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## Branxton Subregion

### Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan

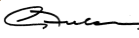

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## Report Revision History

Rev	Date	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Issued to:	Verified by
04	12/02/15	MG <i>Regional Director</i>	GF <i>Senior Consultant</i>	PCG for public exhibition	 <i>Senior Consultant</i>
05	20/5/2016	AW <i>Associate Director</i>	GF <i>Senior Consultant</i>	PCG for comment	 <i>Senior Consultant</i>

This document is preliminary unless approved by a Director of City Plan Strategy & Development

### CERTIFICATION

This report has been authorised by City Plan Strategy & Development, with input from a number of other expert consultants, on behalf of the Client. The accuracy of the information contained herein is to the best of our knowledge not false or misleading. The comments have been based upon information and facts that were correct at the time of writing this report.

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## Preface

The draft *Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan* (the draft Report) was exhibited for public comment during February-March 2016. A number of changes have been made to the draft Report, in response to a range of issues raised by State Agencies and the community in response to the public exhibition of the draft Report.

This Report presents to Council the finalised *Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan* for adoption, reflecting the changes made in response to issues raised during the public exhibition.

### What has changed?

A number of community members raised concerns about how the information was presented within the document. Specific criticisms included the length of the document, repetition of information, and use of technical 'jargon', which made the content difficult to understand. In response to this:

- The Report has been re-structured, with text from some sections re-located within the document; and
- Superfluous and/or repetitive information has been removed.

These changes are illustrated within the Report as follows.

1.1 Heading	draft Report heading and substantive text remains
1.1 Heading 1.1 Heading	draft Report heading has been re-titled
1.1 Heading	New heading and substantive text has been inserted
1.1 Heading	draft Report section / substantive text has been removed

Report text has also been subject to a 'Plain English' edit, to present difficult-to-understand information more clearly. These changes have not been itemised in this Report. Instead, the edited text, as it would be adopted, is presented for Council's review and consideration.

Specific changes to text, tables and figures made to address issues raised during the exhibition period are itemised in a separate enclosure/attachment, and are cross-reference throughout the report, where:

<del>Text</del> Text	specific draft information (text/table/figure) has been replaced
Text	new information has been added
<del>Text</del>	specific draft information has been removed

Drafting note boxes and comments are also provided throughout the Report, as required, to further explain changes.

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Drafting note:  
Example

## Executive Summary

The Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan aims to guide the future development of the Branxton Subregion (the Subregion) through a period of higher levels of growth and change. The establishment of a new town at Huntlee, adjacent to North Rothbury, may see the population of the Subregion more than double by 2041. This growth will influence the role and function of the Subregion's traditional settlements at Branxton and Greta.

The Subregion extends across two Local Government Areas and is influenced by a suite of documents aimed at guiding planning decisions. Cessnock and Singleton Councils have taken an integrated approach to planning and managing the delivery of new housing, jobs, services and facilities to realise benefits for communities across the whole Subregion.

The Strategy outlines a vision, objectives and benchmarks for land use planning and development within the Subregion to 2041. It is supported by the Structure Plan, which sets out more detailed considerations for specific growth areas and an indicative program to guide the servicing and release of lands for development in the coming years. Actions to effect the changes identified in the Strategy and Structure Plan have also been identified, and will be prioritised through Councils' work programs.

The Strategy and Structure Plan have been informed by a series of background studies, which are provided separately, as well as inputs from a range of stakeholders and local communities, which have:

- Highlighted residents' priorities to retain the area's rural character and revitalise Branxton's main street.
- Confirmed that there is sufficient land identified for housing to provide for a range of housing types, sizes and locations, including outside Huntlee.
- Confirmed that supplies of local business and light industrial lands are currently meeting demand, however new supplies are needed to cater for the likely demand for additional light industrial land over the life of the Strategy.
- Identified a need to encourage more commercial development in Branxton and Greta's centres to maintain a sufficient level of services for their local communities. This should focus on improving the design of and access to these centres.
- Recognised that the majority of new jobs expected within the Subregion will occur through the development of Huntlee's town centre.
- Confirmed there is already adequate provision of open space for now and into future, with further additions emerging as part of the Huntlee development.

Recommendations about how to achieve the vision for the Subregional Land Use Strategy are:

- Adopt objectives and principles to guide the settlement pattern, supply of land and location of future development to ensure the maintenance of an adequate supply of land, and direct population growth to planned and serviced areas to more efficiently utilise existing infrastructure and reduce the sprawl associated with the rezoning of rural land.
- Follow Growth Area plans for each of the settlements, by amending planning controls to manage land uses and built form.
- Focus on the identification of up to 5.1ha of local industrial land to meet the short-medium term demands, and take steps to release the underutilised zoned land.



More detailed staging of these principles is addressed in the recommendations of the Branxton Subregional Structure Plan, and specifically for the period 2016 – 2021 as follows:

- Pursue the land release program for 2016-2021, and evaluate and review the program for the following periods.
- During this period, Cessnock Council should
  - implement the Branxton Town Centre Master Plan
  - investigate and rezone industrial land at Branxton
  - amend planning controls to encourage seniors housing and other small lot housing near Branxton and Greta local centres
  - Review development guidelines to encourage 10 dwellings/ha in low density areas and 15 dwellings/ ha in medium density areas
  - Rezone serviced R5 land in Greta to low density residential
- During this period, Cessnock and Singleton Councils should work together to
  - Prepare a joint Section 94 plan to address local infrastructure requirements
  - Liaise with utility providers to ensure that capacity is retained for forecast growth.

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Appendix	Document	Prepared by
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B	Urban Open Space and Recreation	CPSD
C	Review of Expressions of Interest	CPSD

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background 1.1 Background and 1.2 Purpose

The Hunter Region is changing. The opening of the Hunter Expressway in March 2014 and the staged development of Huntlee's New Town, in particular, are anticipated to dramatically influence growth and change within the Branxton Subregion (the Subregion) (**Figure 1**). These regionally significant projects are expected to attract more people to live in the Subregion, and substantially change how people move through and around the area.

To prepare for this change, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment provided funding to Cessnock City Council and Singleton Council to jointly prepare a land use strategy and structure plan for the Subregion, supported by a masterplan for Branxton's Town Centre (this Project). City Plan Strategy and Development was appointed to deliver this Project on the Councils' behalf.

This was the first Subregional Strategy in the Hunter Region to be prepared collaboratively between two Councils and the State government.

### 1.2 Structure of this Report and associated documents 1.3 Scope of the Project and 1.5 Methodology

This report outlines a land use strategy and structure plan for the Subregion to 2041:

- Part A provides an overview of the opportunities and challenges facing the Subregion to establish a context for long-term planning.
- Part B sets out the Land Use Strategy, with long-term directions for the Subregion's settlement pattern, housing and employment lands, open space and rural areas.
- Part C identifies a Structure Plan for the Subregion, providing more detailed directions for growth and change in commercial centres, residential areas, supported by an indicative land release program.
- Part D provides a list of actions for Councils to undertake that will support the delivery of the Strategy and Structure Plan's recommendations.

A separate Masterplan for Branxton local centre has also been prepared to support its transition from a Highway town to a local centre. This recognises the influence of the recent opening of the Hunter Expressway and the planned emergence of Huntlee's Town Centre within the Subregion. The Masterplan establishes a vision for Branxton's local centre, identifies a preferred indicative layout to guide future development and provides recommendations to improve the public domain, particularly along the main street.

The Strategy and Structure Plan outlined in this Report are based on a series of background studies completed between 2014-15. These were exhibited alongside the *draft Branxton Subregional Strategy and Structure Plan*, and are available separately from Council.

### 1.3 Public and stakeholder involvement ~~2.3 Community engagement results and 1.5 Methodology~~

A range of initiatives were undertaken to involve stakeholders and local communities in the process to prepare the Strategy and Structure Plan.

A community survey was conducted in April 2015 to identify predominant community values, concerns and aspirations for the future of the Subregion. In total, 275 responses were received.

A Working Group was established in July 2015, with representatives from State Agencies, Local Government and the local community. Preliminary ideas and concepts for the Strategy and Structure Plan were presented to this group for consideration during meetings held in July and November 2015.

The above information was used to prepare the *draft Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan*, which was exhibited for public comment for six weeks between January and March 2016 alongside the *draft Branxton Town Centre Masterplan*. In total, 19 written submissions were received from State agencies, community groups and individual community members providing feedback to the Strategy and Structure Plan. This Report reflects changes made in response to that feedback.

### 1.4 Application and effect

The Subregion extends to approximately 150 square kilometres, and is located approximately 50 kilometres west of Newcastle, in the middle of the Hunter Region of New South Wales. It straddles the two local government areas of Cessnock and Singleton. The boundary of the Subregion, to which the Strategy and Structure Plan apply, is illustrated in **Figure 1**.

The Strategy and Structure Plan are intended to provide a basis for discussions between Council, the State Government, stakeholders and the broader community when planning for the future of the Subregion. They do not, in themselves, have a statutory role, but may help to inform the preparation of new planning controls including land use zoning amendments made under the LEP, guidelines provided in the DCP, or Local Contributions Plans.

### 1.5 Monitoring and review ~~1.4 Implementation and review~~

Councils will regularly review and update the Strategy and Structure Plan. This review will be informed by a monitoring framework that considers, at minimum:

- Changes to population and demographic growth projections for the Hunter Region;
- The delivery of new residential subdivisions and dwellings in established and new release areas within the Subregion;
- The availability of lands zoned to support employment-generating uses, including in activity centres and industrial areas within the Subregion; and
- The availability and capacity of urban infrastructure to accommodate growth.

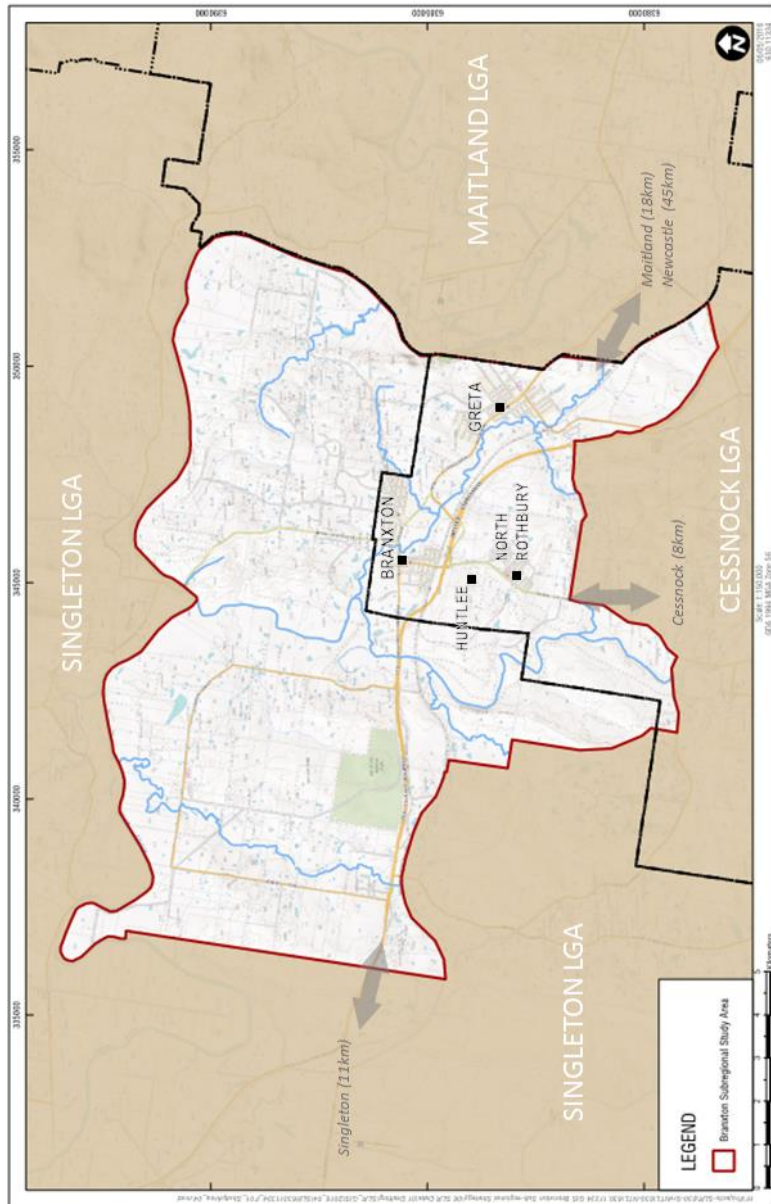



Figure 1: Subregional boundary Figure 4: Study area

Commented [AW2]: Study area boundary amended at Tucker's Lane, Greta (Issue 9)



## Part A – ~~Summary of Planning Considerations~~ ~~State of the Subregion~~

### **Drafting note:**

This Part consolidates information previously provided in draft Report sections:

- 2.1 Snapshot of the Branxton Subregion
- 2.2 Strategic Planning Context; and
- 3.1 Constraints affecting the Study Area.

The following information is available in the Background Report, and has been removed from the final Strategy report:

- Bushfire (previously provided in Section 3.1)

## 2 Settlement and population

### 2.1 Snapshot of the Branxton Subregion

The Subregion, within Wonnarua country, has been occupied since around 11,000 BP<sup>1</sup>. Colonial settlement began from the early 1820s, when the area was opened for farming. This included the establishment of vineyards by George Wyndham in the 1830s on the west bank of the Hunter River. The Dalwood vineyard grew to be the second largest vineyard in the world by 1853<sup>2</sup>, and is considered to be the oldest vineyard in Australia.

The first subdivision was in Greta in 1842 to establish a service centre for a scattering of settlers and timber getters. Land subdivision in Branxton began in 1849, straddling the New England Highway. Settlement continued at a rapid pace as mines and rail lines opened in the late 1860s, and growth in the Subregion has ever since been heavily influenced by the development of the Hunter's mining industry.

The importance of coal mining to the Subregion's heritage includes a memorial on Wine Country Drive to the Rothbury Colliery riot that took place in 1929, when police and miners clashed over the use of scab labour at the colliery during the Northern Coal Lockout. One miner was killed, and a number of miners and police were injured.

The Greta Army Camp, on Camp Road, was established in 1941 and was one of the largest in New South Wales. It was the training site for thousands of recruits, including those that served on the Kokoda Track. This was later converted to a migrant camp accommodating up to 10,000 European migrants at any one time. The camp closed in the early 1960s, with many migrants choosing to settle permanently in the local area. Strong local family connections remain to European countries, including Poland and Italy.

In more recent years, development in the Subregion has remained steady. Major employment opportunities in the mining industry have moved northward to the Upper Hunter coalfields. Service-based jobs have consolidated southward toward Newcastle. The New England Highway continues to be beneficial for residents working in other areas. This, coupled with an attractive rural outlook, continues to drive demands for new housing in the area.

Land was identified in 2013 to establish a new town at Huntlee, in line with the NSW Government's strategy for the Lower Hunter region. This new town is intended to accommodate regional-level population growth anticipated over the coming decades, and recognises the advantages afforded by the Subregion's location, halfway between Newcastle and the Upper Hunter. The opening of the Hunter Expressway to traffic in 2014 further enhances connections between these two major economic and employment areas through the Subregion, and is expected to give rise to transformative change within the Subregion over the next 25+ years.

### 2.1 Future population growth projections

#### Projected population

The NSW Government regularly updates population, household and dwelling projections to consider how the population is expected to change in each Local Government area in the coming decades. This Strategy uses the State Government projections released in 2014 as they apply to Cessnock and Singleton to consider future population growth scenarios for the Subregion.

Whilst population growth rates within the Subregion have historically been relatively low, the emergence of Huntlee and the increased accessibility afforded by the Hunter Expressway are expected to lead to a much higher level of in-migration in the coming decades. This will be dependent on a range of factors, including employment demands in

<sup>1</sup> Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions on behalf of Cessnock City Council (2014) *Cessnock Local Government Area Aboriginal Heritage Study*

<sup>2</sup> NSW Government State Heritage Office (1997) *Dalwood House and surrounds of Wyndham Estate: Statement of Significance* Database no. 5045253, File no. S90/01295-HC 32187-S92/01003

the Upper Hunter and Newcastle and the availability of comparative housing choices in surrounding areas, particularly in and around Maitland.

Huntlee has been planned to ultimately accommodate a population of around 21,000, and inaugural stages of development have commenced. To account for uncertainties around the pace of population growth associated with this development, the Strategy considers separate projections for the Huntlee catchment and for the balance of the Subregion, which predominantly includes communities in Branxton, East Branxton, North Branxton and Greta.

Population projections for the Study Area are shown in **Table 1**. This shows that the population of the Subregion will more than double in the Strategy timeframe to 2041. The development of Huntlee is expected to account over 80% of this growth. Under these growth projections, 44% of the Subregion's population would be living in Huntlee by 2041.

These population growth projections underpin Strategy directions for housing and employment in **Part B**.

**Table 1. Projected population - Branxton Subregion**

Projected Population at yr	2011	2021	2031	2041	Change: 2011 - 2041
Huntlee	0	3,326	6,370	7,772	7,772
	0%	27.7%	40.5%	44.0%	
Balance of Subregion	8,215	8,721	9,343	9,877	1,662
	100%	72.3%	59.5%	56.0%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,215</b>	<b>12,047</b>	<b>15,713</b>	<b>17,649</b>	<b>9,434</b>

SOURCE: BTS, 2014 using Department of Planning & Environment's 2014 NSW population, household and dwelling projections, and ABS 2011 Census data

### 3. Environmental considerations ~~3.1 Constraints affecting the Study Area~~

Protecting the Subregion's natural environment, natural resources and heritage will continue to be important considerations for land use and development planning and decision-making. Many of these considerations are subject to their own legislative frameworks or State-level planning controls.

A range of planning issues are considered in more detail in the Background Report, with key considerations summarised below for:

- Topography and landform, and associated issues with slope, flooding and visual sensitivity;
- Biodiversity;
- Rural lands and resources, including issues associated with the production of agricultural, mineral and energy resources; and
- Heritage and character, including management considerations to protect features and items that reflect the area's Indigenous and colonial history.

These features may place constraints on future development potential within the Subregion, and will be subject to further investigation as part of the ongoing planning process. **Figure 3** identifies areas that may be subject to one or more of these constraints, based on information that is currently available, in order to provide a context for identifying lands suitable for accommodating future growth and development in the Strategy.

#### 3.1 Topography and landform

The Subregion's topography and landform heavily influence its settlement pattern and define its rural character.

##### 3.1.1 Slope

Some parts of the Subregion are steeply sloped, which increases erosion potential and generally relate to a highly exposed location with visual sensitivity. Clearing vegetation from steep slopes is restricted by the *Native Vegetation Act 1993*, in order to manage environmental risks. For this reason, land with slope greater than 18 degrees is generally considered to preclude any form of development.

##### 3.1.2 Flooding

Many parts of the Subregion are heavily floodprone, with risks arising from the Hunter River and its tributaries, including Black Creek, and Anvil Creek, as well as from overland flows during storm events. The Hunter River has a particularly severe flood history, and recent studies have shown a high level of variability in flood behaviour over time. Storm patterns in the Hunter region are expected to result in more frequent and severe events in coming decades.

A number of flood studies have been undertaken for parts of the Subregion, but the full extent of flood risk channel or overland flooding has not yet been fully identified for the whole of the area. At the time of writing, flood modelling is underway as part of broader floodplain risk management studies in the Lower Hunter. Recent developments within the Subregion, including residential developments and the Hunter Expressway, should be taken into account as part of these studies.

The NSW Government's Flood Prone Land Policy is implemented by Local Government through the preparation of floodplain risk management plans. Flood management requirements and programs to prepare risk management plans vary between the two LGAs within the Subregion. This is an ongoing challenge for comprehensively planning in

**Commented [AW3]:** Text updated to more directly acknowledge flood risk (Issues 43 and 56)



localities like East Branxton and Leconfield, where development areas straddle LGA boundaries. Closer collaboration between Councils to prepare floodplain risk management plans for localities within the Subregion would assist in alleviating these inconsistencies.

In 2014, Cessnock City Council adopted an interim flood planning level for residential development in Branxton, applying to the suburbs of Branxton, East Branxton and Huntlee. This imposes a higher-than-normal freeboard due to uncertainties about flood risks. Future planning should consider establishing similar controls for other parts of the Subregion, and for other uses including commercial and industrial.

The risk of flooding to people and property will continue to be sequentially addressed through planning investigations to rezone land and determine development applications.

## 3.2 Biodiversity ~~Environmental conservation~~

The clearing of any lands for development, including to accommodate urban, agricultural or mineral extraction activities, has the potential to impact on biodiversity values. Key considerations within the Study Area will include any impacts to:

- Existing conservation areas. This includes the Belford National Park and lands proposed to be dedicated for conservation under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (including "Persoonia Park") as part of the Voluntary Planning Agreement between Huntlee, the (then) Minister for Environment and Climate Change and the Minister for Planning. The conservation lands identified in Huntlee have similar ecological values to the National Parks. These lands are protected from development and will ultimately be dedicated to the National Park estate.
- Native vegetation of high conservation value. This includes vegetation types that have been over-cleared or occur within over-cleared landscapes. This will be relevant in the Study Area due to its long history of agricultural uses.
- Threatened ecological communities and key habitat. A large portion of the Study Area is already known to contain vegetation listed as 'Endangered Ecology Community' (EEC) under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

Development that impacts on ecological values should be avoided as a first principle. Mechanisms for managing the impacts on threatened species are contained in State legislation and include on-site conservation (through zoning or other property restrictions) but also enable off-site conservation in certain circumstances.

Proposals for development or activities that require land to be cleared will be subject to further assessment, in line with the current national and state frameworks. Clearing of listed EECs, in particular, will require extensive environmental assessment and may need approval from State and/or local government. Other vegetation communities or locations within the Study Area may also require protection because of their ecological value (e.g. vegetation corridors, riparian land).

### 3.3 Rural lands and resources

The majority of the Subregion is characterised by rural lands, which have traditionally been important to the production of a range of commodities. These lands continue to be the focus of non-urban development and activities that drive local economic development and employment opportunities within the Subregion. They also contribute to the rural outlook so highly valued by residents and visitors.

#### 3.3.1 Agricultural lands and agribusiness Significant Agricultural Land and (part) Conflicting land-uses

Agriculture continues to be a predominant land use within the Study Area, as well as a defining element of the area's economy, employment and rural character. Identifying and protecting lands and resources to support the ongoing success of local agricultural industries within the Subregion will be an ongoing consideration.

Lands within the Study Area have already been identified as strategically important by the State Government as:

- Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL), along the alluvial floodplains of the Hunter River; and
- Part of the Viticulture Critical Industry Cluster (CIC), including vineyards in Belford and near Hermitage Road.

Recent State and Local Government studies<sup>3</sup> have also identified agricultural lands within the Subregion as particularly important to sustaining productive beef, dairy and poultry industries. However, the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) advises that existing poultry sheds within the Study Area are considered likely to be phased out over the next 10 years.

Land use conflicts can occur:

- when agriculture impacts on residential uses;
- when other land users impact on farmers; and
- between different agricultural industries.

To minimise the potential for land use conflict, the siting of future urban development, in particular, should consider the potential impacts to existing, or potential future agricultural industries. This may include requirements to assess land use conflicts and identify measures to manage adverse impacts, noting:

- The State Government has guidelines in place for undertaking Land Use Conflict Risk Assessments, which may assist landholders, developers and regulators to avoid and manage land use conflicts in the early stages of planning.
- Land within 500m of poultry sheds is generally considered unsuitable for residential development due to odours, noise and biological hazards. Intensifying residential development within these buffers is not considered appropriate, and will be an important consideration when planning for growth around East Branxton and Greta.

**Commented [AW4]:** Text updated to refer to additional evidence and policy guidelines (Issue 1)

**Commented [AW5]:** Reference to limited timeframe for poultry industries in the Subregion deleted (Issue 2)

<sup>3</sup> NSW Department of Primary Industries (2012) Agriculture Industry Mapping: Upper Hunter Pilot; and Hunter Councils (2013) Mapping Important Agricultural Lands in the Lower Hunter region of NSW

### 3.3.2 Mineral and energy resources and extractive industries ~~Mineral resources and extraction~~

The Hunter region is a nationally important location for the production of mineral and energy resources, and is the oldest coal-producing region in Australia. While coal mining activities have concluded within the Subregion, mining, and related sectors, continue to be important employment industries for residents living in the area.

In recent years, the NSW Government has undertaken a range of initiatives to diversify and improve the security of the State's energy supply. This has included pilot projects to produce coal seam gas resources. The Subregion is known to have the geological potential to produce coal seam gas. Licenses previously granted to explore this potential within the Subregion were bought back by the NSW Government in 2015.

There is only one operational quarry located within the Subregion, at North Rothbury. This has an expected life to at least 2021 (NSW Department of Industry – Geological Survey of New South Wales; 2015). A 'transition area' has already been established around the identified resource for land use planning purposes. This transition area identifies the possibility of potential impacts from quarry operations on sensitive uses, and will continue to limit the potential for new development to encroach on the identified resource area during its operational life.

The long history of mining in the area poses a potential risk of mine subsidence. There is no proclaimed mine subsidence district affecting the Subregion, but isolated areas of mine subsidence may occur. The Mine Subsidence Board has already advised on restrictions to development in Huntlee, and remediation will be undertaken prior to development. This issue should continue to be prioritised at the rezoning stage to identify and manage the risk to subsequent developments.

### 3.3.3 Potential contamination

The potential for contamination arising from previous land uses within the Subregion include, but are not limited to:

- Poultry sheds and other intensive agricultural activities
- Quarry and mine sites;
- Industrial lands;
- Landfill, waste management and waste transfer areas; and
- Disused service stations.

The presence of contamination does not preclude development outright, but it does impose a cost to redevelopment. The viability of redevelopment for urban uses must consider the financial implications of remediation required for the proposed land use. Future developments must assess and manage the potential for contamination, and there is a statutory requirement for the potential for contamination to be considered at any rezoning or development application stage.

### 3.4 Heritage and character

#### 3.4.1 Indigenous heritage

Evidence of the area's Indigenous settlement history remains within the landscape. The Cessnock Local Government Area Wide Aboriginal Heritage Study (AHMS 2014) recently identified the Subregion as having a very high prevalence of Aboriginal archaeological features (see extract below). A search of the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System reports in excess of 100 known Aboriginal sites having previously been recorded within the Study Area.

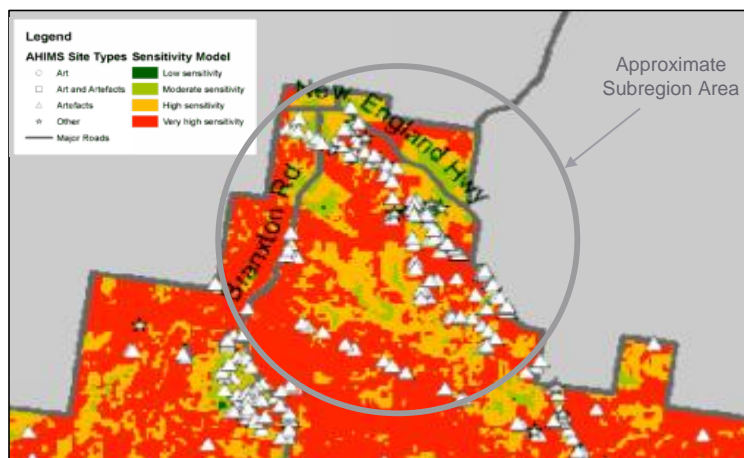


Figure 2: Areas and features important to Indigenous heritage (extracted from AHMS 2014)

Plate 2: Predictive modelling of Aboriginal archaeological sensitivity

In line with local policy, areas identified as 'moderate', 'high' or 'very high' sensitivity in the predictive model maps will require detailed Aboriginal heritage assessment prior to any development. This will include investigations and consultation with Aboriginal groups to prepare Aboriginal Heritage Management Plans. While this may not preclude opportunities for development, it may identify specific restrictions or management requirements for certain developments.

#### 3.4.2 Rural character and built heritage ~~Rural character and Visual landscape~~

The Subregion's rural character and sense of place is defined by its landform and traditional settlement pattern. This varies from flat to rolling grassed hills and dense patches of native vegetation interspersed with rural housing to historic townships with traditional main streets. The rural views afforded from the New England Highway and Hunter Expressway are particularly important to maintaining the scenic values of this route through the Hunter Valley.

The historic settlements at Branxton and Greta are also integral to the visual experience of this landscape, including when travelling to and between them along the New England Highway, and through the frequent views available within the townships to the surrounding rural landscape.

Greta and Branxton have developed as two distinct, yet closely related destinations, with a strong visual separation created by a combination of landform, distance and intervening rural land uses. The separation between the towns is an important visual gateway to/from the Hunter Expressway (Branxton interchange). The area also contributes towards flood management and provides a buffer to surrounding industries (poultry farms and wastewater treatment facilities). Maintaining a visual separation will preserve these settlements' distinct characters and community identities.

Increased pressure for development along main routes, including the New England Highway and entry points to the Hunter Expressway's Branxton and Allandale interchanges, are anticipated to occur as the Subregion grows. Maintaining the area's attractive rural setting by preserving visual connections to natural landscape features and other heritage areas is important to its residents. It will also provide a point of distinction within the Subregion, to attract visitors from surrounding communities and further afield. Specific consideration should be given to identify and manage development within:

- View corridors to dominant natural landscape features, particularly the Belford National Park and Belford Dome in Lower Belford, the Duguids, Harpers and Walkers Hills in Harpers Hill/Allandale, and the rolling hills and distant mountain views to the north of Branxton;
- The 'urban break' that separates Greta and Branxton, to maintain a greenbelt corridor extending from the Hunter Expressway to Dalwood;
- Historic town centres, and their approaches, particularly the traditional main streets in Branxton and Greta, to maintain the character, scale and heritage features; and
- Historic township settings (generally situated within 2km of historic town centres) to maintain the rural character and setting of the township.

Sensitively designed or lower scale development may assist in achieving these objectives, and provide opportunities to improve the quality of landscaping and built form. These issues may be addressed through more detailed masterplanning or development controls for highly sensitive areas.

### 3.5 Summary of physical constraints and limitations

The environmental considerations outlined above will continue to influence how land is used and developed in the Subregion. **Figure 3** illustrates the known extent of environmental considerations across the Subregion, in relation to lands already zoned for urban and rural residential developments, with:

- Combined constraints mapping showing areas:
  - Identified as National Parks or Reserves, using data collected from the NSW Government;
  - That may possibly contain endangered ecological communities, using data provided by Singleton Council;
  - That are likely to be floodprone, using the 34.2m AHD interim flood planning level applied to Branxton as a benchmark;
  - Identified as Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Lands or Critical Industry Clusters, using data collected from the NSW Government;
  - Identified as buffers to existing industries, including quarries, wastewater treatment facilities and poultry farms using data provided by Councils; and
  - Having a slope greater than 18%.
- Other areas highlighted where additional considerations will be made to maintain rural character by addressing issues relating to visual sensitivity.

With few exceptions, most environmental considerations do not preclude development outright. They may, however, limit the nature or extent of development, or attract specific management requirements. Subsequent planning investigations will identify site-specific limitations or management requirements to address these considerations. These interventions may have cost implications that may influence the feasibility or timing of specific projects.

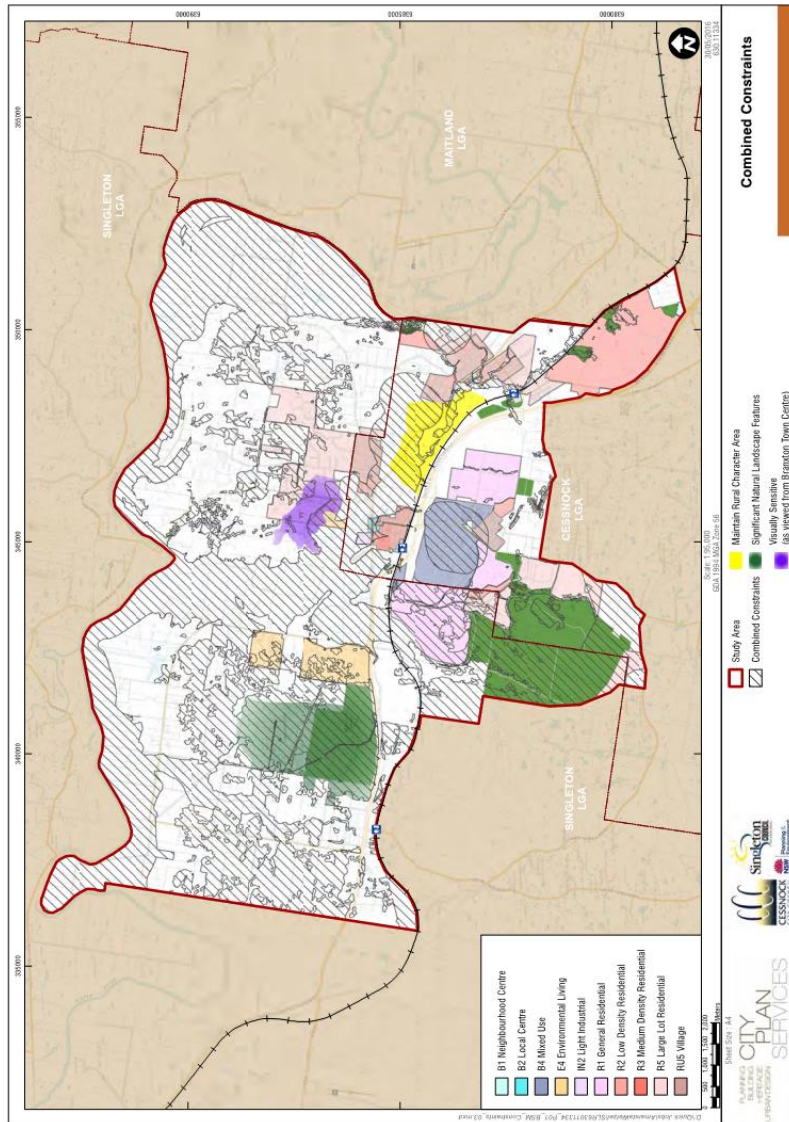


Figure 3: Known extent of environmental considerations across the Subregion Figure 5: Visually Significant Area and Figure 6: Combined Constraints

Commented [AW6]: Buffers to BSAL and CICs removed from mapping (Issue 35)



## 4. Infrastructure

### 4.1 Transport

The Subregion accommodates and caters for a significant volume of traffic along the Hunter Expressway, New England Highway and heavy rail line, which are part of broader national transport systems. Growth demands, and the location of new developments within the Subregion, will continue to be influenced by these major movement networks.

#### 4.1.1 Roads Roads and (part) Conflicting land-uses

The Hunter Expressway opened in 2014 and links Newcastle to the New England Highway. Its convergence with the New England Highway occurs within the Subregion at Belford. It has been established and will continue to be managed as part of a national highway network to maintain efficient transport connections between production areas in regional NSW and major economic gateways at Newcastle, Sydney and Brisbane. This will include limiting interchanges to those six that have already been provided. Two of these occur within the Subregion at Allandale and Branxton, as follows:

- Allandale interchange is a half interchange with east-facing ramps. This exit gives access to Camp Road, Lovedale Road and the wineries, accommodation and dining in the Lovedale area. Traveling north, this exit also gives access to areas towards Harpers Hill.
- Branxton interchange is the most westerly interchange on the Hunter Expressway. It is a full interchange and allows movements in all directions. New roads link the Branxton interchange to Wine Country Drive and to the New England Highway. It is a bypass of the Branxton Town Centre.

The New England Highway was the traditional route through the Subregion, though its role within the Subregion is changing as a result of the Hunter Expressway. Whilst it will continue to accommodate high volumes of traffic northward from Belford, it is expected to cater for lower levels of heavy vehicle traffic, as well as general vehicle traffic to/from Maitland and Newcastle. This is expected to influence the role and function of traditional main streets in Branxton and Greta, which form part of the Highway.

Wine Country Drive provides an important link from the Subregion (including direct connections to the New England Highway and Hunter Expressway) to Cessnock Township via the Vineyards. It is already an important route for tourists and will become increasingly important for local traffic associated with the staged development of a new town at Huntlee. This road has also been planned as the focus for Huntlee's new Town Centre.

The recent opening of the Hunter Expressway is changing the role of the Subregion within the broader Hunter region. The redirection of heavy traffic has also affected how local areas within the Subregion operate. A number of further road modifications are already being planned or are underway within the Subregion, which will have ongoing implications for planning. Collectively, these changes are expected to make the Subregion even more accessible and attractive to a broader catchment, thereby increasing the demand for housing and employment and the importance of infrastructure and service provision.

Future changes to major roads within the Subregion may include:

- Removal of the highway classification along parts of the New England Highway. This will provide Councils and communities greater influence in road design and management, including opportunities to incorporate more street tree planting and landscaping, parking, crossing points and signage. This will be particularly relevant along traditional main streets in Branxton and Greta.
- Duplication of the New England Highway, from the point of its convergence with the Hunter Expressway at Belford to the Golden Highway, providing a divided road with two travel lanes in each direction. This is likely to result in the removal of the heavy vehicle rest stop at Whittingham, thereby increasing the

role of the new rest stop at Branxton. The NSW Government's roads authority will also prepare a corridor strategy for the New England Highway from Beresfield Belford to the Queensland border. This will look at the vision/objectives for the corridor, its function, current performance (and projected performance), and may make future recommendations on the development of the corridor.

- Ongoing improvements to Wine Country Drive, in line with the development of Huntlee. These upgrades will increase traffic capacity, address drainage and road safety issues, and incorporate cycling infrastructure connecting to new residential areas. Further improvements to enhance road connections to Cessnock township from the Hunter Expressway will also be considered.

No specific local design controls (e.g. setbacks or buffers) have been established for these major roads. However, local level planning should consider the potential for noise and other emissions associated with vehicle traffic, noting that the current NSW Road Noise Policy (DECCW, 2011) assigns applicable noise criteria for sensitive receivers within "600 metres from the centerline of the outermost traffic land on each side of the subject road".

**Commented [AW7]:** New England Highway Corridor Strategy boundary amended (Issue 8)

#### 4.1.2 Rail

The heavy rail line running through the Subregion accommodates freight and passenger movements through the Subregion. Freight network operations include those associated with the Hunter Valley Coal Chain, which is one of the busiest freight operations in the world.

Passenger rail services are available within the Subregion from stations at Branxton and Greta. These provide daily connections to major centres southward at Maitland, Newcastle, Sydney, and northward at Singleton and Scone.

National and State level planning will continue to influence the priorities for and role of rail service networks through the Subregion. Key considerations for planning at a local level should be to:

- Support the efficient operation and future growth of rail corridors, including by avoiding or limiting the potential for future land use conflict associated with rail noise and emissions when identifying locations for new development.
- Maintain or improve people's accessibility to train stations. This could include facilitating opportunities for more people to live close to the station, and providing safe and attractive pedestrian and cycling connections to stations from existing or planned residential areas.

**Commented [AW8]:** Additional commentary provided for rail (Issues 13 and 25)

#### 4.2 Water and sewer ~~Water infrastructure, and Sewer infrastructure~~ and (part) ~~Conflicting land uses~~

Hunter Water Corporation (HWC) is currently the relevant water authority for the Subregion. Broader legislative changes are influencing how water and sewerage infrastructure are delivered and managed in NSW. During the Strategy timeframe, HWC is expected to continue operating trunk water and sewerage networks, with an increasing prevalence of private network operators servicing discreet development areas.

All urban areas within the Subregion are connected to water supply networks. With the exception of North Rothbury, all towns and villages within the Subregion are also currently connected to reticulated sewerage.

Growth projections used for planning water and sewerage services have already accounted for the population growth projected at Huntlee. HWC has advised that:

- Regional water supply networks have sufficient capacity to accommodate the population growth currently projected to occur within the Subregion, to 2017/19. Upgrades to trunk infrastructure may be required beyond this period to accommodate further population growth.
- The sewerage network has no capacity constraint to supply sewerage services in the short-term.

A sewage treatment plant is located within the Subregion on the New England Highway, near Miller Park. Local planning will continue to support the efficient operation of this facility to service the growing needs of the Subregion and surrounding areas. This will include consulting with the relevant authority to maintain and manage a minimum 400m buffer to operational areas.

Specific water and sewerage servicing strategies will be implemented for infrastructure and service delivery at Huntlee, as the largest development in the Subregion. These could consider opportunities to extend sewerage connections to North Rothbury to assist in delivering integrated urban infrastructure networks.

## 5. Planning frameworks ~~2.2 Strategic Planning Context~~

Planning for the Subregion will continue to be guided by a range of State and Local Government frameworks. This Strategy and Structure Plan take into account the key matters already outlined in the regional and local strategies and statutory plans that apply to the Subregion, which are summarised below.

Planning is a continual process, and strategies and statutory plans are regularly reviewed and updated. Whilst every effort has been made to reflect current strategic directions relevant to the Subregion, reference should be made to the most recent documents available.

### 5.1 State and regional land use strategies ~~Lower Hunter Regional Strategy 2008, and Upper Hunter Strategic Regional Land Use Plan, and Lower Hunter Regional Conservation Plan~~

The Subregion forms part of the broader Hunter region. Extending across the Cessnock and Singleton LGAs, the Subregion is subject to disparate strategic planning considerations for:

- The Lower Hunter, including the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (NSW Government, 2006) and associated Regional Conservation Plan (NSW Government, 2008), applying to Cessnock LGA; and
- The Upper Hunter, including the Strategic Regional Land Use Plan for the Upper Hunter (NSW Government, 2012), applying to Singleton LGA and parts of the Cessnock LGA that are important to the viticulture industry.

#### 5.1.1 Lower Hunter Regional Strategy

The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy identified three proposed urban areas in the Study Area, being the Huntlee urban release area, Wyndham Street Greta residential extension, and the Anvil Creek/ Greta Migrant Camp development site. Each of these sites has since been rezoned for urban development, with a specific recreation focus for the Greta Migrant Camp. These represent the existing greenfield lands supply within the Subregion, and are expected to be capable of accommodating:

- Up to 7,500 new dwellings and a new Town Centre at Huntlee;
- Around 230 new dwellings at Greta (West and Wyndham Streets); and
- Up to 1,300 new dwellings and major private recreational developments at Greta migrant camp.

At 2016, development activity has started in the Huntlee area, but has yet to begin in Greta or Greta migrant camp.

#### 5.1.2 Lower Hunter Regional Conservation Plan

The Regional Conservation Plan associated with the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy set out a 25-year program to direct and drive conservation planning and conservation efforts. It is a partner document to the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy.

This Plan identifies tools and mechanisms to secure conservation lands and protect wildlife corridors. This has formed the basis for conservation priorities within the Subregion relating to:

- Significant areas of dry forest and woodland, and the enhancement of an east-west habitat linkage for species that uses these communities for refuge during times of inland drought. These communities are very poorly conserved in the Lower Hunter and are under increasing threat from new urban development. Lower Hunter forests around Branxton are of state significance for the

nationally endangered Swift Parrot as well as supporting a suite of typically western avifauna.

- The creation of a new regional conservation area at Huntlee, known as Persoonia Park. Parklands are intended to be transferred to public ownership as part of the planning approvals for Huntlee, and are a biodiversity offset for the balance of the Huntlee urban development.
- The general application of planning principles to create liveable communities whilst conserving biodiversity values. A maintain or improve principle is the benchmark for considering the adequacy of the conservation outcome.

#### 5.1.3 Upper Hunter Strategic Regional Land Use Plan

The Upper Hunter Strategic Regional Land Use Plan identifies lands and considerations important to the future growth and development of agricultural, coal and coal seam gas industries. The intention of this plan is to assist in identifying and addressing land use conflicts between agricultural, coal and coal seam gas industries and with urban areas. Within the Subregion, it applies to all lands in the Singleton LGA and lands west of Huntlee within the Cessnock LGA.

The Upper Hunter Strategic Regional Land Use Plan includes maps of mineral resources and areas of strategic agricultural land. Within the Subregion, these identify areas of biophysical strategic agricultural land and a critical industry cluster of viticultural activity in the Pokolbin district as well as some sites in Belford.

Mining and coal seam gas proposals that are located on strategic agricultural land must go through a Gateway process before a development application is lodged. This process is intended to deliver greater balance and rigour to the assessment process and ensure that the impacts of mining and coal seam gas proposals on agriculture and water resources are assessed at a much earlier stage.

The Upper Hunter Strategic Regional Land Use Plan outlines actions to address challenges facing the Upper Hunter region in relation to infrastructure, economic development and employment, housing and settlement, community health and amenity, natural environment, natural hazards and climate change, and cultural heritage.

Relevant actions in relation to this Subregional strategy are to:

- Protect strategic agricultural land through zoning and LEP provisions;
- Ensure an adequate supply of employment land;
- Ensure an adequate supply of land for residential development and facilitate a range of housing types;
- Locate housing and employment development in areas that can be serviced;
- Ensure that new residential development makes a positive contribution to liveability and character, in accordance with the settlement planning principles identified in the Plan;
- Monitor the supply of residential land and the delivery of new housing, and establish the priorities for the delivery of housing; and
- Zone areas subject to natural hazards appropriate to reflect the risk and limitations of the land.

#### 5.1.4 New approach to regional planning

The NSW Government has recently initiated a new approach to regional strategic planning, which is intended to consolidate strategic planning for the Lower and Upper Hunter areas. A draft Hunter Regional Plan, released in 2015, carries forward many of the strategic directions previously outlined for the Lower Hunter and Upper Hunter areas. These

highlight the importance of the Subregion to achieving regional urban, economic and environmental objectives.

Commented [AW9]: New text provided to reflect recent release of draft Hunter Regional Plan

## 5.2 State planning controls and directions ~~State Environmental Planning Policies and Section 117 Directions~~

The State-level statutory framework, including State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) and directions issued by the Minister for Planning under s117 of the EPA Act, will continue to influence planning and plan-making in the Subregion. Most notably, this includes:

- SEPP Rural Lands, which aims to facilitate the orderly and economic use and development of rural lands for rural and related purposes. This SEPP sets out principles for rural land use planning and identifies statutory requirements for Local Government to address when preparing LEP amendments.
- SEPP Mining, Petroleum Protection and Extractive Industries, which aims to facilitate the orderly and economic use and development of land containing mineral resources. This SEPP establishes a gateway assessment process for certain resource extraction to recognise the importance to agricultural resources and to ensure a balanced use of land by potentially completing primary industries. The strategically important agricultural lands are identified on maps in the SEPP.

A series of directions, issued by the Minister for Planning, must be considered in the preparation of LEP amendments. An LEP amendment, such as a planning proposal that is inconsistent with the terms of these directions may still be considered where it can be justified by a Local or Subregional strategy.

## 5.3 LGA-wide land use strategies ~~Cessnock Citywide Settlement Strategy 2010 and Singleton Land Use Strategy 2008~~

Cessnock and Singleton Councils each maintain a LGA-wide strategy to inform land use and development planning within their jurisdictions, including:

- The Cessnock Citywide Settlement Strategy (2010), which gives effect to the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy; and the
- Singleton Land Use Strategy (2008).

These strategies give effect to the regional-level priorities identified in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy 2006, and further identify local priorities for land use and development planning.

### 5.3.1 Cessnock Citywide Settlement Strategy (2010)

The Cessnock Citywide Settlement Strategy (2010) recognised the new release area at Huntlee and supported cohesive planning for North Rothbury to form part of the Huntlee new town development. It also supported new release areas at Greta (West and Wyndham Streets) and Greta Migrant Camp as part of a broader growth corridor extending to Newcastle Wyndham Street Greta, and Anvil Creek/Greta Migrant Camp. These areas have all been rezoned.

Infill housing opportunities were prioritised:

- In Branxton's centre, to be met through a combination of redevelopment, urban consolidation and the rezoning of small areas of land within the urban footprint. It estimated the centre could be capable of providing up to 50 additional dwellings to 2031.
- In existing residential areas in Branxton located between the rail line and New England Highway (currently zoned R3 Medium Density), by increasing

permissible dwelling densities. It estimated that this area could be capable of providing up to 100 additional dwellings to 2031.

Subsequent investigations have identified that the potential capacity for growth in Branxton will require further consideration of flood constraints, in particular.

Limited infill housing opportunities were also identified in existing residential areas in Greta, including areas currently zoned R5 Large lot residential that can be serviced. The strategy intended to maintain the low-density character of the area, recognising that it is not immediately serviced by a commercial centre. In particular, it discouraged multiple dwelling housing, including dual occupancies.

### 5.3.2 Singleton Land Use Strategy

The Singleton Land Use Strategy (2008), identified four candidate areas for rural residential development in the Subregion, at:

- North Branxton (3 candidate areas), adjoining existing rural residential estates; and
- Lower Belford (1 candidate area).

At the time, the Singleton Land Use Strategy estimated these areas to be capable of providing up to 315 additional rural residential dwellings, representing approximately 10 years' supply. The strategy also suggests there is potential for further expansion of the identified candidate areas and/or increasing lot densities to increase the potential yield of these areas, so that there would be no need to consider additional areas for rural residential developments to 2031.

Planning investigations to establish new controls for lands within these candidate areas have progressed, noting that:

- Investigations are complete for the Branxton North East candidate area. This area has been entirely rezoned R5 (Large Lot Residential), and is subject to detailed masterplanning.
- One lot remains in the Branxton North West candidate area, offering limited potential to provide rural residential lots. The remainder of the candidate area is subject to detailed masterplanning.
- The Branxton South West candidate area, off McMullins Rd, remains. The site is currently used for agricultural activities, and may still, in future, accommodate residential uses.
- The majority of the Lower Belford Lower Belford has been rezoned E4 (Environmental Living), and part of the area is subject to detailed masterplanning. Two adjoining lots remain within this candidate area, which could still provide a limited number of environmental living/rural residential lots.

### 5.3.3 Reviewing and updating local land use strategies

Wherever possible, the Subregional Strategy and Structure Plan reflect Councils' current land use strategies. However, both Councils' LGA-wide land use strategies are currently subject to review and are expected to be updated in 2016/17. Updated LGA-wide strategies will endeavour to reflect the Subregional planning framework, but may identify new priorities, including investigation areas. Where inconsistencies occur, the most recently adopted Strategy will prevail.



#### 5.4 Local planning controls ~~Branxton Urban Design Framework~~ and ~~Local environmental plans~~, and ~~Development control plans~~

Two local environmental plans (LEPs) apply to the Subregion: the *Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011* and *Singleton Local Environmental Plan 2013*. These contain broad objectives and aims for the entire LGA, as well as zoning, tables of permitted land uses, subdivision and built form controls, as well as local provisions in relation to environmental, natural hazard and infrastructure requirements. The land use zoning plan for the Subregion is shown in **Figure 4**.

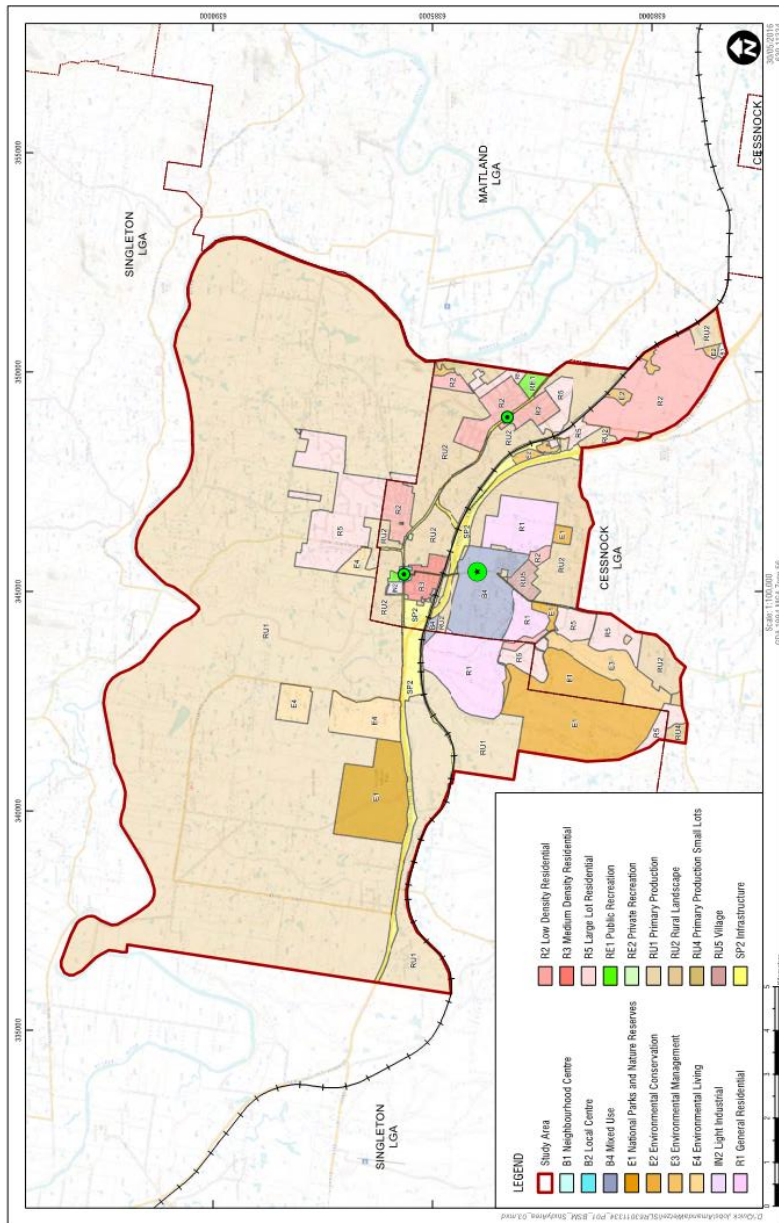


Figure 4: Land Use Zoning (correct as of April 2016) Figure 4: Land-zoning

Three development control plans (DCPs) apply to the Subregion: Cessnock Development Control Plan 2010, Singleton Development Control Plan 2014 and Huntlee Development Control Plan 2013. Each of these gives effect to LEP controls, and provide guidance on the minimum requirements for building, subdivision and land development. In addition to general controls for all developments, specific guidance within the Subregion is provided, including:

- Indicative layouts and staging plans for major release areas (Huntlee, and West and Wyndham Streets) and a number of rural residential sites in the Subregion (North Branxton and Belford); and
- Detailed controls and standards for development at Huntlee.

Current indicative plans are illustrated below for developments at Huntlee (**Figure 5**), West and Wyndham Streets, Greta (**Figure 6**) and North Branxton (known as Elderslie Road South, Radford Park, Bellevue and Branxton North East estates) and Lower Belford (known as Murray's Rise estate) (**Figure 7**).

Development in the Branxton area is also guided by the *Branxton Urban Design Framework*, which was adopted by Cessnock Council in 2010. This sets out an integrated design vision for the desired future development of Branxton's urban areas. It was established in response to the changes anticipated following construction of the Hunter Expressway. The Branxton Urban Design Framework aims to maintain an attractive centre with a strong village atmosphere. It identifies principles for future access and movement, gateway sites, and a richer public realm, and for four distinct character precincts (**Figure 8**).

The varying development controls and standards outlined in disparate local statutory frameworks (LEPs and DCPs) will be an ongoing challenge for planning in the Subregion. For example, within the same standard zone for R5 Large Lot Residential, there are differences in the permitted land uses between the Cessnock and Singleton LEPs. There is an opportunity for greater Council collaboration to unify planning controls applying to localities straddling LGA boundaries within Subregion.

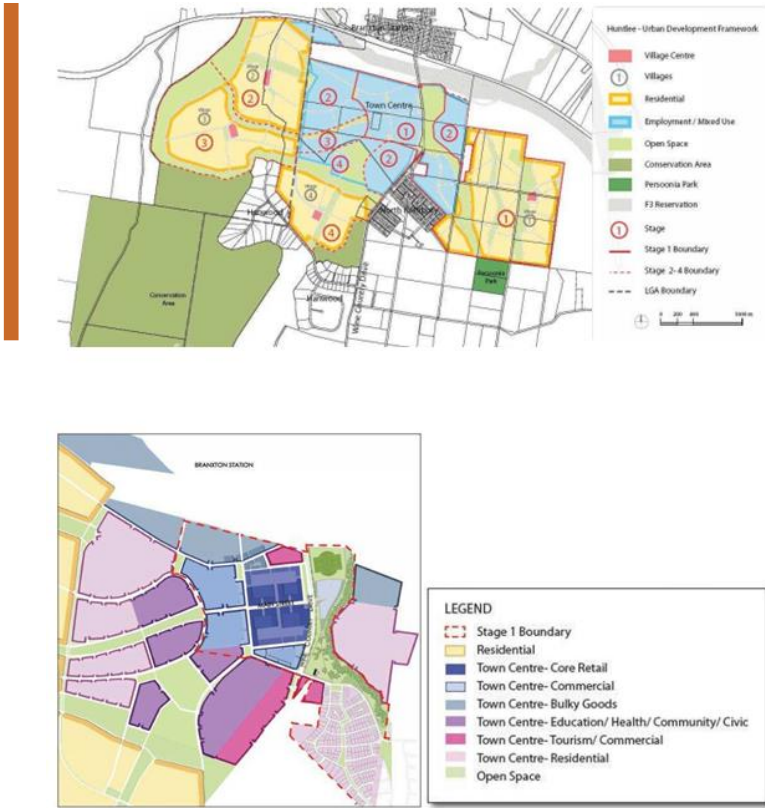


Figure 5: (top) Huntlee Indicative Layout and Staging Plan (bottom) Huntlee Town Centre indicative Layout Plan (extracts from Huntlee DCP, 2013) Plate 3: Huntlee Indicative Staging Plan

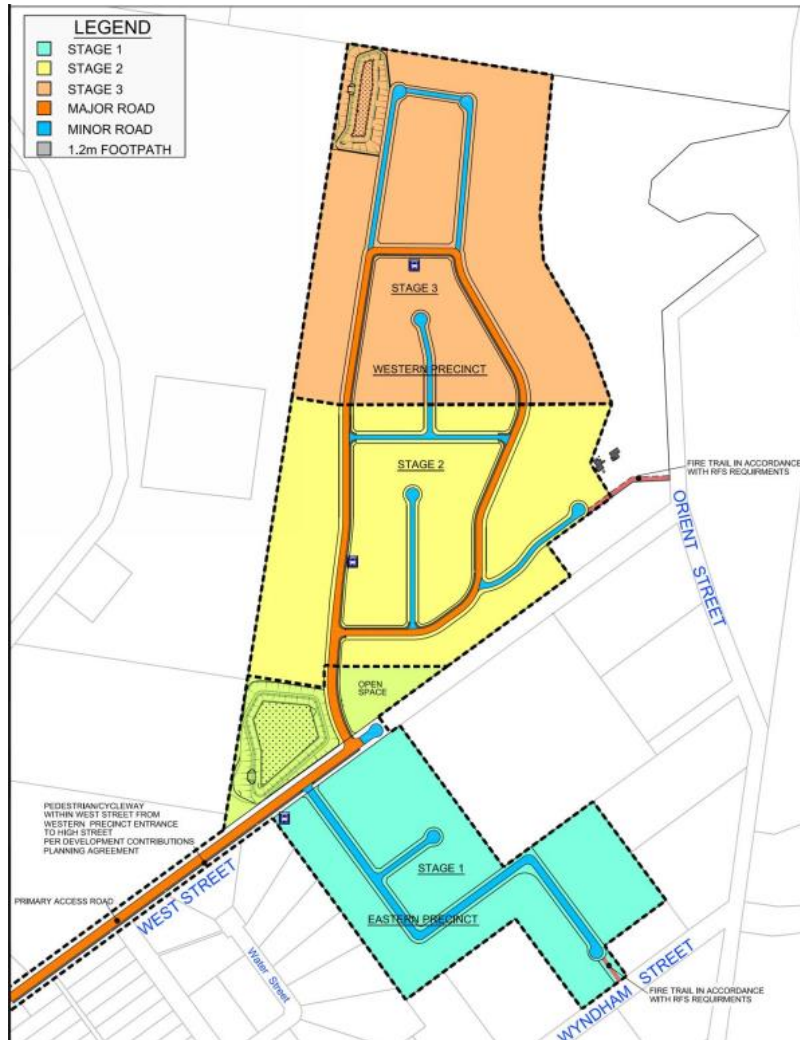


Figure 6: West and Wyndham Streets Indicative Layout Plan (Cessnock DCP, March 2014)

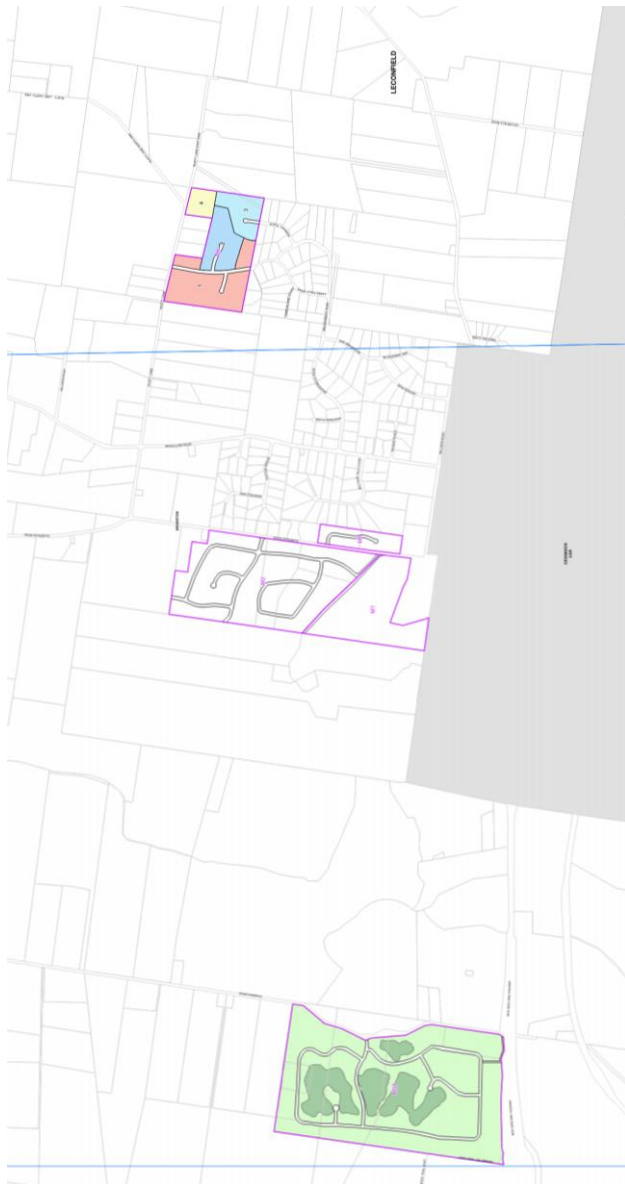


Figure 7: North Branxton and Belford Indicative Layout Plans (extract from Singleton DCP 2014)

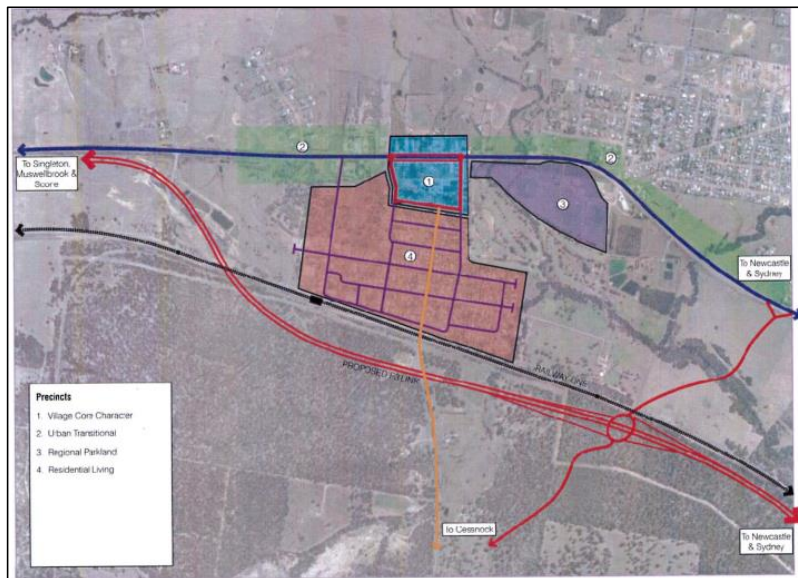


Figure 8: Branxton's four character precincts (extracted from Branxton Urban Design Framework, 2010)

Plate 1: Branxton Urban Design Framework Precincts



## Part B – Land Use Strategy

### **Drafting note:**

This Part reflects information previously provided in draft Report Part B, with the exception of:

- Section 3.1 Constraints affecting the Study Area, which has been re-located into Part A;
- Contextual information relating to the Subregion's settlements and centres, previously presented in sections 3.2.1 (housing) Role of each centre, and 3.3.1 (employment) Role of each Centre, which has been consolidated into Appendix A; and
- Existing open and recreational facilities audit, previously presented in section 3.4 Open Space Strategy, which has been re-located to Appendix B.

The following information is available in the Background Report, and has been removed from the final Strategy report:

- Section 3.2.4 Review of existing zoned land (housing)
- Section 3.2.5 Potential new areas for housing development
- Section 3.3.4 Review of existing zoned employment land



## 6. Vision and objectives ~~4.2 Vision~~ and ~~4.3 Principles for growth~~

The vision for the Subregion offers a picture of what the Councils are jointly looking to achieve for communities over time. It is captured in three statements describing the optimal desired future outcome for the area. These statements are intended to guide and inspire planning and development over twenty or more years.

### ***There is Flourishing Development***

*Growth is high. A new major centre is a hive of business activity. Housing options are diverse. It is a place for investment and prosperity. Local jobs are in new business sectors like education and professional services.*

### ***There is a Strong Sense of Community Wellbeing***

*Infrastructure supports the needs of its communities. There is a high level of active and healthy activities like walking, cycling and playgrounds. The environment is clean and safe. Roads and bridges are connected and people can travel to and through the Subregion efficiently.*

### ***There is a Vibrant and Distinctive Character***

*Culture and history are acknowledged and respected. Main streets are busy, and there are many reasons to visit. It is a place that is distinctive and well-recognised beyond the Hunter Region. People of all ages are in the Subregion because the services are there. It is an attractive place to live.*

To support the vision, the Strategy and Structure Plan have been prepared to achieve six objectives, to:

1. Establish a settlement pattern and hierarchy of activity centres that foster a sense of place for existing communities and support quality lifestyles.
2. Provide suitable supplies of land, in appropriate locations to support residential, community and employment activities to meet forecast population and employment growth of the Subregion.
3. Support the coordination of land and infrastructure developments, to assist in the appropriate provision and equitable access to community facilities, open space areas and employment centres for future residents.
4. Facilitate inter and intraregional transport links within the Subregion, recognising its role as an important National through-route whilst enabling more active movement connections between local areas.
5. Recognise the importance of environmentally sensitive and important agricultural areas and, where possible, avoid land use conflicts arising from demands for urban growth.
6. Promote a range of residential densities to suit the needs of the community and support diverse lifestyle choices, whilst maintaining the rural setting and character of the Subregion.

## 7. Settlement pattern

Recognising the unique capacity, role and function of each settlement area in the Subregion to accommodate growth and change will support efficient use and management of land and infrastructure.

This section of the Strategy identifies the approach that will be taken to maintain adequate supplies of lands zoned and serviced for development in and around the Subregion's settlement areas to accommodate the anticipated demands to 2041.

- **Direction 1: Settlement pattern** directs future growth and change across the already well-established settlement pattern, illustrated in **Figure 9**. The anticipated future role and character of each settlement area within the Subregion is described in **Appendix A**.
- **Direction 2: Maintaining land supplies** describes how land supplies for residential and employment uses will be monitored and regularly reviewed against the benchmarks provided in **Table 3**.
- Some modifications may be made to the existing supply of urban lands within these settlements to accommodate growth and change, but no new settlement areas are considered to be required to meet anticipated demands within the Subregion to 2041. Investigation areas, identified in the Structure Plan, will be prioritised for rezoning considerations. Proposals for development outside of these areas will be considered in line with the policies identified in **Direction 3: Identifying lands suitable for development**.

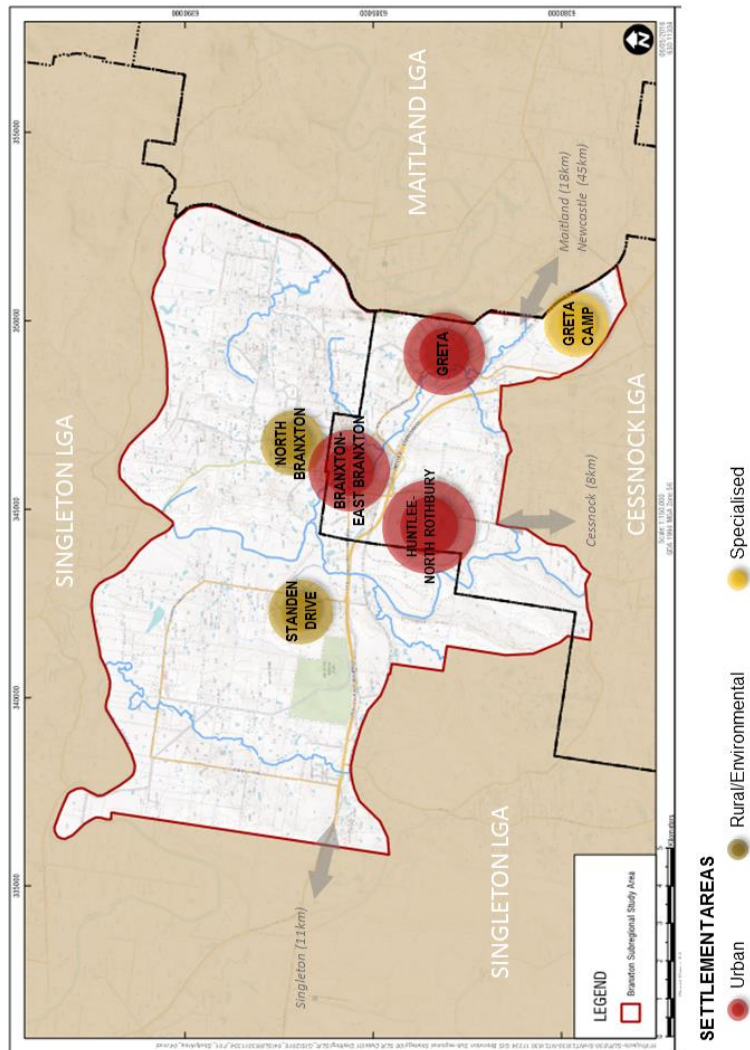


Figure 9: Subregional settlement areas

## 7.1 Settlement directions (part) ~~3.2.6 [housing] principles and growth area recommendations~~

### Direction 1: Settlement pattern

<b>Objectives:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify the preferred future settlement pattern for the Subregion.</li> <li>To identify the roles of, and relationships between settlements.</li> <li>To support a network of accessible centres.</li> </ul>
<b>Policies:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growth to accommodate residential, rural residential, commercial and industrial developments within the Subregion will be prioritised within the settlement areas identified in <b>Table 2</b>.</li> <li>No new settlement areas will be considered within the Subregion during the Strategy timeframe.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a hierarchy of centres in the Structure Plan.</li> <li>Identify preferred growth areas in the Structure Plan.</li> </ul>

Table 2: Subregional settlement areas and benchmarks to 2041

Type	Locality	Benchmark
<i>Regional Town/City</i>	<i>Nearest are Cessnock; Singleton; and Maitland</i>	<i>Not applicable, none are located within the Subregion.</i>
Town	Huntlee, including North Rothbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodates the greatest proportion of population and housing growth</li> <li>Accommodates the largest centre providing commercial, retail and community services in the Subregion, catering to Subregional population demands.</li> </ul>
Village	Branxton, including East Branxton Greta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodate smaller centres providing a mix of uses catering to the demands of surrounding local communities and passing trade.</li> <li>Rural and heritage characteristics are protected.</li> </ul>
Rural settlement	North Branxton Standen Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exclusively residential areas.</li> <li>Good accessibility to services in nearby established centres are provided.</li> <li>Environmental values, the potential for agricultural productivity and rural and heritage characteristics are protected.</li> <li>The potential for land use conflict with surrounding rural industries is avoided.</li> </ul>
Specialised settlement	Greta Migrant Camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodates niche tourism/commercial developments, subject to market demand.</li> <li>Provides limited opportunities for permanent residential developments.</li> </ul>

## Direction 2: Maintaining land supplies

<b>Objectives:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ To ensure that there is adequate and suitable land zoned and serviced to meet projected needs.</li><li>▪ To ensure that there is certainty regarding land supply over the longer term of this Strategy by identifying land that may be investigated for future urban expansion.</li></ul>
<b>Policies:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Land supplies and use changes will be planned based on government endorsed projections for population and employment growth.</li><li>▪ Changes in forecast demands and land supply conditions will be accommodated through regular reviews of land supplies, in accordance with the Land Supply Benchmarks identified in <b>Table 3</b>.</li><li>▪ Land within the Subregion that may be investigated to meet the Land Supply Benchmarks will be identified in the Structure Plan.</li></ul>
<b>Strategic Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Monitor and regularly review housing and employment demands and the availability and capacity of zoned land.</li></ul>

Table 3: Land supply benchmarks

LAND SUPPLY BENCHMARKS	
Residential Lands	An area of land that is zoned and serviced (or is capable of being serviced within 5 years) with trunk infrastructure to accommodate up to 10 years of housing development demand.
Industrial Lands	An area of land that is zoned and serviced (or is capable of being serviced within 5 years) with trunk infrastructure to accommodate up to 10 years of industrial development demand.
Commercial Lands	An area of land that is zoned and serviced (or is capable of being serviced within 5 years) with trunk infrastructure to accommodate up to 10 years of commercial development demand, and that creates a compact and walkable centre.
<b>Notes:</b> Trunk infrastructure refers to sewer and water. All urban lands must be capable of being serviced by reticulated water and sewer. Unless otherwise stipulated in an environmental planning instrument, rural residential lots smaller than 10,000m <sup>2</sup> , must be capable of being serviced by reticulated water and sewer.	

### Direction 3: Identifying lands suitable for development

<b>Objectives:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To reinforce the Subregion's existing settlement pattern, utilising the capacity of existing and planned services, and/or justified by the provision of additional services.</li> <li>▪ To create compact and walkable urban centres with a mix of land uses and housing types.</li> <li>▪ To ensure that there is a mix of housing types within the Branxton Subregion, including varied densities and affordability to respond to changing demographics.</li> <li>▪ To protect important agricultural land, environmentally sensitive areas and visually sensitive landscapes.</li> <li>▪ To protect and enhance the existing character of the area, in particular the heritage character of Branxton and Greta Town Centres.</li> <li>▪ To encourage a dwelling density of 15 dwellings/hectare in the urban settlements.</li> <li>▪ To ensure that large residential lots do not hinder the proper and orderly development of urban areas in the future.</li> </ul>
<b>Policies:</b>	<p>For all proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If additional land requirements are identified, priority will be given to identifying opportunities for growth:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Firstly, within existing urban boundaries, consistent with the current settlement hierarchy, and in locations that are compatible and complementary to existing or planned development and character;</li> <li>▪ Secondly, within investigation areas identified in the Structure Plan;</li> <li>▪ Lastly, in other locations that can demonstrate adherence to location-specific considerations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Mechanisms for the provision of utility services, regional and local infrastructure must be in place prior to notification of LEP amendments that provide additional housing or employment development opportunities.</p> <p>Urban or rural residential developments will generally be discouraged on environmentally sensitive land, important agricultural land, visually sensitive landscape or in locations that will create land use conflicts or adverse cumulative impacts.</p> <p>The potential risk of mine subsidence will be identified at rezoning stage.</p> <p>Proposals for residential rezonings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will generally be discouraged where they are located outside a growth area identified in the Structure Plan.</li> <li>▪ Will only be considered where they:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adjoin existing urban areas;</li> <li>▪ Do not require the extension of trunk infrastructure; and</li> <li>▪ Do not result in a change to the natural physical boundaries of the settlement.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Proposals for rural residential rezonings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will generally be discouraged where they are located within 2km from a town or village centre, to enable lands close to centres to provide more intense urban uses.</li> <li>▪ Will generally be discouraged where they are located further than 5km from a town or village centre, to encourage convenient links to centres.</li> <li>▪ Will be required to identify buffers and management requirements where they are located within 1km of mapped BSAL or CIC areas, or within 1km of clusters of intensive agricultural activities.</li> <li>▪ Must be compatible with adjoining zones.</li> </ul>

**Commented [AW10]:** Guidelines updated to clarify purpose of establishing 'setbacks' and buffers (Issue 1)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May offer a range of lot sizes where this provides a transition in character from urban to rural areas.</li> </ul> <p>Proposals for commercial rezonings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will generally be discouraged where they are located outside an existing commercial centre (Branxton, Greta and Huntlee).</li> <li>Minor rezonings may be considered where they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the edge of the centre;</li> <li>Are based on a natural physical feature; and</li> <li>Encourage intensification of activity on zoned commercial land (including forms of residential) and community uses to create compact and walkable centres.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Proposals for industrial rezonings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be adjacent to an existing urban area on relatively flat land that is not visually prominent.</li> <li>Must be close to major roads, but not rely solely on or create a new direct access to a classified road.</li> <li>Must be capable of connection to water, sewer, electricity and a sealed road.</li> <li>Must be located so as to not have any adverse impacts on sensitive receivers or the environment.</li> <li>Must not contain environmentally sensitive land, except where there is evidence that these matters can be adequately resolved.</li> <li>Must be located to avoid heavy vehicle traffic in residential areas.</li> <li>For heavy industrial zoning, must consider the availability of suitable land within the regional catchment, including Cessnock and Singleton local government areas.</li> </ul> <p>For proposals near classified roads or heavy rail corridors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct vehicle access to land must be provided by a road other than a classified road.</li> <li>The proposal demonstrates that the safety, efficiency and ongoing operation of the transport corridor can be maintained.</li> <li>The identification and provision of appropriate mitigation measures to address traffic noise or vehicle emissions will be the responsibility of the developer</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and regularly review housing and employment demands and the availability and capacity of zoned land.</li> <li>Identify investigation areas in the Structure Plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Proposals” refers to requests to amend a Council’s LEP (i.e. Planning Proposals), DCP, as well as major development applications.</li> <li>“Environmentally sensitive lands” include flood prone land, bushfire prone land, unstable land and alike that cannot be mitigated by the application of development policies or guidelines (e.g. Planning for Bushfire Protection).</li> <li>“Rural residential development” is defined as housing on land in Zones R5 or E4, or any other residential zone with a minimum lot size of 2,000m<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul>	

**Commented [AW11]:** New guidelines added to reflect ISEPP (Issue 4)

## 3. Housing lands and dwellings growth ~~3.2 Housing Strategy~~

The supply of lands to accommodate new housing developments will be important to meet the needs of the Subregion's population as it grows and changes.

This section of the Strategy identifies the approach that will be taken to make efficient use of lands zoned for residential uses in the Subregion to 2041. It responds to opportunities and challenges to meet the anticipated supply and demand requirements to 2041 by:

- Encouraging housing growth and renewal in well-established residential areas to offer greater housing choices near existing urban centres, infrastructure and services;
- Recognising opportunities for the coordinated delivery of new urban centres, infrastructure and services at Huntlee to benefit surrounding communities; and
- Continuing to offer limited opportunities for rural residential developments in appropriate locations.

### ~~3.1 Supply and demand considerations~~ ~~3.2.2 Drivers of change,~~ and ~~3.2.3 Demand for different types of dwellings~~

The influence of population growth and demographic change on future housing requirements in the Subregion are summarised below.

- Total population at the 2011 census was 8,215 and the current projected population to 2041 is 17,650. The staged development of Huntlee is expected to account for around 80 per cent of the total population growth projected in the Subregion.
- The Subregion's population is expected to continue skewing younger than the NSW average.
- Demand for new dwellings is expected:
  - To predominantly be located in Huntlee.
  - To predominantly cater for families, noting that at the 2011 census around 80 per cent of households included children, and household occupancies were around 2.8 persons.
  - To predominantly be for detached dwellings, noting that at the time of the 2011 census, 93% of existing dwellings were detached.
  - To see increasing demands for housing to accommodate a resident ageing population, including greater demands for couples and lone person households and seniors' accommodation.

The Strategy aims to accommodate the projected number of new dwellings needed to meet anticipated population growth to 2041, as described in **Table 4** and **Table 6**. These projections anticipate:

- In Huntlee, fast initial dwellings growth to 2031, with approximately one-third of the planned dwellings constructed during this period, followed by a sharp tapering of dwelling constructions in during 2031-41; and
- In the rest of the Subregion, steady and regular dwelling constructions throughout the forecast period (approximately 0.7% per annum).

**Table 8** identifies the anticipated proportional split between residential and rural residential dwellings growth within the Subregion to 2041:

- With 90% of new dwellings in Huntlee expected to be taken up in the form of traditional residential dwellings, ranging from shop top to detached housing.



- Allowing for a greater proportion of total dwellings growth, up to 40%, in the balance of the Subregion to be provided in the form of rural residential dwellings. This recognises that North Branxton represents one of the largest clusters of rural residential development available in the Hunter. It is especially notable because it is relatively close to the Branxton and Greta village centres, education services and the highway/expressway corridors. Coupled with an attractive mountain-range, forested backdrop and relatively constraint free land, rural residential development is strongly established in North Branxton and demand for this form of housing is expected to continue.

**Table 4: Projected total dwellings by 2041** **Table 5: Projected total dwellings 2011–2041**

		2021	2031	2041
<b>Subregion Total</b>		<b>4,396</b>	<b>5,784</b>	<b>6,528</b>
Huntlee	No.	1,236	2,389	2,928
	Percent	28%	41%	45%
Balance of Subregion	No.	3,160	3,395	3,600
	Percent	72%	59%	55%

**Table 6: Projected 10 yearly total additional dwellings, 2011-41** **Table 7: Projected increase in dwellings 2011 - 2041**

		2011 - 21	2021- 31	2031 - 41	2011-41
<b>Subregion Total</b>		<b>1,425</b>	<b>1,389</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>3,558</b>
Huntlee	No.	1,236	1,153	539	2,928
	Percent	87%	83%	72%	87%
Balance of Subregion	No.	189	236	205	629
	Percent	13%	17%	28%	13%

**Table 8: Projected 10 yearly additional dwelling requirements by type and location, 2011-41** **Table 9: Additional dwellings required by type**

		2011 - 21	2021- 31	2031 - 41	2011-41
<b>Subregional Total</b>		<b>1,425</b>	<b>1,389</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>3,558</b>
Residential dwellings	Huntlee	1,113	1,038	485	2,636
	Balance	113	142	123	378
Rural residential dwellings	Huntlee	123	115	54	292
	Balance	76	94	82	252

A review of housing land supplies for the Subregion is available separately in the **Background Report**. This review indicated that the existing supply of housing lands is capable of exceeding the total demand anticipated during the Strategy timeframe, with:

- A theoretical capacity estimated at around 8,500 additional dwellings, more double the anticipated demand to 2041; and
- Further opportunities to increase this capacity by more efficiently using residential lands already available in settlement areas and through the completion of ongoing planning investigations already supported by local strategies.

Some minor modifications may be made through a more detailed review of residential zoning schemes in the established urban areas of, and between, Branxton and Greta. The purpose of that review will be to consider how residential growth may be accommodated within these villages, providing alternative housing choices to that supplied through the staged development of Huntlee.

## 3.2 Housing lands and dwellings directions (part) 3.2.6 [housing] principles and growth area recommendations

### Direction 4: Housing in urban areas

<b>Objectives:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To facilitate residential growth in and around established urban areas.</li> <li>To create compact and walkable urban centres with a mix of land uses and housing types.</li> <li>To ensure that there is a mix of housing types within the Branxton Subregion, including varied densities and affordability to respond to changing demographics.</li> <li>To encourage a dwelling density of 15 dwellings/hectare in urban settlements.</li> </ul>
<b>Policies:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New dwellings will predominantly be provided in areas already zoned for residential uses.</li> <li>Zoning of non-urban lands to provide new residential development will only be considered where the proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjoins existing urban areas;</li> <li>Does not require the extension of trunk infrastructure; and</li> <li>Does not result in a change to the natural physical boundaries of the settlement.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Greater intensity and diversity of residential uses will be encouraged around town and village centres.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the residential zoning regime and consider applying two zones, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a medium density zone around commercial centres, achieving an average density of around 15 dwellings/ ha; and</li> <li>a low density zone for the balance of the residential area, achieving an average of around 10 dwellings/ ha.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Allow dual occupancy and multi-dwelling housing in the low density zone, but limit residential flat buildings (and development taller than 2 storeys) to the medium density zone.</li> <li>Permit shop top housing in commercial areas in Greta, Branxton and Huntlee.</li> <li>Encourage housing for seniors to be located within a 400m walking radius of Greta and Branxton's village centres and within Huntlee's town centre.</li> <li>Review the extent of the R5 zone at Greta, and consider applying a low density residential zone where the land can be serviced.</li> <li>Review the RU5 zoning at North Rothbury, and consider applying a low density residential zone where the land can be serviced.</li> <li>Review the zoning of the Greta Migrant Camp site, and consider applying the SP3 Tourist zone, which would be consistent with sites in the Pokolbin area.</li> </ul>

#### Direction 5: Rural residential and environmental living areas

<b>Objectives:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide limited opportunities for population growth in established rural residential and environmental living areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Policies:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The provision of new rural residential dwellings will be prioritised in locations where lands have already been zoned for that purpose.</li> <li>Unless otherwise stipulated in an environmental planning instrument, applications for rural residential subdivisions to lots smaller than 10,000m<sup>2</sup>, must be capable of being serviced by reticulated water and sewer.</li> <li>The siting, landscaping and design of buildings (including building materials and colours) in sensitive rural locations will be encouraged to blend with the surrounding landscape.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare Design Guidelines for incorporation within the planning scheme (DCP) to address the siting, access, form and scale buildings in visually sensitive areas as identified on <b>Figure 3</b>.</li> </ul>

Table 10: Dwellings supply benchmarks to 2041

Dwellings supply benchmarks to 2041	
<b>Residential:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Huntlee/North Rothbury: 90% residential, 10% rural residential</li> </ul>
<b>Rural Residential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remainder of subregion: 60% residential, 40% rural residential</li> </ul>
<b>Residential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Huntlee/North Rothbury, up to 2,600 additional dwellings</li> <li>In Branxton/East Branxton and Greta, collectively, up to 380 additional dwellings</li> </ul>
<b>Rural residential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Huntlee/North Rothbury Up to 290 additional rural residential dwellings in.</li> <li>In other settlement areas collectively, up to 250 additional dwellings.</li> </ul>
<p>Note:</p> <p>Dwellings supply benchmarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect current growth projections and housing lands supply capabilities.</li> <li>Are not intended to represent dwelling construction targets, but will be monitored and reviewed in line with these considerations.</li> </ul>	

## 9 Employment lands and centres strategy

### 3.3 Employment strategy

The supply of lands to accommodate employment-generating uses within the Subregion will be important to support the growth of its communities and surrounding industries. This includes considerations for where businesses are located within the Subregion to provide uses and activities ranging from community-oriented services (e.g. retail, hospitality, health, and education) to those relating to industry-oriented services (e.g. manufacturing, and trade supplies).

This section of the Strategy identifies the approach that will be taken to manage the supply of employment lands within the Subregion, focussing exclusively on lands to which business or industrial zonings currently or may in future apply.

#### 9.1 Supply and demand considerations (part) 3.1 Snapshot of the Branxton Subregion (economic influences and projected population) 3.3.2 Drivers of change, and 3.3.3 Demand for different types of employment land

The Subregion has a young and highly skilled resident workforce. Around one in four residents living in the Subregion at the time of the 2011 census were under the age of fifteen, and will be entering the workforce during the Strategy timeframe. A limited number of jobs are currently located within the Subregion, with local residents predominantly benefitting from convenient commutes to employment opportunities in nearby areas. The availability of employment opportunities within a commutable distance of the Subregion will be a major factor influencing population growth (retention and in-migration) in the coming years.

At the 2011 census, the Subregion's resident workforce was heavily reliant on the coal mining industry and associated industries such as heavy construction and freight. Employment opportunities in these industries will continue to be influenced by broader economic and industry trends throughout the Strategy timeframe.

Outside of mining, the 2011 census also identified community and visitor-oriented industries, such as retail (goods and grocery), hospitality (food and accommodation), and education as major employment industries for the Subregion's population. These industries may have strong prospects during the Strategy timeframe, benefiting from a growing and ageing resident population, as well as wider growth in the Hunter's visitor economy.

**Table 11** illustrates the current workforce and jobs forecasts for the Subregion. These show that:

- Starting from a base of around 4,265 workers living in the Subregion at the 2011 census the workforce is expected to double during the Strategy timeframe. This growth is generally expected to occur in line with population growth, recognising that the current and anticipated incoming population is comparatively younger than the NSW average.
- Starting from a base of around 1,500 jobs at the 2011 census, the increase in the number of jobs located in the Subregion is heavily dependent on the development of Huntlee's new Town Centre, which represents around 95 per cent of jobs growth.

**Table 11: Employment forecasts to 2041** **Table 12: Workforce 2011–2041** and **Table 13: Employment 2011–2041**

		2021	2031	2041
<b>Total no. working age residents</b>		<b>6,027</b>	<b>7,758</b>	<b>8,542</b>
<i>Huntlee</i>		<i>1,506</i>	<i>1,904</i>	<i>2,356</i>
<i>Balance of Subregion</i>		<i>4,521</i>	<i>5,854</i>	<i>6,186</i>
<b>Total no. jobs available</b>		<b>2,138</b>	<b>2,817</b>	<b>4,180</b>
<i>Huntlee</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>591</i>	<i>1,217</i>	<i>2,533</i>
	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>43%</i>	<i>61%</i>
<i>Balance of Subregion</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>1,547</i>	<i>1,600</i>	<i>1,647</i>
	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>72%</i>	<i>57%</i>	<i>39%</i>
<b>Containment rate</b>		<b>36%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>49%</b>
Notes:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working age residents are between the ages of 15-65</li> <li>Containment rate is the number of jobs available compared to the number of working age residents.</li> </ul>				
Source: BTS employment forecasts for travel zones 6700, 6701, 6702, and 6703.				

The Subregion's location at the convergence of major interregional transport routes is particularly advantageous for commuters. However, the need for and ability of the Subregion to retain and attract commercial and industrial developments will continue to be influenced by the availability and strategic advantages of lands already established in nearby areas. This includes, within less than thirty minutes' drive:

- Regional centres at Maitland to the east, Cessnock to the south, and Singleton to the west;
- Large industrial estates at Rutherford to the east, the Hunter Economic Zone to the south and Whittingham to the west; and
- The Hunter Valley Vineyards, as a major centre for viticulture and international tourist destination, to the south.

The supply of lands currently available to accommodate commercial and industrial uses in urban areas within the Subregion is reviewed in the Background report, with key findings and recommendations summarised below:

- 150ha of lands in Huntlee's Town Centre are earmarked exclusively for business, including retail, commercial and bulky goods uses, as well as educational uses. The majority of this area forms part of the first stage of the Town's development and will become available during the Strategy timeframe.
- The established commercial centres in the villages of Branxton and Greta are suitably sized and well-located to continue servicing their surrounding local communities as well as passing Highway trade. The diversion of heavy traffic via the Hunter Expressway and the emergence of the new Town Centre at Huntlee are expected to heavily influence the role and function of the commercial centre at Branxton. Further precinct-level planning is recommended to support the ongoing success of this centre.

- The village of Branxton provides the only two industrial areas currently available within the Subregion. These are situated at the western edge of the town, including one area fronting the New England Highway and another opposite the rail station. These areas collectively offer around 13ha of industrial lands, with the majority of lots already occupied. The remaining supply, comprising serviced lots that are vacant or underutilised, is anticipated to be sufficient to meet demands for the next 5 years. An additional 5ha of industrial lands is recommended to secure a 10-year supply for the Subregion.
- Commercial and industrial areas in Branxton are flood-affected. Further investigations are recommended to manage the risk this poses to existing properties and identify future growth potential.

## 3.2 Employment lands and centres directions 3.3.5 Principles and growth area recommendations

### Direction 6: Centres hierarchy

<b>Objectives:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To support a network of accessible centres.</li> <li>▪ To enable centres to remain relevant to the communities they service.</li> </ul>
<b>Policies:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A hierarchy of centres will be established to guide considerations for locating retail, commercial and community services in relation to the communities they serve.</li> <li>▪ Contiguous paths and cycling infrastructure will be prioritised in centres to encourage walking and cycling.</li> <li>▪ Public and community transport services and facilities will be encouraged in centres.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify a hierarchy of centres in the Structure Plan.</li> <li>▪ Review the zoning regime of all centres, to consistently apply development standards.</li> <li>▪ Review the interim flood planning level in Branxton and consider establishing separate flood planning levels for commercial and industrial developments.</li> <li>▪ Identify options to revitalise Branxton's town centre.</li> <li>▪ Support integrated local path networks identified in relevant Council strategies to connect to and through centres.</li> </ul>

**Commented [AW12]:** New action identified to support desired future character and existing intentions of Councils previously identified in draft Report (Issue 36)

### Direction 7: Industrial areas

<b>Objectives:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To facilitate opportunities for industrial development.</li> <li>▪ To make efficient use of lands already identified, or previously developed for industrial purposes.</li> </ul>
<b>Policies:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Industrial uses will be encouraged to co-locate in urban areas, where possible.</li> <li>▪ Proposals that will result in a significant increase of industrial traffic through residential areas will generally be discouraged.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify up to an additional 5ha of urban industrial lands in Branxton.</li> <li>▪ Review the interim flood planning level in Branxton and consider establishing separate flood planning levels for commercial and industrial developments.</li> </ul>

## 10. Urban open space and recreational facilities ~~3.4 Open Space Strategy~~

The availability and quality of open space and recreational facilities is important to creating well-planned and liveable urban areas. These need to be appropriately located, suitably sized, and delivered to provide for the existing and planned population.

The existing and planned supply of urban open space and recreational facilities in the Subregion is described in **Appendix B** which demonstrates that:

- Residents living within the Subregion are already afforded a level of urban open space that exceeds current benchmarks;
- Council has recently invested in recreational infrastructure across the Subregion to ensure parks, playgrounds and facilities are in good working order;
- The staged development of Huntlee will, over time, provide a supply of new urban open spaces and facilities; and
- During the Strategy timeframe, the Subregion may also be the focus of new developments to establish private or non-urban open space and recreational opportunities.

### 10.1 Supply and access considerations

The open space and recreational facility requirements planned for Huntlee were established to cater for the anticipated needs of that incoming population, and no further requirements are expected to 2041. The urban open space and recreational facilities supply requirements based on the projected population growth for the balance of the Subregion are considered in **Table 14**. This demonstrates that the current supply is expected to remain in excess of current benchmarks and should be more than sufficient to meet the projected population growth.

To make the most of this supply, the Strategy supports improved accessibility to urban open space and recreational facilities, including through the delivery of an integrated local path network.

~~Table 14: Projected urban open space requirements~~ **Table 15: Projected open-space requirements**

	2021	2031	2041
Projected population (excl Huntlee)	8,721	9,343	9,877
Minimum area required	24ha	26ha	28ha
Current provision	61.3ha	61.3ha	61.3ha
Area (ha) per 1,000 people	7.0	6.5	6.2
Additional area required	Nil	Nil	Nil
<b>Notes:</b> Total area required is calculated based on the current NSW Government benchmark standard of 2.8 ha per 1,000 people.			



## 10.2 Urban open space and recreational facilities directions

### Direction 8: Urban open space and recreational facilities

<b>Objectives:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ To maintain a sufficient supply of urban open space and recreational facilities that are relevant to residents' needs.</li><li>▪ To ensure residents are afforded convenient access to urban open space and recreational facilities via a range of transport modes.</li><li>▪ To encourage walking and cycling.</li></ul>
<b>Policies:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Urban open space and recreational facilities will be planned to maintain minimum benchmark standards.</li><li>▪ An integrated local path network, including cycling facilities, will be planned to maintain or improve residents' accessibility to urban open spaces and recreational facilities.</li></ul>
<b>Strategic Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Identify integrated local path network requirements in relevant Council strategies.</li><li>▪ Maintain minimum open space and recreational facilities, in line with relevant benchmark standards.</li></ul>

**Commented [AW13]:** New policies / actions identified to support desired future character and existing intentions of Councils previously identified in draft Report (Issue 36)

## Part C – Structure Plan

**Drafting note:**

This Part predominantly reflects information previously presented in Part C, with the exception of the draft Report Section 4.7 Implementation Plan, which has been re-located to Part D.

The information presented in this Part has been updated to improve formatting. Additional information has been included to better explain issues, including:

- A new map has been provided to illustrate the preferred settlement and centres hierarchy previously described in the draft Report;
- Growth area maps have been updated to more accurately illustrate information previously described in the text, and identify all recommended investigation areas; and
- Additional text has been provided to better explain the intention of investigation areas within each growth area.

## 11. Settlements and centres 4.4 Subregional Settlement Pattern and Hierarchy

The Subregional Land Use Strategy gives effect to the State Government's preferred regional settlement pattern with respect to larger settlement areas, and provides greater details for the future role of, and relationship between, all settlement areas in the Subregion. The settlement pattern recommended in the Land Use Strategy will be adopted to guide future planning and development in the Subregion. This has been heavily influenced by the existing and planned settlement pattern. It responds to the anticipated scale and location of population growth and change, and other development opportunities available within the Subregion.

The preferred settlement pattern also supports a hierarchy of centres within the Subregion with respect to the scale of development and mix of activities that are expected to occur within each. These are described in **Table 16** and illustrated on **Figure 10**.

Table 16: Recommended settlement and centres hierarchy Table 17: Settlement Hierarchy

Settlement Type	Locality	Description and key functions
Major Regional Centre	Cessnock Maitland Singleton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Largest concentrations of population, shopping and business in the Region.</li> <li>▪ Preferred location for higher-order retailing, employment, professional services and generally including regional civic functions and facilities.</li> <li>▪ Focal point for Subregional road and transport networks and may service a number of districts.</li> </ul>
Town	Huntlee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Largest concentration of population, shopping and business in the Subregion.</li> <li>▪ Preferred location for major retailing, employment, health and professional services.</li> <li>▪ Offering the greatest and most diverse mix of housing, including medium and higher density residential uses.</li> </ul>
Village	Branxton Greta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Predominantly residential settlements.</li> <li>▪ May include a local, mixed use centre that provides for basic services and daily needs, and is the focus for day-to-day life within a community. Includes a mix of small scale retail, community and health services. Limited office based employment. Includes a supermarket.</li> </ul>
Specialised centre	Greta Migrant Camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides for activity of a specialist nature as defined through specific local area planning.</li> <li>▪ Residential and broader retailing uses are limited to servicing the specialist function.</li> </ul>
Rural settlement area	North Branxton, Standen Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A cluster of low density housing.</li> <li>▪ No identified centre or commercial activities. Services are provided at a higher order centre.</li> </ul>

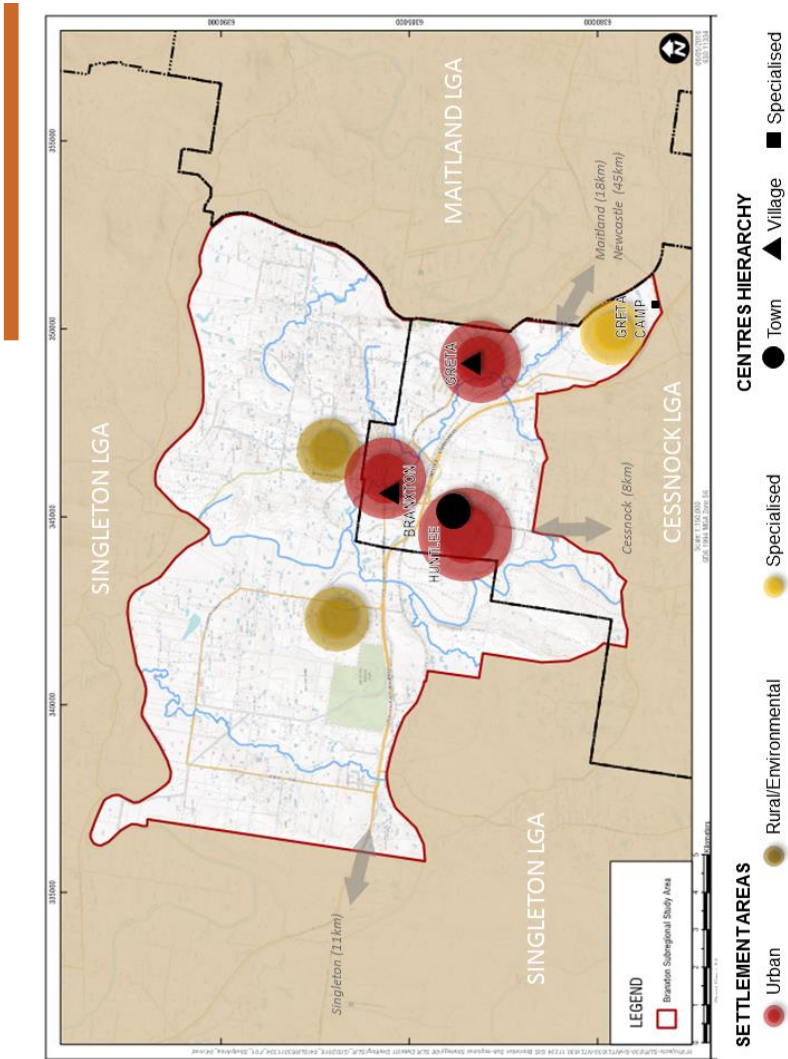


Figure 10: Preferred settlement and centres hierarchy to 2041

## 12 Urban growth areas ~~4.5 Urban Growth Area~~ Boundaries

Six areas within the Subregion will be the main focus of planning and development to support growth and change to 2041 and beyond, as follows:

1. Huntlee
2. Branxton
3. East Branxton
4. North Branxton
5. Greta
6. Greta Migrant Camp

These areas already offer a sufficient supply of lands to accommodate the anticipated demands for residential and employment growth within the Subregion during the Strategy timeframe. While no new major release areas are anticipated to be required, particularly in the short to medium term, the Structure Plan does identify a number of investigation areas. These investigation areas may be the focus for subsequent planning and plan-making to promote the effective long-term use and management of housing and employment lands within the Subregion.

The strategic directions for growth in each growth area are outlined below, including:

- The desired future character for the area;
- Location-specific recommendations for planning and development; and
- The anticipated timing of development, based on current planning and market conditions.

A growth area map is also provided for each area, illustrating the preferred use and investigation areas.

## HUNTLEE GROWTH AREA

*Huntlee continues to evolve, providing the majority of new housing and employment opportunities in the Subregion. Coordination of infrastructure and services is occurring in line with population growth, with strong partnership between the land developer and Council. New sporting and community facilities are well established. The Town Centre is a vibrant shopping and business area. There are good connections to Branxton and Greta.*

<b>Investigation areas:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigation Area 1 relates to lands currently surplus to RMS needs. This area may provide a long-term opportunity to further accommodate employment-generating uses. Preliminary investigations should consider opportunities for this area to support the delivery of an integrated local street network.</li> </ul>
<b>Location specific priorities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinating the staged release of land for residential development.</li> <li>Coordinating the staged development of a new Town Centre for the Subregion, and the influence of this emerging centre on existing centres at Branxton and Greta.</li> <li>Addressing flooding issues affecting the western part of Huntlee.</li> <li>Extending reticulated sewer to North Rothbury.</li> <li>Maintaining setbacks and managing access to/across interregional transport corridors (Hunter Expressway, New England Highway and heavy rail corridor).</li> <li>Managing 'edge effects' of staged development, including anticipated demands for rural fringe developments.</li> </ul>
<b>Land release and indicative staging considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This growth area is expected to ultimately provide around 2,600 residential dwellings, around 300 rural residential dwellings and lands to support around 2,500 new commercial jobs to 2041. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,100 residential dwellings, 130 rural residential dwellings, and 600 jobs to 2021;</li> <li>A further 1,000 residential dwellings, 120 rural residential dwellings, and 600 jobs to 2031; and</li> <li>A further 500 residential dwellings, 50 rural residential dwellings and 1300 jobs to 2041.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Early staging will be in accordance with the Huntlee Stage 1 approval.</li> <li>New urban development will be accommodated within the existing urban lands supply.</li> <li>Urban fringe proposals to provide additional large-lot residential and rural smallholding subdivisions will be assessed in accordance with the principles outlined in the Strategy and Structure Plan.</li> </ul>



## BRANXTON GROWTH AREA

*Branxton will be a vibrant and attractive village, with an interesting main street that provides the day-to-day needs of the local community, as well as attracting visitors to its cafes and shops. There are opportunities to live in the village centre, and people of all ages appreciate the range of educational, health and community services. It is easy to get around in Branxton, with connected paths to the adjoining recreation and sporting areas.*

<b>Investigation areas:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Investigation Area 2</b> relates to Branxton Park, which may provide future opportunities to accommodate new recreational or tourist facilities in an existing recreational area, close to the Town Centre.</li> <li>▪ <b>Investigation Area 3</b> relates to lands fronting the New England Highway and Hunter Expressway, including lands currently surplus to RMS needs. This area may provide a long-term opportunity to support urban growth demands in Branxton, and, with dual highway frontage, would be particularly attractive to employment or motor-oriented uses.</li> </ul>
<b>Location specific priorities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthening the village's core business area, whilst protecting its distinct heritage character (refer to <b>Branxton Town Centre Masterplan</b>).</li> <li>▪ Facilitating infill to encourage greater housing choice, including through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shop top housing in the village centre;</li> <li>▪ Seniors housing within 400 metres walking radius of the village centre; and</li> <li>▪ Greater flexibility in low-density (currently 10 dwellings/ha) and medium-density (currently 15 dwellings/ha) areas.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Investigating opportunities for Branxton Oval to be used for additional recreational and tourist functions that will support the business area.</li> <li>▪ Completing a floodplain risk management plan, to establish stormwater management requirements and, potentially, separate planning levels for commercial and industrial developments.</li> <li>▪ Identifying and accommodating demands for industrial lands, and supporting growth around existing industrial areas.</li> <li>▪ Maintaining an urban break between Branxton and East Branxton, including to manage flood risk associated with Anvil Creek.</li> <li>▪ Maintaining setbacks and managing access to/across interregional transport corridors (Hunter Expressway, New England Highway and heavy rail corridor).</li> </ul>
<b>Land release and indicative staging considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This growth area is expected to ultimately provide around 50 residential dwellings, around 65 new commercial jobs and around 70 new industrial jobs to 2041.</li> <li>▪ An additional 5 hectares of land should be identified for rezoning to accommodate demands for light industrial uses in the short to medium term.</li> <li>▪ Lands adjoining the existing commercial centre may be rezoned for commercial purposes, to support the objectives of the Branxton Town Centre Masterplan.</li> <li>▪ New residential development will be accommodated within the existing urban lands supply in the short to medium term.</li> </ul>



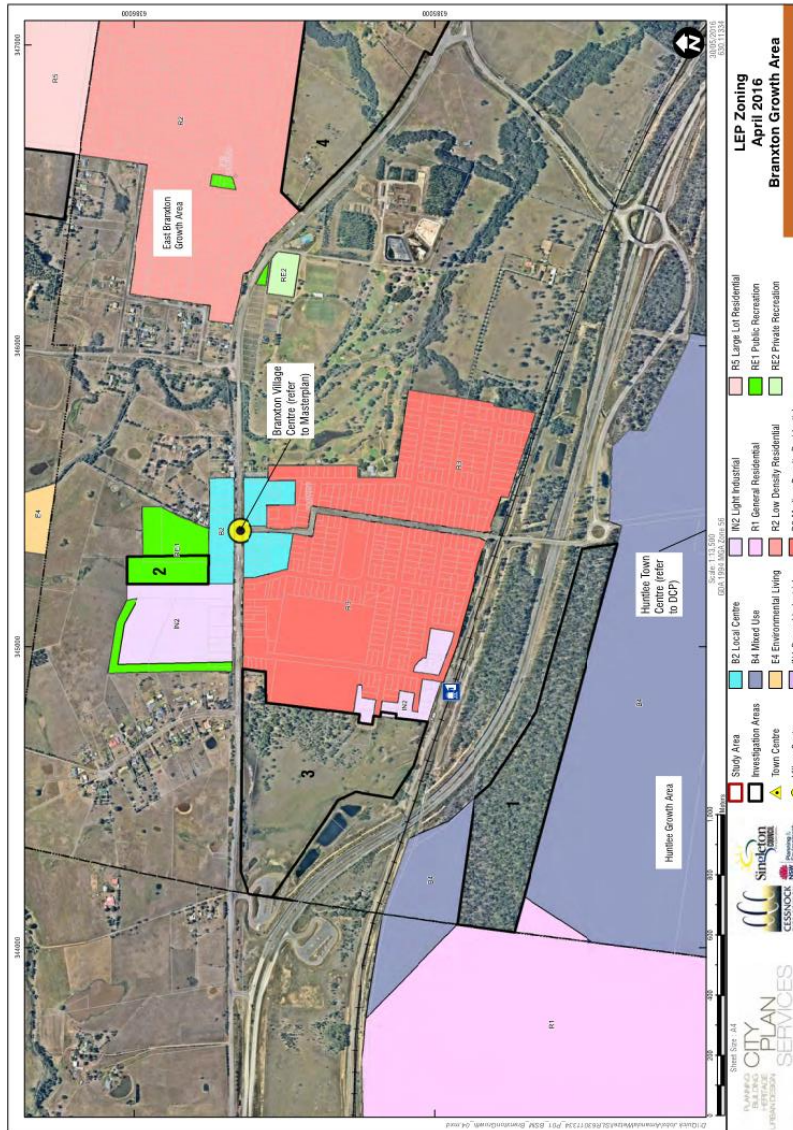


Figure 12: Branxton Growth Area overview Figure 20: Branxton Growth Precinct

## EAST BRANXTON GROWTH AREA

*East Branxton is a safe and connected residential area, with improved walking and road connections to Miller Park, Branxton Town Centre and the Hunter Expressway. Visually sensitive areas are appropriately developed and landscaping creates an attractive gateway to Branxton.*

<b>Investigation areas:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigation Area 4 relates to lands adjoining the existing residential areas, which are currently important to the local poultry industry. They may, in future, provide an appropriate residential extension to the village.</li> </ul>
<b>Location specific priorities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintaining a rural break between Branxton and East Branxton, including to manage flood risk associated with Anvil Creek.</li> <li>Maintaining a rural break between East Branxton and Greta, including to retain visual amenity and rural character.</li> <li>Encouraging low density (10 dwellings/ ha) residential uses, with larger lots to provide a transition to rural living area and environmentally sensitive locations.</li> <li>Completing a floodplain risk management plan.</li> <li>Reviewing and managing buffers at the southern edge of the village to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Branxton wastewater treatment works, in partnership with Hunter Water Corporation; and</li> <li>existing poultry farms.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Identifying long-term development opportunities for lands fronting the New England Highway, with the objective of protecting the rural character and creating attractive main road landscaping.</li> </ul>
<b>Land release and indicative staging considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This growth area will not provide any new commercial or industrial jobs, due to its predominantly residential nature.</li> <li>The area can provide opportunities for housing growth through small-scale residential infill to 2041.</li> <li>The potential release of land additional lands to accommodate residential growth will be subject to ongoing investigations for Investigation Area 4.</li> </ul>



## NORTH BRANXTON GROWTH AREA

*North Branxton continues to offer a range of lifestyle housing in an attractive rural setting. There are improved connections between rural areas and direct paths to the Branxton centre.*

<b>Investigation areas:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigation Areas 5 and 6 relate to residual lands previously identified in the Singleton Land Use Strategy. These may provide a longer-term opportunity to offer additional rural residential uses adjoining the planned rural residential area.</li> </ul>
<b>Location specific priorities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limiting the further encroachment of residential uses into rural areas, to make efficient use of lands already zoned for large-lot residential uses and protect visual amenity and rural character.</li> <li>Encouraging lot arrangements to transition from urban living areas in East Branxton to the south to surrounding rural lands.</li> <li>Providing a connected local street pattern that facilitates walking and cycling routes to Branxton and East Branxton.</li> </ul>
<b>Land release and indicative staging considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This growth area will not provide any new commercial or industrial jobs, due to its predominantly residential nature.</li> <li>Staging will occur in line with approved concept stages, including for Radford Park and Branxton North East estates.</li> <li>The area is expected to provide around 140 rural residential dwellings on large lots to 2041, with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>110 new rural residential dwellings to 2031; and</li> <li>A further 30 rural residential dwellings to 2041.</li> </ul> </li> <li>New rural residential dwellings on large lots can be accommodated within the existing zoned supply in the short to medium term.</li> <li>Longer term land releases will be subject to broader land supply reviews (e.g. Council's LGA-wide land use strategies) and subsequent investigations for Investigation Areas 5 and 6.</li> </ul>



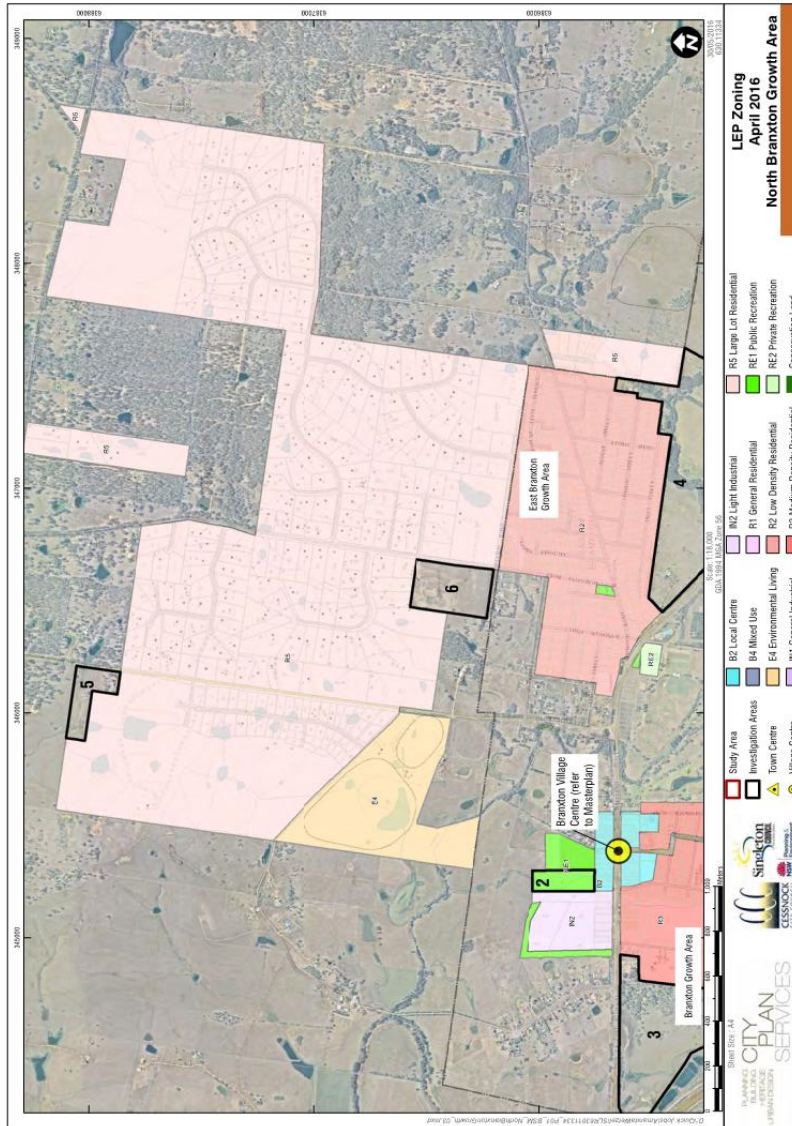


Figure 14: North Branxton Growth Area overview Figure 22: North Branxton Growth Precinct

## GRETA GROWTH AREA

*Greta is a diverse village, with a growing population boosting the local business area. Shops provide convenience goods, and there is activity around parks, sportsgrounds and community centres. Improved connections with Branxton and East Branxton encourage better integration between these communities.*

<b>Investigation areas:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Investigation Areas 7</b> relates to lands that are currently surplus to RMS needs. It may provide long-term opportunities to accommodate residential growth through the physical expansion of the village.</li> <li>▪ <b>Investigation Area 8</b> relates to lands that are currently surplus to RMS needs. It may provide long-term opportunities to accommodate residential growth through the physical expansion of the village of Greta or through integration into the specialised development at Greta Migrant Camp.</li> </ul> <p><i>Physical expansion of the village would be predicated on the findings of a more detailed review of the large-lot residential lands supply surrounding the village, to make efficient use of lands and urban infrastructure.</i></p>
<b>Location specific priorities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintaining a rural break between East Branxton and Greta, including to retain visual amenity and rural character. This will include protecting and enhancing the rural character area along the New England Highway at the village's eastern and western approaches.</li> <li>▪ Supporting the ongoing success of the village centre.</li> <li>▪ Protecting and enhancing the heritage character of the village.</li> <li>▪ Encouraging walking and cycling by improving local connectivity between and within Greta's neighbourhoods and broader links to East Branxton and Branxton's Town Centre.</li> <li>▪ Completing a floodplain risk management plan, to establish stormwater management requirements and, potentially, separate planning levels for commercial developments.</li> <li>▪ Staged development to provide residential uses in existing release areas to the north of the village.</li> <li>▪ Facilitating infill to encourage housing growth and greater housing choice, including through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shop top housing in the village centre;</li> <li>▪ Seniors housing within 400 metres walking radius of the village centre;</li> <li>▪ Allowing for more intense residential uses to be provided on lands currently zoned for large-lot residential, where the land can be sufficiently serviced.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Land release and indicative staging considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The area is expected to provide around 250 new residential dwellings and around 70 new rural residential dwellings to 2041.</li> <li>▪ The majority of new residential dwellings will be accommodated in the Wyndham (West) Street urban release area. Approximately 30 new residential dwellings may be provided as infill development in existing urban areas. Staging for the Wyndham (West) Street urban release area will be in accordance with concept plans developed between landowners and Council.</li> <li>▪ This growth area is not anticipated to accommodate any additional commercial or industrial lands to 2041.</li> </ul>

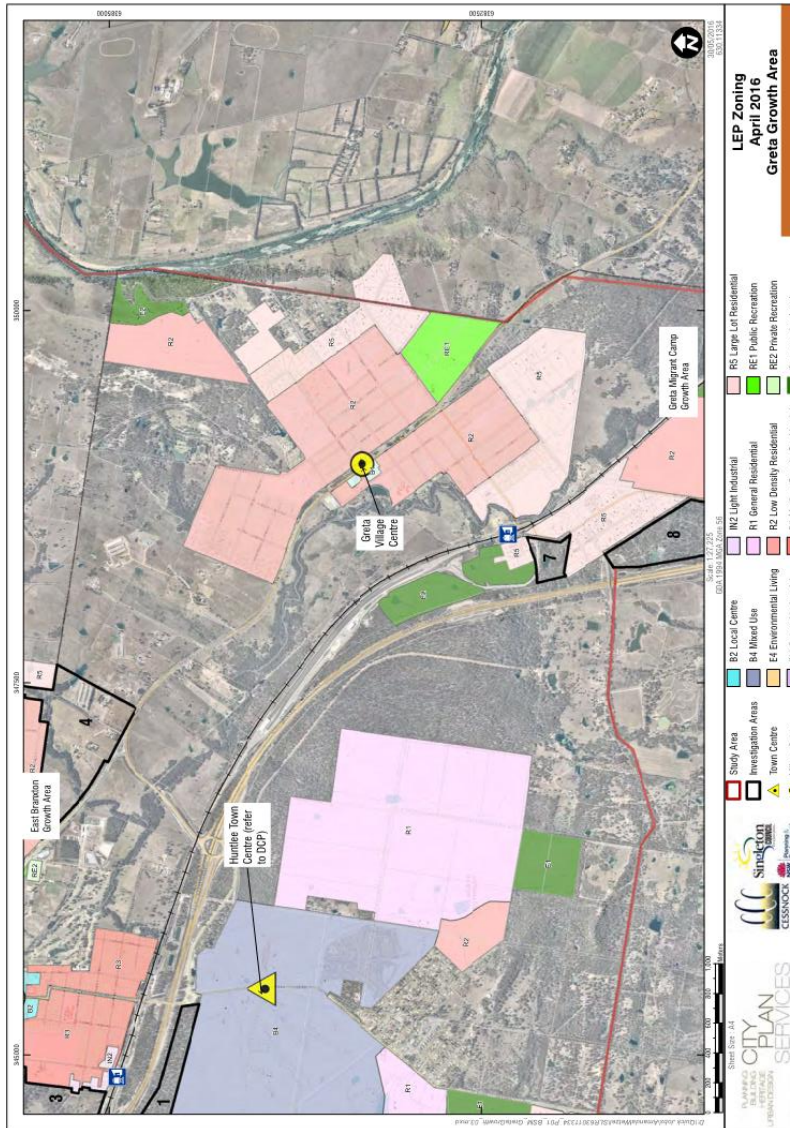


Figure 15: Greta Growth Area overview Figure 23: Greta Growth Precinct

**Commented [AW15]:** Mapping extent of growth area expanded to show release areas at West and Wyndham Streets (Issue 30)  
Investigation areas mapped for RMS surplus lands (Issue 10)

## GRETA MIGRANT CAMP GROWTH AREA

*The Greta Migrant Camp site is the subject of a development consent for an integrated tourist development containing quality housing and recreation facilities that are easy to access, while acknowledging the historic significance of its location.*

<b>Investigation areas:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigation Area 8 relates to lands that are currently surplus to RMS needs. It may provide long-term opportunities to accommodate residential growth through the physical expansion of the village of Greta or through integration into the specialised development at Greta Migrant Camp.</li> </ul>
<b>Location specific priorities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintaining zoning protections for environmentally sensitive areas.</li> <li>Maintaining a rural break between the proposed integrated tourist development and the village of Greta.</li> <li>Protecting and enhancing the heritage character and historic significance of the area.</li> <li>Supporting the ongoing success of Greta's village centre by managing the scale and nature of commercial uses located here.</li> <li>Monitoring the take-up of lands in similar development areas (e.g. the Vintage and Golden Bear in Cessnock LGA) to better understand the market demand and inform concept staging plans.</li> </ul>
<b>Land release and indicative staging considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This growth area will accommodate a niche development that is representative of an emerging market in the Hunter. With similar development already underway in nearby areas, development here is likely to initiate from around 2022.</li> <li>This growth area is expected to provide around 200 residential dwellings to 2041, but has an ultimate capacity to provide around 1,350 residential dwellings. The timing of development will be heavily influenced by market demand and the emergence of similar developments.</li> <li>The current land zoning already allows for an integrated mix of uses, including residential and commercial tourism uses. Subsequent land zoning changes may occur to more accurately reflect the intended future use of the area (e.g. tourism uses), but are not expected to result in a substantial addition to the current supply.</li> </ul>



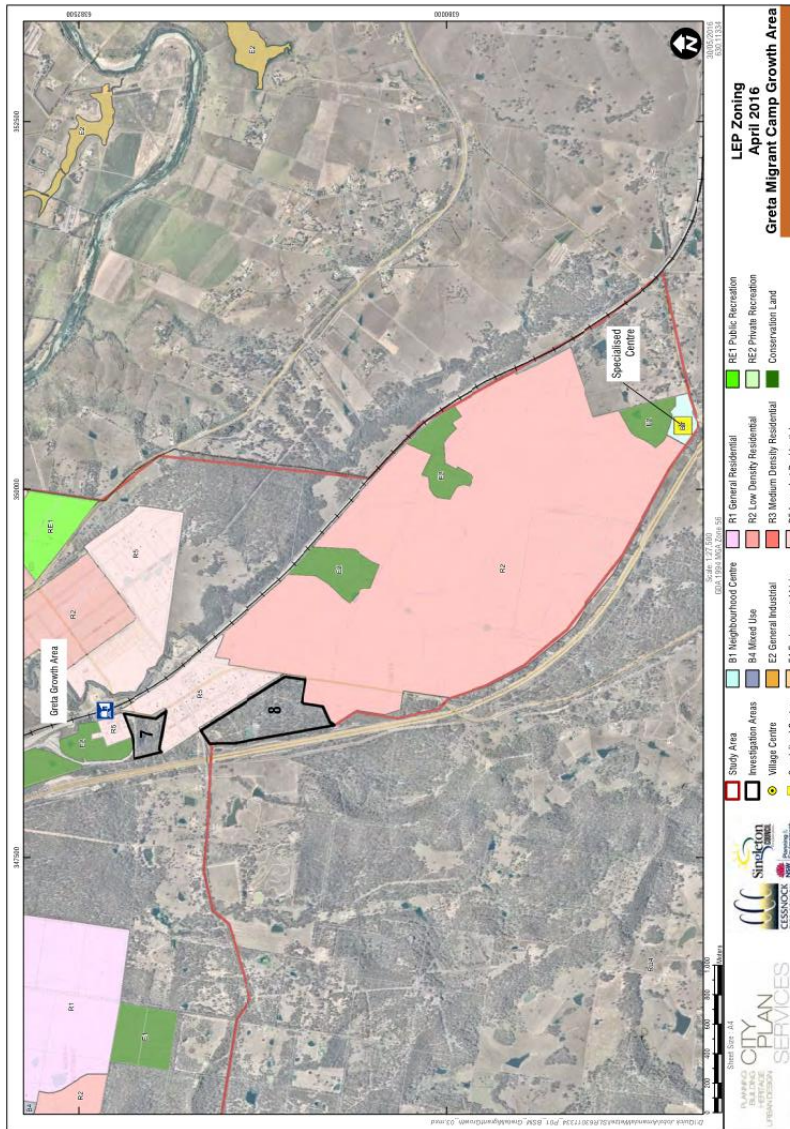


Figure 16: Growth area recommendations for Greta Migrant Camp Precinct

Figure 24: Greta Camp-Growth

Commented [AW16]: Study area boundary amended at Tuckers Lane, Greta (Issue 9)  
Investigation areas mapped for RMS surplus lands (Issue 10)

### 13. Indicative Land Release Program ~~4.6 Land Release Program~~

The Indicative Land Release Program identifies the anticipated location and timing for new development within the Subregion to 2041. This program takes into account factors such as forecast population and household changes, demand and supply of land, and the availability of key infrastructure and services. It is intended to provide guidance for planning authorities, development proponents and the wider community on the amount and type of development that is expected in different areas of the Brantxton Subregion. This will assist in coordinating delivery of development and services in a timely and efficient manner.

Reference should be made to the Land Release Program before decision-making:

- By infrastructure planning authorities, when preparing plans for new or upgraded infrastructure;
- By planning authorities, when reviewing LEPs and DCPs to encourage anticipated land use changes; and
- By landowners and development proponents, before requesting planning approvals.

The proposed land releases are indicative, and may be influenced by a range of factors such as market demand, project feasibility, or other issues identified in more detailed investigations (e.g. development applications). These figures will be reviewed and updated in line with the five-yearly review of the Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan.

### 3.1 Indicative Land Release Program: 2016 – 2021 4.6.1 Land Release Program: 2016 – 2021

The first phase of the land release program is a period of establishing a new planning strategy for the Subregion, as well as an acceleration in population growth stemming from new land release in Huntlee, including the establishment of the new Town Centre.

By 2021, it is expected that 1,327 new dwellings and 627 new jobs will be established in the Subregion. The majority of new dwellings and jobs would be in the approved Stage 1 area of Huntlee, with a smaller proportion distributed between Branxton, Greta and some new dwellings within the zoned rural residential areas.

Table 18 details the expected distribution by growth area and the infrastructure required to support this growth.

A number of actions will be prioritised by the Councils to support these outcomes, including:

- Finalising and implementing a Masterplan for Branxton's Town Centre to support jobs growth and infill housing in and near commercial centre.
- Investigating and rezoning industrial land at Branxton.
- Preparing a joint Local Contributions Plan (i.e.. Section 94 Plan) for the Subregion, to address local infrastructure requirements for new development in Singleton LGA (North Branxton and East Branxton) as well as within Cessnock LGA (Greta and Branxton).
- Amending planning controls to enable and encourage seniors housing and other smaller lot housing opportunities within 400m walking distance of Branxton and Greta's centres.
- Reviewing planning controls (LEP and DCP) for infill housing in existing urban areas to generally encourage 10 dwellings/ ha for low density housing and 15 dwellings/ ha for medium density housing.
- Liaising with utility infrastructure providers to ensure capacity is available for forecast housing and employment growth.
- Reviewing the extent of lands zoned R5 Large Lot Residential within Greta, to consider where more intense residential uses, such as R2 Low Density Residential zonings, can be accommodated. This will consider the availability and capacity of services as well as community aspirations.

The timing and accountability for these actions are outlined in **Section 14**.

Table 18: Indicative Land Release Program: 2016 - 2021

Location	Residential Dwellings	Rural Residential dwellings	Commercial Land	Industrial Land	Comments
Huntlee - Stage 1 area	1,113 Approved Stage 1 residential dwellings completed	123	Town Centre site (591 jobs)		Community and recreation facilities to be provided in line with infrastructure planning agreements
Branxton – Town Centre infill	15		Village Centre site (25 jobs)		Encourage seniors housing or other small lot housing
Branxton - industrial				Light industrial sites (11 jobs) 5.1 hectares rezoned	To be rezoned, pending servicing
Greta – general infill	10	10			No specific sites identified
North Branxton – Radford Park estate		56			Following adopted staging plan
Total	1,138	189	616 jobs	11 jobs	

### 13.2 Indicative Land Release Program: 2022 – 2031

In addition to continued growth in Huntlee, new opportunities are expected to emerge in other parts of the Subregion during the second phase of the land release program, particularly at West and Wyndham Streets in Greta, and through the growth in Branxton's industrial areas. This period may also see inaugural development at Greta Migrant Camp.

Between 2021 and 2031, it is expected that 1,595 new dwellings and 679 new jobs will be established in the Subregion.

A number of actions will be prioritised by Councils and others to support these outcomes, including:

- Ongoing implementation of a Masterplan for Branxton's Town Centre Masterplan.
- Completing rezoning and servicing to support industrial expansion in Branxton.
- Staged development assessments for West and Wyndham Street developments in Greta.
- Preparing of DCP (including Staging Plan) and development assessment for Greta Migrant Camp
- Coordinating the delivery of infrastructure works associated with Huntlee Stage 1 VPA.
- Coordinating the delivery of infrastructure works associated with other residential/ rural residential land release (forecast of 442 dwellings)

The timing and accountability for these actions are outlined in **Section 14**.

Table 19: Indicative Land Release Program: 2022 - 2031

Location	Residential Dwellings	Rural Residential dwellings	Commercial Land	Industrial Land	Comments
Huntlee - Stage 1 area	1,038 Approved Stage 1 residential dwellings completed	115	Town Centre site (626 jobs)		Community and recreation facilities to be provided in line with infrastructure planning agreements
Branxton – Town Centre infill	18		Village Centre site (20 jobs)		Encourage seniors housing or other small lot housing
Branxton – industrial				New industrial site (33 jobs)	To be rezoned, pending servicing
Greta – general infill	10	40			No specific sites identified
Greta – Wyndham Street	120				Subject to servicing
Greta – Migrant Camp	200		Integrated Golfing tourism development (unknown quantity of jobs)		
North Branxton – Radford Park estate		54			Following adopted staging plan
Total	1,386	209	646 jobs	33 jobs	

### 13.3 Indicative Land Release Program: 2032 – 2041

The final phase of the land release program is expected to deliver the greatest number of jobs, supporting the area to become more self-sufficient. A greater proportion of residential growth is expected to occur in and around Branxton and Greta during this time.

Between 2031 and 2041, it is expected that at least 1,046 new dwellings and 1,363 new jobs will be established in the Subregion.

A number of actions will be prioritised by Councils and others to support these outcomes, including:

- Development assessment for Huntlee Stage 2, and preparation of a new local infrastructure agreement (or inclusion in Section 94 plan).
- Ongoing implementation of a Masterplan for Branxton's Town Centre Masterplan.
- Coordinating the delivery of infrastructure works associated with residential/rural residential land release (forecast of 205 dwellings)

The timing and accountability for these actions are outlined in **Section 14**.

Table 20: Indicative Land Release Program: 2032 – 2041

Location	Residential Dwellings	Rural Residential dwellings	Commercial Land	Industrial Land	Comments
Huntlee – Stage 2 area	485	54	Town Centre site (1,316 jobs)		New infrastructure agreement needed
Branxton – Town Centre infill	15		Village Centre site (20 jobs)		Encourage seniors housing or other small lot housing
Branxton - industrial				New industrial site (27 jobs)	Subject to rezoning and servicing
Greta – general infill	10	22			No specific sites identified
Greta – Wyndham Street	100				Subject to servicing
Greta – Migrant Camp	300		Integrated Golfing tourism development (unknown quantity of jobs)		
North Branxton – Rusty Lane		30			No specific sites identified
Standen Drive		30			Subject to development assessment
Total	910	136	1,336 jobs	27 jobs	





## Part D – Implementation Plan

**Drafting note:**

This Part predominantly reflects information previously presented in draft Report Section 4.7 Implementation Plan (previously included in Part C).

## 14. Delivering the Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan

### 4.7 Implementation Plan

The desired outcomes of the Strategy and Structure Plan will primarily be implemented through amendments to Councils' standard planning instruments (the *Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011* and the *Singleton Local Environmental Plan 2013*).

The current supply of land zoned for residential uses in the Subregion is considered sufficient to meet the forecasted demand for housing within the Subregion to 2041. Some minor additions to this supply may be identified through a more detailed review of residential zoning schemes in the established urban areas of, and between, Branxton and Greta. The purpose of that review will be to consider how residential growth may be accommodated within these villages, providing alternative housing choices to that supplied through the staged development of Huntlee.

It is anticipated that a regular review and update of the population growth forecasts and projections contained within this Strategy would need to be undertaken prior to determining when and where suitable land releases could occur.

#### 14.1.1 Prioritised actions

Council will prioritise a number of actions in the coming years to realise changes identified in the Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan. These actions are presented in Table 21 to Table 27 below, and are grouped by the predominant outcome they support:

- General outcomes
- Land use zoning outcomes
- Environmental outcomes
- Transport and infrastructure outcomes

Each action has been assigned a priority level and timeframe to inform the Councils' annual business reporting, monitoring and budgeting processes.

Priority levels are:

- High – These actions are not anticipated to be dependent on external factors or the completion of other (medium or low priority) actions. They should be completed in the identified timeframe.
- Medium – These actions may be dependent on external factors, such as funding, or additional investigations. They are not anticipated to be dependent on low priority actions.
- Low – These actions are likely to be heavily dependent on external factors, such as funding, additional investigations, or owner motivation. They are not intended to impede progress toward other (medium to high priority) actions.

Timeframes are:

- Short term (0-2 years);
- Medium term (2 - 8 years);
- Long term (8 - 20 years); and
- Ongoing (continuous action and/or monitoring)

Table 21: Actions supporting general outcomes (part) ~~Table 22: Implementation/Action Plan~~

Code	Action	Action by	Timeframe	Priority Level
GE01	Endorse the Key Guiding Principles provided by this Strategy.	CCC, SC	Short	High
GE02	Review housing supply and demand every 5 years to ensure that this Strategy is up to date and on track.	CCC, SC	Medium term	Medium
GE03	Develop and/or maintain development controls within Huntlee, Branxton, East Branxton and Greta that complements similar development controls in each of the other areas.	CCC, SC	Ongoing	Medium
GE04	Monitor the supply and demand for integrated golfing tourism and residential development, and amend land use provisions accordingly.	CCC	Ongoing	Medium

Table 23: Actions supporting land use zoning outcomes (part) [Table 24: Implementation/Action Plan](#)

Code	Action	Action by	Timeframe	Priority Level
LZN01	Investigate rezoning RMS owned land to be integrated with the Huntlee precinct	RMS, CCC	Long term	Low
LZN02	Review business zoning regime for Branxton, Greta and Huntlee to ensure the zoning for each area complements the other two without jeopardising their future viability.	CCC, SC	Medium term	Medium
LZN03	Review land use provisions/zoning in rural areas in relation to commercial activities	SC, CCC	Medium term	Low
LZN04	Review the extent of B4 Mixed Use zoning within the Huntlee precinct at least every 5 years to be consistent with approved or appropriately proposed development.	CCC, SC	Long term & Ongoing	Medium
LZN05	Review residential zoning regime for Branxton, Branxton East, Greta and Huntlee to ensure the land use provisions and development controls in each area complements the others.	CCC, SC	Long term	Low
LZN06	Review zoning for Greta Migrant Camp with consideration of applying an SP3 Tourist zone across the site, consistent with the zoning approach for similar tourist developments within the Cessnock Local Government Area. Areas currently zoned E2 Environmental Conservation should be maintained as E2 zoning.	CCC	Long term	Low
LZN07	Review the extent of the R5 zoned land in Greta with consideration of applying an R2 Low Density Residential zoning where the land can be appropriately serviced.	CCC	Long term	Low

Table 25: Actions supporting environmental outcomes (part) ~~Table 26: Implementation/Action Plan~~

Code	Action	Action by	Timeframe	Priority Level
ENV01	Address flooding issues effecting the western portion of the Huntlee precinct	Huntlee, SC	Long term	High
ENV02	Complete the floodplain risk management plans for Branxton and Greta with consideration of a flood planning level for industrial and commercial development.	CCC	Short-Medium term	High
ENV03	Review Branxton Wastewater Treatment Works buffers	CCC, Hunter Water	Long term	Low

Table 27: Actions supporting transport and infrastructure outcomes (part) ~~Table 28: Implementation/Action Plan~~

Code	Action	Action by	Timeframe	Priority Level
TIN01	Establish appropriate setbacks to significant interregional transport corridors	CCC, SC	Ongoing	High
TIN02	Extend reticulated sewer from the Huntlee precinct to North Rothbury	Huntlee Water	Long term	Medium

## Appendix A

**SETTLEMENT STATEMENTS** (part) ~~3.1 Snapshot of the Branxton Subregion (urban form),~~  
(part) ~~3.2.1 (housing) Role of each centre,~~ and (part) ~~3.3.1 (employment) Role of each~~  
~~Centre~~

The settlement statements below describe how each of the Subregion's settlement areas is expected to grow and change to 2041. These are based on available information with respect to physical constraints and planned developments. They are intended to provide a context for the directions and recommendations set out in the Strategy and Structure Plan.

**Huntlee / North Rothbury** (part) ~~3.1 Snapshot of the Branxton Subregion (urban form),~~ (part) ~~3.2.1 (housing) Role of each centre,~~ and (part) ~~3.3.1 (employment) Role of each Centre~~

At the 2011 census, the village of North Rothbury was home to around 510 people. The majority of its 180 households were younger families, and the local workforce had strong ties to coal mining (15 per cent) and associated industries. The village's housing stock was made up entirely of detached dwellings, the majority of which had 3 or more bedrooms (85 per cent).

Emanating from the village of North Rothbury, a new town at Huntlee has begun to emerge. With the capacity to accommodate around 21,000 additional people, it will be the pre-eminent location for housing, employment and services within the Subregion during the Strategy timeframe and will ultimately grow to be the most populated locality between Singleton, Cessnock and Maitland.

The first stage of development at Huntlee is anticipated to provide at least 10 years' supply of new housing and employment lands for the Subregion. New development areas will be supported by improvements to Wine Country Drive, with the subdivision and servicing of lands to accommodate:

- Around 1,680 new residential dwellings and a new Town Centre, including core retail, commercial and bulky goods uses, situated to the north and east of North Rothbury; and
- Around 120 new rural residential dwellings to the south of the existing rural residential area at Hanwood Road.

A range of residential lot sizes will facilitate the delivery of a diversity of dwelling types across three general character areas:

- Huntlee's Town Centre and its surrounds will offer greater residential densities, including shop top units, residential flat buildings, townhouses and small-lot detached dwellings;
- A number of new residential villages with convenient access to the Town Centre will predominantly offer detached dwellings and townhouses; and
- Rural fringe areas around the existing village of North Rothbury and south of Hanwood Road will continue to provide a transition from urban to rural and environmental areas, with detached dwellings on larger lots.

Future stages of development at Huntlee may be subject to approvals during the Strategy timeframe. Early planning investigations will further address strategic environmental issues, including joint Council considerations to manage the risk of flooding in established and new urban areas.

While the existing village of North Rothbury is not anticipated to provide a significant number of new dwellings during the Strategy timeframe, its communities will inevitably experience change as Huntlee emerges around them. Residents living in the village will ultimately benefit from the planned upgrades to existing infrastructure and access to new urban infrastructure, including reticulated sewer services, open space and community facilities. Careful planning and management will be required during the Strategy timeframe to realise these benefits and to identify and address the potential for land use conflicts with established uses on surrounding rural lands.

Planning controls, including land use zonings, for the existing village of North Rothbury may also be considered to better facilitate housing growth and renewal in the later years of the Strategy.

### Huntlee's Town Centre

Huntlee's Town Centre will ultimately grow to become the largest in the Subregion. Approximately 276 hectares of lands have already been zoned for Mixed Use, and are intended to accommodate a range of commercial, retail and residential uses. Of this, about 130ha will accommodate predominantly business uses, with the balance developed for residential and community uses.

The Town Centre will be the premier location for larger retail shops and supermarket in the Subregion. It will also offer a range of new community services and niche living experiences, including (but not limited to) schools, childcare, medical centre and private medical facilities, and retirement / seniors living. The first shops and businesses are predicted to open in 2017/2018.

**Branxton / East Branxton** (part) ~~3.1 Snapshot of the Branxton Subregion (urban form);~~ (part) ~~3.2.1 (housing) Role of each centre,~~ and (part) ~~3.3.1 (employment) Role of each Centre~~

At the 2011 census, the village of Branxton, including East Branxton, was home to around 2,700 people. Around three quarters of its 950 households were younger families, and the local workforce had strong ties to coal mining (19%) and associated industries. The majority of dwellings in the village had three or more bedrooms (86%). Its housing stock represented the greatest diversity in the Subregion, with around 12% being attached or multi-unit dwellings.

The broader village of Branxton will encompass three distinct planning areas:

- Branxton township, encompassing the urban areas situated to the west of Anvil Creek. Notably included within this is Branxton's Town Centre, which will be the main service centre for the broader village.
- East Branxton, encompassing the residential areas situated to the east of Anvil Creek. This area extends northward from the New England Highway and is generally bounded to the north by Hillview Road and to the west by Redhouse Creek. Increasing pressure for development may see the residential footprint expand during the Strategy timeframe.
- North Branxton, extending northward from East Branxton and generally bound by Elderslie Road, Rusty Lane and Dalwood Road.

Branxton has a traditional main street with shops and services fronting Maitland Street, which forms part of the New England Highway. These include grocery, medical, café and take away food, and other retail and service businesses. More broadly, the village also has a pre-school and two primary schools, plus a police station, volunteer ambulance location and fire station. Miller Park is a regional sportsfield, including a swimming pool, and adjoins the Branxton golf course. It is serviced by a train station, situated to the south west of the village, which offers passenger services to Scone, Newcastle and Sydney.

The traditional role of Branxton village as the main population and service centre between Maitland, Cessnock and Singleton will change during the Strategy timeframe. This will predominantly arise from the influence of the Hunter Expressway redirecting the flow of interregional traffic around the village, and the emergence of Huntlee's Town Centre as the Subregion's pre-eminent location for new retail and community services.

The village of Branxton will continue to contribute to the choice of housing available to existing and new residents during the Strategy timeframe, across two general character areas:



- To the west of Anvil Creek, Branxton will continue to offer the most diverse mix of housing outside Huntlee, close to its established commercial centre; and
- To the east of Anvil Creek, East Branxton will continue to be an attractive residential precinct with convenient links to shops and services in Branxton and Greta.

The footprint of the village and its adjoining rural residential area will continue to be influenced by management requirements associated with:

- The flood risk predominantly associated with Black Creek to the west of the village, Anvil Creek, which bisects the village and Redhouse Creek to the east of the village;
- Interregional transport corridors along the New England Highway, which bisects the village and the Hunter Expressway and heavy rail line to the south of the village;
- Potential land use conflicts with surrounding urban and rural industry uses, including the wastewater treatment facility and poultry farms situated to the east of the village; and
- The scenic qualities and conservation value of lands and vegetation to the north of the village.

The main focus for change and renewal within the village during the Strategy timeframe will be in and around the established commercial centre at Maitland Street. This will be guided by precinct-level planning to facilitate the progressive renewal and revitalisation of the main street in particular.

The village may also offer further opportunities to accommodate demands for light industrial uses through the expansion of its existing industrial areas.

#### **Branxton's village centre**

Branxton village centre offers approximately 7 hectares of lands zoned B2 Local Centre and is occupied by a range of retail, commercial, residential, tourist and community uses. At 2015, approximately 2 hectares of this land was vacant and a further 1.57 hectares was underutilised for commercial purposes (e.g. used as dwellings). Some commercial uses are also located on adjoining lands zoned for other purposes (e.g. medical centre in the R3 Medium Density Residential zone, takeaway shop and hotel in RU2 Rural Landscape zone).

Branxton's village centre is characterised by small shops of around 330m<sup>2</sup> of gross floor area, giving rise to a fine grain built form that lends itself to smaller boutique retail uses. There is a large consolidated lot available for development in the western part of the village centre.

Branxton's village centre is expected to be more heavily influenced by the bypass of traffic via the Hunter Expressway and the emergence of Huntlee's Town Centre during the Strategy timeframe. The anticipated re-classification of the Highway within the village centre will provide greater opportunities for Council and the community to influence the design of new development along Maitland Street. This will require a coordinated effort between State and Local government, in close consultation with the community. This will be supported by a centre-specific Masterplan, provided separately.

#### **Branxton's industrial areas**

Branxton offers the only industrial development areas in the Subregion, provided to the north west and south west of the village. Collectively, these offer a total area of approximately 13 hectares of land currently zoned IN2 Light Industrial, occupied by a range of light industrial uses including earthmoving and haulage, nursery, motor vehicle repairs and prefabricated steel building manufacturers. The majority of lots are occupied.

Development opportunities within the existing industrial areas include around 4 hectares of vacant land available for future development. Isolated small lots remain vacant to the south, while one large parcel of industrial zoned land is vacant north of the New England Highway. There is also potential to redevelop underutilised sites, including a number of individual dwelling houses located within these areas.

Future development and expansion will need to address a range of planning and management considerations. Both areas adjoin existing residential areas, and will need to maintain residential amenity with respect to noise, emissions and industrial traffic. The industrial area to the north is also heavily flood-affected.

The demand for industrial development in the Subregion is relatively unknown, and will continue to be influenced by the availability of larger industrial areas within 30 minutes' drive. It is likely that the footprint of the industrial area to the south of town will expand to accommodate this demand.

#### North Branxton

The North Branxton rural residential area has been the predominant focus of planning and development to provide rural residential opportunities in the Subregion and has the capacity to accommodate more than 200 additional rural residential lots during the Strategy timeframe in areas already zoned R5 Large Lot Residential and E4 Environmental Living.

The strategic intention is for this area to provide a transition northward from urban to rural areas. The area has a high degree of scenic quality and connected patches of native vegetation. Pressure to expand existing rural residential estates, or increase the density of development need to consider these features.

**Greta** (part) ~~3.1 Snapshot of the Branxton Subregion (urban form),~~  
(part) ~~3.2.1 (housing) Role of each centre,~~ and (part) ~~3.3.1~~  
(~~employment) Role of each Centre~~

At the 2011 census, the village of Greta was home to around 2,480 people. Over three quarters of its 840 households were younger families, and the local workforce had strong ties to coal mining (13 per cent) and associated industries. Its housing stock mostly offered three or more bedrooms (84%) in the form of detached dwellings (98%).

With the extension of the Lower Hunter growth corridor west from Maitland along the New England Highway, Greta has transformed from an unserviced rural area into a small village. This has implications for the re-development of existing housing, with demand for more dual occupancy and multi-unit residential housing on larger lots that can now be serviced. Increased dwelling density may also have an effect on stormwater drainage and other flooding, footpaths and local commercial and community services.

Greta's current housing supply includes a mix of Low Density (R2) and Large Lot (R5) zonings. There are also a number of disconnected residential areas, with barriers to movement arising from the rail line, highway and drainage corridors.

The main focus for new dwellings will be in the new release area identified at West and Wyndham Streets. This is the largest greenfield site for housing in the Subregion outside of Huntlee. It has the potential to accommodate up to 260 new dwellings.

#### Greta's village centre

Greta also has a small village centre at High Street, which forms part of the New England Highway. This currently offers around 1.8 hectares zoned B1 Neighbourhood Centre in the centre of town, and is occupied by a number of retail and community uses including a bakery, butcher and newsagent, McDonald's restaurant and the Greta Arts and Sports Community Hall. The retail floor spaces here are similar in average size to Branxton (around 310m<sup>2</sup> of gross floor area). Commercial uses, including a service station

development, Greta Workers' Club and three other isolated retail uses, occupy adjoining lands currently zoned R2 Low Density Residential. Several dwellings currently occupy B1 zoned land.

#### **Greta Migrant Camp**

The former migrant camp, located to the south east of the village of Greta, has been subject to a rezoning to support an integrated tourist development. The proposal includes a range of recreational, commercial and residential uses. Given the similarity of this proposal to other projects already emerging nearby, take-up is expected to be slow and the development concept may be subject to minor changes during the Strategy timeframe.

Current planning controls impose a limit of 1,364 dwellings to be constructed on the Greta Migrant Camp site. It is intended that any new dwellings will be sited around a golf course and provided in conjunction with other tourist facilities (hotel, restaurants). A limited range of commercial activities may be provided in a specialised centre situated to the southern part of the site. The purpose of these controls is to ensure new housing offers a boutique product, rather than competing with housing choices available in the Subregion's existing settlements.

Other rural living areas (part) ~~3.1 Snapshot of the Branxton Subregion (urban form)~~, (part) ~~3.2.1 (housing) Role of each centre~~

#### **Standen Drive**

Land adjoining the Belford National Park and extending along Standen Drive has been zoned for environmental living purposes. It is planned that a limited number of dwellings will be built in this area, on large lots varying between 1ha and 4ha. Development has not yet occurred in this area, however, 118 allotments with a minimum lot size of 1 hectare (commonly known as Murrays Rise estate) has been approved by Singleton Council. It is expected that, overall, this area will play a marginal role in providing housing for the Subregion.

The E4 Environmental Living zone will continue to be applied in this area, due to its remote location from a residential area, the presence of Endangered Ecological Communities on the site, and the environmental and visual significance of the area (National Park, visually prominent Belford Dome).



## Appendix B

### URBAN OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ~~(part) 2.4 Open Space Strategy~~

The current provision of urban open space is described in **Table 29**. This illustrates that the current supply provides approximately 7.5ha of open space per 1,000 persons, which is more than double the NSW Government's current benchmark standard of 2.8 ha per 1,000 people.

All open space and recreational facilities are currently located within Cessnock's LGA. Significant upgrades and consolidations have recently been undertaken on social infrastructure since the 2009 Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan (Cessnock City Council) with all existing parks, playgrounds and facilities now in good working order.

Table 29: Existing open space (2016)

Open Space Type	Hierarchy	Approximate Land Area	Existing Facilities
Recreation	Local	11,865m <sup>2</sup>	Norman Brown, Greta
		5,575m <sup>2</sup>	North Rothbury
		2,150m <sup>2</sup>	Oxford Street, Greta
	Regional	83,000m <sup>2</sup>	Hunter River Reserve, Greta
Sportsgrounds and courts	Local	33,465m <sup>2</sup>	Branxton Oval
		990m <sup>2</sup>	Greta Art and Sports Community Hall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Indoor basketball</li><li>Indoor netball</li></ul>
	Regional	134,000m <sup>2</sup>	Miller Park, Branxton: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cricket practice net x 1</li><li>Tennis court x 2</li><li>Netball court x 2</li><li>Swimming Pool</li></ul>
		207,800m <sup>2</sup>	Greta Central Oval: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tennis court x 2</li></ul>
		Recreation subtotal	
Sportsgrounds and courts subtotal		376,255m <sup>2</sup> (37.6ha)	
Combined Total		612,845 m <sup>2</sup> (61.3ha)	

The concept plans for the Huntlee urban area and the infrastructure agreements between the developer, State and local government have addressed the open space needs and provision of land and facilities. This will provide a further:

- Eight local parks;
- Two district parks;
- Two sporting fields;
- A multi-purpose community building; and
- Embellishment of other public spaces.

Singleton Council has identified a requirement to provide a continuous pathway to connect the existing and emerging rural residential areas in North Branxton to Branxton's town centre via Elderslie Road, to encourage walking and cycling.

Development of other lands within the Subregion may provide destination-based open space and recreational opportunities for residents, potentially including:

- Use of existing Crown Lands west of Branxton. Up to 140ha with dual frontage to the New England Highway and Hunter Expressway currently form part of the NSW Government's travelling stock reserve. Opportunity exists under current regulations to utilise a portion of this land for a formal cycle path. This site also presents opportunities to offer better services and activities for the community, subject to further investigation. These could include passive public recreation uses (such as bushwalking and cycling), active recreation uses, tourist and visitor services, or other public uses such as a regional cemetery.
- The delivery of an integrated tourism development at Greta Migrant Camp.

## Appendix C

### REVIEW OF EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

**Drafting note:**

This table provides commentary on all expressions of interest received during the preparation and exhibition of the draft Strategy and Structure Plan. Lots that were not previously reviewed in the draft Report are highlighted in yellow.

All lots have been grouped into general areas (labelled A-S), cross-referenced to a new map. This updated review provides additional information for each area including:

- Further commentary on preliminary considerations, to better clarify the planning issues that would need to be addressed for each area in order for a planning proposal to be seriously considered; and
- A recommendation as to whether a planning proposal would be seriously considered during the Strategy timeframe, to better manage owners' expectations.

A number of Expressions of Interest to rezone lands were received during the preparation of the Strategy and Structure Plan, including in response to the public exhibition of the draft reports. These were reviewed to inform the identification of the Structure Plan investigation areas.

The Strategy establishes that the current supply of lands to accommodate urban (including residential, commercial and industrial) and rural residential (including large-lot and environmental living) uses is considered sufficient to meet the anticipated demands, particularly in the short to medium term. The intention of identifying investigation areas in the Structure Plan is to provide a focus for long-term urban growth, including beyond the Strategy timeframe.

The identification of Investigation Areas does not preclude development from occurring in other parts of the Subregion during the Strategy timeframe. Proposals to rezone lands located outside identified Investigation Areas, including on sites subject to expressions of interest identified below, will be considered in line with current State and Local policy frameworks, as well as the principles of the Strategy.



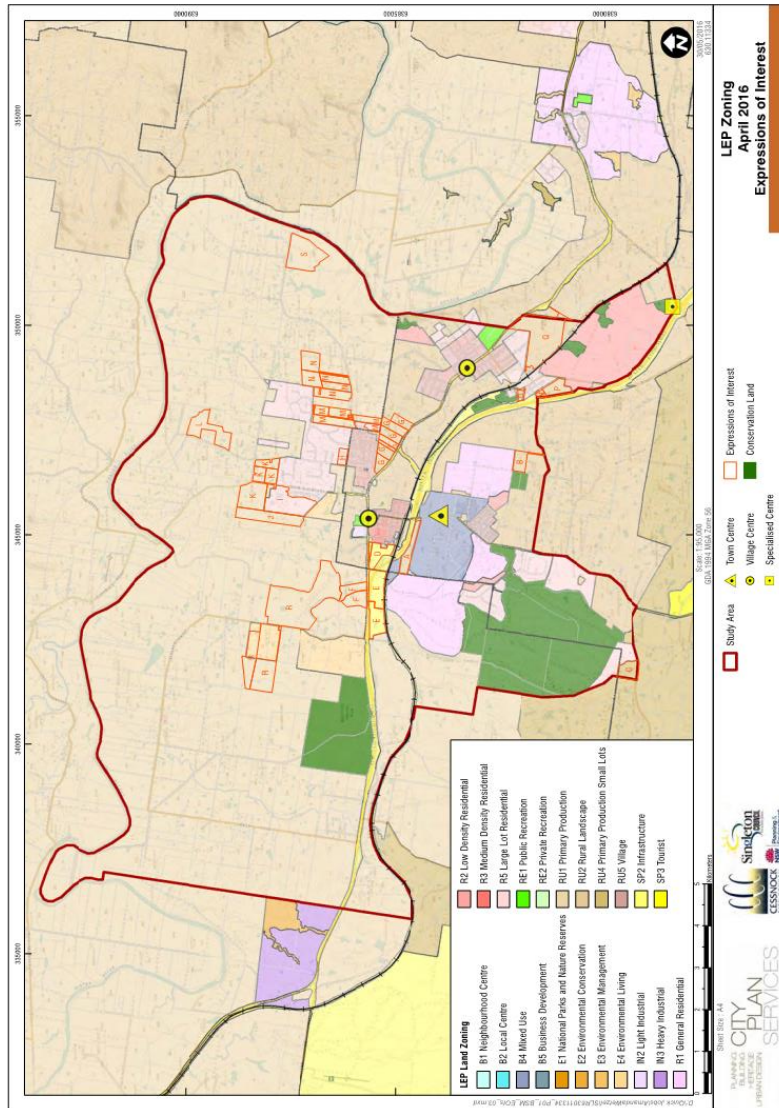


Figure 17: Expressions of Interest Areas A-S (refer to tables below)

REF	Property	Current Zone & Proposed Use	Preliminary considerations and recommendation
A	Lot 1 DP1207577 Wine Country Drive BRANXTON	Current: RU2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surplus RMS lands (Site G)</li> <li>Surrounded by proposed Huntlee mixed use area</li> <li>May provide opportunities for improved internal traffic circulation to Huntlee Town Centre</li> </ul>
		Proposed: Employment	Recommendation: Identify as Structure Plan investigation area
B	Lot 3 DP574205 234 Tuckers Lane NORTH ROTHBURY	Current: RU2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjoins proposed Huntlee residential area (Stage 1)</li> <li>Existing tourist accommodation business potentially affected by urban encroachment</li> </ul>
		Proposed: Rural residential	Recommendation: Owner-initiated PP unlikely to be considered during Strategy timeframe.
C	Lot 101 DP1040618 727 Old North Road ROTHBURY	Current: RU4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjoins proposed Huntlee rural residential area, not likely to be developed in short to medium term</li> <li>Not considered to be required to meet demand rural residential dwellings during life of Strategy</li> <li>Remote from existing services</li> <li>Large rural lot, consider potential agricultural capability of lands</li> <li>Likely to contain EECs</li> <li>Bushfire risk (Categories 1 and 2 vegetation) management requirements likely to be limited by EEC conservation priorities.</li> </ul>
		Proposed: Rural residential	Recommendation: Owner-initiated PP unlikely to be considered during Strategy timeframe.
D	Lot 7 DP38681 Maitland Street BRANXTON	Current: SP2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surplus RMS lands (Site H)</li> <li>Flood affected</li> <li>May provide an opportunity to expand adjoining existing residential and industrial areas</li> </ul>
		Proposed: Any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjoins existing heavy vehicle rest area.</li> </ul>
	Lot 42 DP1133909 Maitland Street BRANXTON	Current: SP2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New England Highway, Hunter Expressway and rail corridor frontages</li> <li>Would visually impact on westward approach to Branxton</li> </ul>
		Proposed: Any	Recommendation: Identify as Structure Plan investigation area

Commented [AW17]: EOI (Issue 10)

Commented [AW18]: EOI (Issue 40)

Commented [AW19]: EOI (Issue 27)

Commented [AW20]: EOI (Issue 10)

REF	Property	Current Zone & Proposed Use	Preliminary considerations and recommendation
E	Lot 1 DP770416 New England Highway BRANXTON	Current: SP2	* Surplus RMS lands (Site 1) * Distant from existing urban area and infrastructure * Flood affected
		Proposed: Any	* Would visually impact on westward approach to Branxton * New England highway, Hunter Expressway and rail corridor frontages
	Lot 422 DP1141524 New England Highway BRANXTON	Current: SP2	Recommendation: Owner-initiated PP may be considered in longer term, subject to conclusion of investigations for adjoining area D.
		Proposed: Any	
F	Lot 131 DP1051210 2540 New England Highway BRANXTON	Current: RU1	* Distant from existing urban area and infrastructure * Would visually impact on westward approach to Branxton * Flood affected
		Proposed: Rural residential	* Large rural lots, need to consider potential agricultural capability of lands * New England Highway frontage
	Lot 132 DP1051210 2540 New England Highway BRANXTON	Current: RU1	Recommendation: Owner-initiated PP unlikely to be considered during Strategy timeframe.
		Proposed: Rural residential	

Commented [AW21]: EOI (Issue 10)

REF	Property	Current Zone & Proposed Use	Preliminary considerations and recommendation
G	Lot 1 DP1133172 2170 New England Highway BRANXTON	Current: RU2 Proposed: Res/Rural Res	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Adjoins existing East Branxton residential area</li> <li>* Existing poultry farms, likely to be impacted by urban encroachment</li> <li>* Flood affected</li> <li>* New England Highway frontage</li> <li>* Visually sensitive, approach to town from New England Highway and Hunter Expressway</li> <li>* Must address strategic intention to provide transition from urban to rural areas.</li> <li>* Multiple landownership, will require coordination to address combined constraints.</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation: Identify as Structure Plan Investigation Area</p>
	Lot 1 DP1133254 2116 New England Highway BRANXTON	Current: RU2 Proposed: Res/Rural Res	
	Lot 901 DP747350 2104 New England Highway BRANXTON	Current: RU2 Proposed: Res/Rural Res	
	Lot 902 DP747350 2084 New England Highway BRANXTON	Current: RU2 Proposed: Res/Rural Res	
	Lot 6 DP238139 2042 New England Highway BRANXTON	Current: RU2 Proposed: Res/Rural Res	
	Lot 7 DP238139 2082 New England Highway BRANXTON	Current: RU2 Proposed: Res/Rural Res	
	Lot 8 DP238139 2082 New England Highway BRANXTON	Current: RU2 Proposed: Res/Rural Res	
H	Lot 101 DP755211 62 McMullins Road	Current: R5 Proposed: Residential (R2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Currently within North Branxton rural residential area, adjoining existing East Branxton residential area</li> <li>* Aligns with strategic intention to provide transition from urban to rural areas.</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation: Owner-initiated PP would be considered in short term.</p>

REF	Property	Current Zone & Proposed Use	Preliminary considerations and recommendation
I	Lot 45 DP1166072 Elderslie Road BRANXTON	Current: R5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing Radford Park Estate</li> <li>Current controls mandate an average 4,000m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Visual sensitivity of lands as viewed from Branxton Town Centre</li> </ul>
		Proposed: Rural residential, seeking smaller lot sizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potentially conflicts with Strategic intention is to provide transition from urban to rural areas</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation Maintain existing average lot size, consider flexibility on a stage-by-stage basis</p>
J	Lot 1 DP1124566 103C Elderslie Road BRANXTON	Current: RU1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjoins Radford Park Estate</li> <li>Not considered to be required to meet demand rural residential dwellings during life of Strategy</li> <li>Large rural lot, need to consider potential agricultural capability of lands</li> <li>Visual sensitivity of lands as viewed from Branxton Town Centre</li> </ul>
		Proposed: Rural residential	<p>Recommendation: Owner-initiated PP may be considered in medium to longer term, subject to availability of lots within existing zoned supply.</p>
K	Lot 52 DP620139 284 Elderslie Road BRANXTON	Current: RU1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjoins Radford Park Estate</li> <li>Multiple landowners</li> <li>Not considered to be required to meet demand rural residential dwellings during life of Strategy</li> </ul>
		Proposed: Rural residential	
	Lot 4 DP539087 256 Elderslie Rd BRANXTON	Current: RU1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likely to contain EECs</li> </ul>
		Proposed: Rural residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bushfire risk (Categories 1 and 2 vegetation) management requirements likely to be limited by EEC conservation priorities.</li> </ul>
	Lot 11 DP850244 285 Elderslie Rd BRANXTON	Current: RU1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes a large rural lot, need to consider potential agricultural capability of lands</li> </ul>
		Proposed: Rural residential	<p>Recommendation: Owner-initiated PP may be considered in medium to longer term, subject to availability of lots within existing zoned supply.</p>
	Lot 2 DP609838 215 McMullins Rd BRANXTON	Current: RU1	
		Proposed: Rural residential	

Commented [AW22]: Issue 32

Commented [AW23]: EOI (Issue 33)

Commented [AW24]: EOI (Issue 41)

REF	Property	Current Zone & Proposed Use	Preliminary considerations and recommendation
L	Lot 23 DP734796 348 McMullins Road BRANXTON	Current: RU1	* Distant from existing rural residential area at North Branxton * Not considered to be required to meet demand rural residential dwellings during life of Strategy
		Proposed: Rural residential	* Large rural lot, need to consider potential agricultural capability of lands  Recommendation: Owner-initiated PP unlikely to be considered during Strategy timeframe.
M	Lot 6 DP827226 6 Preston Close LECONFIELD	Current: R5  Proposed: Res/Rural Res	Subject of current Planning Proposal  Recommendation: Refer to determination of current planning proposal
	Lot 2 DP237057 162 Dalwood Road LECONFIELD	Current: RU1  Proposed: Res/Rural Res	
	Lot 31 DP571275 167 Dalwood Rd LECONFIELD	Current: RU1  Proposed: Res/Rural Res	
	Lot 32 DP571275 169 Dalwood Rd LECONFIELD	Current: RU1  Proposed: Res/Rural Res	
	Lot 33 DP571275 181 Dalwood Rd LECONFIELD	Current: RU1  Proposed: Res/Rural Res	
	Lot 34 DP571275 163 Dalwood Rd LECONFIELD	Current: RU1  Proposed: Res/Rural Res	
	Lot 4 DP533318 Dalwood Road LECONFIELD	Current: RU1  Proposed: Res/Rural Res	

Commented [AW25]: EOI (Issue 29)

REF	Property	Current Zone & Proposed Use	Preliminary considerations and recommendation
N	Lot 1 DP1030313 245 Dalwood Road LECONFIELD	Current: RU1 Proposed: Rural Res	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Availability of rural residential lots in other parts of North Branxton</li> <li>▪ Some areas subject to steep slope</li> <li>▪ Likely to contain EECs</li> <li>▪ Bushfire risk (Categories 1 and 2 vegetation) management requirements likely to be limited by EEC conservation priorities.</li> </ul>
	Lot 111 DP590103 227A Dalwood Road LECONFIELD	Current: RU1 Proposed: Rural Res	
	Lot 3 DP239188 267 Dalwood Road LECONFIELD	Current: RU1 Proposed: Rural Res	
	Lot 4 DP239188 265 Dalwood Road LECONFIELD	Current: RU1 Proposed: Rural Res	
	Lot 5 DP239188 249 Dalwood Road LECONFIELD	Current: RU1 Proposed: Rural Res	
			<p>Recommendation:</p> <p>Owner-initiated PP may be considered in medium to longer term, subject to availability of lots within existing zoned supply.</p>

Commented [AW26]: EOI (Issue 38)

REF	Property	Current Zone & Proposed Use	Preliminary considerations and recommendation
O	Lot 806 DP1141528 10 Mansfield Street GRETA	Current: RU2  Proposed: Any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surplus RMS lands (Site F)</li> <li>Adjoins established Greta residential area (R5)</li> <li>Within walking distance of Greta train station</li> <li>May provide opportunity for further residential uses and improved local access to station.</li> <li>Hunter Expressway and rail corridor frontages.</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation: Identify as a Structure Plan investigation area, to be reviewed as part of broader review of Greta's housing supply lands</p>
P	Lot 40 DP1079692 Tuckers Lane GRETA  Part Lot 41 DP1079692 Tuckers Lane GRETA  Lot 62 DP828903 Tuckers Lane GRETA	Current: RU2  Proposed: Any  Current: RU2  Proposed: Any  Current: RU2  Proposed: Any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surplus RMS lands (Site E)</li> <li>Adjoins established Greta residential area (R5)</li> <li>Adjoins proposed Greta Migrant Camp development, currently zoned R2 but not yet developed.</li> <li>May provide opportunity for further residential uses and improved local traffic circulation between village and Migrant Camp.</li> <li>Hunter Expressway frontage</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation: Identify as a Structure Plan investigation area, to be reviewed as part of broader review of Greta's housing supply lands</p>
Q	Lot 1010 DP1141530 New England Highway GRETA	Current: RU2  Proposed: Residential/Rural Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjoins established Greta residential area (R5)</li> <li>Likely to contain EECs</li> <li>Part flood affected</li> <li>New England Highway frontage</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation: Owner-initiated PP may be considered in longer term, subject to review of Greta's housing supply lands.</p>

Commented [AW27]: EOI (Issue 10)

Commented [AW28]: EOI (Issue 10)



REF	Property	Current Zone & Proposed Use	Preliminary considerations and recommendation
R	Lot 2 DP849939 188 Standen Drive BELFORD	Current: RU1 Proposed: Environmental Living	Not located within Singleton Land Use strategy candidate area Availability of lots in adjoining environmental living areas along Standen Drive. Visual significance of area – natural landscape features
	Lot 511 DP1096873 273 Standen Drive LOWER BELFORD	Current: RU1 Proposed: Environmental Living	Conservation management requirements Flood affected Recommendation: PP unlikely to be considered during Strategy timeframe.
	Lot 512 DP1096873 273B Standen Dr LOWER BELFORD	Current: RU1 Proposed: Environmental Living	
S	Lot 1 DP113114 700 Dalwood Road DALWOOD	Current: RU1 Proposed: Commercial / Tourism	Wyndham Estate, now closed EOI submitted by community group, not owner. Recommendation: PP would be considered for proposed use.

Commented [AW29]: EOI (Issue 28)

Commented [AW30]: EOI (Issue 39)

Commented [AW31]: EOI (Issue 12)



## Branxton Town Centre Masterplan

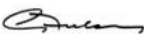
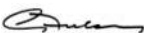
June 2016



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June 2016 | N-14066

## Report Revision History

Rev	Date	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Issued to:	Verified by
03	2.12.15	AW <i>Associate Director</i>	GF <i>Senior Consultant</i>	PCG for public exhibition	 <i>Senior Consultant</i>
04	23.5.16	AW <i>Associate Director</i>	GF <i>Senior Consultant</i>	PCG for comment	 <i>Senior Consultant</i>

This document is preliminary unless approved by a Director of City Plan Strategy & Development

### CERTIFICATION

This report has been authorised by City Plan Strategy & Development, with input from a number of other expert consultants, on behalf of the Client. The accuracy of the information contained herein is to the best of our knowledge not false or misleading. The comments have been based upon information and facts that were correct at the time of writing this report.

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# Preface

The *draft Branxton Town Centre Masterplan* (the draft Report) was exhibited for public comment during February-March 2016. A number of changes have been made to the draft Report, in response to a range of issues raised by State Agencies and the community in response to the public exhibition of the draft Report.

This Report presents to Council the finalised *Branxton Town Centre Masterplan* for adoption, reflecting the changes made in response to issues raised during the public exhibition.

## What has changed?

A number of community members raised concerns about how the information was presented within the document. Specific criticisms included the length of the document, repetition of information, and use of technical 'jargon', which made the content difficult to understand. In response to this:

- The Report has been re-structured, with text from some sections re-located within the document; and
- Superfluous and/or repetitive information has been removed.

These changes are illustrated within the Report as follows.

1.1 Heading	draft Report heading and substantive text remains
1.1 Heading 1.1 Heading	draft Report heading has been re-titled
1.1 Heading	New heading and substantive text has been inserted
1.1 Heading	draft Report section / substantive text has been removed

Report text has also been subject to a 'Plain English' edit, to present difficult-to-understand information more clearly. These changes have not been itemised in this Report. Instead, the edited text, as it would be adopted, is presented for Council's review and consideration.

Specific changes to text, tables and figures made to address issues raised during the exhibition period are itemised in a separate enclosure/attachment, and are cross-reference throughout the report, where:

Text Text	specific draft information (text/table/figure) has been replaced
Text	new information has been added
Text	specific draft information has been removed

Drafting note boxes and comments are also provided throughout the Report, as required, to further explain changes.

Commented [AW1]: Example comment box

**Drafting note:**  
Example

## Executive summary

Branxton is a small township with a distinctive heritage character and rural landscape setting. Its main street, which forms part of the New England Highway, offers a narrow and fine grain frontage of shops. This centre has traditionally been the focus of commercial and social activities for a broader subregion, and businesses have benefitted from passing trade associated with the highway.

The role of Branxton's Town Centre is set to change, with recent studies anticipating up to a 90 per cent reduction in traffic volumes through the township. This has already begun with the opening of the Hunter Expressway and will continue through the planned emergence of Huntlee's Town Centre.

This Report outlines a Masterplan for Branxton's Town Centre, to facilitate its long-term transition from a Highway centre to a local place. It addresses a range of challenges, including:

- Management considerations for traffic, parking, flooding and heritage.
- Existing movement and access limitations, including a constrained local street network, which forces vehicles to rely heavily on the Highway.
- Opportunities to enhance the 'core business area' by more efficiently use lands already zoned and/or used for commercial purposes;
- Opportunities to enhance the public domain along the main street, which has been progressively widened to cater for large traffic volumes.

The Masterplan outlined in this Report supports the following vision:

*Branxton is a vibrant village centre that continues to build upon its strength as an important heritage town in the Hunter Valley. It has developed an attractive and active main street that is encircled and supported by a compact urban form, respecting its unique heritage and rural setting.*

*It is a local place of commerce, innovation, history and recreation*

This will be achieved by a series of actions to:

1. Revitalise the main street (Maitland Street);
2. Increase connectivity to and within the Town Centre;
3. Improve approaches and gateways;
4. Strengthen relationships to recreation areas;
5. Rationalise parking;
6. Respond to unique heritage and rural setting; and
7. Enable and encourage future development.

This Report was commissioned by Cessnock and Singleton Councils, together with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment, as part of the Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy project. The Masterplan supports the Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan 2016. Branxton's Town Centre is wholly located in the Cessnock Local Government Area.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background ~~1. Introduction~~

The Hunter Region is changing. The opening of the Hunter Expressway in March 2014 and the staged development of Huntlee's New Town, in particular, are anticipated to dramatically influence growth and change within the Branxton Subregion (the Subregion). These regionally significant projects will attract more people to live in the Subregion, change how people move through and around the area, and heavily influence the future role of Branxton's Town Centre.

To prepare for this change, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment provided funding to Cessnock City Council and Singleton Council to jointly prepare a land use strategy and structure plan for the Subregion, supported by a masterplan for Branxton's Town Centre (this Project). City Plan Strategy and Development was appointed to deliver this Project on the Councils' behalf. This was the first Subregional Strategy in the Hunter Region to be prepared collaboratively between two Councils and the State government.

The Masterplan outlined in this Report for Branxton's Town Centre (the Masterplan) is the first place-specific plan for a local centre in the Subregion to be prepared under the Subregional strategy.

### 1.2 Structure of this Report and associated documents ~~1. Introduction~~

The Masterplan details the planning and design guidelines for Branxton's Town Centre, directed by the strategic planning framework established in the *Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan* (2016).

This Report presents the Masterplan, providing:

- The vision and objectives that underpin the Masterplan and that will guide future planning and design (**Section 2**);
- An overview of the opportunities and challenges for planning and development in the Town Centre (**Section 2**); and
- The structural elements of the Masterplan, including the preferred indicative layout, recommended main street public domain improvements and recommended improvements to the Town Centre's surrounds (**Section 4**).

The Masterplan is supported by an implementation plan (**Section 5**), which will be used by Cessnock City Council to direct priorities in policy amendments, funding and key site investigations. The Masterplan will guide the preparation of detailed controls for future development. These controls will be prepared as an amendment to the Cessnock City-wide Development Control Plan and Cessnock Local Environmental Plan.

The Masterplan is based on a series of background studies completed between 2014-15. These were exhibited alongside the *draft Branxton Town Centre Masterplan*, and are available separately from Council.

#### **Explanatory note for terminology used in this Report**

##### **Centres**

The Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan recommend a settlement hierarchy for existing and emerging population centres in the Subregion. Development in Huntlee will include a new activity centre for the Town, which is expected to operate as the major service centre for the Subregion (and beyond).

Branxton and Greta are listed within this settlement hierarchy as "villages", and their activity centres are intended to cater for the daily needs of surrounding local communities and passing trade.

For the purposes of this Report, Branxton is described as a Town Centre. This is intended to be a place description, rather than a reference to the hierarchical ordering of the activity centres within the Subregion.

##### **Main street / Maitland Street / New England Highway**

Branxton's Town Centre is situated along Maitland Street, which forms part of the New England Highway. This Report refers to Maitland Street as the Town Centre's main street.

## 2. Masterplan vision and objectives

### 4.1 Summary of recommendations

#### Drafting note:

The Masterplan vision and objectives were previously presented in a later section of the draft Report. They have been re-located to give them prominence, and enable them to be referred to more directly throughout the Report.

The vision for the Masterplan is that, by 2041:

*Branxton is a vibrant village centre that continues to build upon its strength as an important heritage town in the Hunter Valley. It has developed an attractive and active main street that is encircled and supported by a compact urban form, respecting its unique heritage and rural setting.*

*It is a local place of commerce, innovation, history and recreation.*

Seven objectives for planning and urban design will assist in realising this vision. These are to:

1. Revitalise the main street (Maitland Street);
2. Increase connectivity to and within the Town Centre;
3. Improve approaches and gateways;
4. Strengthen relationships to recreation areas;
5. Rationalise parking;
6. Respond to unique heritage and rural setting; and
7. Enable and encourage future development.

The Indicative Layout, Public Domain Improvement Plan and Action Plan presented in the Masterplan support each of these objectives in various ways. Council will continue to consider these objectives when making decisions about land use and development within the Town Centre.

### 3. Opportunities and challenges ~~2. Urban form and land capability analysis~~

#### Drafting note:

This section generally reflects that previously provided in the draft Report, but information has been re-ordered to provide a more coherent narrative. Additional information has been provided in response to public exhibition feedback to better illustrate the Town Centre's context within the broader village and Subregion, and demonstrate the anticipated changes to the role of the Town Centre as the impetus for preparing a Masterplan.

The detailed Land Use survey analysis previously provided in the draft Report itemised current land uses on a property-by-property basis, and was correct as of May 2015. This information will continue to be available in the Background Documents but has been removed from the final Report. References to the key findings and recommendations have been retained where relevant.

This section provides a context for the Town Centre Masterplan, including an overview of the various analyses that assisted in identifying the opportunities and challenges for change and improvements. Key outcomes and recommendations are considered in relation to the Town Centre's:

- Setting, including its role and relationship to other centres, and its existing physical environment and character;
- Planning Frameworks, considering the strategic frameworks and current planning controls influencing existing and future land use and development within the Town Centre; and
- Built form, considering the street and subdivision patterns as well as the current form and quality of the Town Centre's buildings and public domain.

#### ~~3.1 Setting~~ ~~2.1 Location and setting, (part)~~ ~~2.6 Physical constraints and opportunity analysis~~

The broader Branxton Subregion (the Subregion) extends over the Cessnock and Singleton Local Government Areas (LGAs) (**Figure 1**). It includes the established and planned settlement areas of Huntlee and North Rothbury, Branxton and East Branxton, Greta, and Greta Migrant Camp, as well as diverse and productive rural lands.

Settlement of the area dates from the 1830s when the Hunter Valley was opened up beyond Maitland, yet the town's main growth started in the late 1800s with the development of the nearby Anvil Creek Coal Mine. Establishment of the Greta Migrant Camp in 1939 created accelerated growth in the village at that time.

The Subregion is well-served by interregional transport links, including the New England Highway, Hunter Expressway and Main North Rail Line. These routes generate a high volume of traffic through the Subregion every day, being situated between:

- Australia's seventh largest city and international transport hubs (Port and Airport) at Newcastle;
- Highly-productive mining and agricultural areas in the Upper Hunter and New England areas; and
- Popular national tourism destination at the Hunter Valley Vineyards.

Branxton has historically been the largest service centre between Singleton, Maitland and Cessnock, conveniently located at the convergence of main routes between these larger centres. Businesses and services located within Branxton's Town Centre have catered

predominantly to the residents living within the Subregion, as well as passing trade. **Figure 2** illustrates the Town Centre in context with the village. The main commercial area fronts the New England Highway at Maitland Street, which operated as the main thoroughfare for passing freight and commuter traffic until the Hunter Expressway opened in 2014. The village is also serviced by a rail station, located approximately 1km southwest of the Town Centre, as well as a number of popular local recreational areas and community facilities.

The Subregional population was 8,215 people at the 2011 Census, and is currently forecasted to grow to more than 18,000 by 2041. A substantial proportion of this growth is expected to occur through the staged development of Huntlee New Town, which has an estimated capacity to ultimately accommodate up to 21,000 people. The opening of the Hunter Expressway has already changed the flow of traffic through Branxton's Town Centre. Huntlee will also accommodate a new Town Centre that has been planned to cater for a population catchment beyond the Subregion. These changes will influence the future role and function of Branxton's Town Centre.

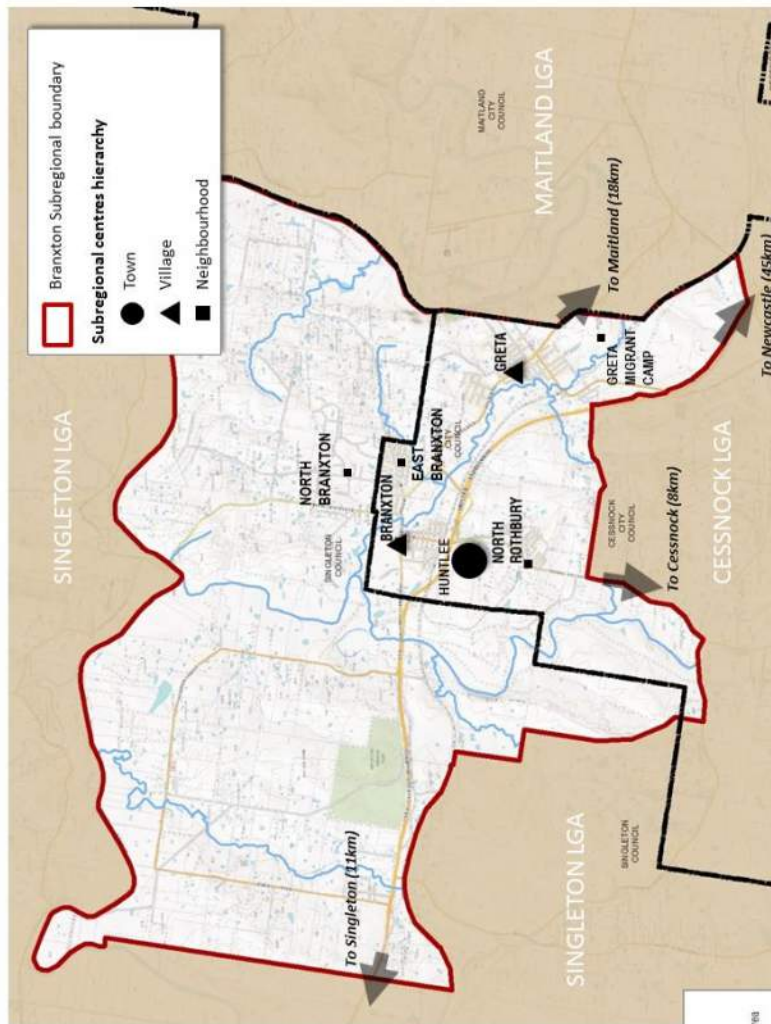


Figure 1: Subregional context Figure 1: Study Area



Figure 2: Town Centre context (Town Centre area indicated in yellow) (CPSD 2016)

#### **2.1.1 Character and heritage (part) ~~2.1 Location and setting, (part) 2.6 Physical constraints and opportunity analysis (heritage)~~**

Branxton is a village with a visually dominant built heritage and rural setting. These attributes offer many positive characteristics that are highly valued by residents, attractive to visitors, and integral to the activity and quality of experience within the Town Centre.

The Town Centre can be approached from east, west and south, and is currently marked by two thresholds:

- At the eastern end of Maitland Street, two former heritage hotels on the northern frontage, and the Royal Federal Hotel on the southern frontage, provide a clear threshold to the Town Centre (**Photo 1**). These buildings first appear as one travels over the Anvil Creek Bridge, approaching the village along the New England Highway from the east. They are preceded by the green open space and landscaping features associated with Anvil Creek and Miller Park.
- Two heritage buildings at the Maitland Street intersection with Clift Avenue/John Rose Avenue also serve as a threshold to the Town Centre for visitors arriving from the west along the New England Highway or the south along Clift Street (**Photo 2**). This threshold is less well defined, with residential and industrial uses generally appearing first.

At 2016, commercial activities within the Town Centre are predominantly focused along Maitland Street (the New England Highway). This functions as a traditional main street, offering a strip of heritage and other buildings along the northern and southern frontages (**Photos 3 and 4**).

Several heritage items are located within the Branxton Town Centre, including fourteen properties fronting Maitland Street (indicated in **Figure 5**). The prominence of heritage buildings in the Town Centre establishes the well-loved character of Branxton that should be retained and supported.

The main street offers a range of small shops, including a small supermarket. Its dominant heritage buildings form a strong built edge, particularly on the southern side of Maitland Street (**Photo 5**). Heritage buildings are generally two storeys, in good condition, and offer verandah features that define the public domain (**Photos 6 and 7**).

Long views to the surrounding rural area are possible from Maitland Street and other locations within the Town Centre (**Photo 8**).

Future planning and development within the Town Centre should consider the following:

- The village's established character and heritage features provide an attractive environment, and may be utilised to attract and promote new business investments ranging from retail to tourism.
- Heritage listed buildings have limitations on re-development and must retain key elements of their significance. Any development in close proximity to heritage buildings must also consider the impact on the significance of heritage items.





Photo 1: Approach to Town Centre from east, crossing Anvil Creek bridge



Photo 2: Approach to town from south along Clift Street



Photo 3: Branxton main street, looking west



Photo 4: Branxton main street and Town Centre defined by two storey heritage buildings



Photo 5: Heritage buildings defining main street along southern side



Photo 6: Main street with verandahs and other heritage paving features



Photo 7: Main street with mixed pavement materials and distinct cross-fall



Photo 8: View corridor along Cessnock Road to surrounding rural views

### ~~2.1.2 Flooding and stormwater management~~ ~~2.6 Physical constraints and opportunity analysis~~

**Commented [AW2]:** Updated text previously provided in draft Report (Issues 43 and 56)

Most of the lands fronting Maitland Street are flood-affected, and planning authorities must consider the specific flooding characteristics (e.g. depth, velocity, change on adjoining properties) when assessing a development application. This affects the re-development potential of existing properties and will continue to influence the built form, streetscape appearance and cost of new development.

Future planning and development within the Town Centre should consider the following:

- It is generally unacceptable to locate habitable floor space or site access below the flood planning level, which is generally around 2.5m above the natural ground level. Council will review and update flood planning levels for residential, commercial and industrial development as part of a future floodplain risk management study.
- Stormwater management is a related consideration. New developments may be subject to stormwater and infrastructure and management requirements to mitigate the impacts of overland flooding.

### ~~3.2 Built form (part) 2.3 Land use and planning control analysis, 2.4 Public domain analysis, (part) 2.5 Built form analysis, (part) 2.6 Physical constraints and opportunity analysis, and 2.7 Movement networks~~

#### ~~3.2.1 Street patterns and movement~~ ~~2.7 Movement networks~~

How people access Branxton Town Centre, and how easily they can move around within it once they arrive, is an important consideration for its future success.

Approaches to the Town Centre, along the New England Highway and from the direction of Cessnock via Bridge Street, offer very distinct experiences. The entry from Cessnock along Bridge Street is particularly notable due to the need to travel in a 'dog-leg movement' around to Clift Street or Cessnock Road.

Branxton's traditional street network reflects the grid-like pattern that is typical of similar regional towns established around the same time. More recent changes to the network, such as the part one-way road that runs past the medical centre, and to a lesser extent the closure of John Street, have eroded this grid and led to reduced permeability.

Ample on-street parking is available along Maitland Street, providing convenient access to shops along the northern and southern frontages. Off-street parking is also available at the Town Centre's western edge, including:

- A public (Council-owned) car park on Cessnock Road offers off-street parking; and
- Behind the supermarket and Royal Federal Hotel, accessed via Maitland Street or Cessnock Road.

A summary of movement network considerations and challenges is presented in **Figure 3**, including:

- **Pedestrian crossings and safety.** There is currently one formalised pedestrian crossing at Clift Street, which is located at the western edge of the main street, away from the main commercial frontage.
- **Fragmented car parking.** The existing carpark behind the supermarket and hotel on the southern side are separately accessed and physically separated by a grade change and fencing which prevents rationalisation of parking spaces and interrupts permeability of the retail area.
- **Access to medical centre and seniors living.** The driveway access to these two sites is confusing and does not provide specific pedestrian access. The partial one-

way system is also not ideal and the duplication of another driveway to a private residence, which runs along the south side, further exacerbates a currently poor outcome.

- **Driveways crossing footpaths.** There are a number of properties fronting Maitland Street with driveways crossing the main footpath. This damages the footpath, creates uneven surfaces, and creates hazards for pedestrians. It also lowers the amenity of the footpath as a place for outdoor dining or other gathering.

Improving public accessibility, wayfinding and facilities within the village more broadly, including facilities for school buses and public transport (i.e. bus interchange facilities and connected footpaths to safe road crossing points) will make it easier for existing and future residents to come to the Town Centre, further encouraging economic activity. This may also support opportunities for after-school activity businesses (tutoring, music lessons, sports training, child-care) to establish in the Town Centre.

#### The influence of traffic reduction on trade

Traffic counts by the road authority before and after the opening of the Hunter Expressway indicate that there has been a 90 per cent reduction in the number of vehicles passing along the main street of Branxton. Whilst there has not been a quantification of the subsequent reduction in trade for the business owners in Branxton, it is a reasonable assumption supported by evidence from other by-passed towns, that there is a change in trade.

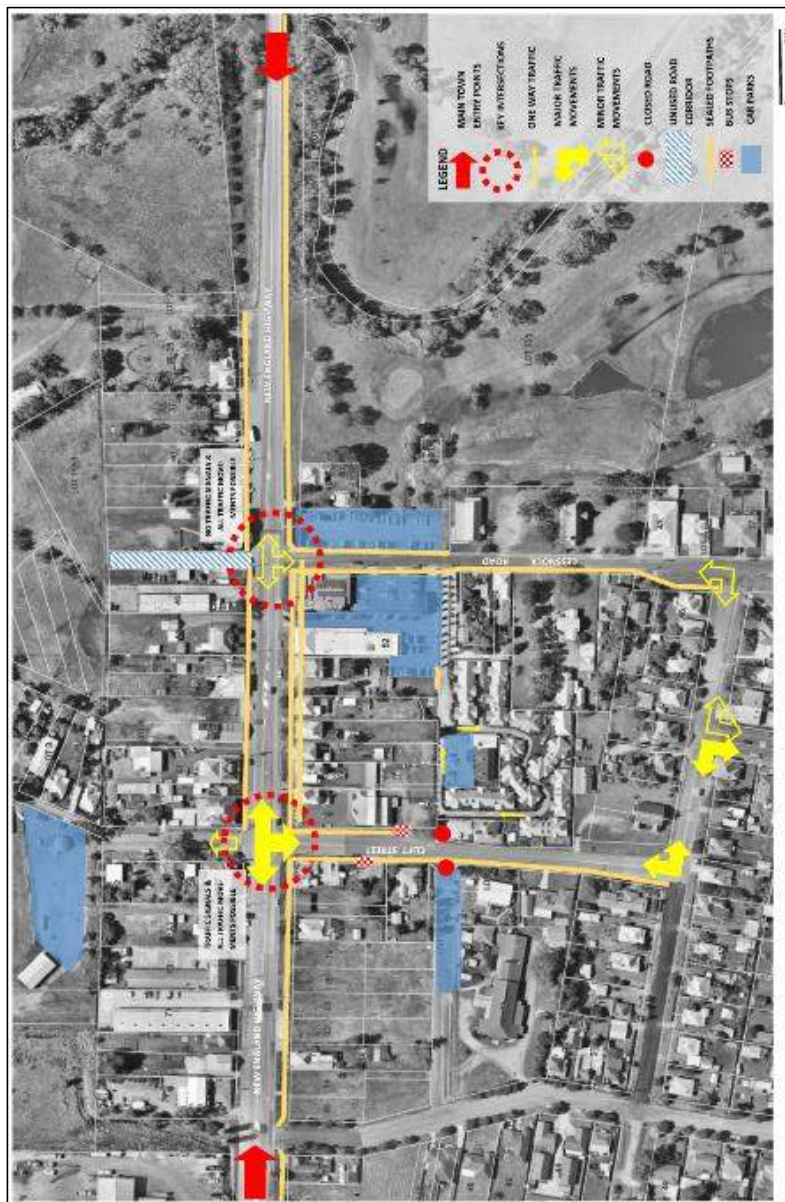
Research from Australia (BTCE, 1994; RMS, 2012) and the United States of America (Economic Development Research Group, 2000) indicated that there are consistent impacts on Town Centres arising from highway bypasses. The common themes in the research are:

- There will be turnover or relocation of existing businesses, especially traffic-servicing businesses.
- Communities and Town Centres with a strong identity as a destination or for local shopping are most likely to be economically stronger due to reduced traffic delays.
- Adequate signage to the by-passed Town Centre is needed to "remind" vehicle drivers.
- Tourism and visitor benefits are felt in the long term, after towns have had time to exploit new opportunities.
- Quality of life factors (i.e. better place to live, quieter, no traffic congestion) are commonly experienced.
- Investment and intervention by government can assist to soften the immediate impacts of the loss in through traffic.
- The effect of the impacts depends on the characteristics of the bypassed town (for example, tourism-based towns fare better than those focussed on freight services).

The most recent study commissioned by the RMS and published in 2012, concludes that:

*"in the longer term highway bypasses do not have adverse economic impacts on towns that are bypassed and that in most cases bypasses have resulted in economic development benefits for the towns which have been bypassed" (pg. v)*

This supports the potential for the initial constraint arising from the loss of passing and through traffic to become an opportunity for the longer term economic benefit of Branxton's Town Centre.



**Figure 5 Summary of Road Network Considerations (December 2015)** From draft report page 27, previously not referenced

### 2.2.2 Subdivision and building form (part) ~~2.5 Built form analysis (existing built form)~~, and (part) ~~2.3 Land-Use Planning Control Analysis~~

Building form is important to Branxton due to its strong heritage and its visible extent exhibited in the existing buildings. The architectural period features cover the breadth of architectural styles from the mid to late 1800s through to the present day, dominated by elements from the Victorian (1850 -1890) and Edwardian or Federation (1890 – 1915) times.

Branxton retains a great many of its original or early shopfronts and hotel facades, with these substantially contributing to the town character. Heritage features include large shopfront windows, brick, stone and timber building materials, wrought iron lacework, verandahs and timber and iron verandah posts extending over the footpath.

**Photos 9-11** illustrate that the existing Town Centre is a mix of one and two storey buildings, with a dominant edge of character and heritage buildings along the mostly commercial area between Cessnock Road and Clift Street. It comprises a traditional main street of small shops that create a strong if not consistent built form, particularly on the northern side of the Maitland Street. There are some built form gaps in the Town Centre, including vacant or underutilised sites, plus buildings that are not contributory to the heritage character.

Street blocks in the Town Centre are around 150 to 160 metres wide and 90 metres deep. Street blocks are set in a grid pattern; however, a number of streets are not fully formed, or have been closed to through-connections.

This block layout allows a smaller retail form, either fine grain retail shops, or a large floorplate without sleeving<sup>1</sup>. The long and narrow lots predominantly provide small shops of around 330m<sup>2</sup> of gross floor area (refer to **Figure 6**), lending itself to smaller boutique retail uses. The exception to this is a large, consolidated parcel of land in the Town Centre's west. This site's previous consent for a supermarket has lapsed.

There are two locations within the Town Centre where there are clusters of underutilised business zoned land. The main street frontage gives these sites a higher profile and the reduction in traffic volumes may improve their access, street parking and amenity:

- The large, consolidated parcel in the Town Centre's west; and
- Properties between Clift Street and Cessnock Road with dual street frontage to Maitland Street and the existing vehicle laneway to the south.

Additional development in the Branxton Town Centre is likely to be either commercial or mixed use. Infill development needs to improve the built form and contribute to the heritage character of the Town Centre. When applied to the Branxton Town Centre, the following detailed outcomes should be pursued through development guidelines:

- Consolidate and intensify a diverse range of retail, commercial, residential and lifestyle activities, by renewing existing buildings and encouraging infill development.
- Connect the Town Centre with a high quality pedestrian environment that supports lively day and night public domain activities including sitting, socialising and eating places.
- Deliver buildings that offer fine-grain diversity, provide shelter, active retail and hospitality uses.
- Buildings should complement the rhythm of the existing built fabric of the centre through building form, proportions and materials.
- Ground floor residential development, other than seniors housing, is not permitted in the B2 Local Centre zone. Therefore, any residential development is limited to shop top housing above commercial floor space.

<sup>1</sup> From Edmondson Park Locality DCP template, Liverpool City Council



- New buildings should respect the existing two storey building height, and keep taller buildings to the main street corners, with a transitioning of building heights towards the rural and residential fringes.
- Ensure that the potential major development site (between Clift Street and Bowen Street):
  - is integrated into the Town Centre through complementary and cohesive built form and enhanced pedestrian and public domain connectivity;
  - addresses the impact of scale, bulk and intensity of future development on the public domain;
  - has effective landscaping, deep soil planting and wide footpaths as a buffer to the adjoining residential areas; and
  - coordinates with the rest of the Town Centre to create a mixed village centre that will attract a range of business activities and local employment opportunities.



Photo 9: Main street at Clift St/John Rose Ave, looking west



Photo 10: Existing northern frontage



Photo 11: Eastern entrance to main street



Photo 12: Existing northern frontage

## 2.2.3 Public domain 2.4 Public domain analysis

A public domain audit was undertaken in May 2015 to review the quality, nature and location of public domain infrastructure in the Town Centre. It included general mapping of assets such as pathways, land uses and connections, within and around the Town Centre. Details of the Public Domain Audit are provided in **Appendix A**, with key considerations summarised below.

### Pedestrian paving

- The predominant paving type is standard concrete pavement. Large expanses of concrete are also located outside of key buildings such as the hotels. Many sections of the concrete pavement, particularly the narrower concrete footpath sections, are in quite poor condition exhibiting cracking, raised sections and holes.
- A narrow bitumen pathway on the southern side of Maitland Street extends over the bridge to the entrance of Miller Park. This pathway is of fair but trafficable condition, yet quite narrow.
- Sections of the street kerb are in poor condition which may affect pedestrians, as well as other areas used by pedestrians such as the unformed area of Church Street which interrupts the main street and the bitumen car park at the corner of Cessnock Road.

### Street furniture

- There is very limited street furniture in the Town Centre, principally being a number of mismatched seats and several pairs of 'wheelie' style bins. There are also a variety of planting containers such as full and half wine barrels and some concrete ones. In the past the barrels were a landscape feature that was a recognisable one in Branxton, yet many of the remaining barrels and plants are in fair to poor condition.

### Way-finding and interpretative signage, public art

- Apart from a number of large road signs, including one very visually dominant sign placed within the footpath area of the main street, there is no specifically designed way-finding signage in terms of directions, or cultural and heritage information. There are a large number of signs related to parking, no stopping areas and a 'local traffic area zone' that may now be rationalised. Outside the Town Centre are small, standard entrance signs provided by Cessnock Council. There is no public art in the Town Centre.

### Natural landscape

- Existing trees are limited to a few native Bottlebrushes scattered along the main street, mostly on the southern side. These trees are not particularly attractive and provide minimum visual amenity and shade.

### Public amenities

- The nearest public amenities to the Town Centre are in Branxton Park which, although in fair condition, are not well located in terms of convenience and general surveillance.

### Heritage features

- There are a number of sections of sandstone kerb and guttering along some of the streets leading from the main street, including Cessnock Road and John Rose Avenue. There is also an historic horse trough along John Rose Avenue, leading towards Branxton Oval. A remnant section of sandstone paving is present in front of the bakery on the southern side.
- By far the strongest structural features of the public domain are the many heritage buildings that create a unique 'wall' along both sides of the main street, with the taller and greater number on the southern side leading to that side being the most visually dominant. The heritage buildings include a mix of hotels, small retail shops, food

outlets and interspersed houses, with the condition of the buildings generally good, although there are a number that are vacant and in a poorer state. The verandahs of many of these buildings, and the supporting posts that extend over the footpath area, are a very noticeable element that serves to enhance the public domain through a physical and visual connection between the building edge and the street. This element is also one which distinguishes Branxton as a place with a history that is still valued and integral to its character.

#### Recreation areas

- Branxton Oval lies behind the main street, accessed off John Rose Avenue, comprising a playing field, small grandstand, croquet club, public amenities and RV dump station. The park also has a brick bandstand and obelisk feature which together form a war memorial, rather unsympathetically placed on the side of the unsealed car park.
- The other main recreation areas are the Branxton Golf Course and Miller Park to the east of the golf club, of which parts of both can be seen from the eastern side of the main street.
- The more detailed components of the public realm, such as the street furniture, pathways and plantings display a lack of unity and quality, and in many cases are in poor condition. There are also many elements that relate to the previous highway role of the main street that can now be re-considered, such as the visual width of the roadway, the extensive number and dominance of signs and existing parking provisions.

Future planning and development within the Town Centre should consider the following:

- There is a cross-fall from the higher southern side of the highway to the northern, which has historically led to a slope from the kerb line up to the footpath in front of the buildings. In general, this slope has been addressed by the use of grass closer to the kerb, yet overall there is a lack of a consistent grade, and a mix of materials and widths of flatter pavement. Grade from the footpath to the main street affects the permeability of the main street and the functionality of on-street dining and pedestrian movement.
- There are many driveways which interrupt the street frontage and footpaths along both sides. These driveways further exacerbate the landform issues on the southern side by cutting through the slope and crossing over the footpath zone.
- Although the main highway function has been removed, the New England Highway still forms the main street, and related to that highway function are likely to be very specific requirements of the road authority for any possible changes in terms of street tree planting, parking, traffic movements and signage.
- The existing transmission lines along the northern side of the main street present some limitations on street tree planting.

The quality of the public domain of Branxton Town Centre is integral to the rejuvenation and reinvention of the township in response to the Hunter Expressway bypassing of the town, Huntlee development and the changing employment context.



### 3.3 Planning frameworks ~~2.2 Strategic context~~ and (part) ~~2.3 Land use and planning control analysis~~

#### 3.3.1 Strategic planning framework ~~2.2 Strategic context~~

The strategic planning framework influencing land use and development in Branxton's Town Centre is set out in a range of State and Local government documents. At 2016, these include:

- The NSW Government's Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (2010), Upper Hunter Strategic Regional Land Use Plan (2012), and draft Hunter Regional Plan (2015); and
- Council's Cessnock City Wide Settlement Strategy (2010), Branxton Urban Design Framework (2010) and Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan (2016).

Collectively, these documents establish a range of considerations and targets to guide long-term planning. Notably, the NSW Government and Council are undertaking major reviews to update the overarching regional and local strategies influencing development in Branxton's Town Centre.

The Masterplan draws heavily on the strategic intentions and recommendations of the *Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan (2016)*, summarised below, as the most recent and locally-relevant document for the Town Centre:

- Branxton is classified as a Village within the subregion's settlement hierarchy. Its centre is intended to provide for basic services and the daily needs of residents in the Subregion, and continue catering for passing trade. It is envisaged to include a mix of small scale retail, community and health services, limited office space and a supermarket.
- Rezoning of additional lands to accommodate employment growth is not required in the Subregion in the short to medium term. However, Council will review the business zoning schemes in all centres, including Branxton's, to ensure planning controls are applied consistently. This review will recognise that there are opportunities to support existing and accommodate new businesses in Branxton by:
  - More efficiently using lands already zoned for commercial development in the Town Centre; and
  - Recognising the contribution of existing commercial premises on rural zoned lands adjoining business zoned land to activities and character of the Town Centre. Council may consider rezoning where existing or new commercial uses can help deliver the vision for the Town Centre and its main street.
- The distinct heritage character of Branxton's Town Centre is recognised as a unique advantage, and should be protected.
- The Town Centre can support broader regional and local strategies for housing growth and diversification by:
  - Facilitating shop top housing in centres; and
  - Encouraging seniors housing within 400 metres walking radius of centres.
- Floodplain risk management plans for Branxton will consider a commercial flood planning level as a separate level to a residential flood planning level.

### 2.3.2 Planning controls (part) 2.3 Land use and planning control analysis

The current statutory framework relevant to the Town Centre includes controls set out in the:

- Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011 (the LEP); and
- Cessnock City Wide Development Control Plan 2010 (the DCP).

The land use zonings within the Town Centre at November 2015 are illustrated in **Figure 4**, showing:

- The predominant land use zoning for the Town Centre is B2 Local Centre (7ha); and
- The Town Centre also includes smaller pockets of R3 Medium Density and RU2 Rural Landscape zonings.

This mix of zonings reflects the range of uses and rural setting that are typical of small regional activity centres. However, the underlying land use zones do not necessarily reflect current land uses within the Town Centre, which are indicated (as of May 2015) on **Figure 5**. Notably:

- A number of existing single dwellings have an underlying B2 Local Centre zoning. These would not be permitted under the current zone controls, but have existing use rights.
- A number of existing commercial premises have underlying RU2 Rural Landscape (takeaway shop and hotel) or R2 Medium Density Residential zonings (medical centre).

Council will consider the zoning regime in Branxton's Town Centre as part of its broader review of land use zonings for centres across the LGA.

Council is also currently considering future opportunities to repurpose some of the existing sporting fields at Branxton Oval, off John Rose Ave, on the edge of the Town Centre for other recreation or visitor functions, such as a recreational vehicle (RV) temporary stay place. This has the potential to attract more people to and through the Town Centre, and generate greater demands for businesses and services.

Future planning and development within the Town Centre should consider opportunities to improve existing planning controls to, in particular:

- Define the extent of and preferred zoning regime for the Town Centre's core business area.
- Identify how land uses and activities can meet relevant zoning objectives. The current objectives for B2 Local Centre are to:
  - To provide a range of retail, business, entertainment and community uses that serve the needs of people who live in, work in and visit the local area
  - To encourage employment opportunities in accessible locations
  - To maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling
- Consider site-specific provisions for minimum lot sizes, floor space ratios or maximum building heights. The *Cessnock Citywide Development Control Plan 2010* does not currently provide any specific controls for Branxton's Town Centre, though some provisions in relation to heritage conservation, car parking and subdivision guidelines would generally apply.

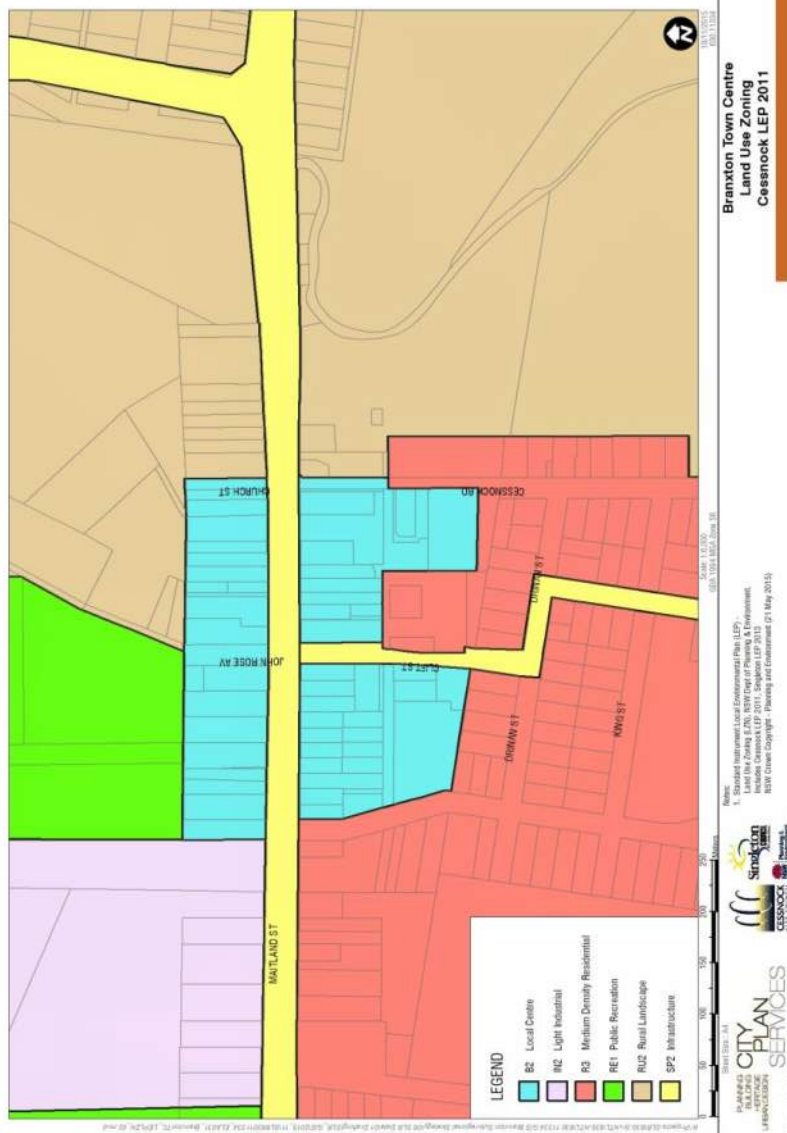


Figure 4. Current Town Centre land use zonings (Cessnock LEP at Nov 2011) **Figure-2**

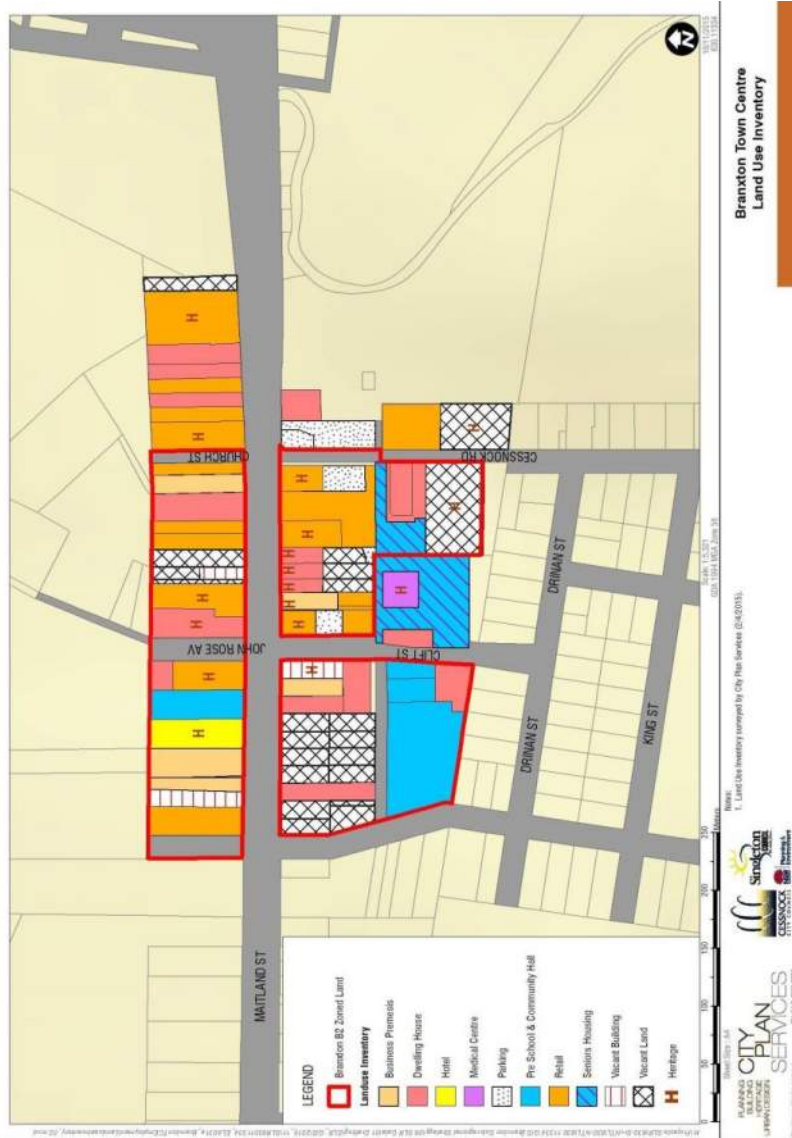


Figure 5. Town Centre land use inventory (CPSD, May 2015) **Figure-3**



## 4. The Masterplan ~~3. Indicative Layout Plan~~

### Drafting note:

This section has been updated to more clearly distinguish between the:

- Indicative Layout Plan (relating to the Town Centre),
- More detailed recommended main street public domain improvements, and
- Other recommended public domain improvements within the broader village area, which were previously provided in an Appendix.

Specific design elements have been referenced back to the Masterplan vision and objectives, to more clearly demonstrate the intent of including them. Further commentary has been provided to better demonstrate the functionality of proposed road modifications and street tree planting.

Key design elements that have been modified or added in response to feedback include:

- The length of the proposed main street median has been reduced to maintain access to properties at the eastern end of Maitland Street (Issue 53);
- Traffic-calming measures have been recommended along Cessnock Road (Issues 52 and 55)

This section outlines the Masterplan for Branxton's Town Centre:

- Identifying the preferred Indicative Layout for future land use and development within the Town Centre boundary;
- Recommending detailed public domain improvements for the main street (Maitland Street); and
- Recommending broader public domain improvements to better integrate the Town Centre with the broader village.

The Masterplan is intended to provide a basis for discussions between Council, the State Government, stakeholders and the broader community when planning for the future of Branxton's Town Centre. It does not, in itself, have a statutory role, but may help to inform the preparation of new planning controls including land use zoning amendments made under the LEP, guidelines provided in the DCP, or Local Contributions Plans.

## 4.1 At a glance

### 4.1.1 Town Centre indicative layout

The Indicative Layout for Branxton's Town Centre is illustrated in **Figure 7**, showing the Centre's preferred future

- Town centre boundary;
- mix and intensification of uses;
- placement of roads and other infrastructure; and
- location of open space and public areas.

This identifies a core business area, predominantly fronting onto Maitland Street, with public domain embellishments, as well as new opportunities for on-street dining and mixed-use buildings. It also identifies opportunities to create a new local street connecting Cessnock Road to Clift Street, through the extension of the existing laneway, which will provide new opportunities for development within rear-lots.

Three options for future development in the Town Centre were considered to establish this Indicative Layout. These considered alternative layouts to accommodate different management approaches, emphasising:

- Small commercial infill;
- Mixed use development; and
- Large floorplate developments.

These alternative layouts are provided in **Appendix B** for information.

### 4.1.2 Main street public domain

Improving the public domain along Maitland Street will be critical to revitalising the main street, which is a key objective of the Masterplan. Recommended public domain improvements are illustrated in **Figure 8**, and supported by artist impressions showing the change in context.

These detail the preferred location along Maitland Street for new:

- Open/public spaces;
- Formalised pedestrian crossings;
- Street tree planting and landscaping;
- On-street parking;
- Cycling facilities; and
- Landmark and wayfinding features, such as public art, signage, and heritage interpretation.

### 4.1.3 Wider Town Centre considerations

Integrating the changes recommended for Branxton's Town Centre with the broader village will ensure investments benefit residents, visitors and business owners. Recommended improvements to areas outside the defined Town Centre boundary are illustrated on Error! Reference source not found.. These will help strengthen connections to places people visit most, as well as improve approaches to the Town Centre.



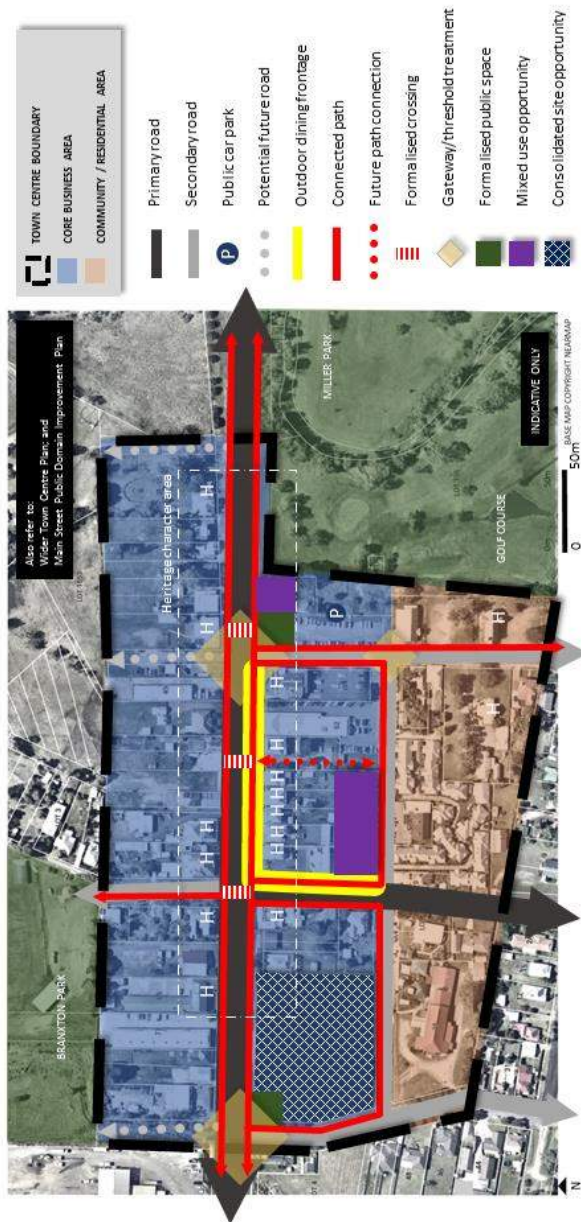
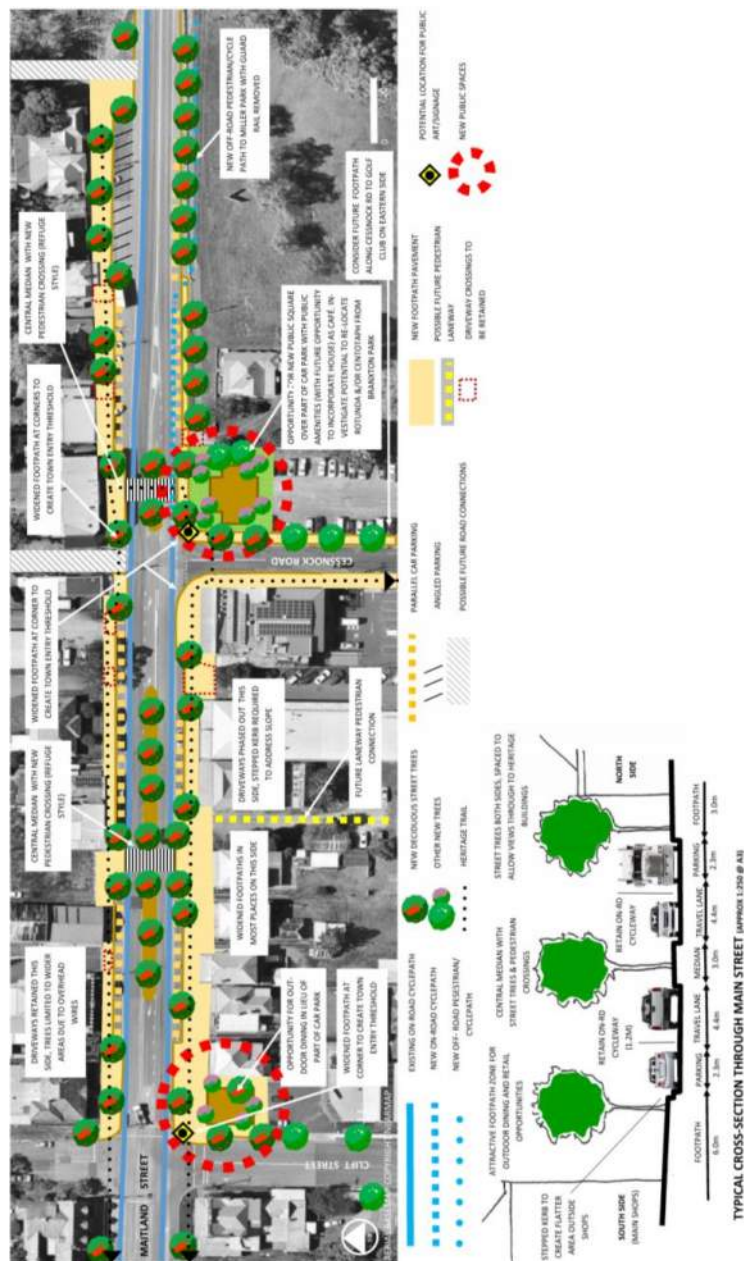


Figure 7: Preferred Town Centre Indicative Layout Plan (CPSD 2016) **Figure-6**

**Commented [AW3]:** Figure updated to improve legibility and more clearly define Town Centre boundary





**Commented [AW4]:** Figure updated to reflect changes made in response to feedback to maintain access to property at Maitland St (Issue 53) and demonstrate that proposed road modifications and street tree planting will still accommodate large-vehicles (Issues 20, 44 and 46)

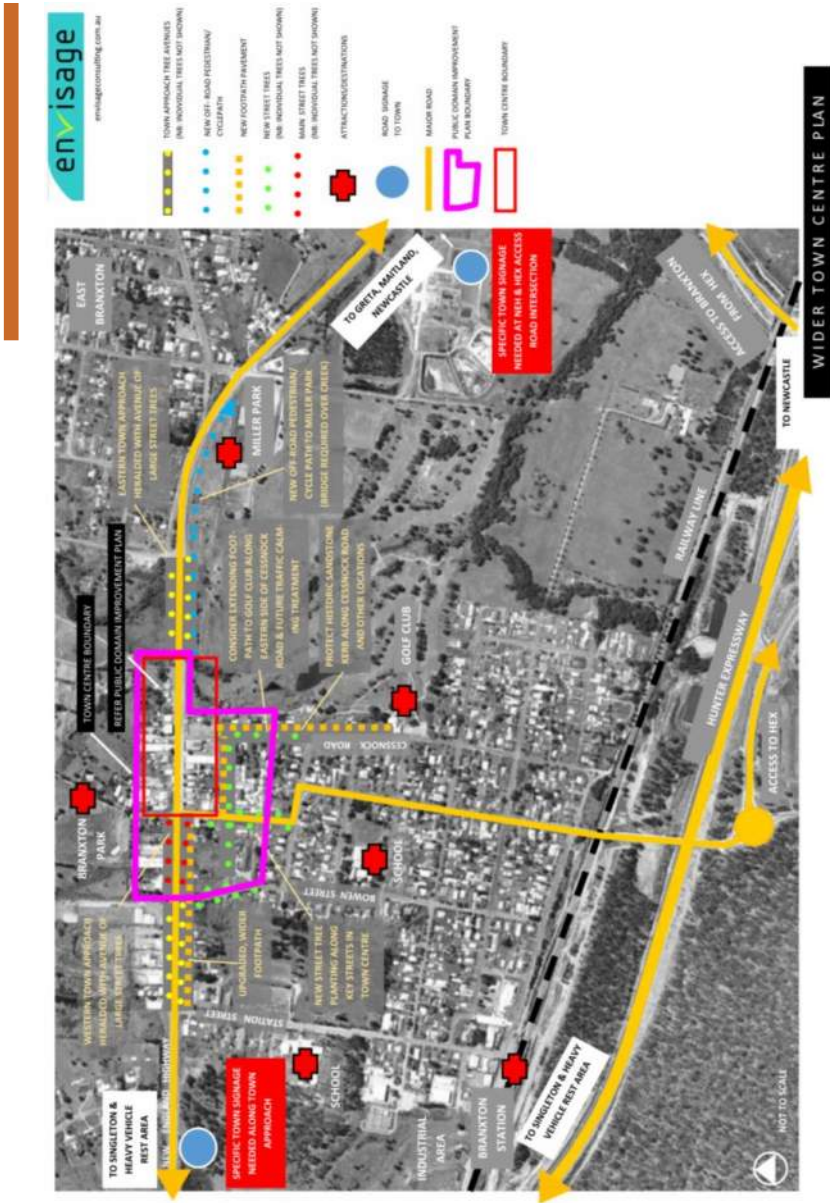


Figure 9: Wider town centre plan (Envisage 2016) Previously provided in Appendix-B

**Commented [AW5]:** Figure re-located from Appendix to main body of Report, and updated in response to feedback to show wider connections (Issues 25 and 36) and recommend traffic-calming at Cessnock Rd (Issues 52 and 55)

The key urban design outcomes, illustrated on **Figure 7**, **Figure 8**, and **Figure 9** align with the vision and objectives for Branxton's Town Centre.

**Commented [AW6]:** Key design elements previously outlined throughout draft Report have been consolidated here to provide an easy-to-understand summary of the nature and intention of recommended improvements

Objective 1: Revitalise the main street	
>	Building façades remain sympathetic to the heritage character.
>	A boulevard, including new street trees and a tree-lined median, offers shade in the summer, provides safe crossings and acts as a traffic calming measure.
>	Wider footpaths and public spaces provide opportunities for people to enjoy and interact.
>	Permit activities that animate the main street, including on-street dining and temporary events such as markets and festivals.
>	Building design and uses provide an active frontage, with commercial and retail activities occupying the ground floor.

Objective 2: Improve connectivity to and within the Town Centre	
>	A new street connection between Cessnock Road and Clift Street, extending the existing laneway, improves vehicle circulation.
>	A new laneway from Maitland Street southward provides direct pedestrian links between shops, services, and parking areas.
>	Wayfinding features and signage from the Town Centre to local destinations (for pedestrians) and the Hunter Expressway (for vehicles) provides a legible environment for all and raises awareness of what the Town Centre has to offer.
>	Shop-top and seniors housing as well as visitor accommodation offer more people a chance to live or stay within walking distance to where they work, shop or socialise.

Objective 3: Improve approaches and gateways to the Town Centre	
>	Statement features, such as public art, a marquee or embellished building façades at the intersection of Maitland Street and Bowen Street mark the Town Centre's western threshold.
>	Landscape features, such as large trees, along Maitland Street at Anvil Creek and Miller Park enhance the eastern approach to the Town Centre.
>	A minor threshold along Cessnock Road calms traffic and marks the transition between commercial and residential areas.

**Commented [AW7]:** New design element provided to address feedback (Issues 52 and 55)

#### Objective 4: Strengthen relationships to recreational areas

- > Continuous paths and signage to/from the Town Centre to nearby recreational areas make it easier and more attractive for people to walk.

#### Objective 5: Rationalise car parking

- > Opportunities for large vehicles, such as trucks and caravans, to park within and close to the Town Centre are retained.
- > Parking restrictions along the main street are relaxed
- > The existing Council-owned public car park at Cessnock Road is re-configured and possibly expanded to provide more spaces.
- > Private car parks within the core business area are reconfigured to provide more spaces and improve circulation for vehicles and pedestrians, including by removing fences and improving grades between existing private car parks for the supermarket and Royal Federal Hotel.

#### Objective 6: Respond to the unique heritage and rural setting

- > The area's established rural and heritage characteristics are promoted to attract new businesses and visitors.
- > New or modified buildings, street furniture and landscaping respects existing heritage features.
- > Visual connections to surrounding areas from the Town Centre are maintained and, where possible, emphasised.

#### Objective 7: Enable and encourage future development

- > Provide sufficient space for businesses and services that conveniently meet the daily needs and expectations of local residents and cater for passing trade.
- > Establish and promote a niche business environment throughout the Town Centre that can attract visitors off the Hunter Expressway and encourage them to linger longer in Branxton.
- > Provide a zoning scheme that supports existing businesses to grow and diversify.
- > Permit and encourage subdivision and redevelopment of the rear portions of business-zoned lots.

## 4.2 Defining the Town Centre ~~3.2 Branxton Town Centre~~

The Town Centre is a distinct neighbourhood in Branxton. It has clearly defined boundaries to rural and recreational areas at the north and east, and residential areas to the west and south.

The boundary of the Masterplan encompasses the main cluster of current and future commercial activities and services for the village. It:

- Extends along Maitland Street from Anvil Creek to Bowen Street (the main street), encompassing northern and southern street frontage properties; and
- From Maitland Street, extends southward along Bowen Street, Clift Street and Cessnock Road to encompass the existing community hall, seniors living area, medical centre and church.

Strategies outlined in the Masterplan also consider connections between the Town Centre and other popular destinations within the village, including:

- To the north, Branxton Oval;
- To the east, the Golf Course, Miller Park, and onward to East Branxton; and
- To the south, Branxton rail station and onward to Huntlee.
- Gateway features at the corners of Bowen Street and Cessnock Road, together with public domain improvements, will reinforce the Town Centre as the most significant place in the Branxton locality.

### 4.3 Land uses and activities ~~3- Indicative Layout Plan~~

The Indicative Layout shows the preferred mix of land uses in the Town Centre. It is intended to coordinate government and community actions to:

- Establish a niche business environment to attract visitors to get off the Hunter Expressway and linger longer in Branxton.
- Leverage off the established rural and heritage character of the area to attract new businesses and visitors.
- Renovate the façade of existing main street buildings, emphasising the area's heritage character.
- Open a new laneway from the main street, connecting to the aged care and Cessnock Rd.

Benchmarks provided in **Table 1** indicate the indicative area/yield for each of the different land use elements, which are further described in following sections. Neither the Indicative Layout Plan or the benchmarks are intended to reflect specific land use zonings, but will inform future changes to land use zonings to facilitate development in line with the Masterplan.

~~Table 1: Indicative Layout Plan land use elements benchmark~~ ~~Table 2: Summary of Indicative Layout Plan~~

Land use element	Benchmark
Mixed use	0.31 hectares
Business use	6.7 hectares
Residential use (other than seniors')	0.49 hectares
Seniors' living	0.67 hectares
Community services	0.69 hectares
Recreation/open space	0.28 hectares
Business floor space	24,060 m <sup>2</sup> (Existing: 8,260 m <sup>2</sup> )
Dwellings (not including seniors')	48 dwellings (Existing: 12 dwellings)
Car parking (public and on-street)	170 spaces (plus new development requirements) (Existing: 154 spaces)

**Commented [AW8]:** Benchmarks updated in line with further parking analysis undertaken in response to feedback (Issues 15, 20, 46 and 53)

### 3.2.1 Business uses 3.3 Business area and floor space

Business uses, including shops (retail, food and drink) and offices will remain the predominant use type in the Town Centre, comprising more than half of the land take. The location of business uses shown in the Indicative Layout generally reflects the current arrangement, with Maitland Street and Clift Street continuing to frame the core business area.

Business floor space in Branxton Town Centre has been estimated at around 8,250m<sup>2</sup>. There is potential to expand this over time to approximately 24,000m<sup>2</sup>, whilst maintaining the existing average site coverage (approximately 30 per cent). Subject to addressing design and site constraints (flooding, access and circulation, heritage):

- Vacant, but consolidated lands between Clift and Bowen Streets provide an opportunity to accommodate a larger floorplate development;
- The future widening of the laneway connecting Cessnock Road to Clift Street will create a new street frontage, enabling new business-related and mixed-use developments on the rear lots of existing properties; and
- The re-use or redevelopment of underutilised sites, including existing dwellings in the core business area provides opportunities for gradual, smaller scale infill.

All new development should reinforce the role of Branxton as a village centre, providing basic services and daily needs, with a focus on the day-to-day life within a community. Built form should be respectful of the heritage character, with active and attractive street frontages along all edges.

The use of existing buildings, and design of new buildings in the core business area, will assist in revitalising the main street, with:

- Retail shops, including food and drink premises, required to maintain a direct visual or physical connection to the street;
- Other commercial activities, such as offices or tourist and visitor accommodation, encouraged to locate on levels above the street; and
- Outdoor dining or other street-based activities encouraged along Maitland Street's southern frontage, between Cessnock Road and Clift Street, and along Clift Street's eastern frontage.

The separation of core business area from the quiet, residential areas to the south and west also offers potential advantages for evening trading for restaurants and pubs.

### 3.2.2 Residential uses 3.4 Residential area and dwelling locations

Lands dedicated solely to residential uses are a small component of the Indicative Layout. These generally relate to:

- Established residential areas to the south and west that are separate from the core business area; and
- The existing seniors living area, which provides a higher-density option for permanent residents that is directly connected to local businesses.

Existing dwellings located within the core business area will continue.

New residential development within the Town Centre can be achieved through the provision of shop top housing. This will address considerations for flood constraints and active street frontages. Subject to addressing design and site constraints (flooding, access and circulation, heritage), mixed use developments, offering commercial and residential uses within a single building, will be prioritised:

- Along the new street frontage created by the future widening of the laneway connecting Cessnock Road to Clift Street, with approximately 1,800m<sup>2</sup> space available in the rear lots of existing properties. This could also be an opportunity for

new seniors housing, mirroring the adjoining land use, subject to addressing the flood planning level.

- Through the possible future development of the existing single dwelling site east of Cessnock Road. This may provide an active use such as a café, gallery or tourist information fronting onto Maitland Street to strengthen the relationship to Miller Park and support the creation of the new Town Park.
- By supporting the conversion of existing two storey buildings into ground floor commercial and upper storey residential uses, including visitor and tourist accommodation.

Through a combination of shop top housing and mixed use development sites, it is possible that the dwelling yield could increase from 12 dwellings to 48 dwellings in the core business area (this excludes existing seniors' dwellings).

### **3.3 Community facilities and open space** ~~3.5 Community facilities and open space~~

Community facilities are already distributed throughout the Town Centre, including halls, a pre-school, police station, and church. These provide a wide range of services for people of various ages and needs within the community.

No additional community facilities are planned, but utilisation of and access to the existing facilities will be improved through improvements to footpaths, vehicle circulation, car parking and increased population within the Town Centre.

The Town Centre already benefits from the large and well established open spaces and recreational areas within the village, including the adjoining Branxton Oval, Branxton Golf Course, and Miller Park. Providing additional public spaces within the Town Centre will assist in revitalising the main street by providing opportunities for people to meet and linger in and around businesses. Public spaces can also accommodate landmark features that draw attention to and demarcate the Town Centre as an important place.

The Indicative Layout proposes two pocket parks at the eastern and western Gateways to the Town Centre. These should include seating, shelters, public amenities, signage and public art to improve accessibility and quality experience for people living, working and visiting the Town Centre.

**Commented [AW9]:** Additional element added to address feedback (Issues 16 and 19)



#### 4.4 Main street public domain ~~3.7 Public domain masterplan~~

The preferred future public domain arrangements for Branxton's main street are illustrated in **Figure 8**.

Key improvements include:

- Widened footpaths on the southern side to support outdoor dining and retail opportunities.
- Street furniture, street tree planting and more attractive pavements to improve the amenity and create a more attractive environment for pedestrians.
- A central median, incorporating street tree planting and pedestrian refuge crossings to calm traffic and increase safety.
- Town gateway elements, such as public art work and/or signage, at eastern and western extents of the main street, incorporated into a public square at the corner of Cessnock Road, and a landscaped semi-public space at the corner of Clift Street.
- A future laneway, connecting the main street to the existing seniors living area and future commercial developments at the southern end of the core business area.

Artist impressions, provided in **Figure 10** assist in illustrating these proposed changes in context.

These improvements are intended to assist in revitalising the main street as a key objective of the Masterplan. The final alignments, design and delivery of these improvements will be subject to further investigation and identification of funding mechanisms. Improvements will be delivered in stages, in line with development and funding requirements.



Figure 10: Artist's impressions of main street public domain improvements (top) Corner of Cassock Road, looking west (bottom) New laneway and extended road improve pedestrian and vehicle traffic connections



Figure 10 (continued): Artist's impressions of main street public domain improvements (top) On-street parking maintained to enable direct access to shopfronts (bottom) Widened footpaths provide opportunities for social interactions and activities, including on-street dining



Figure 10 (continued): Artist's impressions of main street public domain improvements (top) Median and street tree planting calm traffic and provide shade in summer (bottom) Tree spacing and canopy designed to maintain visual connectivity at street-level

## 4.5 Detailed design considerations ~~3.6 Transport and parking provision~~

Proposed changes to roads, paths, and parking within and around the Town Centre arising from the preferred Indicative Layout and main street public domain improvements were subject to more detailed investigations to consider preliminary design issues.

The key outcomes and recommendations are summarised below. These are indicative considerations, only, and will be subject to further investigation through subsequent, detailed design stages.

### Roads

Road modifications will be required to deliver the changes proposed by the preferred Indicative Layout and the recommended main street public domain improvements. These broadly include:

- The creation of a boulevard along Maitland Street;
- The extension and re-configuration of an existing laneway to connect Cessnock Road to Clift Street; and
- Creation of two shared access driveways via the extended laneway and existing private car parks, servicing existing dwellings and businesses fronting Maitland Street.

Cross-sections for Maitland Street, Cessnock Road, and the extended laneway are provided in **Appendix C**, illustrating the proposed apportionments to accommodate relevant footpaths, landscaping, parking, cycling lanes and traffic lanes.

Maitland Street and Clift Street will continue to accommodate the highest volumes of through traffic and greatest diversity of road users, including general vehicles, heavy goods vehicles, caravans, buses and cyclists. These streets will also provide direct vehicle access, including on-street parking, to the main commercial frontages within the core business area.

The changes proposed by the preferred Indicative Layout and main street public domain improvements are expected to result in a slight narrowing of traffic lanes along Maitland Street to 4.5m. This is considered to be sufficient space to safely accommodate vehicle and cycle movements, with existing cycle lanes retained along the northern and southern extents.

At 3m, the proposed central median, incorporating street trees and pedestrian crossing refuges, will change access arrangements across Maitland Street. Notably,

- No changes are proposed for vehicle turnings to/from Bowen Street, Clift Street and Cessnock Road. The impacts to vehicle access to specific properties along Maitland Street will be investigated by Council through detailed design stages.
- Pedestrians will be afforded five formal crossing points, with no changes proposed to existing crossings at Bowen Street, Clift Street and Cessnock Road and the formalisation of two mid-street crossings opposite the proposed laneway and town park.

The median and incorporated street trees are also anticipated to create a more attractive and pedestrian-friendly environment along the main street by calming traffic and providing shade. The height and density of the street tree canopy will be considered through detailed design stages to ensure visual connectivity across the street, particularly to commercial properties, is maintained.

**Commented [AW10]:** Additional text included to address feedback relating to proposed median and street trees (Issues 15, 21, and 46)



## Paths and signage

Modifications to footpaths in and around the Town Centre will also be required, as broadly summarised below.

- Provision of continuous paths, with improved paving materials, throughout the core business area, including through the proposed laneway extension.
- Along Maitland Street, between Clift Street and Cessnock Road, in particular:
  - Widened pathways along the southern extent to accommodate on-street dining.
  - A new through-block connection to the extended laneway at the rear of the core business area.
- Continuous pathways should also be provided to nearby destinations, including:
  - Eastward along Maitland Street to Miller Park and the school bus interchange.
  - Southward along Cessnock Road to the golf course.
  - Eastward from Clift Street to the villages pre-school / community facilities, including formalisation of the pedestrian crossing at the southern end of the core business area.

These modifications will predominantly address safety and mobility issues. They will also assist in creating a more attractive pedestrian environment to encourage more people to walk and cycle around the village. Specific elements such as paving materials, kerb treatments, tactile paving will be considered through detailed design stages.

Additional considerations for wayfinding elements, including signage, to improve legibility for visitors should demarcate routes from the Town Centre to, at minimum:

- Miller Park/East Branxton
- Branxton Oval
- Branxton Golf Course; and
- Branxton Rail Station.

## Car parking

The changes proposed by the preferred Indicative Layout and main street public domain improvements may affect up to 14 existing car parking spaces, but are expected to lead to an overall net gain of parking within the Town Centre. Key impacts are expected:

- Along Maitland Street, with 4 spaces potentially removed to construct a new pedestrian crossing. An additional five spaces could potentially be created through the removal of driveways along the northern frontage, resulting in a net gain of 1 space.
- Along Clift Street, with 5 spaces potentially removed through the widening of the footpath to provide space for on-street dining.
- Along the extended laneway at the rear of the core business area, with 5 existing spaces removed through the redevelopment of rear lots. An additional 6 spaces could be created through the incorporation of parking into the street design, resulting in a net gain of 1 space.


Further car parking gains may be possible through:

- The re-configuration and possible expansion of the Council-owned carpark at Cessnock Road, with a possible net gain of around 17 off-street spaces. This should be pursued in consultation with adjoining landowners.

**Commented [AW11]:** Addresses Issue 22

**Commented [AW12]:** Text updated to reflect further investigations into parking impacts, responding to feedback (Issues 15, 20, 44, 46)

**Commented [AW13]:** Text updated to reflect further parking analysis undertaken in response to feedback, noting objection from adjoining landowner to expand car park without further consultation (Issue 53).

- 
- The re-configuration of private car parks associated with existing uses, such as the supermarket and Royal Federal Hotel, in the core business area. This should be pursued in consultation with existing landowners and occupiers.
  - The delivery of new development, in line with Council's car parking requirements.

## 5. Delivering the Masterplan 4. Recommendations

### Drafting note:

This section reflects that previously provided in the draft Report.

Council regularly reviews and updates its strategies, policies and planning controls. The actions identified below in support of the vision and objectives for Branxton's Town Centre (Section 3) will be incorporated into this process. This will result in changes to planning controls to:

- Amend the LEP, including rezoning rural land northeast of Cessnock Road, recognising the contributions of existing commercial activities to the function of the Town Centre.
- Preparing Development Control Plans, including for the Masterplan Study Area and surrounds, addressing the following matters:
  - flooding and stormwater management;
  - provision of public transport facilities (seating, shelter, street lighting);
  - road layout and footpaths, including hierarchy and function;
  - site coverage, building heights;
  - location of parking and loading facilities;
  - integrated housing and subdivision provisions for mixed use development; and
  - Specific recommendations for the major development site (as outlined in **Section 2.5**)
- Identify the funding requirements and timing of public domain improvements, including the preparation a Local Contributions Plan for the Town Centre and surrounding urban area.

Council will also regularly review and update the Masterplan to ensure it remains relevant to the changing needs and expectations of the community.

### 5.1 Prioritised Actions 4.2 Summary of recommendations

Council will prioritise a number of actions in the coming years to realise changes identified in the Masterplan. These actions are presented in **Table 2** to **Table 8** below, and are grouped according to the Planning and Urban Design Principles they predominantly support.

Each action has been assigned a priority level and timeframe to inform Council's annual business reporting, monitoring and budgeting processes.

Priority levels are:

- High – These actions are not anticipated to be dependent on external factors or the completion of other (medium or low priority) actions. They should be completed in the identified timeframe.
- Medium – These actions may be dependent on external factors, such as funding, or additional investigations. They are not anticipated to be dependent on low priority actions.
- Low – These actions are likely to be heavily dependent on external factors, such as funding, additional investigations, or owner motivation. They are not intended to impede progress toward other (medium to high priority) actions.

Timeframes are:

- Short term (0-2 years);



- Medium term (2 - 8 years);
- Long term (8 - 20 years); and
- Ongoing (continuous action and/or monitoring)

**Table 2: Actions to realise the main street (Mainland Street) – Objective**

Ref	Action	Action by	Timing	Priority Level
MS01	Increase amenity and activity in main street with new development and business that provide for the convenience and day-to-day needs of residents and visitors, including tourism uses in the vicinity of the Town Centre.	Local business chamber, with assistance from Council with an Economic Development Strategy	Medium term & Long term	Medium
MS02	Permit shop top housing and mixed use development in the Town Centre.	Council - Maintain the existing zoning and land use tables	Ongoing	High
MS03	Implement streetscape improvements such as street trees, wider footpaths and street furniture as detailed in a Public Domain Plan.	Council - Public Domain Plan subject to funding	Medium term & Long term	Medium
MS04	Formalise pedestrian crossings to improve safety and connection.	Council - subject to funding	Long term	Medium
MS05	Rationalise driveway crossings along the southern side of the main street in longer term.	Council - To be identified in Town Centre DCP and subject to alternative access arrangements	Long term	Medium

Table 10: Actions to increase connectivity – Objective 4

Ref	Action	Action by	Timing	Priority Level
C01	Improve existing vehicular and pedestrian/cyclist connections to and from the medical centre, particularly travelling west.	Council - To be identified in Town Centre DCP, and delivered in conjunction with new development	Medium term	High
C02	Plan for new connections at the rear of commercial properties on the northern side of Maitland Street to minimise vehicular reliance on the main street.	Council - To be identified in Town Centre DCP and subject to alternative access arrangements	Long term	Low
C03	Plan for new mid-block pedestrian laneway from Maitland Street to the existing / extended vehicle laneway.	Council - To be identified in Town Centre DCP	Long term	High
C04	Locate parking and loading facilities so that they operate efficiently and do not intrude on the public realm.	Council - To be addressed in Town Centre DCP, and applied to all new development.	Medium	High
C05	Integrate a Traffic and Transport Strategy for Branxton into a DCP (see explanatory box)	Council - to be addressed in Town Centre DCP, and applied to all new development	Medium	High

#### **A traffic and transport strategy for Branxton**

A traffic and transport strategy will be required to coordinate planning and management of the new routes (vehicular and pedestrian), parking, passenger transport and public domain improvements in and around Branxton's Town Centre. This should be supported through guidelines that can be incorporated into Council's DCP.

This strategy, and associated guidelines, should:

- Identify the network of streets linking the Town Centre to adjoining areas;
- Establish a hierarchy of roads, to provide for growth in traffic volumes and cater for future diversion of heavy traffic;
- Establish a system of connected paths between the Town Centre and surrounding open space and recreation areas, public transport areas (school bus interchange, Branxton train station), community facilities (preschool and primary school, churches, community centres), residential areas;
- Identify the streets and lanes that will be shared spaces, providing for the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles;
- Support a street network that offers alternative routes to destinations, in order to increase permeability and to spread traffic; and
- Identify design requirements and opportunities to enhance the public domain.

Some preliminary considerations for roads and parking within the Town Centre are provided in **Appendix C**.

Table 4: Actions to improve approaches and gateways – Objective 4

Ref	Action	Action by	Timing	Priority Level
AG01	Establish street trees to improve the look of key approaches along the New England Highway, Cessnock Road and Clift Street.	Council - Public Domain Plan subject to funding	Long term	High
AG02	Create subtle 'gateways' near the Maitland Street/Clift Street intersection and Maitland Street/Cessnock Road intersection, through the use of measures such as appropriate signage, public art and public spaces.	Council- Public Domain Plan subject to funding Also to be identified in Town Centre DCP and implemented with new development.	Medium term & Long term	Medium

Table 15: Actions to strengthen relationship to recreational areas – Objective 1

Ref	Action	Action by	Timing	Priority Level
RE01	Improve pedestrian/cyclist connections to Miller Park.	Council - Public Domain Plan subject to funding	Medium term	Medium
RE02	Improve connections between main street and Branxton Park, and retain gathering space at Branxton Park in association with memorials.	Council - Public Domain Plan subject to funding	Medium term	Medium
RE03	Consult with Branxton Golf Club regarding potential to improve links with Town Centre.	Council	Short term	Low

Table 15: Actions to rationalise parking – City Centre

Ref	Action	Action by	Timing	Priority Level
PA01	Consult with Royal Federal Hotel and the IGA Supermarket over the potential to rationalise existing car parking for these businesses with a view to improve vehicular and pedestrian connection.	Council and landowners	Short term	Low
PA02	Remove parking time restrictions along Maitland Street.	Council	Short term	Medium
PA03	Consult with Golf Course and adjoining landowners to investigate opportunities to extend the public car park at the corner of Maitland Street and Cessnock Road.	Council	Short term	Medium
PA04	Replace part of the public car park on the corner of Maitland Street and Cessnock Road with a new public space.	Council - Public Domain Plan subject to funding.	Long term	Medium

Table 7: Actions to respond to the unique heritage and rural setting – Objective 1

Ref	Action	Action by	Timing	Priority Level
HE01	Protect view corridors within Branxton Town Centre to the surrounding rural setting.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	High
HE02	Ensure future streetscape improvements acknowledge the existing heritage and do not incorporate inappropriate, more contemporary treatments such as raised thresholds, excessive use of 'blisters' along kerb lines and dominant signage and 'gateway' features.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	High
HE03	Establish appropriate guidelines to encourage future development to compliment the existing heritage character.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	High
HE04	Remove unnecessary and out of character signage, and other traffic management devices in Town Centre.	Council	Ongoing	Low
HE05	Promote heritage character with heritage appropriate signage.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	Medium

Table 15: Actions to enable and encourage future development – Commercial

Ref	Action	Action by	Timing	Priority Level
FD01	Encourage infill mixed use and residential development to increase the population in the Town Centre, including seniors and smaller lot housing within 400 metres walking radius of the core business area.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	High
FD02	Review the business zoning scheme to retain commercial activities on land currently zoned R2.	Council - subject to Planning Proposal.	Medium term	Medium
FD03	Complete floodplain risk management plans, and consider a separate commercial flood planning level	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	High
FD04	Retain two-storey height limits along both sides of Maitland Street.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	Medium
FD05	Encourage commercial development by requiring commercial land uses are provided for all new development at ground level along either side of Maitland Street between Clift Street and Cessnock Road.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	Medium
FD06	Maintain a fine-grained urban form of facades along Maitland Street within the Town Centre to encourage local businesses to establish.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	Medium



**APPENDIX A – PUBLIC DOMAIN AUDIT** ~~Appendix 1~~  
~~Branxton Town Centre Audit~~

**Drafting note:**

This appendix reflects that previously provided in the draft Report.

**Table A.1** describes the main public domain features in the area of the town centre indicated in **Figure A.1**, with the identification numbers relating to that plan. It is to be noted that planting containers such as wine barrels and concrete planters have not been separately listed as there are many and most are in fair to poor condition. All of the existing Bottlebrush trees have not been listed separately as all appear generally healthy.

The condition of each element was based on a visual inspection, with three categories of condition considered, those being from highest to lowest – Good, Fair and Poor. Images of typical elements and condition are provided overleaf.

**Table A.1: Public domain infrastructure audit condition report (refer to Figure A.1 for asset locations)**

Ref	Description	Condition
S1	Seat - timber bench	Poor
S2	Seat – timber seat	Poor
S3	Seat – white metal seat	Good
CF1	Concrete footpath	Fair to poor
CF2	Concrete footpath	Fair to poor, poorest areas east of Branxton Hotel
CF3	Concrete footpath	Good to fair (section from Royal Federal Hotel to near pharmacy). Poor - remainder
CF4	Concrete footpath	Good
CF5	Concrete footpath	Good to fair
CF6	Concrete footpath	Fair to poor
CF7	Concrete footpath	Good
CF8	Concrete footpath	Good
BF1	Bitumen footpath	Fair, becomes poor further east
CP1	Concrete square pavers	Fair
CP2	Concrete square pavers	Fair
SF1	Sandstone flagstones - historic feature	Fair
B1	Rubbish bin – large 'wheelie' bin	Good
B2	Rubbish bin – large 'wheelie' bin	Good
B3	2 x rubbish bins – large 'wheelie' bins	Good
B4	Rubbish bin – large 'wheelie' bin	Good
B5	Metal rubbish bin	Good
RW1	Concrete block retaining wall	Fair
RW2	Concrete block retaining wall	Fair
RW3	Concrete block retaining wall	Fair
RW4	Concrete block retaining wall	Fair in general, damaged in some areas
PF1	Pedestrian fence – green 'pool style' 1.2m high fence	Fair
PF2	Pedestrian fence – green 'pool style' 1.2m high fence	Fair

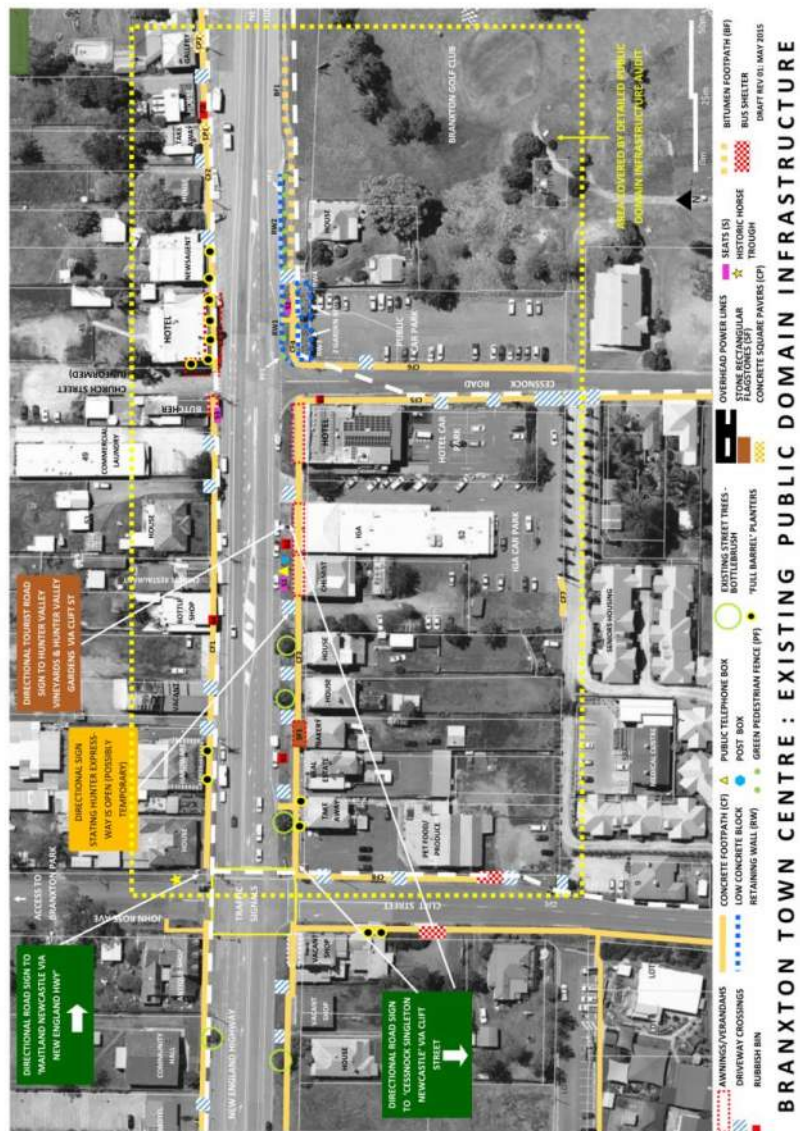
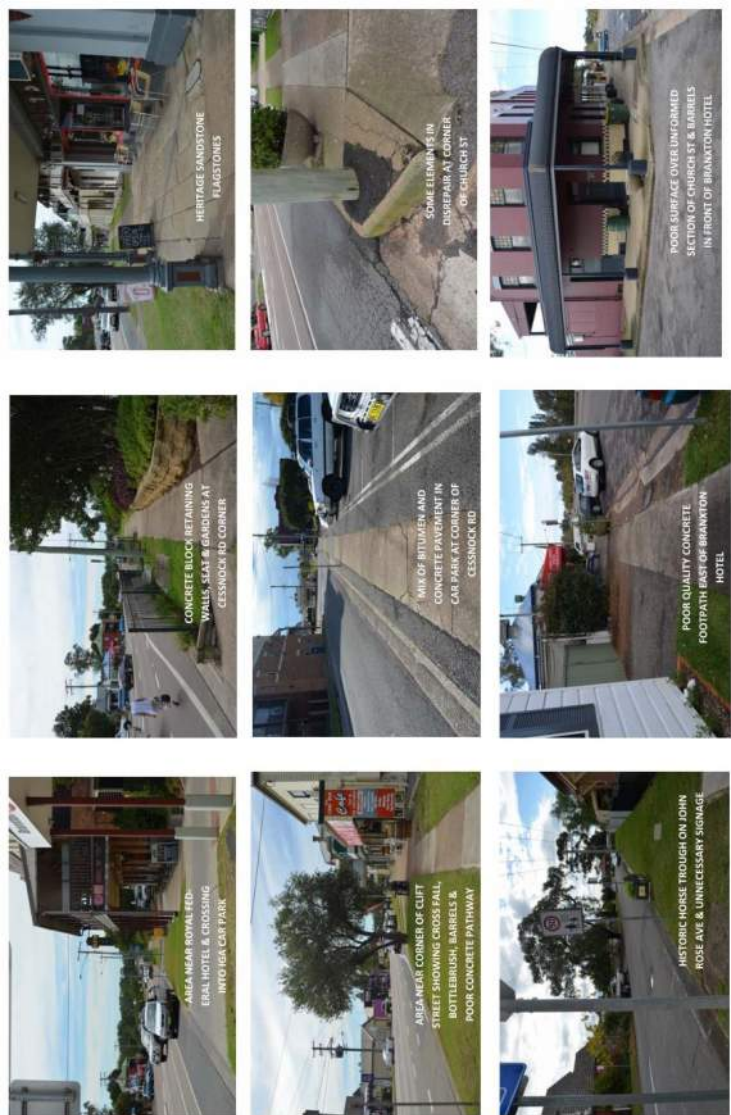


Figure A.1: Public domain audit plan (refer to Table A.1 for condition report)



BRANXTON TOWN CENTRE : PUBLIC DOMAIN INFRASTRUCTURE IMAGES

Figure A.2: Public domain infrastructure audit - example photos



## APPENDIX B – ALTERNATIVE INDICATIVE LAYOUTS 3.8

### Indicative Layout Options

**Drafting note:**

The alternative indicative layouts that were considered to prepare the draft Masterplan were previously provided in the body of the draft Report. These have been re-located to an appendix to give prominence to the Indicative Layout Plan.

Considering how land use, street and subdivision patterns are influenced by and influence future alternative growth scenarios is important to establishing strategic parameters for planning and development.

Three alternative indicative layouts were considered for Branxton's Town Centre, emphasising:

- Small scale commercial infill outcomes (Figure B.1);
- Mixed use and tourism outcomes (Figure B.2); and
- Large floorplate outcomes (Figure B.3).

Considerations presented herein were used to inform the preferred Indicative Layout identified in the Masterplan.



FIGURE 9  
BRANXTON TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN : OPTION 1 (SMALL COMMERCIAL INFILL)

Figure B.1 - Alternative indicative layout option 1: small commercial infill emphasis  
Figure 10.1



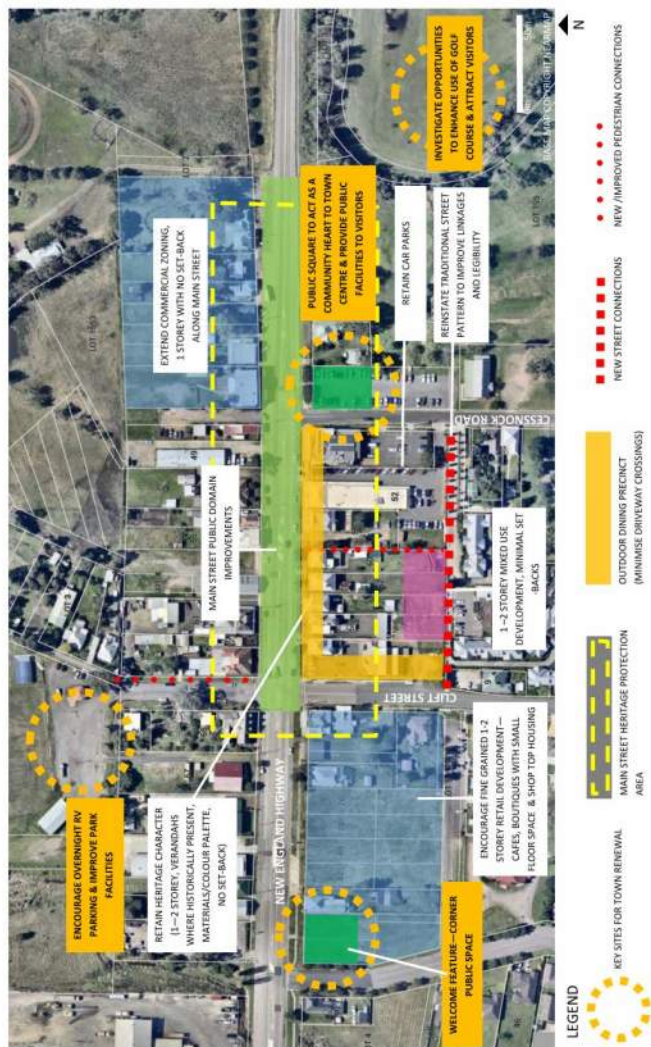


FIGURE 10  
BRANXTON TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN : OPTION 2 (MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM)

Figure B.2 - Alternative indicative layout option 2: mixed use & tourism emphasis  
Figure 10.2

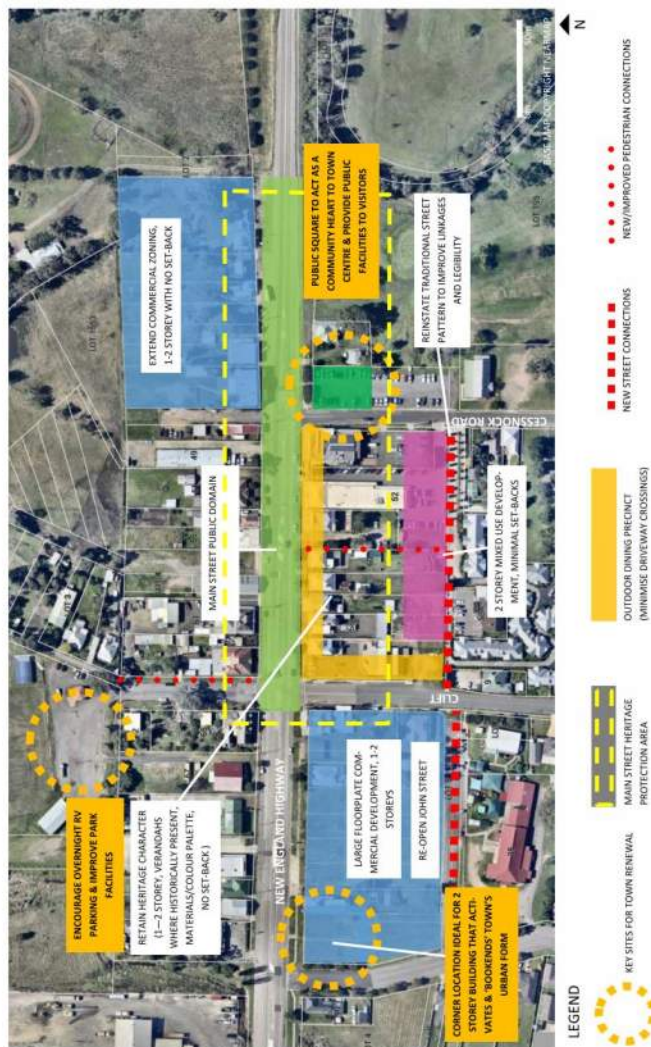


Figure B.3 - Alternative indicative layout option 3: large floorplate emphasis

## APPENDIX C – PRELIMINARY TRANSPORT INVESTIGATIONS

### Appendix 2 Traffic and Streetscape Strategy

#### Drafting note:

The preliminary transport investigations included in the draft Report were intended to demonstrate that the recommended road modifications were technically feasible, and to identify, at the earliest possible stage, the likely potential impacts to various road elements, including safety and parking. These potential impacts will be managed through future planning and design stages.

The drawings have been updated to:

- Include a new drawing that highlights the locations most likely to be affected by road modifications;
- Reflect specific changes to road modifications made in response to public exhibition feedback; and
- Include new drawings that provide more detailed analysis of the likely impacts of proposed road modifications on car parking.

This section also includes introductory text to more accurately reflect the purpose of its inclusion.

More detailed preliminary investigations were undertaken to begin considering the impact of the Masterplan on accessibility and movement in the Town Centre. This included preparing and testing high-level design concepts to establish future planning parameters and detailed design considerations.

Figures C.1 - C.6 illustrate how the preferred Indicative Layout and recommended main street public domain improvements could be accommodated:

- Identifying modification areas (Drawing C0.10);
- Providing indicative road and path modifications (Drawing C0.11 – C0.13)
- Illustrating cross-sections of indicative new road layouts (Drawing C0.20); and
- Illustrating the possible impacts of road and path modifications on existing car parking in the Town Centre (Drawings C0.25-C0.26).









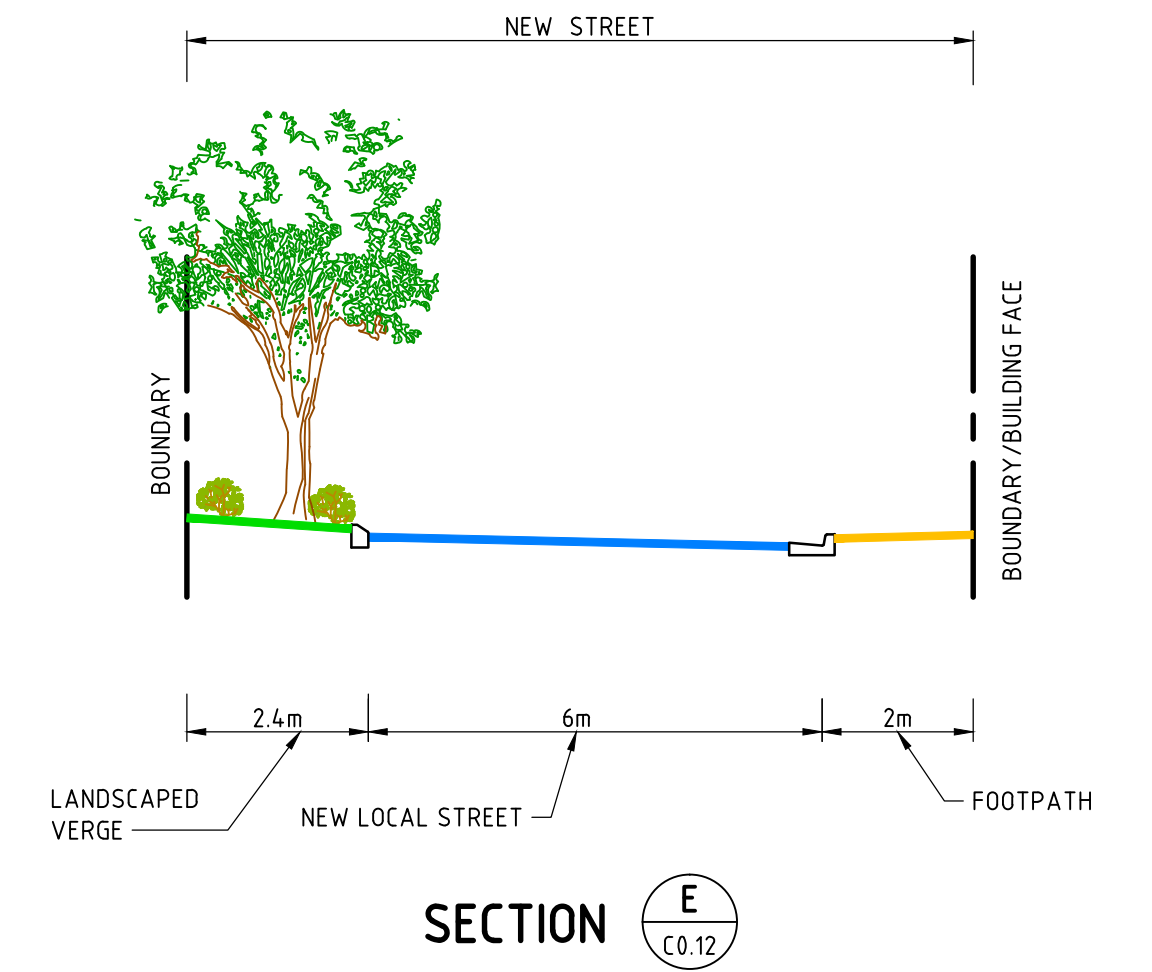












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2	FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION	JK		AB	02.09.15				DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION	
3	FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION	JK		AB	10.12.15				C0.20	5	
4	CONCEPT PLANNING - FOR INFORMATION ONLY	JK		AB	21.04.16				DRAWING SHEET SIZE = A1		
5	CONCEPT PLANNING - FOR INFORMATION ONLY	JK		AB	03.05.16						
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DESIGNED: J KIDD  
JOB MANAGER: A BROWN  
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IMAGE OBTAINED FROM GOOGLE EARTH AND SIX MAPS.

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## Appendix 3 Public domain cost schedule

### **Drafting note:**

The public domain cost schedule was included in the draft Report to illustrate the indicative costs associated with the recommended public domain improvements. The purpose of including it was to demonstrate that the recommended improvements were financially achievable.

Council will now prepare a detailed public domain plan, based on the Masterplan's recommendations. This will be supported by a contributions plan, which will include an updated cost schedule relating to the detailed scope of works and identify funding mechanisms.

The public domain cost schedule has not been included in the final Report, as it will be superseded by the above.