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DCP Principles

1.1. Background

1.1.1. Council's Commitment to Sustainability

Penrith City Council has made a firm commitment to building a Sustainable City. This commitment has been clearly articulated in 'Penrith's Principles for a Sustainable City.' These principles have subsequently been reflected in the Sustainable Penrith Program.

The Sustainable Penrith Program commits Council to apply the principles of sustainability in all of its operations. The program aims to ensure that Council's decisions, policies and actions should maintain or improve environmental, social and economic outcomes for future generations. A number of action plans and policies addressing specific sustainability issues have been developed under this program to guide Council's efforts towards a sustainable City.

1.1.2. Sustainability and Development Control

The preparation of this Plan has provided Council with an opportunity to extend its commitment to sustainability and progress the creation of a Sustainable Penrith. In its role as regulator, Council is able to encourage the inclusion of sustainable design principles and land management practices in future development.

To build a sustainable city, Council needs to ensure that development of land is responsive to the needs of current and future generations. The overriding goal of making Penrith a sustainable city is woven into every section of this Plan and has guided the development of the provisions contained within it.

1.1.3. Key Principles for this Plan

Transforming the City of Penrith into a sustainable city will require cooperation between all levels of government, resource managers, the business sector, community groups and all citizens. 'Penrith's Principles for a Sustainable City' have been adopted as the key principles for this Plan to guide our journey towards sustainability. The principles are supported by a series of objectives to help in interpreting these principles. A brief description of the principles and objectives, how they relate to sustainability and how they are reflected in the provisions contained within this Plan appear below.

1.1.4. How to Use these Principles

The principles and objectives set out below should be addressed as part of any development application to Council.

The principles and objectives will be satisfied by ensuring that any proposed development is in accordance with the development controls set out in the remainder of this Plan. Some examples of these controls and the desired outcomes are listed under each of the principles.

If a proposed development is unable to comply with all of the development controls then it will need to justify how non-compliance will be addressed in other ways to satisfy this Plan's principles.

The controls in this Plan are not intended to prevent new and innovative ways of addressing the principles and objectives in this section as long as the objectives can be addressed.

1.2. Principles

Principle 1: Provide a long term vision for cities, based on sustainability; intergenerational, social, economic and political equity; and their individuality.

A. Objectives

- We plan responsibly for now and the future.

The aims of this Plan, together with Council's strategic plans, set a vision for sustainable development, and ultimately, a sustainable city. Objectives within individual sections express the way towards a more sustainable city and should always be read in that context. The exemplar controls outlined in this Plan and supported by Penrith LEP 2010 demonstrate that Council is prepared to recognise developers and individuals who 'lift the bar' and drive the built form of the City closer towards the vision expressed.

This Plan reflects this principle by expressing an overall commitment to sustainability through:

- The format and structure of this Plan;
- Integration of Penrith's Principles for a Sustainable City throughout the document;
- Linking areas of objectives and controls to the overarching principles of sustainability; and
- Including information which explains how individual controls contribute to the creation of a sustainable city.

Principle 2: Achieve long term economic and social security.

A. Objectives

- We have access to what we need.

Environmental sustainability is only one part of the picture. To have a truly sustainable city, economic and social aspects must also be considered as part of the triple bottom line.

This Plan promotes sustainable economic growth through:

- Encouraging innovative and sustainable use of rural, industrial, commercial and residential land;
- Building on the existing strengths of the local and regional economy, by providing guidance for industrial and commercial development within the City;
- Ensuring that industrial and commercial development is responsibly designed and built;
- Helping protect rural lands from fragmentation;
- Helping reduce the negative impacts of necessary activities (such as manufacturing, waste disposal and some agricultural activities);
- Providing specific controls for transport corridors, in recognition of the key role they play in moving people and goods around our city, our region and our state; and
- Encouraging the integration of housing with other land uses which provide employment, social and cultural opportunities.

This Plan promotes social sustainability through:

- Encouraging the use of the principles of universal design, so that the public domain is accessible to people in all stages of life and with all levels of mobility;
- Encouraging buildings to be designed with the health and wellbeing of their future occupants in mind;
- Providing design guidelines for a variety of housing forms to accommodate people in all stages of life and with all levels of mobility;
- Encouraging the development of communities through allowing for (and designing) community spaces, both indoor and outdoor, providing opportunities for meeting and gathering and community interaction;
- Encouraging a range of uses and employment opportunities to create a mixed income and mixed demographic community;
- Providing guidelines to create a range of recreational and leisure opportunities; and
- Adopting the principles of 'Crime Prevention through Environmental Design' (CPTED), to assist in making the public domain a safer place.

Principle 3: Recognise the intrinsic value of biodiversity and natural ecosystems, and protect and restore them.

A. Objectives

- Our natural habitats are healthy

This Plan recognises the value of the surrounding environment and will minimise the impact of development on that environment by:

- Requiring all design to be based on a comprehensive site analysis, to ensure that development on a site reflects each site's unique conditions;
- Ensuring that any modification of the existing land form required to facilitate development is undertaken to minimise the impact on surrounding lands; and
- Including provisions to reduce the likelihood of development or activities increasing the salinity of land.

This Plan promotes biodiversity conservation through:

- Protection of known areas of biodiversity value;
- Protection of threatened species and ecological communities;
- Protection of watercourses, wetlands and riparian corridors;
- Protection of remnant native bushland; and
- Requiring that all significant areas of vegetation be assessed to determine their value prior to any development being designed for the site.

This Plan helps to reverse previous negative impacts on biodiversity conservation through:

- Encouraging replanting of key identified corridors, including riparian corridors; and
- Encouraging the use of plant species native to the area in all forms of landscaping.

This Plan helps to reduce the negative impact of development on air quality through encouraging alternate means of transport (e.g. cycling and walking).

This Plan helps to minimise the impact of poor air quality on amenity through:

- Encouraging the planting of particular species along main roads, which have proven to be effective at absorbing pollutants from motor vehicles; and
- Requiring the provision of buffer zones between polluting land uses and adjacent areas which may be sensitive to reduction in air quality.

This Plan helps to minimise the negative impact of development on water quality through:

- Minimising the risk of accidental pollution of surface and ground water sources through appropriate setbacks of potentially polluting activities from watercourses;
- Requiring soil testing to determine appropriate locations for water treatment activities;
- Encouraging the retention or replacement of vegetation along riparian corridors;
- Requiring that water quality be monitored throughout the construction process, and occasionally during occupation; and
- Requiring responsible use and storage of possible pollutants.

Principle 4: Enable communities to minimise their ecological footprint.

A. Objectives

- We use our resources wisely and take responsibility for our levels of consumption.

The ecological footprint of a city is a theoretical calculation of the land required to support that city in terms of its consumption of resources like food, energy and water, as well as for the disposal of the waste it produces. Reducing our ecological footprint means reducing this theoretical land area and represents an increase in the overall sustainability of the city.

A reduction in the ecological footprint will almost always mean an increase in the efficiency of a city's operation, either through consumption of fewer resources, production of less waste or both. It should not, however, result in a transfer of problems elsewhere.

This Plan assists in the reduction of Penrith's ecological footprint by:

- Encouraging a reduction in the amount of waste going to landfill through the inclusion of provisions relating to responsible waste management, recycling and resource reuse, and materials selection;
- Encouraging increased water re-use, either through harvesting of rainfall or the re-use of grey water, to reduce the demand for potable water;
- Encouraging the use of water efficient and energy efficient appliances; and
- Applying standards for energy efficiency to all forms of development to encourage buildings that minimise the use of electricity and gas as energy inputs.

Reducing the City's ecological footprint through the inclusion of energy efficiency principles will have the added benefits of mitigating the impacts of climate change, through decreased emission of greenhouse gases.

This Plan will also help Penrith adapt to the likely impacts of climate change by:

- Encouraging buildings to be designed to maximise natural ventilation and temperature regulation;
- Requiring drought resistant planting and landscaping;
- Requiring the harvesting and re-use of rainwater through tanks, dams and other means; and
- Requiring that the design of dwellings aims to minimise their vulnerability to extreme weather events and bushfires.

Principle 5: Build on the characteristics of ecosystems in the development and nurturing of healthy and sustainable cities.

A. Objectives

- Our public spaces encourage safe and healthy communities.
- Our physical infrastructure is adaptable and responds to changing needs.

Natural ecosystems are inherently more sustainable than artificial ones. Thus cities as artificial ecosystems can learn from and better reflect the processes and systems of the natural world to improve their sustainability.

The characteristics of natural ecosystems include diversity, an ability to adapt, interconnectedness, resilience, regenerative capacity and symbiosis. In nature all resources are valued – there is no waste. These are all traits which can increase the sustainability of a city and which this Plan will try to encourage in development within Penrith.

This Plan will encourage development in Penrith to learn from natural ecosystems by:

- Including provisions which require development to consider all aspects of the natural environment in their design, including topography and the water cycle;
- Providing standards to guide mixed use development to help provide a diverse urban area;
- Requiring housing to consider the changing life cycle of the occupants in its design;
- Helping to minimise land use conflict through requirements for buffer zones and other measures;
- Requiring the provision of adaptable and inclusive infrastructure which meets the needs of development and is designed to accommodate likely future needs;
- Encouraging innovative responses to the provision of infrastructure, such as car parks, drainage systems, etc. which adapt to changing circumstances and mimic natural ecosystems; and
- Incorporating the principles of Universal Design, adapting our built environments so they are suitable for all.

Principle 6: Recognise and build on the distinctive characteristics of cities, including their human and cultural values, history and natural systems.

A. Objectives

- We build on our strengths, value our heritage, celebrate our cultural diversity and foster

creativity.

Sustainability cannot be achieved if those promoting it ignore the context of the city and the people within it. Penrith City has its own set of unique characteristics, values and history which are all an integral part of where our city has come from and where it is heading. For Penrith to be a truly sustainable city, these characteristics, values and history must be recognised in our past and reflected in our future.

This Plan will help to recognise our past through:

- Including European heritage provisions, which protect our built heritage of the last 200 years and the people who contributed to the framework and fabric of our city;
- Including Aboriginal heritage provisions which recognise the original custodians of the land, their role in protecting it and their ongoing role in providing diversity in our society and a link with the past; and
- Including social planning provisions that seek to recognise and reinforce the cultural and social character of key areas.

This Plan will build on the distinct characteristics of Penrith by:

- Recognising that particular types of land use within the City require specific controls;
- Developing character statements for individual precincts that have unique features or development requirements;
- Including provisions that are aimed at protecting the scenic and landscape character of Penrith; and
- Including provisions that encourage development in Penrith to respond to Penrith's unique environment, particularly climate, soil, topography and natural hazards.

Principle 7: Empower people and foster participation.

A. Objectives

- We have a say in our future.

For a city to be sustainable, it must have the support and commitment of all sections of the community, not just those who have the means to make their voice heard. An increase in sustainability will only be achieved if the majority of the community recognise it as a legitimate goal and work together to achieve it.

This Plan will help to provide people with an opportunity to have a say in their future by:

- Requiring that certain development be advertised, to give neighbours and others that might be affected the opportunity to comment;
- Requiring that all likely affected parties are told about any development which substantially breaches outlined development standards;
- Providing information about the type of development that can be expected in Penrith; and
- Providing people with the opportunity to help guide development in Penrith, through the exhibition of this Plan and any future amendments.

Principle 8: Expand and enable cooperative networks to work towards a common, sustainable future.

A. Objectives

- We play an active role in our communities

Sustainability is a worldwide issue and Penrith cannot hope to achieve it on its own. Other local government areas within Australia and worldwide are also making advances towards sustainability and it is vital that we learn from their experiences.

This Plan will learn from others by being reviewed on a regular basis, taking account of best practice in promoting sustainable development both nationally and internationally. It will also learn from others through seeking and considering comments from the community and developers during the development and ongoing review of this Plan.

This Plan will assist in sharing knowledge through providing links to additional information throughout the text and through being publicly available, free of charge, through Council's web site.

This Plan will assist people to play an active role in their communities through:

- Encouraging the provision of community spaces, both (internal and external) for future developments within the City. Use of these spaces will help to encourage meeting and gathering and help develop a sense of community, which will in turn encourage people to have a say in how their community develops;
- Encouraging development to consider social needs and potential social impacts, to minimise and mitigate against potential impacts within both the existing and future communities;
- Encouraging a diverse community, which in turn helps foster a feeling of inclusiveness;
- Providing opportunities for people to participate in decision making; and
- Encouraging developers to recognise the human need to connect with nature, with their community and with their city, and take this concept into consideration in development design.

Principle 9: Promote sustainable production and consumption, through appropriate use of environmentally sound technologies and effective demand management.

A. Objectives

- We encourage sustainable production and technologies.

This Plan will help encourage sustainable production through:

- Requiring, where appropriate, Waste Management Plans to be prepared that consider all aspects of waste generation, recycling and disposal during design, demolition, construction and operation.
- Encouraging developers to source construction and fit out materials from sustainable sources;
- Encouraging developers and the community to consider the life cycle costs of products installed and used in construction and operation of buildings; and

- Encouraging the adoption of innovative technologies and designs, where they will have a positive sustainability outcome without an adverse impact on the amenity of the surrounding area.

This Plan will demonstrate a commitment to sustainable technologies through:

- Encouraging developers to consider technology at the design stage, so that necessary infrastructure can be installed, regardless of whether or not it can be used to its full effect at the time of construction; and
- Providing controls that, where possible, have flexibility in the way they can be met so new technologies can be adopted as they become available.

Principle 10: Enable continual improvement, based on accountability, transparency and good governance.

A. Objectives

- We demonstrate accountability, transparency and ethical conduct.

Good urban governance requires robust processes towards achieving the transformation of cities to sustainability through continual improvement.

This Plan contributes towards continual improvement through:

- Including within it exemplar provisions which can be measured, to allow benchmarking of the overall change in the level of sustainability measures being implemented by development in Penrith;
- Being subject to ongoing review (as with all planning documents and policies within Penrith), so that achievements can be measured and controls which are not resulting in the expected outcome can be changed; and
- Providing clear and comprehensive information to developers and the community about the development process and what type and standard of development the Council would like to see in Penrith.