

11.6 Exhibition of the Draft Maitland Residential Density Guide 2025

FILE NO:	103/170
ATTACHMENTS:	1. Draft Maitland Residential Density Guide (February 2025) (Under Separate Cover)
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Director City Planning Manager Strategic Planning
AUTHOR:	Strategic Planning Policy Lead
MAITLAND +10	Outcome 7 To afford the house we want in the neighbourhood we like
COUNCIL OBJECTIVE:	7.1.1 Implement a Local Housing Strategy that identifies how and where housing will be provided across the city

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2023, Council adopted the Maitland Local Housing Strategy 2041. Subsequently, this Strategy was endorsed by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) in September 2024. The preparation of the draft Maitland Residential Density Guide is a key action identified in the Local Housing Strategy and Council's Operational Plan 2024/2025.

In 2024, Council commissioned Smith & Tzannes Pty Ltd to carry out research on residential density and prepare a Residential Density Guide for the city to inform future planning and development.

The purpose of this report is to present to Council the draft Residential Density Guide and seek endorsement for public exhibition.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

THAT

- 1. Council endorses the Draft Maitland Residential Density Guide (dated February 2025) in Attachment 1 for public exhibition for a minimum period of 28 days.**
- 2. A further report be prepared for Council's consideration following the exhibition of the Draft Maitland Residential Density Guide.**

REPORT

Project Background

Maitland has already experienced significant growth over the past two decades and that growth is projected to continue over the next 20 years. The recent residential growth has been characterised by the development of greenfield release areas located on the outer edges of the city, representing approximately 90% of housing. There has been limited infill development in recent years, and it is likely to change in the medium to long term in response to changing demographics, land economics and housing markets.

EXHIBITION OF THE DRAFT MAITLAND RESIDENTIAL DENSITY GUIDE 2025 (Cont.)

The city's housing stock is currently dominated by low density freestanding houses, representing 87% of total dwellings. A lack of diverse housing makes it difficult for many residents to find suitable and affordable housing. The provision of a range of housing in Maitland will assist in attracting a more diverse population, provide housing choice to meet the needs of residents at different stages of life and allow them to remain in the same community when their life circumstance change over time.

Increasing densities in different neighbourhood contexts is seen as a means to meet the expected demand for small dwellings, providing for greater housing choice, making service provisions more efficient and protecting local character in established areas. It will reduce the pressure to continually expand urban areas into rural and environmental land and has the potential to provide different housing options at a range of price points.

The Hunter Regional Plan 2041 aims for a more sustainable and consolidated model of urban growth and sets a benchmark for 20% greenfield and 80% infill housing across the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City by 2041. For urban release areas, the Hunter Regional Plan requires local councils to achieve a minimum residential density of 30 dwellings per hectare with additional lots capable of providing small lots and multi- dwelling housing types. Note that the dwelling density in existing urban release areas is approximately around 10-20 dwellings per hectare.

Residential Density

Residential density has been successfully used as an urban planning tool to create vibrant and liveable cities and neighbourhoods across the world. Residential density describes how intensively an urban area is developed and it is measured as the number of dwellings in a given area. Density can significantly influence the functionality, sustainability and overall quality of city life. To ensure density does not result in congestion or unsympathetic outcomes, it needs to be planned and guided in the right location and supported by appropriate infrastructure.

Planned density helps us to ensure that housing is available for our growing and changing population; households have access to a greater choice of more affordable housing in existing and new communities, close to jobs, education, open space, shops and services and supported by walking, cycling, public and private transport options; and the existing infrastructure and services are efficiently used and planned for the future to achieve both economic growth and environmentally sustainable outcomes.

Purpose of the Draft Residential Density Guide

The Maitland Local Housing Strategy 2041 is a forward-thinking plan aimed at transforming the city's housing landscape. This Strategy builds on the long-term vision established in the Maitland Local Strategic Planning Statement and Community Strategic Plan and is informed by a number of NSW Government plans and strategies including Hunter Regional Plan 2041. All these plans and strategies highlight the need for increasing densities in our neighbourhoods.

Increasing densities in our greenfield release areas and existing urban areas can meet the changing needs of our existing and future communities, providing for greater housing choice, making housing more affordable, situated in the right location and supported by appropriate infrastructure.

EXHIBITION OF THE DRAFT MAITLAND RESIDENTIAL DENSITY GUIDE 2025 (Cont.)

There are significant opportunities for increased densities within our established urban areas through urban renewal (commonly known as urban infill housing), particularly around town centres and railway stations. Increased densities can align with, or even strengthen, the character of the areas and community ambitions to locate housing within walking distance of shops, services and open spaces.

Planned densities in our greenfield release areas also present an opportunity to maximise development yield while achieving higher standard of amenity. The location of planned densities in greenfield areas should be identified at the early stage of planning and be supported with appropriate land use zoning and infrastructure. This ensures that increased residential densities are supported by walkable neighbourhoods within close proximity to neighbourhood centres, schools, community and recreation facilities and transport nodes.

The purpose of this Density Guide is to:

- Start the discussion between Council, residents, businesses and the development industry about appropriate densities for Maitland.
- Create a shared understanding about residential densities by providing a clear framework in defining, determining, and applying densities for the Maitland context.
- Provide guidance and inspiration on suitable forms of density and housing typologies for future urban renewal areas and greenfield release areas in Maitland.
- Inform master planning, planning proposals, development applications and future changes to planning controls.

This Guide is prepared for both Maitland City Council and applicants who are planning for residential development in the Maitland Local Government Area. The Guide can be used as a practical tool at various stages of the planning and development process. It translates the strategic concepts and provides tangible guidance on suitable forms of housing and metrics against which proposals can be measured.

The Guide describes:

- The definitions of different residential density measures and the purpose of each
- How the different residential measures can be used in the planning for the future growth of Maitland
- The different housing typologies suitable for the Maitland context
- Guidance on how to select the appropriate density for selected locations
- The need for infrastructure provision in support of residential densities
- Built form controls that enable various densities

Residential density outcomes are not solely a product of zoning and development controls - but are the result of many complex interactions between built form, natural environments, transport options and networks of roads, open spaces and other services. A holistic approach that balances these factors can lead to vibrant, liveable and sustainable urban environments that accommodate a growing and changing population while maintaining a high quality of life.

Public exhibition

EXHIBITION OF THE DRAFT MAITLAND RESIDENTIAL DENSITY GUIDE 2025 (Cont.)

Council is proposed to exhibit draft Residential Density Guide for a minimum of 28 days in accordance with the Maitland Community Participation Plan. In summary, the proposed engagement activities will include:

- Place the draft Guide on Council website
- Newspaper advertisement and media release
- Place hardcopies in Council Administration Centre and libraries
- Targeted stakeholder consultation (developers, businesses, government agencies and service providers etc.)

A copy of draft Guide is attached to this report as **Attachment 1**.

CONCLUSION

Like many other Australian regional cities, Maitland's housing stock is dominated by single detached dwellings. Our ageing population, changing household structure and shrinking household sizes emphasise the need for a greater mix of housing types within the city to meet the needs of smaller and more diverse households. Providing a range of diverse housing types will allow Maitland to remain as an attractive place to live for residents in all stages of life and also to raise a family.

Achieving appropriate residential densities requires a significant level of collaboration between all levels of government, communities, development industry, community housing providers, and utility suppliers to deliver.

This Residential Density Guide is the first step in this journey and provides a road map for Maitland to transform its approach to delivering neighbourhoods and homes that better meet the needs of our communities.

It is recommended to exhibit the draft Residential Density Guide to allow community and other stakeholders to provide an opportunity to comment on the city's future housing options and priorities.

Following the exhibition period, a further report will be prepared to Council for consideration of submissions received and the updated Draft Residential Density Guide, with the recommended changes in response to submissions.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Smith & Tzannes Pty Ltd was commissioned to undertake this work within 2024/25 Operational Budget.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The preparation of this Residential Density Guide is a key priority action identified in the Council's Local Housing Strategy 2041. The Guide will inform future amendments to Maitland LEP and DCP and are subject to future report to Council. Once endorsed, the Guide will be listed under the Maitland DCP as a detailed technical guideline.

STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

There are no statutory implications under the Local Government Act 1993 with this matter.

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COUNCIL RESOLUTION

THAT

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Moved Cr S Halliday, Seconded Cr M Griffin

CARRIED

The Mayor in accordance with Section 375A of the Local Government Act 1993 called for a division.

The division resulted in 13 for and 0 against, as follows:

For:	Cr A Atkinson	Against:
	Cr R Barstow	
	Cr D Ferris	
	Cr K Flannery	
	Cr M Griffin	
	Cr B Hackney	
	Cr S Halliday	
	Cr K Jordan	
	Mayor P Penfold	
	Cr W Penfold	
	Cr B Whiting	
	Cr B Worth	
	Cr M Yarrington	