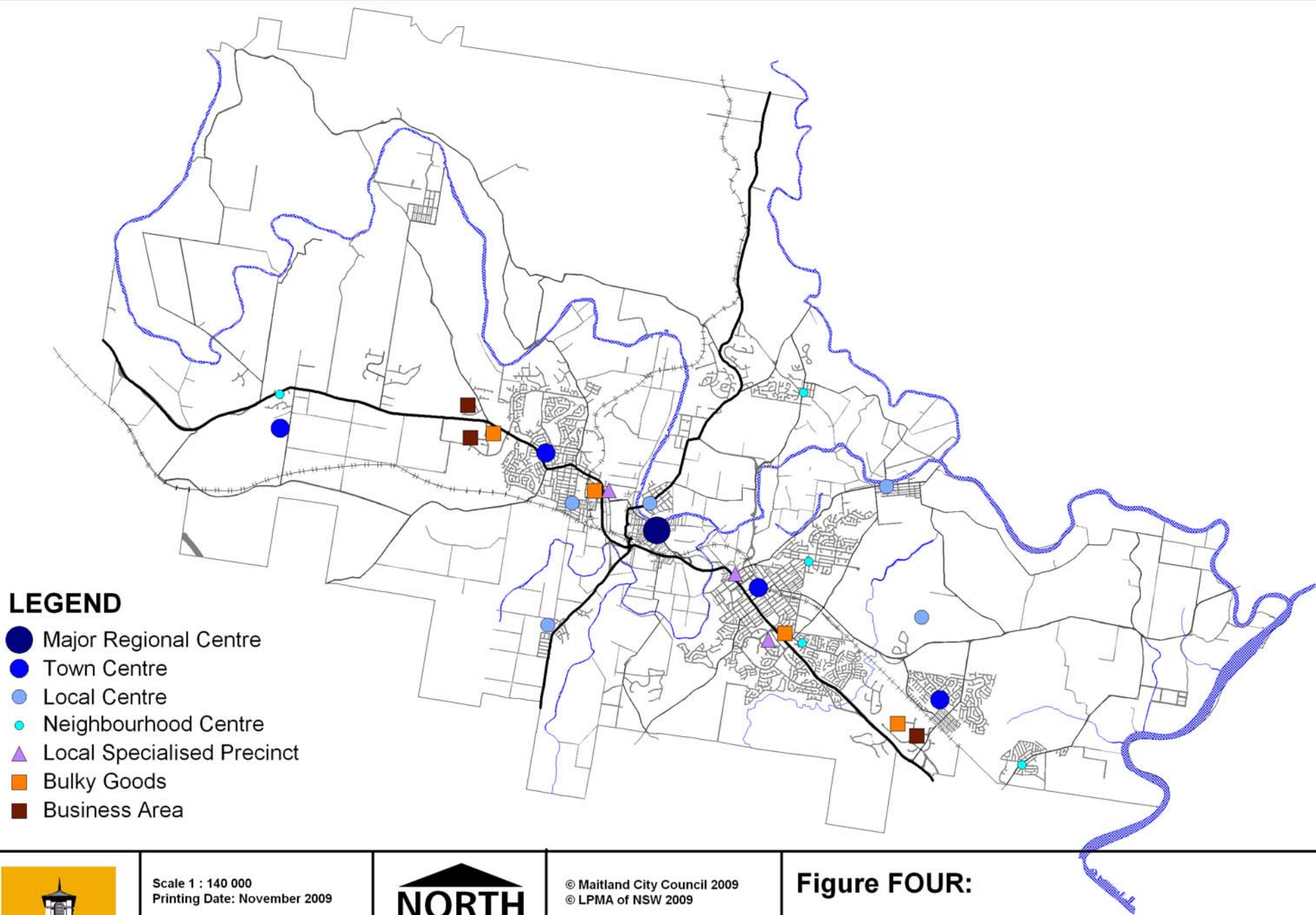
The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy establishes a regional hierarchy of centres. The NSW Government's regional hierarchy lists Central Maitland as a Major Regional Centre within the Lower Hunter. This is supported by the identification of town centres at East Maitland, Rutherford and Thornton and a new town centre at Lochinvar to support the associated residential growth. Greenhills is classified as a Stand Alone Shopping Centre which recognises the significant retail offer and specialised function that Greenhills provides the Maitland LGA and the wider region.

The network and hierarchy framework of this strategy provides a clear definition as to the vision, role and function of activity centres, specialised precincts, employment clusters and corridors. It builds on the regional hierarchy, providing a more local approach to defining activity centres and employment clusters. The hierarchy ensures that residents across the LGA have easy access to the higher order centres, as well as the convenience that local and neighbourhood centres offer and jobs in locations close to home.

The network and hierarchy of activity centres and employment clusters must be resilient to positively respond to the inevitable economic and social changes. Review of the strategy and regular monitoring to identify growth and decline of centres and clusters is critical to enable Council to take action for the benefit of residents, workers, visitors and investors of Maitland.



Figure THREE: Hierarchy of Activity Centres



Scale 1 : 140 000
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NORTH

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This map has been prepared on the basis of information available to Council at the date of issue. However, that information may be subject to change over a limited time and should therefore be verified with Maitland City Council

Figure FOUR:

**NETWORK OF CENTRES and EMPLOYMENT CLUSTERS
within the MAITLAND LGA**

Activity Centre and Specialised Precincts

The identification of activity centres and specialised precincts ensures that the residents, workers and visitors of Maitland are provided with a range of services and facilities in locations which are highly accessible. It also facilitates the creation of places that the communities of Maitland can form a strong identity to and encourages the physical, economic and emotional investment required to create vibrant, living neighbourhoods where people want to stay and be a part of the community life.

MAJOR REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTRE

CENTRAL MAITLAND

Central Maitland is the primary activity centre and heart of the civic, health, education, cultural, recreational, and community activities in the Maitland LGA and wider region as well as providing a significant retail and commercial offer. Figure 5 shows the extent of this activity centre and identifies key features.

Central Maitland offers a highly accessible centre, being the place where different modes of public transport interconnect and the location of both the Maitland railway station and High Street station. The retail and commercial services are located primarily fronting High Street and Church Street with residential communities located at Horseshoe Bend and south of Ken Tubman Drive.

The physical urban structure of this activity centre has been shaped by the surrounding natural features. High Street follows a course between two bends in the Hunter River and the eastern point where the river and street once came together is the location of the civic precinct. Central Maitland is very well endowed with buildings that represent the growth over the past 180 years. The City offers excellent examples of commercial, residential and civic buildings, which together form one of the richest and most complete pictures of Australian architecture.

VISION

An important merchant city in the historical development of NSW, Central Maitland will continue to encourage a diverse, vibrant community life and support a thriving local economy to reinforce its role as the Major Regional Centre, second only to Newcastle in the Lower Hunter.

Future development will enhance the exceptional characteristics of Central Maitland and contribute to strengthening its role as a long standing regional civic and retail/commercial centre, a place of historical importance on the doorstep of the Hunter River, and a focal point for learning, artistic, cultural and democratic expression.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Central Maitland Activity Centre include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Central Maitland as the primary activity centre in the Maitland LGA and the Major Regional Centre, second only to Newcastle in the Lower Hunter;
- Provide a range of community, commercial, civic, cultural, educational, recreational and retail uses within Central Maitland to create a more varied and vibrant activity centre which services the needs of residents, locally, LGA wide and regionally;
- Reinforce the role of Central Maitland as the place of civic leadership, the focal point of local and regional public administration and the preferred location for government departments and agencies of all levels;
- Provide significant employment generating activities within Central Maitland to accommodate, at least an additional 3200 jobs over the next 20 years;
- Encourage the location of significant office development in Central Maitland to take advantage of the high levels of public transport accessibility, supporting retail, community and entertainment services, within a vibrant city setting for business owners and their employees;

- Increase the residential population of Central Maitland with a variety of housing types and sizes. This, supported by a range of convenient services, activities and community facilities, will increase activity outside regular business hours, create a liveable neighborhood and a more lively activity centre;
- Sensibly manage flood risk to increase the residential population and diminish the threat of sterilising this activity centre. This can be achieved through sensible development controls, up to date flooding information, genuine partnerships with local emergency services and improved evacuation education for all residents;
- Create a vibrant evening economy by encouraging the provision of café's and restaurants in Central Maitland as well as entertainment venues and a variety of community events to offer opportunities for people to socialise and be part of the Maitland community;
- Placing a high value on the heritage character of Central Maitland and celebrate its important role in the historical development of NSW. Sensitive reuse and protection of the heritage characteristics and value of Central Maitland, whether this is through the built environment and/or the knowledge and stories that is shared about our past;
- Continue to strengthen the arts, cultural and learning environment of Central Maitland, building upon the existing concentration of schools, the location of the Maitland Regional Art Gallery, Repertory Theatre, Maitland Library and historically significant places;
- Create an interesting public domain through a high quality built environment, streetscape improvements, public art and well designed, safe public spaces for people to identified with and enjoy. In particular, the Hunter River as a location to create usable spaces on its banks and to reconnect the river back to the city;
- Take advantage of this highly accessible location for residents, workers and visitors in Maitland and improve the legibility for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Increase the use of public transport into Central Maitland as one means to reduce traffic congestion and create a pleasant pedestrian environment.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- To create a point of difference for Central Maitland to all other activities centres in the Maitland LGA by providing a diverse range of services, activities and places for residents, workers and visitors to meet and to be a destination that encourages them to stay longer;
- Grow as an evening and weekend destination, through the creation of an entertainment precinct. This attracts a variety of people seeking cafes, restaurants, wine bars, cinemas and other opportunities to socialise.
- Encourage growth of the evening economy with the location of quality cafes and restaurants to promote Central Maitland as being a renowned eat-street with a vibrant atmosphere similar to places like Darby Street, Newcastle and Beaumont Street, Hamilton;
- Improve the amenity of this activity centre by building on existing advantages such as the heritage character and river/rural vistas. This can be achieved through streetscape improvements, high quality architecture, provision of interesting public spaces and community events.
- Encourage opportunities for more transit-oriented development in and around Maitland and High Street Railway stations to support commutes and people seeking residential accommodation in a highly accessible, vibrant location;
- Encourage opportunities to strengthen the range of artistic, cultural and learning activities on offer in Central Maitland. Improved connections between these facilities within a specific precinct builds a strong identity for the community;
- Provide a coherent tourist destination supported by high quality tourism facilities and services such as a variety of accommodation, attractions, activities, cultural and community events to entice more visitors to the historical, artistic and cultural heart of the Hunter; and
- Maitland's historical significance, both indigenous and colonial is a significant tourism magnet, enhanced by the location of the Maitland Regional Art Gallery, Walka Water Works and a number of attractive heritage buildings, all on the banks of the Hunter River.

Figure FIVE: Major Regional Centre – Central Maitland



TOWN CENTRES

EAST MAITLAND

The existing centre at East Maitland is classified as a Town Centre by the LHRS and the Maitland Urban Settlement Strategy (MUSS). The East Maitland Town Centre is highly accessible being in close proximity to the New England Highway and the location of Victoria Street Station and East Maitland Station within approximately 500m of the core commercial area of the town centre. In and around this activity centre are a number of schools, public and private recreation facilities, all which support its role as a focal point for the community.

East Maitland Town Centre currently provides a mix of commercial premises, convenience shopping and services, comparison retail, restaurants and a pub. Its location at the heart of the East Maitland community and its integration with an established neighbourhood provides access to a range of community, retail and professional services for local residents.

VISION

The East Maitland Town Centre will provide an array of restaurants, cafes, retail, and commercial activities along with convenience shopping and services creating a vibrant atmosphere and a thriving evening economy. The highly accessible location of East Maitland Town Centre provides future opportunities for the development of higher density residential living, greater levels of commercial office space for small business and transit oriented development to support workers, residents and visitors and encourage a greater use of public transport.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for East Maitland Town Centre include:

- Reinforce the role and function of East Maitland as one of the town centres in the Maitland LGA and provide a focal point for community activity enabling a strong identity and sense of community to be built by the residents of East

Maitland and the wider area;

- Provide a range of community, commercial, and retail activities to create a more varied and vibrant activity centre which services the needs of residents, particularly those within the central sector of the Maitland LGA;
- Encourage the growth of an evening economy for residents and visitors seeking cafes, restaurants and wine bars, creating a lively atmosphere for people to socialize and enjoy;
- Encourage a well designed public domain with spaces for people to meet and mingle and a high quality built form with active ground floors particularly those buildings fronting Lawes Street to enhance the safety and overall pedestrian experience; and
- Encourage the development of higher density residential dwellings and mixed use development in and around the centre to offer a range of housing size and types within a highly accessible location.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Being one of Maitland's town centres, there is significant opportunities for a larger commercial component to be located in and around this activity centre. The location of small scale office-based activities within an accessible location, supported by a range of retail, entertainment and community facilities offers the opportunity for smaller business enterprises to develop.

Analysis suggests that over the life of this strategy there is potential for considerable expansion of the East Maitland Town Centre to meet the growing demand for professional and convenience services in the area.

Being located in close proximity to the Victoria Street and East Maitland Railway Station as well as the New England Highway, the East Maitland Town Centre offers a highly accessible location for high density residential developments. Providing high quality mixed development and multi unit dwellings increases the diversity of housing size and types and contributes to the creation of a lively activity centre.

Figure SIX: Town Centre – East Maitland



Figure SEVEN: Town Centre - Rutherford



RUTHERFORD

The existing centre at Rutherford is classified as a Town Centre by the LHRS and the MUSS. The Rutherford Town Centre is located on the New England Highway, providing high levels of accessibility via a number of bus routes. In and around this activity centre are a number of community facilities including the Rutherford Branch Library, Rutherford High School and a range of public and private recreation facilities, all which support its role as a focal point for the community.

The Rutherford Town Centre currently provides a significant convenience offer, with the location of several supermarkets within the commercial core of this activity centre. Limited professional services and comparison retail add some diversity to the facilities and services currently provided. Rutherford Town Centre is surrounded by the established neighbourhood of Rutherford and with the proposed future residential development within the western sector of the LGA, it is critical that its place within the network and hierarchy of activity centres is strengthened.

VISION

The Rutherford Town Centre will be a lively activity centre, providing a range of retail and commercial activities coupled with convenience shopping and services. Being located on the New England Highway, the development of higher density residential living, greater levels of commercial office space for small business and the consolidation of community facilities will enhance the diversity of this activity centre, strengthen its viability and meet the needs of residents, workers and visitors within the western sector of the LGA.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for Rutherford Town Centre include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Rutherford as one of the town centres in the Maitland LGA and provide a focal point for community activity enabling a strong identity and sense of community to be built by the residents of Rutherford and the wider area;

- Diversify the retail and convenience shopping offer and increase the range of community and commercial activities to create a more varied and vibrant activity centre which services the needs of residents, particularly those within the western sector of the Maitland LGA;
- Encourage a well designed public domain with spaces for people to meet and mingle and a high quality built form with active ground floors to better integrate with surrounding residential dwellings and enhance the overall safety and pedestrian experience; and
- Encourage the development of mixed use development and higher density residential dwellings in and around the centre to offer a range of housing size and types within a highly accessible location.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

As the main centre located within the Western Sector of the LGA, Rutherford Town Centre has the opportunity to develop as demand for retail, commercial, and community activities increase with the proposed release of areas for residential and industrial land uses.

The growth of commercial services (e.g. travel agents and real estate agents) and personal services (beauticians, shoe repairs, dry cleaners) is encouraged to provide a broader range of services and to reduce the need for residents to travel to larger centres. Analysis suggests that over the life of this strategy there is potential for moderate expansion of the Rutherford Town Centre to meet the growing demand from new residential development occurring in the western sector of the LGA.

An increase of office development located in and around this activity centre presents a significant opportunity for growth. The location of small scale office-based activities within an accessible location, supported by a range of retail, entertainment and community facilities offers the opportunity for smaller business enterprises to develop.

The creation of a community focal point in the Rutherford Town Centre such as a play area and amenity space (including café space) to enhance its entertainment and leisure value and build on the existing community facilities such as the Rutherford Library and skate park.

THORNTON

The existing centre at Thornton is classified as a Town Centre by the LHRS and the MUSS. The Thornton Town Centre is located within 500m of the Thornton Railway Station providing a high level of accessibility. The location of the Thornton Branch Library, playing fields, community facilities and the Thornton Primary School adds to the diversity of this activity centre and reinforces its role as a town centre within the hierarchy.

The Thornton Town Centre currently provides a limited mix of convenience and comparison retail with the provision of some personal services. This activity centre is surrounded by an established residential neighbourhood and with the expected increase of residential development in its area of the LGA, it is critical that the Thornton Town Centre is strengthened to provide the necessary community, commercial and retail services to support the wider community.

VISION

The Thornton Town Centre will be a place people will want to visit and stay. It will be a focal point for the wider community within the eastern sector of the LGA and beyond. The integration of commercial, retail and community facilities will provide a diverse mix of activities, catering to the needs of the wider residential community.

Improved pedestrian and cycleway links to the Thornton Railway Station and surrounding residential neighbourhoods in conjunction with well-designed, safe public spaces will strengthen the identity of this activity centre.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for Thornton Town Centre include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Thornton as one of the town centres in the Maitland LGA and provide a focal point for community activity enabling a strong identity and sense of community to be built by residents of Thornton and the wider area;

- Consolidate and improve the diversity of commercial, professional and retail activities to create a more varied and vibrant activity centre which services the needs of residents, particularly those within the eastern sector of the Maitland LGA and beyond;
- Strengthen the range of community facilities and improve the pedestrian and cycle way links to the Thornton Railway Station and surrounding residential area to reduce the need for residents to travel to larger centres and contributing to the creation of a more walkable community.
- Encourage a well designed public domain with spaces for people to meet and mingle and a high quality built form with active ground floors to enhance the safety and overall pedestrian experience; and
- Encourage the development of higher density residential dwellings in and around the centre to offer a range of housing size and types within a highly accessible location.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

As the main activity centre located within the eastern sector of the LGA, Thornton Town Centre has an opportunity to grow and diversify the retail, commercial, and community activities. Analysis suggests that over the life of this strategy there is potential for moderate expansion of the Thornton Town Centre to meet the growing demand from the significant residential development occurring in the eastern sector of the LGA. Physical constraints of the location requires an innovative design approach be developed to accommodate growth and that integrates with the surrounding residential and community activities.

With improved pedestrian and cycle links to the Thornton Railway Station, the location of the Thornton Town Centre offers opportunities for new medium density residential dwellings, live/work units and mixed use development at the edges of the activity centre. This aims to increase the patronage of public transport, provide a range of housing types and sizes and the mix of uses contributes to a more vibrant activity centre.

Figure EIGHT: Town Centre - Thornton

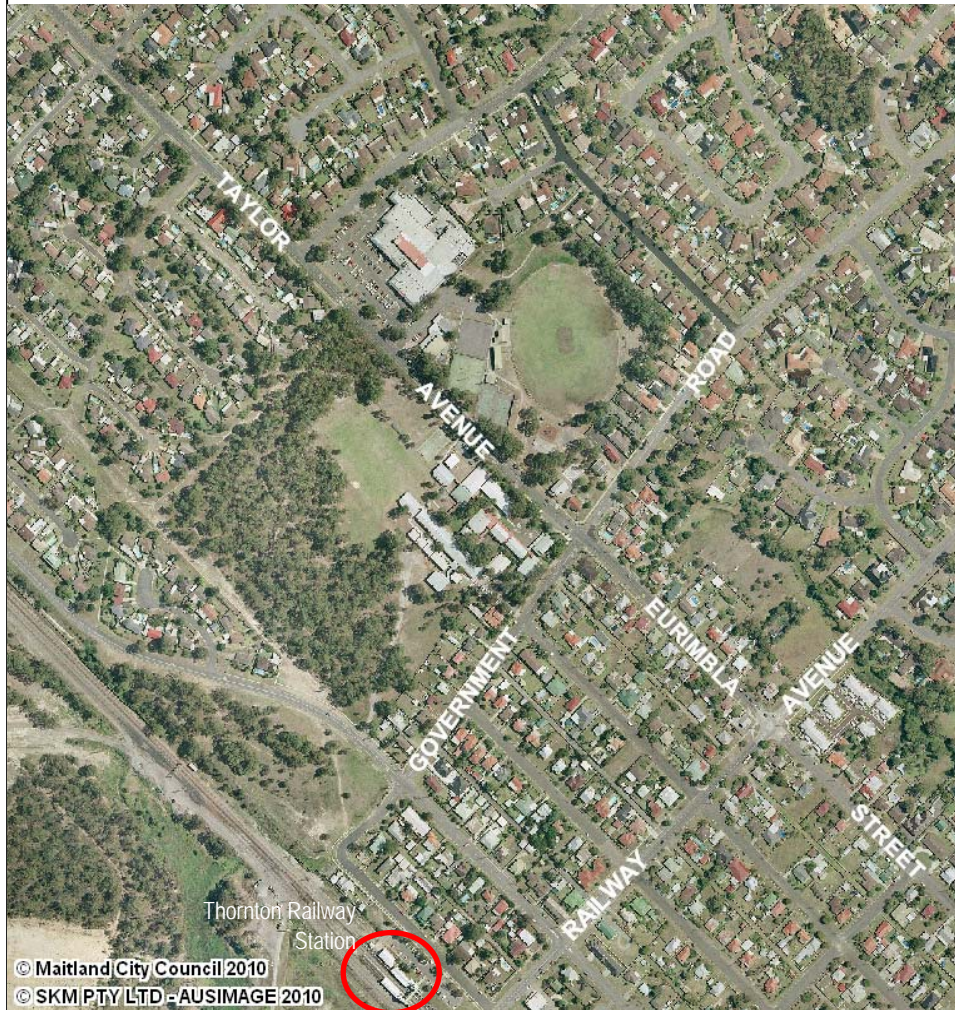
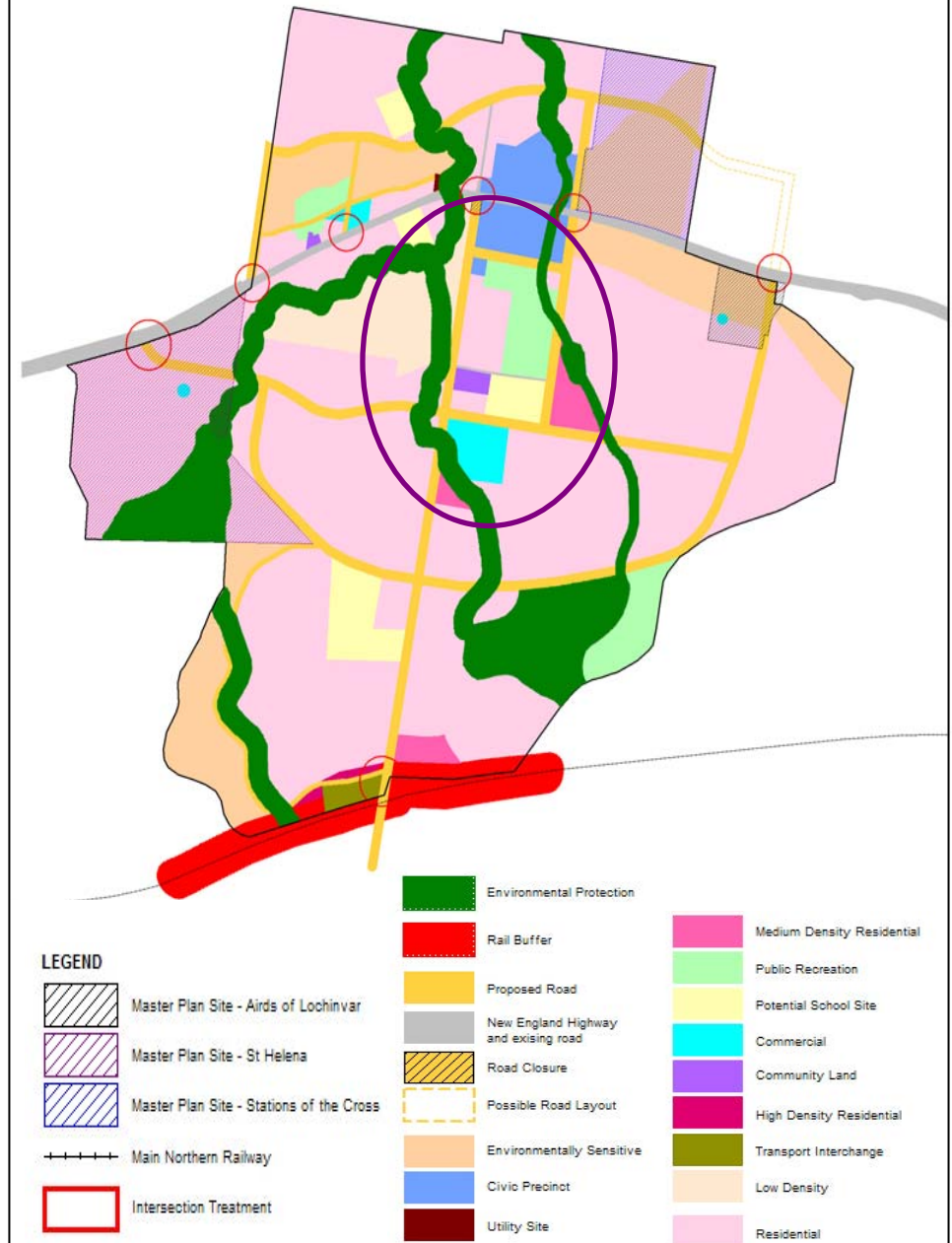


Figure NINE: Town Centre – Lochinvar
(Proposed location within the Structure Plan Area)



LOCHINVAR

Lochinvar Town Centre has been identified in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy as an emerging centre. The creation of this new town centre for the Maitland LGA is in recognition of the significant future growth that is planned for the Lochinvar area. The creation of a new town centre will support the existing centre in Lochinvar which is identified as being a neighbourhood centre.

The location of the town centre is at the heart of the structure plan area, central to Station Lane and within walking distance to the railway station. It is also in close proximity to existing residential areas, recreational, community and educational facilities.

VISION

Located at the heart of a new community, the Lochinvar Town Centre will be an attractive central focus for new and existing residents of Lochinvar and the western sector of the LGA and beyond. A mix of retail, commercial, community, recreational and residential uses will be provided within a safe, inviting public realm. The inclusion of interesting public spaces and, high quality architecture will contribute to the creation of a vibrant activity centre.

Accessibility to the Lochinvar Town Centre will be enhanced with the provision of pleasant, safe pedestrian and cycleway links to the railway station, major bus routes along the New England Highway and the surrounding residential neighbourhood.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for Lochinvar Town Centre include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Lochinvar as one of the town centres in the Maitland LGA and provide a focal point for community activity enabling a strong identity and sense of community to be built by all residents of Lochinvar and the wider area;
- Provide a range of community, commercial, retail and entertainment activities to create a diverse activity centre which serves the needs of new and existing

residents of Lochinvar and further west beyond the Maitland LGA boundary;

- The integration of mixed use development, medium density residential and shop top housing in and around the centre will contribute to a diverse, vibrant town centre and support uses to establish a viable night-time economy;
- The provision of quality public spaces, public art, landscaping and street furniture to create an interesting public realm and present opportunities to meet and mingle and participate in community life;
- Create safe and well connected pedestrian and cycle routes to provide high accessibility between the town centre, residential areas, existing education facilities and public transport.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The planning and development of the Lochinvar Town Centre must be undertaken in the context of the residential development that is being planned for. Analysis suggests that this new activity centre could potentially be similar in size and offer to East Maitland and Thornton.

It is envisaged that the Lochinvar Town Centre will provide a diverse range of convenience and comparison retail, commercial activities, including offices, community and recreational facilities and residential.

To ensure the town centre is highly accessible, it is critical that well designed pedestrian and cycle routes are integrated to link the centre with the Lochinvar Railway Station, bus routes along the New England Highway and the wider Lochinvar area.

LOCAL ACTIVITY CENTRES

CHISHOLM

The Thornton North urban release area is one of the 'Major Priority Release Areas' as identified in the LHRS and is also identified as an urban release area within Council's endorsed MUSS. The creation of a local centre within this release area was identified through the preparation and adoption of the Thornton Structure Area Plan (December 2003) and identified as a 'Key Development Site' within the Waterford County Precinct Plan (February 2008).

It is envisaged that the co-location of schools, community facilities, recreation space and the provision of an adequate network of roads and shared paths will create a focal point for the local community.



FIGURE TEN: Local Centre – Chisholm (Indicative location as per the Structure Plan)

VISION

Located within one of Maitland's newest residential neighbourhoods, the provision of a local centre at Chisholm is critical to the creation of a more sustainable community. The Chisholm Local Centre will provide for the convenience needs of the surrounding residents and rural areas in the north-east of the LGA.

The central location will enhance accessibility with connections to public transport, provision of an adequate road network supported by safe, pleasant pedestrian and cycleway links. Creating a place that residents can connect with and form a strong identity with is essential to ensuring Chisholm grows into a viable local centre supporting a vibrant new community.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for Chisholm Local Centre include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Chisholm as a local centre within the network and hierarchy of activity centres, to support the higher order function of the town centre at Thornton and provide a focal point for community activity enabling a strong identity and sense of community to be built by the new residents of Chisholm;
- Creation of a new local centre to support the growing residential population by providing a range of convenience shopping combined with some community activities within this area of the Maitland LGA;
- To create a walkable neighbourhood with convenient access to employment, retail premises, community facilities and other services, with less dependence on cars for travel. This can be achieved with the integration of live/work units in and around the centre to encourage the location of small home-based businesses;
- Provide safe, pleasant pedestrian and cycleway routes connecting the activity

centre to the surrounding residential neighbour and to provide good connectivity with public transport; and

- Create a village atmosphere with the mix of uses and integration a range of housing options like shop-top housing close to or within the centre to provide out of hours activity and contribute to the creation of Chisholm as a vibrant activity centre.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The planning and development of the Chisholm Local Centre must be undertaken in the context of the significant residential development that is occurring in the Thornton North urban release area. Analysis suggests that this new activity centre could potentially be similar in size and offer to the existing local centre at Lorn.

It is envisaged that the Chisholm Local Centre will provide a diverse range of convenience retail integrated with limited commercial activities through the encouragement of live/work units and home businesses to development at the edge of the centre. It is also envisaged that some small-scale community and recreational facilities servicing the needs of the immediate population will also form part of the growth of this activity centre.

LORN

Located across the river from Central Maitland, the Lorn Local Centre comprises of a small cluster of convenience and retail premises mixed with a number of small professional and personal services reusing existing residential dwellings. The location of a school at the edge of the activity centre contributes to this being a walkable neighbourhood.

Belmore Road is the high street of the Lorn Local Centre and is also a major transport route through the LGA. This coupled with its proximity to Central Maitland makes Lorn a highly accessible location. The tree lined streets of the activity centre and surrounding residential area enhances the amenity of the centre and the integration with the surrounding residential area and recreation space provides a pleasant, village feel to this activity centre.

VISION

Nestled on the banks of the Hunter River, the Lorn Local Centre will be an energetic village providing for the day to day needs of the local community as well as a place to meet and enjoy. The provision of some comparison retail, personal services, restaurants and cafes with outdoor dining, mixed with medium density housing will enhance the activity in the centre through the day and into the evening. High quality, safe pedestrian and cycle routes will improve the links between Lorn and Central Maitland and reconnect the Lorn Local Centre to the banks of the Hunter River.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for Lorn Local Centre include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Lorn as a local centre within the network and hierarchy of activity centre supporting the higher order function of Central Maitland and provide a focal point for community activity enabling a strong identity and sense of community to be built by the residents Lorn and the surrounding area;
- Consolidation and revitalisation of the Lorn Local Centre to support the existing residential population by providing a range of convenience and comparison retail, personal services and personal businesses and build of the existing concentration of cafes and restaurants;
- Redevelopment within the Lorn Local Centre to enhance the village atmosphere with cafes and restaurants providing outdoor dining, active ground floors fronting Belmore Road and the integration of live/work units in and around the centre to encourage the location of small professional businesses;
- Provide safe, high quality public spaces, landscaping and street improvements, improvement of pedestrian and cycle routes, linking the activity centre to Central Maitland, recreational spaces along the riverbank and the surrounding residential area;
- Due to its close proximity to Central Maitland, an increase of the mix of housing options in and around the Lorn Local Centre, particularly through the provision of shop-top housing and some medium density residential development.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

It is expected that over the life of this strategy, there is potential for some expansion of the Lorn Local Centre to meet the convenience needs of residents in the area. In particular, opportunities exist to expand the existing provision of cafes and restaurants with outdoor dining to enhance the evening activity of this centre.

Other opportunities within this activity centre include continuation of professional offices and services reusing residential dwelling and the development of live/work units. Medium density residential development should also be encouraged in and around the centre as well as the provision of shop top housing.

The Belmore Bridge is a key entry point into the Lorn Local Centre. To provide a clearly defined entrance into Lorn, the redevelopment and design outcomes of key sites should reflect and reinforce a sense of arrival into the Lorn Local Centre. Other pedestrian/cycle routes linking Lorn with the surrounding areas of Central Maitland and Bolwarra should be investigated.



Belmore Road is a major link from the north of the LGA and beyond to Maitland and Newcastle. Therefore, traffic and congestion through Lorn must be effectively managed, along with streetscape improvements to create a safe, pleasant pedestrian environment, to enhance the overall village feel of the Lorn Local Centre.

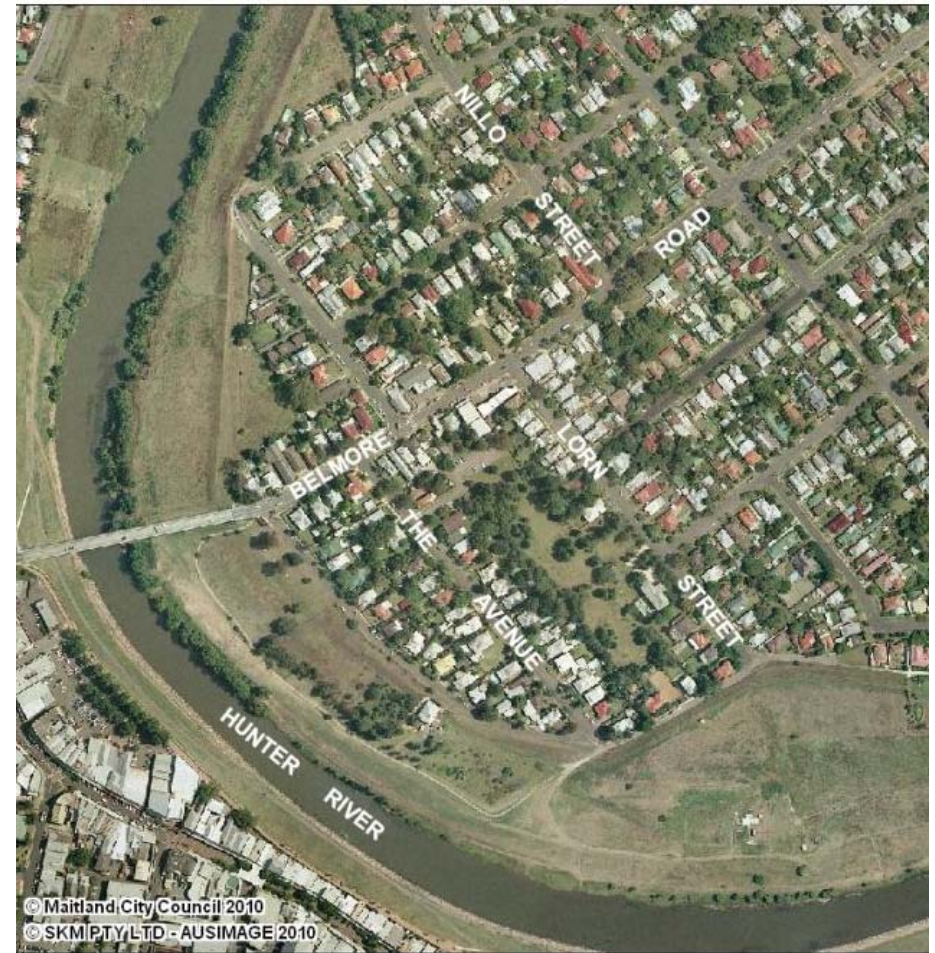


Figure ELEVEN: Local Centre – Lorn

MORPETH

The Morpeth Local Centre is located on the southern bank of the Hunter River and the historic character is one of its most prominent and defining features and the main attracter for tourists. The local centre is surrounded by the residential neighbourhood of Morpeth, rural communities and the large quantity of green space, which creates an attractive, village setting for this activity centre.

Morpeth comprises of a mix of retail and commercial premises which provide for both the day to day needs of the local community of Morpeth and accommodate the needs of the visitors to the area. Morpeth is considered a destination tourist centre and this tourism focus differentiates it from the other local centres within the network. This activity centre provides a range of restaurants, cafes and pubs, which cater to the needs of visitors and residents and contributes to the diversity and viability of the Morpeth Local Centre.

VISION

Having developed as an important port town in the establishment of NSW, the Morpeth Local Centre is a significant historic asset providing the Maitland community and visitors with the opportunity to glance into the region's past. This activity centre has an important dual role as a regional tourist destination and the local centre for the residents of Morpeth and the surrounding rural communities.

The provision of convenience retail, personal services, restaurants and cafes with outdoor dining will accommodate the needs of the local community while boutique retail and accommodation facilities will support the vital tourism function of the centre. The heritage character of Morpeth enhances the village feel and deepens not only the visitor experience but also the everyday experience for the local community

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Morpeth Local Centre include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Morpeth as a local centre within the network and hierarchy of activity centres and to provide a focal point for community

activity enabling a strong identity and sense of community to be built by the residents of Morpeth and the surrounding rural areas;

- Recognition of the Morpeth Local Centre as a key tourist destination. This distinctive function must be supported through the provision of facilities and services to accommodate visitors while also boosting the visitor experience;
- Consolidation of Morpeth Local Centre to support the residential population and visitors by providing a range of convenience and comparison retail, community facilities, events and activities such as restaurants and cafes;
- Redevelopment within the Morpeth Local Centre will aim to preserve the historic character through the sensitive design of new buildings and public spaces, and innovative reuse of buildings for alternative uses; and
- Views to the Hunter River and connections to the surrounding communities and other areas of the Maitland LGA.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

It is expected that over the life of this strategy, there is potential for some expansion of the Morpeth Local Centre to meet the convenience needs of residents in the area and to support this activity centre's additional function as a key tourist destination.

The expansion of the Morpeth Local Centre must be of a scale and architectural quality that is sympathetic to the existing streetscape and ensure that the heritage character and village atmosphere is valued. It is critical that the qualities which makes this local centre a tourist destination are enhanced through future redevelopment.

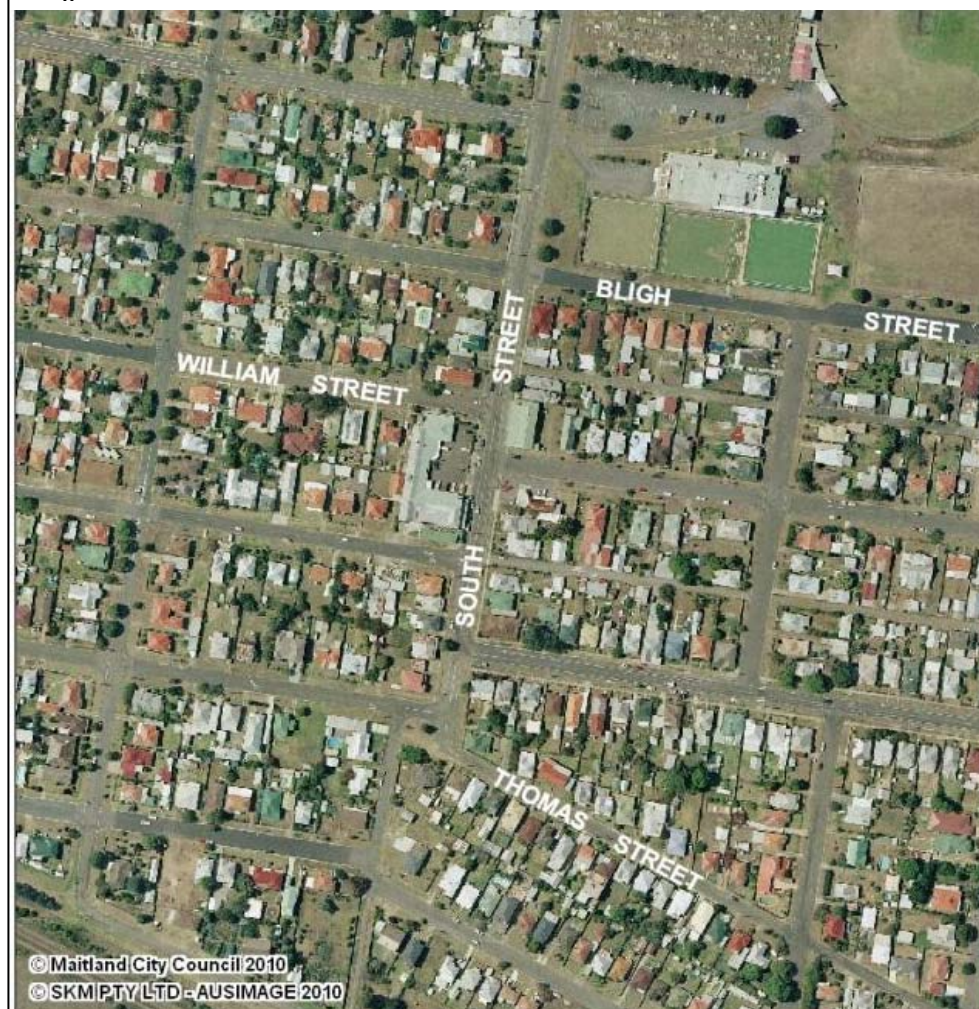
Due to the reliance of Morpeth on tourist spending, outside economic influences can adversely impact on the viability of the centre. To maintain a robust and diverse local economy which is less vulnerable, the growth of Morpeth's evening economy should be encouraged by providing a mix of activities and opportunities to meet and mingle.

With its location on the Hunter River and the attraction of this activity centre, there are opportunities to extend the current riverside walk through to Morpeth, linking this local centre with Central Maitland.

Figure TWELVE: Local Centre –Morpeth



Figure THIRTEEN: Local Centre –Telarah



TELARAH

The Telarah Local Centre comprises of a small cluster of shop front premises, with associated car parking located on the south-western corner of South Street and William Street. A number of community facilities are also located within and around the existing centre. The existing catchment of the Telarah is small, generally covering the local population.

The buildings within the local centre present an attractive frontage to the street. Combined with the centre's high quality streetscape, the viability of the Telarah Local Centre will continue to be strengthened.

VISION

Telarah Local Centre will continue to strengthen its primary convenience function to support the local residents. With expanding higher order centres nearby, this local activity centre will be a community focal point capitalising on the centre's walkable location to provide a range of everyday shopping, and access to community facilities. Streetscape improvements will continue to provide a safe, inviting village atmosphere, supported by increased housing in and around the centre to build a vibrant activity centre.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Telarah Local Centre include:

- Expansion of the Telarah Local Centre to support residents by providing a range of shopping and community support facilities and activities within this area of the Maitland LGA and provide a focal point for community activity and to build a strong identity and sense of community for the residents of Telarah and the surrounding area;
- Reinforce the role and function of Telarah as one of the local centres within the network and hierarchy of activity centres and to provide a focal point for community activity enabling a strong identity and sense of community to be built by the residents of Telarah and the surrounding areas;
- To create a walkable neighbourhood with access to a mix of convenience retail

premises, existing community facilities and other services, resulting in less dependence on cars for travel.

- Future development within the Telarah Local Centre will aim to enhance the village-like atmosphere and improve the public domain with the provision of public spaces and street improvements; and
- To increase the mix of housing options, both in terms of size and type in and around the Telarah Local Centre, including the provision of shop-top housing.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

It is expected that over the life of this strategy, there is potential for moderate expansion of the Telarah Local Centre to meet the growing demand convenience services in the area. In particular, opportunities exist to expand the existing supermarket along with greater provision of specialty food stores, personal services and shop front commercial space to a minor degree.

A greater density of residential development could also be encouraged around the centre to increase its accessibility to a wider number of people. This could be achieved with the integration of live/work units and the reuse of residential dwellings in and around the centre to encourage the location of small home-based businesses.

GILLIESTON HEIGHTS

The Gillieston Heights urban release area is one of Council's priority release areas as identified in the Maitland Urban Settlement Strategy and land release program. The creation of a local centre was identified through the preparation and adoption of the Gillieston Heights Area Plan (April 2006) and aims to positively contribute to the social and economic circumstances of the local community.

VISION

Located within the Central Maitland-Kurri Kurri growth corridor, the Gillieston Heights Local Centre is critical to the creation of a sustainable community. This activity centre will provide for the convenience needs of the surrounding residential neighbourhoods, as well as providing a variety of community, recreation and professional services and facilities.

The creation of a walkable neighbourhood increases the accessibility of the location which will also be enhanced by the connections to public transport and safe, pleasant pedestrian and cycleway links. Creating a place that new and existing residents can connect with and form a strong identity with is essential to ensuring Gillieston Heights develops into a vibrant, viable local centre.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Gillieston Heights Local Centre include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Gillieston Heights as a local centre within the network and hierarchy of activity centres and to provide a focal point for community activity enabling a strong identity and sense of community to be built by the new and existing residents of Gillieston Heights;
- Creation of a new local centre to support the growing residential population by providing a range of convenience shopping combined with some community activities within this area of the Maitland LGA;
- To create a walkable neighbourhood with convenient access to employment, retail premises, community facilities and other services, with less dependence

on private cars for travel;

- Provide safe, pleasant pedestrian and cycleway routes connecting the activity centre to the surrounding residential neighbour and to provide good connectivity with public transport; and
- Create a village atmosphere with the mix of uses and integration a range of housing options like shop-top housing close to or within the centre to contribute to the creation of a vibrant activity centre.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The planning and development of the Gillieston Heights Local Centre must be undertaken in the context of the significant residential development that is occurring in the area. Analysis suggests that this new activity centre could potentially be similar in size and offer to the existing local centre at Lorn.

It is envisaged that the Gillieston Heights Local Centre will provide a diverse range of convenience retail and some small-scale community and recreational facilities servicing the needs of the immediate population will also form part of the growth of this activity centre.



FIGURE FOURTEEN:
Local Centre – Gillieston Heights
(Indicative location as per the Structure

NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTIVITY CENTRE

LOCHINVAR

Fronting the New England Highway in Lochinvar, the existing loose cluster of business and activities form the genesis of a neighbourhood centre. This centre has serviced both the existing residential and rural community of Lochinvar, Luskintyre, Oswald and Windella and the travelling public. Community uses such as the public school, School of Arts, pub and tennis courts, with a civic area of schools and churches on its edge, further support and enhance the identity of the Lochinvar district.

VISION

The Lochinvar Neighbourhood Centre enhances the identity of the Lochinvar township and works cooperatively with the Lochinvar Town Centre. Services will provide for the travelling public and add to the amenity of the streetscape. The Lochinvar Neighbourhood Activity Centre will strengthen the liveable neighbourhood character that exists with highly accessible residential, community and business areas

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Lochinvar Neighbourhood Centre include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Lochinvar as a neighbourhood centre within the network and hierarchy of activity centres which supports the function of the town centre at Lochinvar;
- To provide for the convenience needs of the surrounding residential neighbourhood and due to its location on the New England Highway provide additional services and facilities to support the traveling public ; and
- Provide safe, pleasant pedestrian and cycleway routes connecting the activity centre to the new Lochinvar Town Centre, education and recreational facilities,

the surrounding residential neighbourhood and build on its locational advantage.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Analysis suggests that the potential growth of the Lochinvar Neighbourhood Centre should be further explored with the implementation of the structure plan and be of a scale which adequately support the higher order role and function of the new town centre at Lochinvar.

Its location fronting the New England Highway provides opportunities for small scale services which cater for the needs of the travelling public as well as services catering for the convenient needs of surrounding residents.

LARGS

The neighbourhood centre at Largs has grown organically in response to the needs of the local area. The Largs Neighbourhood Centre primarily provides convenience retail activities with additional activities such as the pub and community facilities such as the School of Arts and childcare facilities. This activity centre is heavily reliant on the surrounding residential neighbourhoods supporting the local businesses and the convenience they offer, however currently the activities located within the centre are spread out, thereby reducing the convenience of the activity centre.

VISION

Reflecting the character of Largs and its rural surrounding the neighbourhood centre will build on its identity as the focal point for the hamlet of Largs, Woodville and Phoenix Park. The primary convenience function of this activity centre will continue to be strengthened with the provision of a range of services and facilities to accommodate the day to day needs of the local community. The inclusion of community facilities, quality place spaces and excellent pedestrian, cycle and road connections will enhance the viability of this activity centre.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Largs Neighbourhood Centre include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Largs as a neighbourhood centre within the network and hierarchy of activity centres and to provide a focal point for community activity enabling a strong identity and sense of community to be built by the residents of Largs and surrounding rural areas;
- Encourage a range of convenience retail activities to support the wider rural community and continue to build on the existing community and recreational facilities located in and around the activity centre;
- Improve links to surrounding residential areas, recreational and community facilities within the area; and
- Improvements to the public domain provide spaces for people to meet and create a consistent treatment to provide a clear definition and identity for the Largs Neighbourhood Centre.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

It is expected that over the life of this strategy, there is potential for some expansion of the Largs Neighbourhood Centre to meet convenience needs of the surrounding residential neighbourhood. Recognition of the Largs Neighbourhood Centre provides opportunities for a more coordinated approach to growth of the centre and for redevelopment to consolidated activities into an identifiable centre.

METFORD

As one of the newer residential areas of Maitland, the locality of Metford has not had the benefit of a long and established character. The neighbourhood centre has struggled to form a strong identity, but has the makings of a diverse and vibrant area, with residential, community, commercial, recreational and transport opportunities. Dislocation of commercial zoning and a cluster of small shops at the western end of Chelmsford Drive has diluted the potential for a critical mass of activity.

VISION

A strong sense of community identity is reflected in the activity in the Metford Neighbourhood Centre. Convenience needs and community services are consolidated and coordinated with a walkable residential neighbourhood. Links with the school, TAFE, recreation area and train station are robust and synergistic making Metford a desirable place to live, work and visit.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Metford Neighbourhood Centre include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Metford as a neighbourhood centre within the network and hierarchy of activity centres and to provide a focal point for community activity enabling a strong identity and sense of community to be built by the residents of Metford;
- Improve the convenience retail offer to provide for the everyday needs of the surrounding community and support the creation of a more walkable neighbourhood to encourage less dependence on cars for travel; and
- Provide safe, pleasant pedestrian and cycleway routes improved connectivity with the Metford Railway Station, TAFE and the surrounding residential neighbourhood.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

It is expected that over the life of this strategy, there is potential for moderate expansion of the Metford Neighbourhood Centre to meet the convenience needs of the surrounding neighbourhood.

FIGURE FIFTEEN: Neighbourhood Centre – Lochinvar



FIGURE SIXTEEN: Neighbourhood Centre – Largs



FIGURE SEVENTEEN: Neighbourhood Centre – Metford



FIGURE EIGHTEEN: Neighbourhood Centre – Tenambit



TENAMBIT

The Tenambit Neighbourhood Centre provides for the day to day needs of the local community of Tenambit. The catchment of the Neighbourhood Centre is small, generally covering the residents of Tenambit and Raworth and therefore the activity centre heavily reliant on the surrounding residential neighbourhoods supporting the local businesses and the convenience they offer.

The diversity of activity is supported by a number of community facilities also located within Tenambit including the Tenambit Community Hall, the Tenambit Public School and an Early Education Centre. The community open space located at the rear of the retail premises provides an attractive asset to the neighbourhood centre and its overall appeal.

VISION

The Tenambit Neighbourhood Centre will build on its success and established identity as a diverse, busy activity centre. Connections to the recreation and community space will be reinforced to create an accessible neighbourhood to encourage less use of private vehicle for small trips. The provision of shop-top housing and home-based business in and around the centre will continue to strengthen this activity centre.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Tenambit Neighbourhood Centre include:

- Reinforce the role and function of the Tenambit Neighbourhood centre within the network and hierarchy of activity centres and to provide a focal point for community activity enabling a strong identity and sense of community to be built by the residents of Tenambit;
- Build on the strength of the existing convenience retail activities to support the surrounding residential neighbourhood and enable expansion of the centre when required;

- Improve links to community and recreational spaces in and around the activity centre and connections to public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes; and
- The provision of spaces for people to meet and create a consistent public domain treatment to reinforce the identity of the Tenambit Neighbourhood Centre.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

It is expected that over the life of this strategy, there is potential for moderate expansion of the Tenambit Neighbourhood Centre to meet the convenience needs of the surrounding residential community.

WOODBERRY

The neighbourhood centre at Woodberry provides a localised convenience function servicing the day to day needs of residents. This activity centre also provides a limited number of personal services and a variety of recreational and community facilities including a school adding to the diversity and mix of uses provided. The Woodberry Neighbourhood Centre and surrounds presents a built form which varies in quality and a degraded amenity has resulted in the lack of a cohesive identity for this activity centre.

VISION

Creating a renewed sense of community pride and identity for the Woodberry Neighbourhood Centre is a key factor to create a more viable activity centre. The centre will provision a greater range of convenience retail to support the local residents, and provide improved links to the nearby community and recreation facilities. Revitalisation of the public domain will improve the amenity and attractiveness, creating a place that residents can connect with to ensure Woodberry develops into a vibrant neighbourhood centre.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Woodberry Neighbourhood Centre include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Woodberry as a neighbourhood centre within the network and hierarchy of activity centres and to provide a focal point for community activity enabling a strong identity, local pride and sense of community to be built by the residents of Woodberry and surrounding areas;
- Improve the diversity of convenience services to provide for the everyday needs of the surrounding residential community to encourage less dependence on cars for travel to other centres; and
- Create a walkable neighbourhood with the provision of safe, pleasant pedestrian and cycleway routes improved connectivity with the recreational spaces, schools and the surrounding residential neighbourhood within the area; and
- Provide safe public spaces for people to meet and community events and activities to occur. The renewal of the Woodberry Neighbourhood Centre through an improved and consistent public domain treatment will help to create an attractive centre with strong community identity.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

It is expected that over the life of this strategy, there is potential for moderate expansion of the Woodberry Neighbourhood Centre to meet convenience needs of the surrounding residential neighbourhood.



FIGURE NINETEEN: Neighbourhood Centre – Woodberry

FARLEY and ANAMBAH

The MUSS identifies specific areas within Farley and Anambah for investigation as long term urban release areas. In keeping with the rationale applied to areas like Gillieston Heights and Thornton North, opportunities existing for the development of a new neighbourhood centre to grow in parallel with future residential development that may occur in either location.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives that would apply to a neighbourhood centre in either Farley or Anambah include:

- Reinforce the role and function as a neighbourhood centre within the network and hierarchy of activity centres and provide a focal point for community activity and to build a strong identity and sense of community for the new residents of the specific location;
- Creation of a new neighbourhood centre to support the convenience needs of the new and existing residential community and the integration of some shop top housing to create a vibrant activity centre; and
- Contribute to the creation of a new walkable neighbourhood through the provision of safe, pleasant pedestrian and cycleway routes connecting the activity centre to the surrounding residential neighbourhood and to provide good connectivity with public transport; and

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The potential population growth in Farley and Anambah may provide opportunities for the creation of a new neighbourhood centre. The creation of a new centre must be further explored with the preparation of a structure plan or planning proposal for the areas. If the population growth fails to reach predicated levels, or is delayed this may affect the potential scale or eliminate the need for a new centre in either location.

A new activity centre in either location must clearly demonstrate to Council that the scale and siting has been subject to detailed analysis and that it can successfully integrate with the existing and new residential development and that it has considered the established network and hierarchy of centres and clusters in Maitland.



FIGURE TWENTY and TWENTY-ONE: Potential Neighbourhood Centres – Farley and Anambah
(source: MUSS 2008 – Investigation Area Maps)

SPECIALISED PRECINCTS

Specialised Precincts are clusters of like industries that are able to benefit, from an economic perspective. These efficiencies are potentially gained through shared building use, on site servicing (i.e. retail, dining halls, a post office), transport and road infrastructure that may otherwise not be viable on an individual scale.

Benefits of specialised precincts also include the shared knowledge and enhanced knowledge transfer between activities. Particularly in a local economy which is evolving to include 'New Economy' or idea enterprises, the efficient gain of information and knowledge is critical to success and innovation. These precincts benefit from close proximity and association, drawing other symbiotic industries to an area. This in turn enhances the potential for specialised precincts to succeed and generate more jobs within a given area.

HEALTH PRECINCT – MAITLAND HOSPITAL AND SURROUNDS

Maitland Hospital is a major employer within the LGA and is 'magnet infrastructure'. This means that while providing essential health services – its primary function - it also attracts other medical and supporting services such as doctors, radiologists and osteopaths to the locality and contributes positively to the local economy through the generation of jobs.

The provision of services within this precinct is currently disjointed with little coordination over the number of properties. Due to the growing medical demands of the Maitland area and the wider regional area, the Hunter New England Health is planning for future expansion of Maitland Hospital, starting with the expansion of the emergency department.

VISION

Reinforce and expand existing medical and health services to create a regionally significant health precinct providing for the health and well being needs of the local and regional population. This precinct will facilitate both public and private health infrastructure and will ensure that adequate service to support the employees, visitors and patients is provided.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Maitland Hospital Health Precinct include:

- Redevelopment and expansion public and private health infrastructure to create a regionally significant health precinct for the Maitland and wider regional community;
- Create a precinct which provides a large variety of health and allied health services and facilities in one location along with adequate supporting services, facilities and activities are provided to support the needs of staff, patients and visitors; and
- Ensure that the health precinct is highly accessible and provides adequate car parking for staff, patients and visitors

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The existing specialised precinct has potential to expand, particularly given the significant growth in population forecast for the LGA and the ageing of the population within the Hunter Region over the timeframe of the Study. These characteristics will result in greater demand for health and medical services.

The expansion of the hospital and associated services will generate additional employment opportunities. Based on TDC estimates, the net growth in health related jobs in Maitland LGA will be in the order of 776 jobs (13% of all job growth in the LGA.)

The Maitland Centres Study, prepared by HillIPDA suggests that this specialised precinct has the potential for an additional 31,000sqm of health related floorspace (i.e. consulting rooms, osteopaths, physiotherapists, chiropractors etc) to cater for the growing population of the Maitland LGA.

RETAIL PRECINCT - GREENHILLS STAND-ALONE SHOPPING CENTRE AND SURROUNDS

Stand alone centres such as Greenhills have a concentrated retail function, supported by extensive car parking. This is often important given their focus on large supermarket and household good retailers requiring high accessibility by vehicles.

This retail precinct provides a significant concentration of retail uses, with a number of bulky goods and office-based activities. There are also some community services located within or close to the centre. These include the East Maitland Library, the Maitland Church of Christ. The Greenhills Retail Precinct comprises a large stand alone shopping centre, surrounded to the north-west and the east by a mix of bulky goods, retail and commercial development.

VISION

Greenhills will continue to be a regionally significant retail precinct within the Lower Hunter providing a range of general and bulky good retail options. Future development of Greenhills will ensure that adequate car parking is provided and connections to public transport is maximised. Improved pedestrian links between the stand-alone shopping centre and other retail areas of Greenhills will provide for greater cohesion of this retail precinct.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Greenhills Retail Precinct include:

- Maintaining the retail function as the dominant activity, to ensure it continues to provide a regionally significant concentration of retail uses, which contributes to Maitland's local economy;
- The future growth of the Greenhills retail precinct consider the impact on activity centres and that it continues to provide a point of difference to Central Maitland to ensure that both can function concurrently and remain viable to the benefit of

the Maitland community and the local economy;

- Maximise public transport connectivity to and from Greenhills with improved pedestrian connections from the core retail areas to bus stops on Mitchell Drive;
- With future growth of the retail precinct, adequate traffic management and car parking levels are provided to ensure easy access to the precinct and reduce traffic congestion within the locality; and
- The cohesiveness of the precinct must be improved to ensure opportunities for redevelopment are not focused in one part of the precinct and customers are able to access all areas of the precinct on foot.

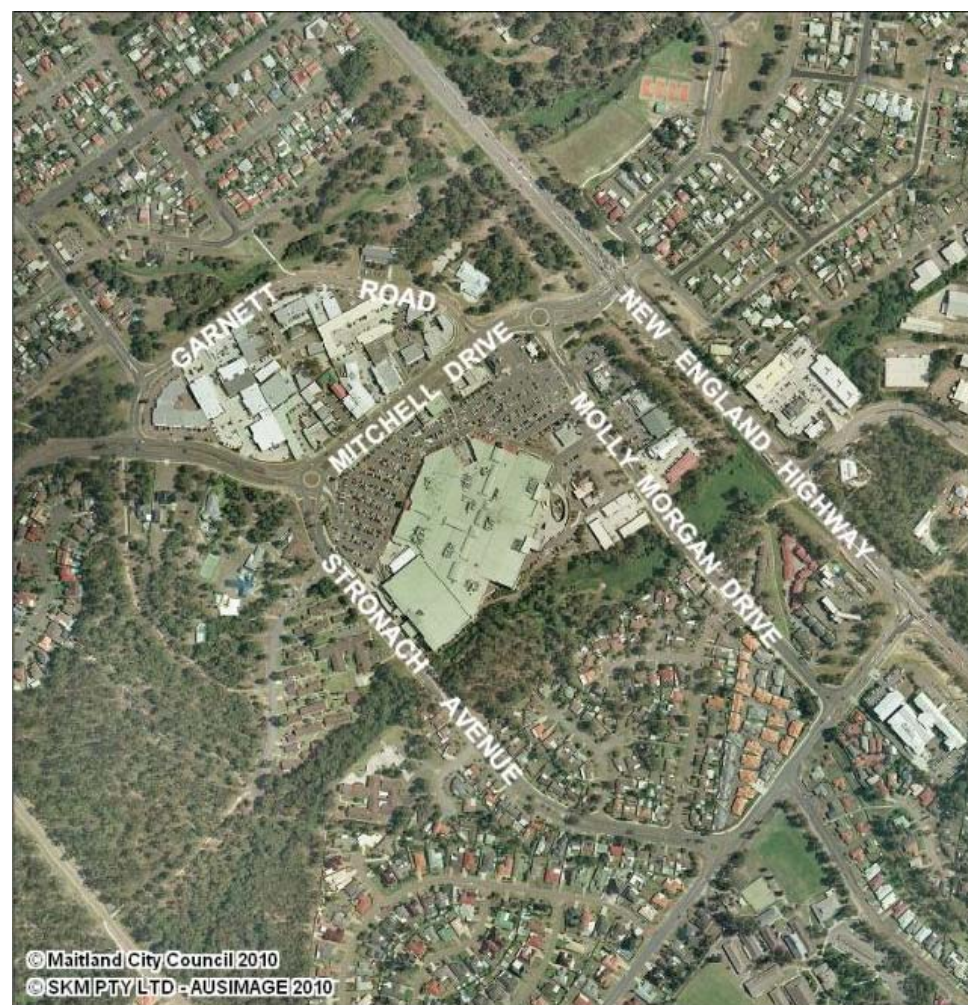
FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

It is expected that over the life of this strategy, there is potential for significant expansion of the Greenhills retail precinct to accommodate demand from the local Maitland community and the wider regional community. It is critical that growth in this precinct is in proportion and adequately responds to the demands on traffic, public transport, residential areas and to ensure that the viability and vitality of activity centres, particularly Central Maitland is maintained which in turn enhances the performance of the overall network of activity centre and employment clusters.

FIGURE TWENTY-TWO: Health Precinct – Maitland Hospital and Surrounds



FIGURE TWENTY-THREE: Retail Precinct – Greenhills Stand-Alone Shopping Centre and Surrounds



Maitland's Employment Clusters and Corridors

Employment clusters and corridors accommodate a range of industries, bulky goods retailing and business activities in locations along transit corridors or in clusters that are easily accessible to major transport routes. The primary aim of clusters and corridors is to provide employment generating activities to encourage growth in the local economy and provide job opportunities to cater for a range of skills and qualifications.

Employment clusters are usually located outside of activity centres however, due to the size, activity or potential impact of the activity, it may be inappropriate for the particular industry or business use to be located within an activity centre.

Employment corridors provide for a range of business activities that are located on major transit routes, such as the New England Highway, or significant local routes such as Melbourne Street. Identifying a contained area for development as a corridor, reduces 'ribbon' development and helps to create viable clusters of economic activity.

EMPLOYMENT CORRIDORS

MELBOURNE STREET MIXED USE PRECINCT

Within this precinct, there is an existing mix of uses ranging from car sales yards, and light industrial activities to shops, schools, community facilities, home businesses and residential buildings. Services catering to the travelling public such as fast food outlet, service station and accommodation are also located in this precinct, taking advantage of the corridor location.

VISION

The Melbourne Street Mixed Use Precinct will provide a mix of employment, commercial and industrial enterprises coupled with urban support uses, integrated with higher density residential development. This variety of uses builds on the existing character of the precinct and strengthens the connection with the East Maitland Town Centre in a highly accessible location.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Melbourne Street Mixed Use Precinct include:

- To encourage the development of start-up business opportunities for a range of industries and enterprises within this precinct;
- Encourage the continuation and consolidation of the light industrial activities currently located in Melbourne Street, south of the New England Highway;
- Encourage shop top housing and higher density residential development within the precinct which provides high quality design outcomes;
- Maintain ground floor uses, such as cafés and restaurants which activate the street frontage and encourage the development of a more pedestrian friendly environment; and
- Recognition of the important connectivity function of Melbourne Street between the New England Highway and Morpeth;

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The location of these retail and commercial premises in close proximity the East Maitland Town Centre is important and therefore the future development of this precinct must be considered in the context of the East Maitland Town Centre and aim to support its role and function.



NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY CORRIDOR

The New England Highway (NEH) forms a 914km part of the interstate road link between Sydney and Brisbane. It begins at the end of the Sydney-Newcastle Freeway (F3) travelling north through the Hunter Valley and New England region to Toowoomba and the Darling Downs area of southern Queensland. The NEH runs east-west through the Maitland LGA and is major arterial road linking suburbs within the LGA, Maitland with Newcastle and the Upper Hunter, as well as servicing the interstate/intrastate travelling public and freight movement.

Existing uses located along the NEH include retail/commercial development, light industrial and large format retail uses, along with a number of schools, parks and community facilities. However, the predominant landuse fronting the NEH is residential.

However, not all commercial and retail development along the NEH is in a cluster pattern. A number of businesses exist as a stand alone, which in turn creates a ribbon of commercial and retail development.

VISION

The New England Highway Corridor will continue to reinforce its primary role as a significant corridor for the movement of freight and people, locally, regionally and nationally and to provide appropriate opportunities for business and residential uses which service the users and utilise this highly accessible corridor.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the New England Highway Corridor include:

- Activities fronting the NEH cater for the travelling public, without impacting on its primary function – being an interstate corridor for the movement of goods and people;
- The reduction of 'ribbon' development and the consolidation of clusters close to existing centres along the NEH;

- Activities along the NEH provide for a range of employment and residential uses, without limiting the vitality and viability of centres and in locations which have accessibility to high frequency public transport routes;
- That residential development located directly fronting the NEH is adequately soundproofed and designed to minimize adverse impacts of noise and pollution.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

While the location on the NEH is desirable for these businesses, in the long term it creates a situation in which commercial/retail development is stretched out along the corridor which can lead to issues with accessibility and impact on the flow of traffic, also the impact on existing centres and their viability. However, to support the role of the NEH as a transport corridor, uses and activities to support the travelling public will continue to be encouraged to develop in this location.



EMPLOYMENT CLUSTERS

BULKY GOODS RETAILING

Maitland has become a regionally significant hub for bulky goods retailing in the Hunter Valley, with this form of retail use generating a substantial demand for floorspace. The attraction of Maitland for young families and growth in the new home market can partly account for this phenomenon. Clusters of bulky goods retailing businesses have formed naturally, taking advantage of high profile sites and marketing strategies to establish “homemaker centres”.

Traditionally located in core commercial areas, bulky goods retailing has expanded to edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations, providing opportunities for higher order uses to emerge in centres. Some of the clusters in Maitland LGA are at Shipley Drive Rutherford, Chelmsford Drive East Maitland and Thornton Road Thornton.

VISION

Bulky goods retailing will continue to strengthen the local economy, supporting the diverse and robust commercial environment that Maitland offers. Clusters of specialised large retailing floorspace will adapt and respond to a changing market. These clusters will operate in a cohesive and cooperative manner to provide a well serviced, high amenity shopping experience for residents of Maitland and the Hunter Valley.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Bulky Goods Retailing Clusters include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Bulky Goods Retailing as an employment cluster in the Maitland LGA and provide nodes for expanding and strengthening the regional offer of bulky goods to shape a destination shopping experience.
- Champion bulky goods retailing in out of centre locations, but within an existing or emerging cluster to provide opportunities for higher order

activities in centres and a net community benefit.

- Ensure suitable servicing and amenities for clusters of bulky goods, including adequate car parking, an adaptable built form, attractive shopping experiences and complementary activities.
- Focus retailing in clusters to encourage cooperative sharing of facilities and the formation of robust business areas with opportunities for change over time.
- Promote locations for clusters that take advantage of Maitland’s attributes such as the convenience travel times from all parts of the Hunter Valley, easy access via road and rail and relatively unconstrained development sites. Support these locations with local access improvements and connections to other business areas.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Growth of bulky goods retailing in the Maitland LGA will be fuelled by population growth throughout the Hunter Valley, as well as changing and emerging retailing formats that rationalise establishment costs. To capitalise on the benefits of the clustered approach and their high profile locations, existing bulky goods retailing areas at Rutherford and Thornton have potential to both consolidate and expand. Regular monitoring of this specialised retailing activity will enable timely and informed policy response to ensure continued growth.



INDUSTRIAL AREAS

Industrial areas in Maitland range from the traditional village locations in areas like Morpeth and Woodberry, through to the large estate-developments like Rutherford and Thornton industrial areas. Although varying in size and age, all industrial areas in Maitland provide employment and activities, including agricultural, minerals, manufacturing and transport industries. Ties to regionally significant markets have always existed, and can continue to advance with population growth and Maitland's locational benefits.

The compact and constrained local environment has both hindered and benefited the industrial areas, by keeping them relatively close to urban areas providing ready access for employees and supporting businesses. Heavy and polluting industry has not been a significant part of the industrial environment in Maitland.

VISION

A key pillar in Maitland's economy and a significant contributor to the regional and state economy, Maitland's industrial areas will expand and develop over time. A range of industrial activities will be present, supported by a strong technical and trade workforce that is flexible and robust in a changeable economy. By playing to its strength as the Hub of the Hunter, industrial areas in Maitland will service the region and provide a range of primary, secondary and tertiary industries.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Industrial Areas include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Industrial Areas in the Maitland LGA, working in harmony with the network of employment clusters, activity centres as well as the local environment;
- Encourage industrial areas to take advantage of important characteristics such as location, accessibility, workforce, local and regional economy;
- Support the role and function of smaller industrial areas that can offer

clusters for niche or emerging industrial activities, or local services in the construction or automotive sector;

- Encourage thoughtfully designed industrial areas that will continue to offer sites and solutions for industrial activity in an enduring and robust economy;
- Respect and respond to the interfaces between urban and industrial areas, managing potential sources of conflict and creating tolerant outcomes.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Conventional industrial activities and industrial areas may become harder to identify as macroeconomic reforms and public policy evolve. However, demand for manufacturing, processing and distribution of products and services will continue. Industrial areas will remain as significant employment zones and will expand to meet needs. Existing and identified new industrial areas will service the major of these demands, which may be supported by other emerging clusters of industrial activity.

Opportunities exist to further utilise the location and infrastructure of Maitland's industrial areas for logistics and transport-related activities.



BUSINESS AREAS

Clusters of concentrated business activity current occur, or are planned to occur in locations at Rutherford Industrial Estate, Thornton Industrial Estate and at Anambah. These business activities are distinct from the industrial uses and include office based businesses, research or technology based activities. Co-locating with similar businesses has strengthened the significance of these areas and they represent a new and emerging economy for Maitland.

Business areas typically have a demand for high amenity settings and this is reflected in new campus-type developments that generally cannot be provided within or on the edge of activity centres.

VISION

Opportunities for a mix of compatible uses that have similar operational needs are provided in the Business Areas of Maitland. Precincts of higher technology or R&D activities act as magnets for support businesses and utilise the professional skills of Maitland's residents. Office development not suited to blue-ribbon activity centre locations, is accommodated and adds to the diversity of the employment clusters in the Maitland LGA.

KEY POLICY OBJECTIVES

Key policy objectives for the Business Areas include:

- Reinforce the role and function of Business Areas in the Maitland LGA, working in harmony with the network of employment clusters, and activity centres;
- Provide a responsive planning framework to support emerging business areas that strengthen the Maitland economy and have a net community benefit;
- Ensure that high amenity is created for employees, workers and visitors through built form, access to convenience facilities and the provision of transport options;

- Encourage clustering and coordination of business activities to maximise the benefits of a united and strong business area, and the creation of magnet locations;

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Interest in the business areas is likely to remain high as Maitland's economy and population grows. For office-based businesses that may require specialised facilities or locational demands which are not suited in activity centres, location in a business area that clusters similar activities can meet these needs.

Locations for business areas are likely to expand from existing clusters, however new areas may be identified in response to demand. Consideration is to be given to the network of employment clusters and activity centres and net community benefit.

Regular monitoring of this emerging sector within employment clusters will enable timely and informed policy response to ensure continued growth.



PART D: REVIEW and IMPLEMENTATION

Review of this Strategy

One of the key principles underpinning this strategy is the importance of it being reviewed and updated on a regular basis. This review process ensures that the key policies and principles respond to the changing nature of cities over time and where deficiencies are identified, opportunities to remedy these can be implemented.

It is envisaged that this strategy will be reviewed every five years to ensure that the vision and key policy objectives for each of the activity centres and employment clusters are achieving the desired future outcomes envisaged by this strategy.

Regular monitoring of development in activity centres and employment clusters will ensure that the vision is being achieved and opportunities are being identified and pursued. The review of all activity centres and employment clusters will monitor a range of economic, social and community indicators to ascertain their viability. It also provides opportunities to introduce new initiatives to respond to future changes and continue to provide vibrant activity centres and diverse employment opportunities in employment clusters.

Maintaining the Viability of Activity Centres and Employment Clusters

The viability and vitality of Maitland's activity centres and employment clusters is not only a measure of economic success, but must be considered through a range of indicators. The community, environmental and social aspects of activity centres also must be vital and viable to ensure that they support the needs of the residents, workers and visitors of the Maitland LGA.

Monitoring the viability and vitality of activity centres and employment clusters should be on a regular, ongoing basis. This provides valuable information to evaluate changes over time and to effectively respond to those changes that will occur in the community and local economy.

Indicators that can be used to effectively monitor the viability and vitality of activity centres and employment clusters include:

- **The Diversity of Activities** – to measure the type, number and size of the different activities within activity centres and employment clusters with regular land use surveys. This includes land uses such as retail; offices; cultural, community, civic and government functions; entertainment and leisure facilities; accommodation; and restaurants, cafes, pubs and bars. Having a diverse range of services and activities attracts a range of people, activities and contributes to a vibrant activity centre.

Within employment clusters and precincts a diverse range and size of employment generating activities and support services cater for a range of skills and qualifications and provide opportunities for smaller businesses to enter the local market.
- **Views and Behaviour of Customers and Residents** – regular customer workers and community surveys can assist in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of activity centres and employment clusters. In particular surveys provide information on attitudes and other indicators which are qualitative and harder to measure.
- **Perceptions of Safety and Occurrence of Crime** – surveys should also include questions relating to the perceptions of safety within the activity centre and employment cluster. Although crime statistics provide accurate data on actual safety, the perceptions of customers, residents and workers can greatly impact on the viability and vitality of the centre or cluster, particularly the night-time economy of activity centres.
- **Quality of the public realm and surrounding environment** – conducting regular audits of the public domain and environment of activity centres and employment clusters can identify potential problems (i.e. graffiti, lighting and damaged street furniture) as well as the positive features (i.e. landscaping, public art, open spaces, seating).
- **Quality of the Built Environment** - conducting regular audits of the quality of the buildings in activity centres and employment clusters provides an indication of the level of expenditure and capital that owners are willing to invest into their

property and the surrounding landscape.

- **Accessibility** – the ease of access by a variety of transportation modes. This includes the quality of car parking in terms of location, safety and availability; the quality, frequency and connectivity of public transport and the provision of quality spaces for pedestrian and cyclists to access the centre from the main arrival point.
- **Potential Capacity for Growth and Change** – For both activity centres and employment clusters, this understands the physical constraints of the location to facilitate expansion and the land available for new and possibly more intensive development to occur.
- **Proportion of Vacancies** – conduct regular landuse surveys of activity centres and employment clusters to ascertain the take up and change in the type of businesses. In activity centres this is particularly significant for those properties at street level. High vacancy levels can contribute to an activity centre being lifeless, rundown and perceived as being unsafe. If this is observed as being a long term issue, incentives and alternative strategies can be put in place to reinvigorate or renew the centre.
- **Rental Value of Properties** – cost of rental can impact on the choices made about location. Providing a range of rental costs and grades of rental space offers choices, in terms of location, ongoing cost and types of services. A range of rental costs also facilitates the entrance of small business and start-up enterprises into the local market, and the location of community services within activity centres thereby resulting in greater choice and diversity for customers.
- **Pedestrian Volume and Movement** – This indicator is specific to activity centres and is a measure of vitality. Monitoring pedestrian volume and movement helps to evaluate the different areas which people are attracted to and frequently use within an activity area or alternatively an area that may be perceived as unsafe and that is not used. This can also be a sign of as to how the centre is being used and at what times of the day and night.

Assessment of Planning Proposals

An important part to maintaining the viability and vitality of activity centres and

employment clusters and facilitating future development to strengthen existing and create new centres and clusters is through the development assessment process.

To achieve the desired future outcome of the network and hierarchy of activity centres and employment clusters in the Maitland LGA, Council will require applicants to demonstrate the appropriateness of the proposal. The following issues need to be justified for development application within activity centres and employment clusters as well as proposals for commercial, retail, industrial and community land uses located outside of centres.

The level of detail provided should be proportional to the nature and scale of the development proposed. However, all applications must demonstrate that:

- a. The need for the development within the local and if appropriate, the regional context. Consideration should also be given to the local network and hierarchy of activity centres and employment clusters as outlined in this strategy;
- b. The development is of an appropriate scale and is consistent with the vision, role and objectives of the activity centre or employment cluster in which the proposal is located;
- c. Based on the sequential testing framework, the development proposal can not be located within or at the edge of an activity centre or employment cluster;
- d. The location of the proposed development outside of activity centres and employment clusters will have no undesirable impact on their viability; and
- e. The location of the proposed development outside of activity centres and employment clusters is accessible by a variety of transportation modes.

Sequential testing

In line with the key principles of this strategy to protect the vitality and viability of existing activity centres and protect the viability of well located employment clusters a sequential testing framework will be used. This assessment method has been in

the United Kingdom for a number of years to protect the viability of centres and to ensure communities have access to a range of services and facilities which are easily accessible while also promoting economic growth and encouraging investment. The sequential approach has also been applied to this strategy and the identification of activity centres and employment clusters within the Maitland LGA.

Prioritising sites within existing activity centres and employment clusters or at there edge, the sequential approach aims to encourage developers and business operator to demonstrate that in seeking an appropriate site, they have also been flexible about their business model in terms of scale, format and car parking provisions. This enables specific types of activities and land uses to be located within activity centres and employment clusters which is supported by high levels of accessibility and supported by a range of facilities, services and public infrastructure.

The sequential testing approach requires that sites be considered in the following order:

- Preference will be given to sites located within existing activity centres and employment centres;
- Edge of Centre/Cluster - located on or near to the boundary of the activity centre or employment cluster that is or will be well-connected to the existing centre or where it is demonstrated that expansion is required without compromising the network and hierarchy of centres and clusters; and
- Out of Centre/Cluster – where suitable sites can not be identified in or at the edge of activity centres or employment clusters, preference will be given to sites with have accessibility to a range of transport options, that are close to existing centres or clusters and there is a possibility of forming links.

For large-scale sites out of centre/cluster, an impact assessment must accompany applications which demonstrate that the location will not significantly impact on the vitality and viability of existing activity centres and employment clusters.

Impact Assessments

An impact assessment is required for significant development proposals for a land use best suited within an activity centre or for an employment generating activity best

suited within an employment cluster which is located outside and is inconsistent with the strategies and principles of this strategy.

This assessment must clearly demonstrate to Council that the location outside of the activity centres or employment clusters has considered the sequential testing framework. The impact assessment must justify the location choice and demonstrate that the proposed development will have no undesirable impact on the viability of identified activity centres and employment clusters within the surrounding area; and that the proposed land use activity easily accessible, providing links with a variety of transport options and adequate car parking and therefore the impact on traffic and congestion.

Other considerations such as requirements for infrastructure provision to support the proposal, environment impact of the proposed location, the risk to Council's strategic approach to a network and hierarchy of activity centres and employment clusters and the community and social impact of the proposed development being located outside an existing centre or cluster.

Structure Planning

The purpose of preparing structure plans for activity centres and employment clusters is to ensure that future growth takes place in a coordinated and sustainable manner. In consultation with the local community, government departments and agencies, infrastructure providers and community representatives, structure plans provide the framework, vision and key policy objectives for the activity centre or employment cluster.

It is envisaged that structure plans be prepared, but not limited to the following activity centres and employment clusters:

- Central Maitland Major Regional Centre;
- East Maitland Town Centre / Melbourne Street Precinct;
- Thornton Town Centre;

- Rutherford Town Centre; and
- Other new or identified activity centres and employment clusters as determined by Council.

The town centre proposed at Lochinvar and the local centres proposed for Chisholm, Gillieston Heights are part of adopted structure plans. However, a number of the smaller local or neighbourhood centres will be included as a part of a structure plan for an identified urban release area.

Therefore, the planning and design of those activity centres must be considered within the context of the overall release area and how it will best support the immediate and wider residential neighbourhood. The future development of activity areas will be required to provide a detailed planning and design proposals clearly demonstrating that the vision and key objectives of the centre and this strategy are being achieved.

Design and Development Controls

The implementation of this strategy will occur through a number of mechanisms. In regards to landuse planning, the primary implementation mechanisms are the Maitland LEP 2011 and associated development control plan. Policies and guidelines to support specific issues will also be prepared to ensure that vision and objectives of this strategy are implemented.

To ensure a positive design outcome for Maitland's activity centres and employment clusters, design guidelines will be prepared to support the implementation of this plan. This will provide guidance on a range a design outcomes, such as street layout and design; public spaces and landscaping, safe public realm, mixed use development and higher density building design and car parking. This will present landowners with a clear understanding as to the expectations of Council and ways to achieve the vision and objectives outline in this strategy.



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