



Our Ref: 12119

26 February 2015

General Manager,
Hunter & Central Coast,
Department of Planning and Environment
PO Box 1226, Newcastle NSW 2300

by email

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Draft Hunter Regional Plan

We act on behalf of Jetty and Uri Windt the owners of Lot 2 DP 628939 New England Hwy, Greta (otherwise known as Walkers Hill). Having regard to the broad goals and principles of the draft Plan, we are of the view that the subject site is suitable for urban use and this should be facilitated by some changes to the draft Plan. The following discussion does not go into the specifics of the appropriateness of the site but rather, focuses on changes that will place more emphasis on the relationship of major infrastructure and growth generally and in particular the importance of the new Hunter Expressway.

The Subject Site

The subject property is located at Greta, approximately 131 kilometres north east of the Sydney Central Business District, and approximately 43 kilometres north-west of the Newcastle Central Business District. The property is located approximately 2.0 kilometres to the south of the main Greta town centre (see **Figures 1 and 2**)

The subject land is irregular in shape. The property has extensive frontage to the New England Highway on the eastern boundary, and frontage to the Hunter Railway Line on the western boundary. The main access to the property is via Sale Street extending south from Greta. The property comprises partially timbered, partially cleared, undulating land. The current zoning of the land is RU2 Rural Landscape

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under Cessnock LEP 2011 (with a small area in the eastern part of the site being under Maitland LEP)(see **Figure 3**).

Across the railway line is the urban release area known as 'Anvil Creek' (see **Figure 3**), which is an integrated tourist (golf course) and residential development that has DA approval but is yet to be commenced.

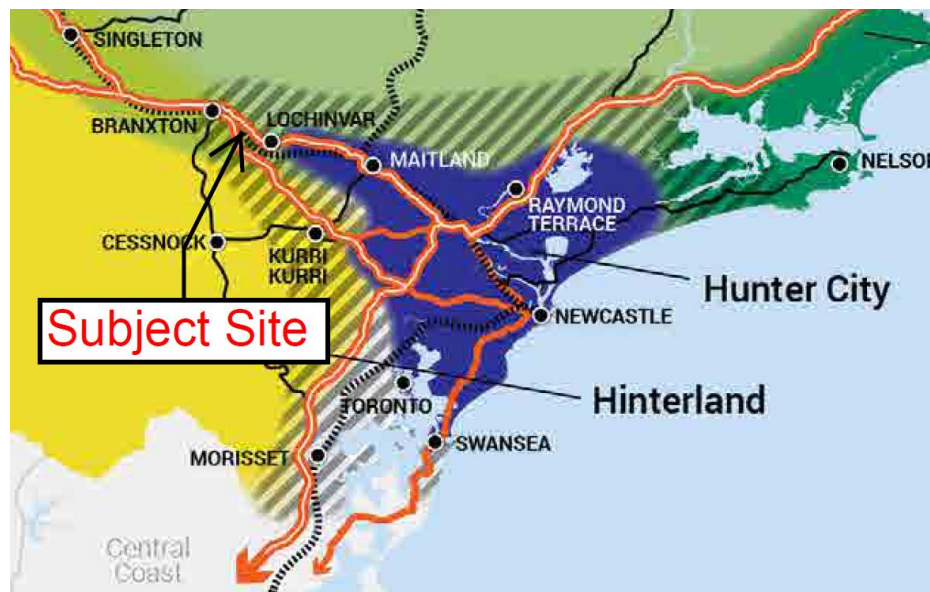


Figure 1 – Location within the draft Hunter Plan

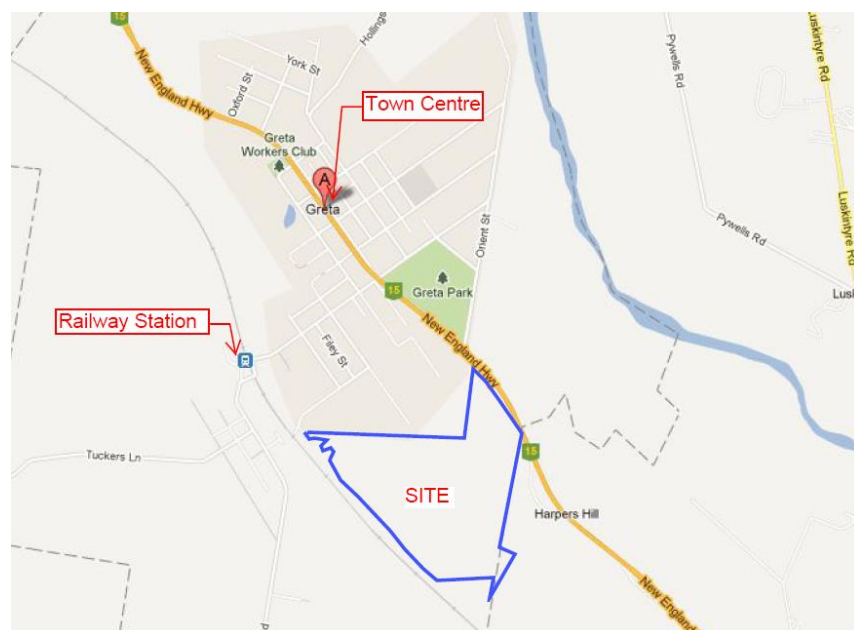


Figure 2 – Location adjacent to Greta urban area

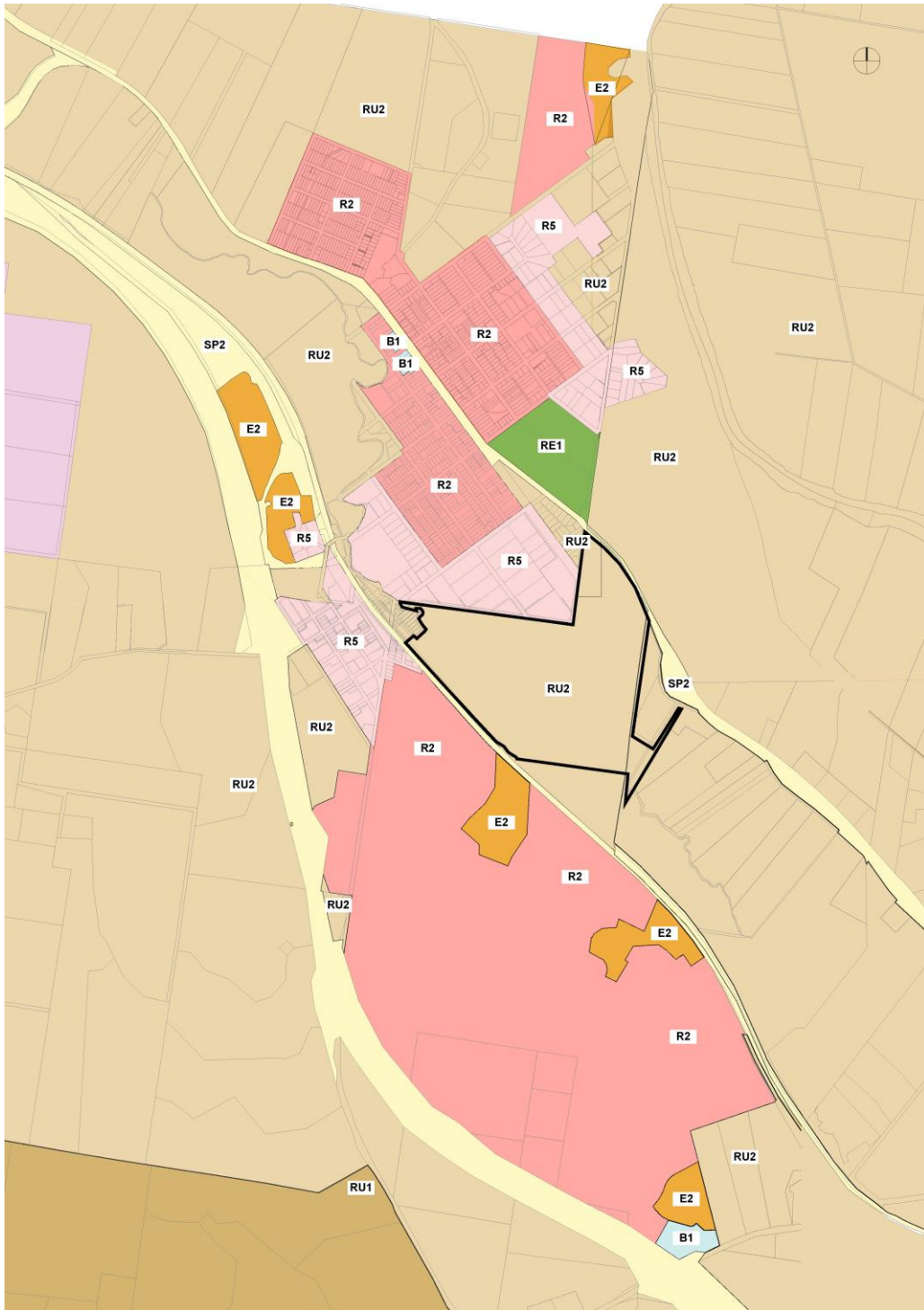


Figure 3 – Zoning of site and adjoining Anvil Creek development



Discussion of Issues

The following comments are provided in relation to the specific aspects of the draft Regional Plan.

The draft Plan Map

The map breaks down the region into 4 sub-areas (see **Figure 1**). There is no discussion of how these areas have been designated. At least in part, the presence of major transport infrastructure, appears to be a factor in defining these areas. Accessibility should be a significant factor in considering how regions operate and how they should grow. However, in our view there is a glaring oversight in that the most significant new infrastructure created in recent times – the Hunter Expressway, seems to be ignored. Areas such as Medowie and Swansea have been included in the Hunter City area, despite being well removed from the CBD and not highly accessible.

The western extension of the city extends as far as Lochinvar however this is based on the existing, not very satisfactory infrastructure of the New England Highway. Major towns such as Kurri Kurri and Branxton/Greta, which are located on the new Hunter Expressway are ignored, despite being more highly accessible to the city. The Hunter Expressway provides a direct link to the city via the 'city link' road connecting the M1 to the city centre. In our view the 'Hunter City' area should be reconfigured to include areas which are more accessible and more suited to contributing to growth and to exclude less accessible areas. It does not make sense to extend westward to Lochinvar and not include all areas in close proximity to the new freeway. These areas should be included. This would also then facilitate the inclusion of Cessnock as part of the City's hinterland which is considered to be another oversight of the current Plan.

The above amendments would be more consistent with the number 1 goal of the draft Plan to "Grow Australia's Next Major City' and in particular 'Principle 1: Development will contribute to connected communities'. Without these changes some of the most connected communities will be excluded.

Constraints to development

Goal 2 of the draft Plan is to "Grow the largest regional economy in Australia". The maps in this section and other parts of the Strategy show that considerable areas are constrained by the presence of both primary industry and environmental areas. The



area adjacent to the Hunter Expressway including the subject land has limited constraints in this regard.

Housing growth

Within Goal 4 to 'Support robust regional communities' is "DIRECTION 4.1 Focus housing and service growth towards Hunter City and the region's existing towns and villages". Whilst the subject site is adjoining the existing Greta township, there are many areas adjacent to the new expressway that are not and it is considered that there should be a comment that also acknowledges the importance of transport infrastructure as a driver for growth. In this case the Hunter Expressway is of such regional importance that it should be a major factor in determining the boundaries of 'Hunter City' area as discussed above and also future growth generally.

ACTION 4.2.1 of this section is to "Investigate options to integrate the delivery of housing with infrastructure". The lack of integration of potential growth areas with the location of the Hunter Expressway in the draft Plan appears to be contrary to the intent of this action.

Conclusion

The previous Strategic Plan – the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy, failed to appropriately acknowledge infrastructure and its importance in terms of urban growth. The new draft Plan is an improvement in this regard however, we believe it still does not provide enough commentary of the importance of good infrastructure, and in particular transport infrastructure and accessibility, in achieving 'connected communities' and urban growth generally. This is evident in the failure to include the areas adjoining the expressway in the 'Hunter City' area, when other less accessible and less suitable areas have been included.

Therefore it is requested that the draft Plan be amended both in relation to the mapping and commentary to ensure that the much discussed planning principle of integrating infrastructure and growth is actually reflected in the final Hunter Regional Plan.

Please contact Brett Brown should you wish to discuss any of the matters raised.

Yours faithfully

Ingham Planning Pty Ltd