

Trends in the City of Bankstown: Parks and Community Facilities

What community infrastructure is needed to sustain population growth?

Quality communities are places that focus on people and provide supporting infrastructure to ensure the physical, social and cultural needs of everyday are well met. Importantly, they support the development of social capital through the formation of strong social connections and relationships.

In determining the need for community infrastructure, it is important to differentiate between what people demand and what people really need particularly as public funding will provide the community infrastructure.

Council is currently preparing a Needs Assessment of Open Space and Community Facilities.

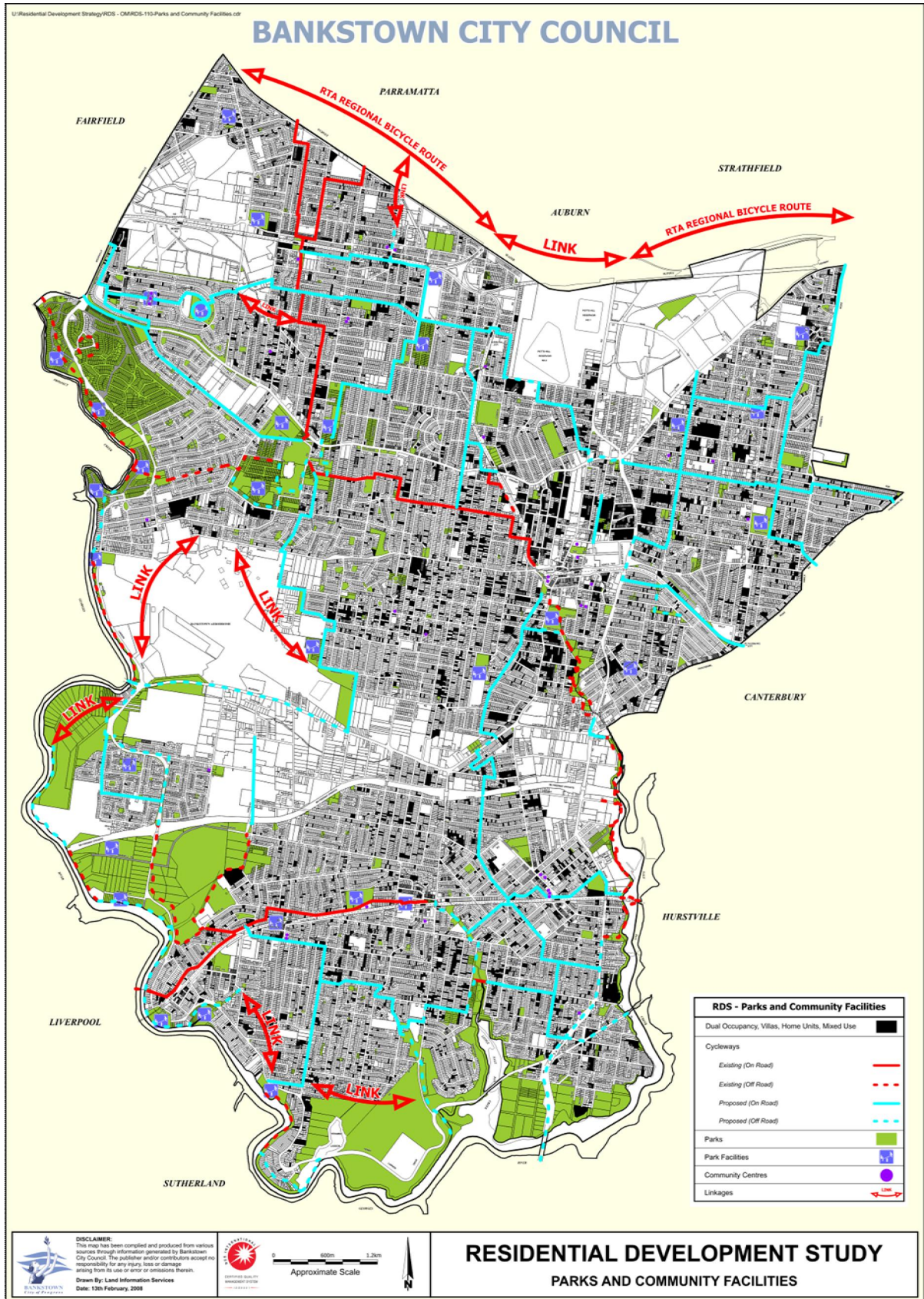
Local community facilities and services

The need for access to quality community facilities and services is important to respond to significant concentrations of families with young children, a growing aged population, and a high proportion of residents from non-English speaking backgrounds. The services play a major role in assisting new residents to settle into a community.

The City of Bankstown provides a basic range of community facilities, however their ability to meet community needs are limited by factors such as building age, condition and design (many are over 40 years old and are built for single purpose use only).

The table below outlines the current distribution of key community facilities per resident.

Indicative Catchment Area	Population 2006	Population 2031	Existing Facility Provision in Centres
Bankstown	28,446	39,232	Community centre (2) Library
Bass Hill-Lansdowne	7,943	10,103	Nil
Birrong-Regents Park-Potts Hill	3,265	4,567	Nil
Chester Hill	11,017	12,230	Community centre Library Early childhood health centre
Condell Park	10,032	10,049	Community centre



Bankstown City Council

Georges Hall	8,547	8,376	Community centre Early childhood health centre
Greenacre–Mount Lewis–Chullora	22,577	25,132	Community centre Library Early childhood health centre
Milperra	3,963	6,625	Community centre
Padstow–Padstow Heights	16,040	18,707	Community centre (2) Library Early childhood health centre
Panania–East Hills	14,239	16,148	Community centre Library Early childhood health centre
Picnic Point	5,658	5,873	Nil
Punchbowl	7,148	7,802	Nil
Revesby–Revesby Heights	13,709	15,634	Community centre
Sefton	5,052	6,121	Community centre
Villawood	3,537	3,962	Community centre
Yagoona	15,644	19,494	Community centre Early childhood health centre
Total Population	176,817	210,055	14 Community centres 5 Libraries 6 Early childhood health centres

Source: ID Consulting Population & Household Forecasts 2008 and Bankstown Community Directory 2008

Based on the projected population, the centres in the City of Bankstown have:

-  1 community centre per 12,629 residents in 2006 decreasing to 1 community centre per 15,003 residents in 2031.
-  1 library per 35,363 residents in 2006 decreasing to 1 library per 42,011 residents in 2031.
-  1 early childhood health centre per 29,469 residents in 2006 decreasing to 1 early childhood centre per 35,009 residents in 2031.

Based on these rates of provision, the growth areas that may not provide easy access to community centres and early childhood centres by 2031 are Bankstown, Bass Hill, Greenacre, Padstow and Revesby.

The provision of community facilities raises some concerns about Council's ability to support housing growth. An increase in housing will place additional demand on existing community services.

Section 94 developer contributions may not be sufficient to fully fund community projects over the next 25 years. As alternative options:



Council could investigate the financial feasibility of developing these facilities as part of multi storey mixed use development, which may be owned or leased by others. Council would retain the ownership of the community facility component of the development.

Other councils and agencies are using this approach to generate income, which can be used to cover the initial facility construction costs and/or the ongoing staffing and maintenance costs associated with the community facility. Examples of other projects are the Castle Hill Library and Community Centre (mixed with home units), Five Dock Library (mixed with a supermarket and home units), and the Forestville Library (mixed with a supermarket).



Council could consider a citywide land acquisition and divestment program.

Parks

The City of Bankstown has around 538.5 hectares of local parks (excluding regional parks like Mirambeena Regional Park and Deepwater Park).

In 2006, the rate of provision was 3 hectares per 1,000 residents decreasing to 2.5 hectares per 1,000 residents by 2031.

There is also an uneven distribution of local parks across the City. Many areas such as Bankstown, Greenacre and Yagoona have a low rate of provision of local parks.

Consideration also needs to be given to the community's ability to access parks. The analysis recommends that all residents should be within 500 metres walking distance of one playground within a neighbourhood park.

This benchmark indicates access to playground facilities for many residents north of the Hume Highway is poor. As the population in this area is expected to increase, access to parks with no major physical barriers (such as traffic on the Hume Highway) will be important.

Biodiversity Corridors

Parks play a role in protecting existing areas of environmental significance and to help form vegetation and habitat corridors that promote revegetation. Council adopted a Biodiversity Strategy to map areas of environmental significance and possible vegetation linkages. These areas tend to concentrate along significant watercourses and within reserve areas with a large percentage under the care and control of Council. The Biodiversity Strategy identifies the following reserves as suitable for environmental conservation:

Lansdowne, Mirambeena, Boggabilla, The Crest, Louis, Thornton, Norfolk, Deepwater, East Hills Park, Monash, Lehn Road, Dalton, Manahan, Marion, Higgins, Thella Kenway, Vale of Ah, Newland, Piper, Whittle, Virginus and Salt Plan Creek.

A number of State Government and privately owned sites also contain areas of high biodiversity and conservation value. These locations are generally developed with industrial complexes and public infrastructure. These sites may require buffer areas to protect vegetation and habitat corridors.

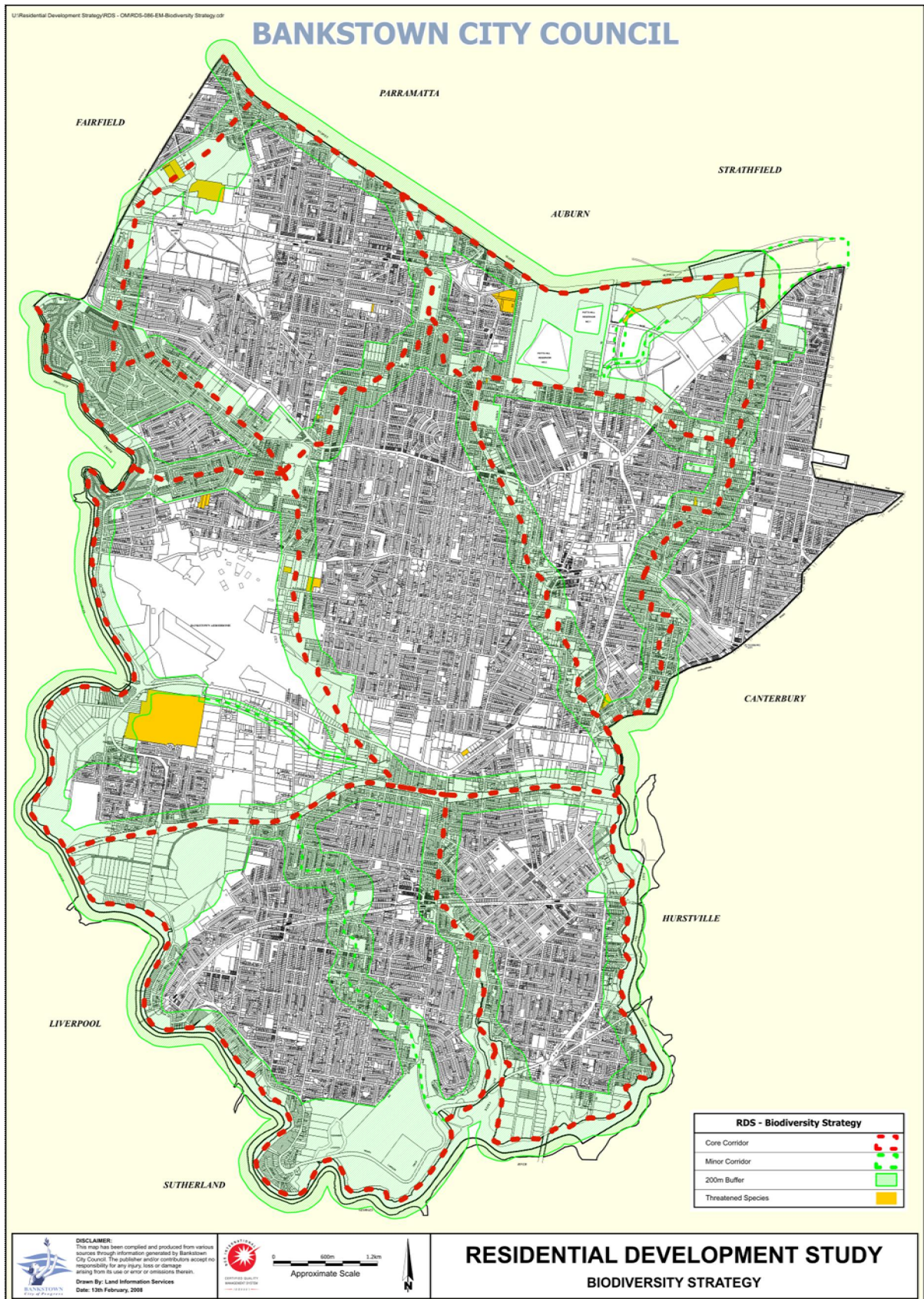
Foreshore Area

The foreshore area along the Georges River and tributaries is unique to the City of Bankstown. It is one of the few areas where native bushland and trees dominate both public and privately owned land. This continuity of vegetation combined with the steep sandstone topography are seen to contribute to the natural scenic quality of the City of Bankstown, and act as an important habitat link between the coastal areas and the Greater Western Sydney Region.

Council recognises there is mounting pressure to develop the foreshore area. The cumulative effect is that it may lead to the removal of native vegetation, fragmentation of wildlife corridors, the destruction of rock faces, stormwater runoff, pollutants entering the waterways and weed infestation.

Bankstown Development Control Plan 2005 currently protects the foreshore area by prohibiting development within 30 metres of the water (also known as a foreshore building line). This means many properties can only accommodate buildings with a small footprint (such as houses or dual occupancies).

Council also adopted the Policy Paper on the "Housing Strategy Review", which supports the prohibition of villas in the Foreshore Scenic Protection Area in conjunction with the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy. This change will affect approximately 1,234 privately owned properties (i.e. 2% of all properties in the City of Bankstown). Many residents are likely to support this change as it protects the natural features that attracted them to live in the City of Bankstown (such as its sense of greenery and relationship with the Georges River). This approach also supplements the Georges River Regional Environmental Plan, with the aim to protect the environmental qualities of the whole catchment.



Trends in the City of Bankstown: Environmental Management

Are there natural hazards in the City of Bankstown?

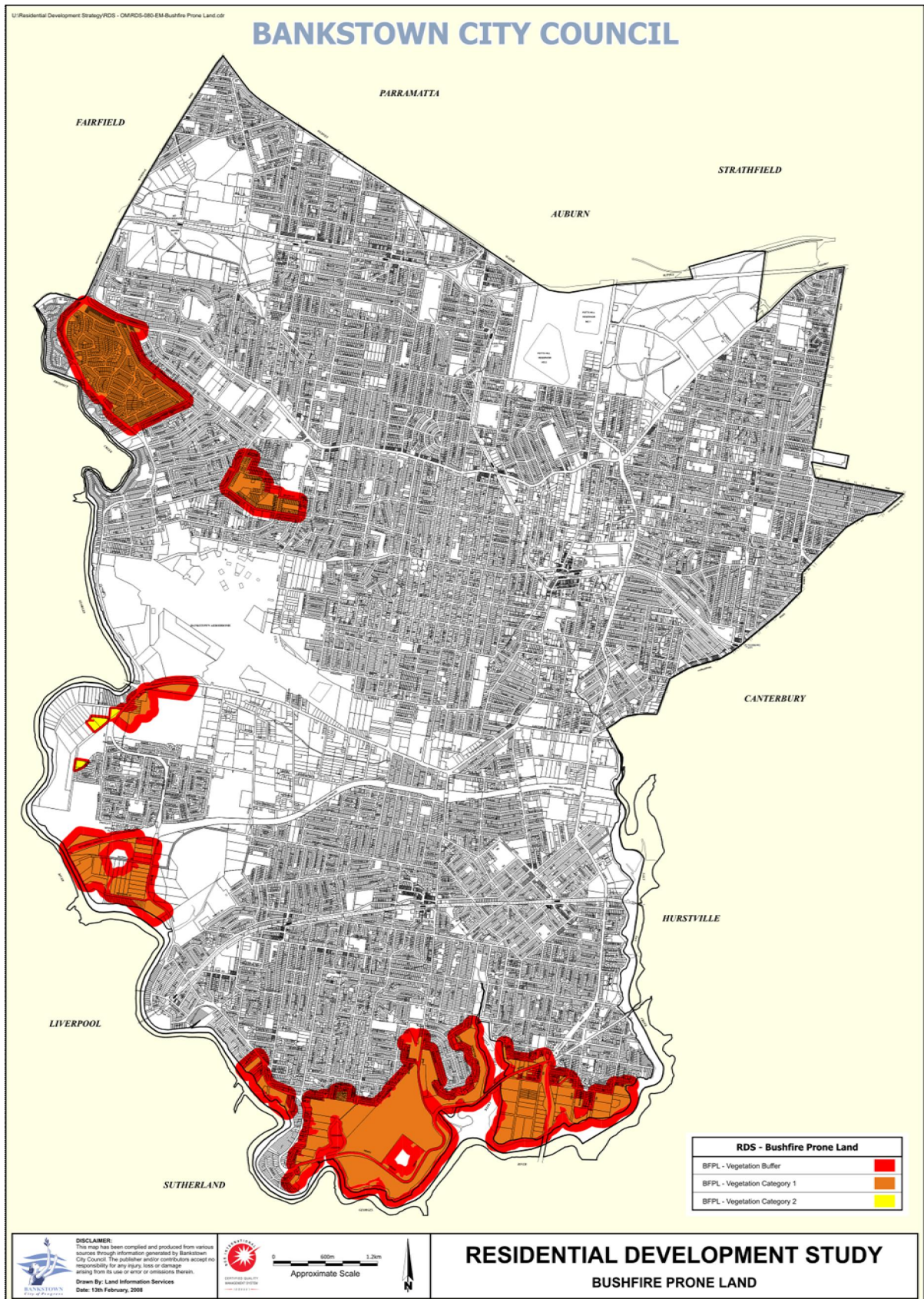
Since 2001, Council has undertaken considerable investigation work to identify natural hazards that may impact on development in the City of Bankstown. This is to ensure development in the City of Bankstown comply with new State Government guidelines such as the Floodplain Development Manual, and the Ministerial (section 117) directions relating to bushfire prone land and acid sulfate soils.

This investigation work is consistent with the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Water Resources 'Climate Change Adaptation Actions for Local Government' (released in 2007). This publication forms part of the Australian Government's National Climate Change Adaptation Program, and aims to manage the unavoidable consequences of climate change (such as more frequent extreme rainfall and possible sea level rises). Actions that Council is undertaking to protect buildings and infrastructure include identifying significant areas of risk (such as flood and bushfire prone land) and protecting the natural environment from external stresses (such as pollution and development).

Bush Fire Prone Land

The State Government adopted a Ministerial (section 117) direction requiring councils to comply with the Planning for Bushland Protection Guidelines. The objectives are to protect life and property from bush fire hazards, and to discourage the establishment of incompatible land uses in bush fire prone areas.

The Rural Fire Service mapped the high risk areas in the City of Bankstown that require a 100 metre buffer zone, and would be unsuitable for residential development. These areas affect approximately 2,358 properties adjoining the Georges River National Park, The Crest, Lansdowne Reserve, Deepwater Park, and Ashford Reserve.



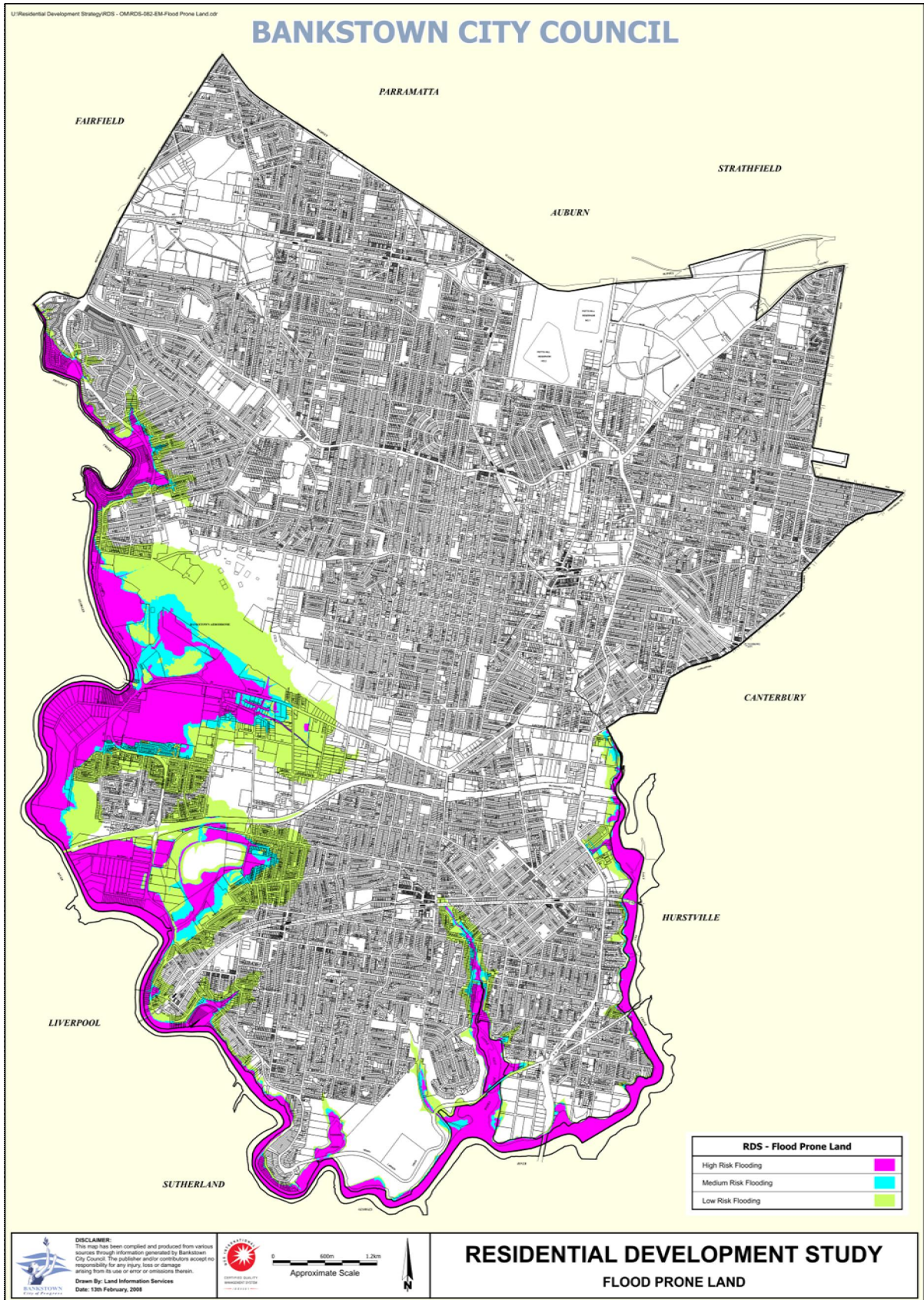
Flood Prone Land

The State Government adopted a Ministerial (section 117) direction requiring councils to comply with the Floodplain Development Manual. The objectives are to reduce the impact of flooding and flood liability on owners and occupiers of flood prone property, and to reduce private and public losses resulting from floods.

Council mapped the Georges River Floodplain based on the criteria set by the State Government policy, and categorises the floodplain into three risk precincts:

- The high risk area that may experience a 1 in 20 year flood. This area is unsuitable for residential development and affects approximately 1,312 properties adjoining the Georges River.
- The medium risk area that may experience a 1 in 100 year flood. This area may be unsuitable for residential development and affects approximately 444 properties in Milperra.
- The low risk area along the edge of the floodplain. This area may be suitable for residential development subject to flood related controls, and affects approximately 3,177 properties in Milperra, Georges Hall, Lansdowne, and along Salt Pan Creek and Little Salt Pan Creek.

Council is also preparing management strategies for the 5 stormwater catchments (comprising 21 sub-catchments) that cause stormwater flooding throughout the City of Bankstown.



Acid Sulfate Soils

The State Government adopted a Ministerial (section 117) direction requiring councils to comply with the Acid Sulfate Soils Planning Guidelines. The objective is to ensure development does not result in significant environmental impact on land containing acid sulfate soils.

The Department of Natural Resources mapped the areas with a high and low probability of containing acid sulfate soils. The areas with a high probability may restrict the scale of residential development, and include properties adjoining the Georges River and Salt Pan Creek.

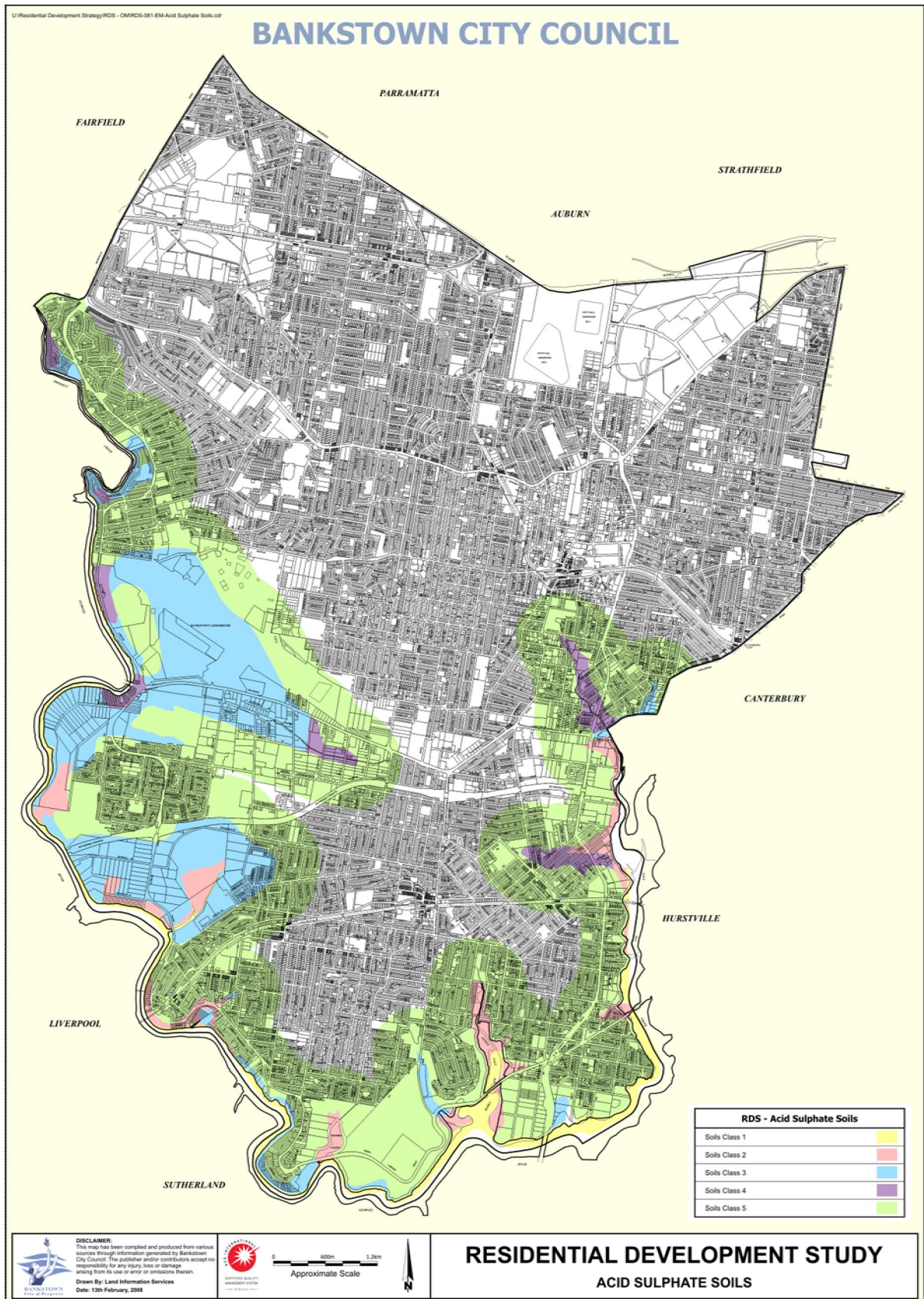
Studies indicate the development application stage can address the management of acid sulfate soils.

Salinity

Salt is a natural part of the landscape in Western Sydney and is found in the rocks, soil and shallow groundwater of the region. Changes in land uses have caused salts normally stored in soils and rocks to be dissolved in water and brought to the surface. When the water evaporates, the salts concentrate at or near the surface. This can damage trees, lawns, gardens, playing fields, buildings, underground pipes and roads.

The Department of Planning is requiring councils in Western Sydney to investigate the issue of salinity when investigating potential sites for residential development.

To assist, the Department of Natural Resources mapped the areas in the City of Bankstown with high and low potential for salinity. The areas with a high potential may restrict the scale of residential development, and include properties adjoining the watercourses (particularly in Villawood, Chester Hill, and Sefton).



Noise and air quality

The State Government is requiring councils to look at noise and air quality when planning for residential development. For example, State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007 aims to ensure noise sensitive development proposed in or adjacent to road and rail corridors are not adversely affected by noise or vibration.

Road and rail corridors are a main source of emissions and noise (such as 24 hour freight movements). Council would need to assess the long term impacts to determine whether residential development and other sensitive land uses are appropriate along these transport corridors.

The Department of the Environment and Climate Change recommends that councils anticipate, avoid or manage potential noise impacts as early as possible in the planning process. Resolving noise problems after they occur may not always be possible and is often difficult and costly. The preferred option is to avoid the location of sensitive land uses next to noisy activities such as industrial premises, major roads and railway lines. This will help to avoid exposing future residents to excessive noise.

Examples of noisy activities in the City of Bankstown are:



Bankstown Airport

The State Government adopted a Ministerial (section 117) direction requiring councils to comply with the Australian Noise Exposure Forecast contours. The objective is to prohibit development within a certain distance of aircraft noise at an airport.

This includes prohibiting residential development where the Australian Noise Exposure Forecast exceeds 25, and requiring acoustic treatments to residential development where the Australian Noise Exposure Forecast is between 20 and 25.

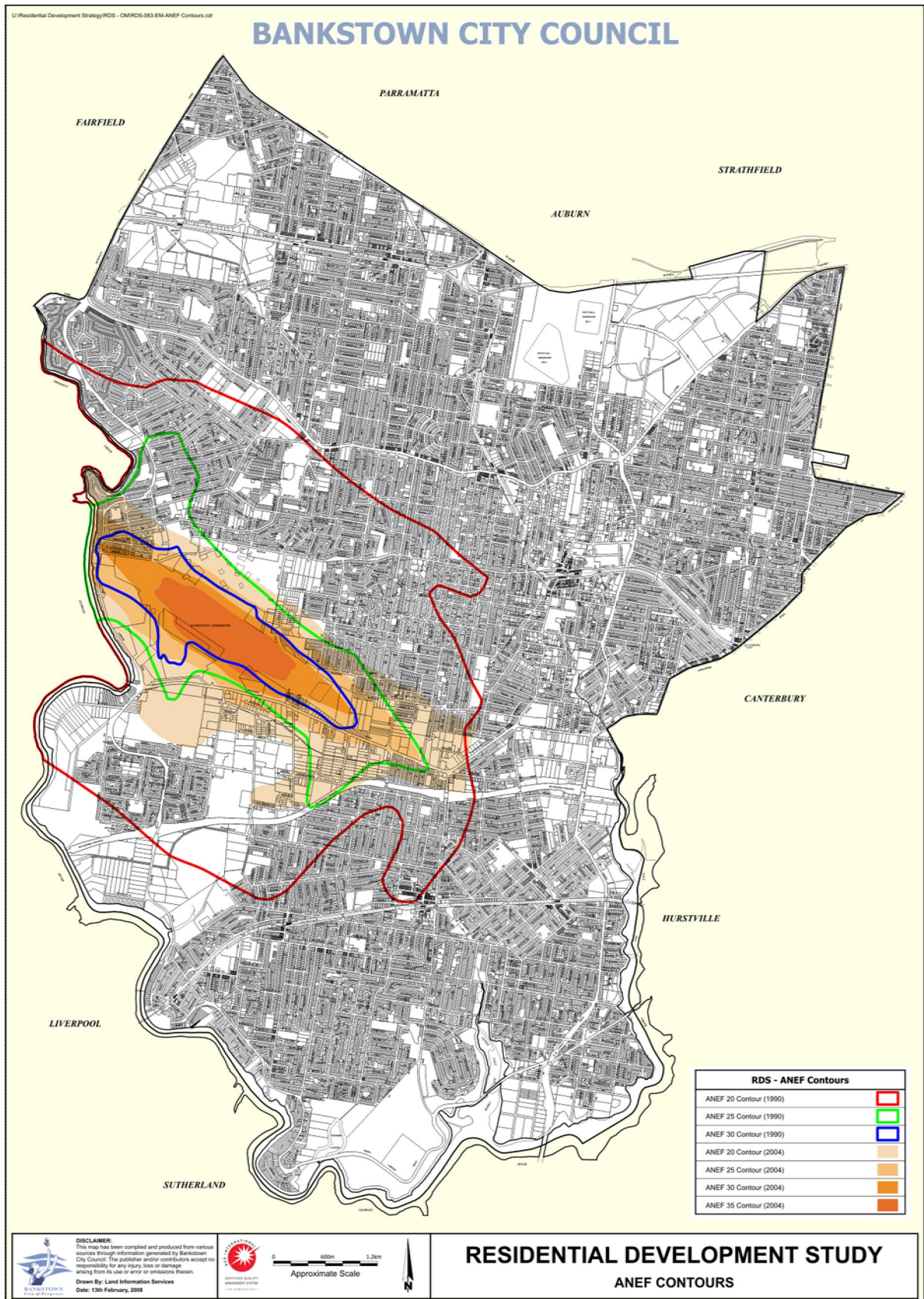


Hume Highway and the Enfield Intermodal Terminal

The Hume Highway Corridor carries up to 62,000 car and truck movements a day, with noise levels exceeding acceptable standards. Vehicle emissions also affect air quality as carbon monoxide and particulate matter are harmful to people.

The Hume Highway Environmental Analysis Report found that concentrations of pollutants are affecting properties along the roadway. The Report recommends generous setbacks for sensitive land uses to avoid noise, air toxins, dust and smell that may cause health concerns. In response, Council adopted a minimum setback of 20 metres for home units while discouraging the use of solid noise walls. The Land and Environment Court has supported this setback requirement.

Projections indicate the Enfield Intermodal Terminal will increase traffic along the Hume Highway, Roberts Road and Boronia Road by 1,160 truck movements a day.





Southern Sydney Freight Line

The Transport Infrastructure Development Corporation recognises rail transport will increase. This will expose people near railway lines to more noise and vibration from passing trains. The effects of noise and vibration include discomfort for people and sleep disturbance.

In general, freight trains are noisier than passenger trains and can affect properties up to 200 metres from the railway line.

The Transport Infrastructure Development Corporation recommends councils locate industrial and commercial land uses, multi-storey car parks and sport and recreation uses closer to the railway line. Councils should locate sensitive land uses as far away as possible from the railway line, as distance is one of the most effective mitigation measures against noise and vibration as opposed to solid noise walls.

Projections indicate the Southern Sydney Freight Line will increase freight train movements along the Bankstown railway line and there are no noise mitigation works proposed for the Chester Hill shopping centre or Sefton shopping centre.



Industrial Precincts

Industries impose some constraint on the potential for housing development. Controlling the operation of industries has not been achieved satisfactorily, and new housing development tends to encroach on desirable buffers to industries.

Council should consider introducing buffer requirements around industrial precincts.

A recent example is the rezoning of Nos 30–46 Auburn Road in Regents Park to allow residential development. Council introduced a 10 metre setback to neighbouring industries to avoid potential odour and noise impacts on residents. This is in response to a recommendation by the Department of the Environment and Climate Change.

Trends in the City of Bankstown: Urban Design

What are the urban design considerations in the City of Bankstown?

The City of Bankstown is an example of post-war development in Sydney. Workers cottages on individual allotments and public housing estates characterise the housing stock. Council recognises there will be redevelopment changes to the existing character over the next 25 years.

To date, Council's policies have been to allow housing choice in all areas of the City of Bankstown, and to gradually relax the development controls to the point where they now impose little constraint on development opportunity. This is seen to provide equality to property owners and encourage investment.

However, this generalised approach does not take into consideration economic and environmental changes since the adoption of the Bankstown Housing Strategy in 1997. For example:

Location

Allowing medium density development in all areas of the City of Bankstown has led to some difficulty when assessing proposals in areas that have natural hazards, culs-de-sac and narrow streets.

Allotment widths

The relaxation of some development controls has resulted in poor designs such as development on narrow lots with a generally poor street presentation.

Car ownership is also increasing.

Building height versus floor space ratio

Generic height limitations do not match floor space ratios. Compliance with the height limitations has resulted in box-shape buildings that are low and wide in an attempt to achieve the floor space ratio, and provide poor amenity to residents and neighbouring buildings.

Council will need to review the height limitations for mixed uses and home units to comply with State Government urban design guidelines (State Environmental Planning Policy 65 and the Residential Flat Design Code). These guidelines aim to have building envelopes that allow building separation, natural cross ventilation, solar access, building depth, and communal open spaces.

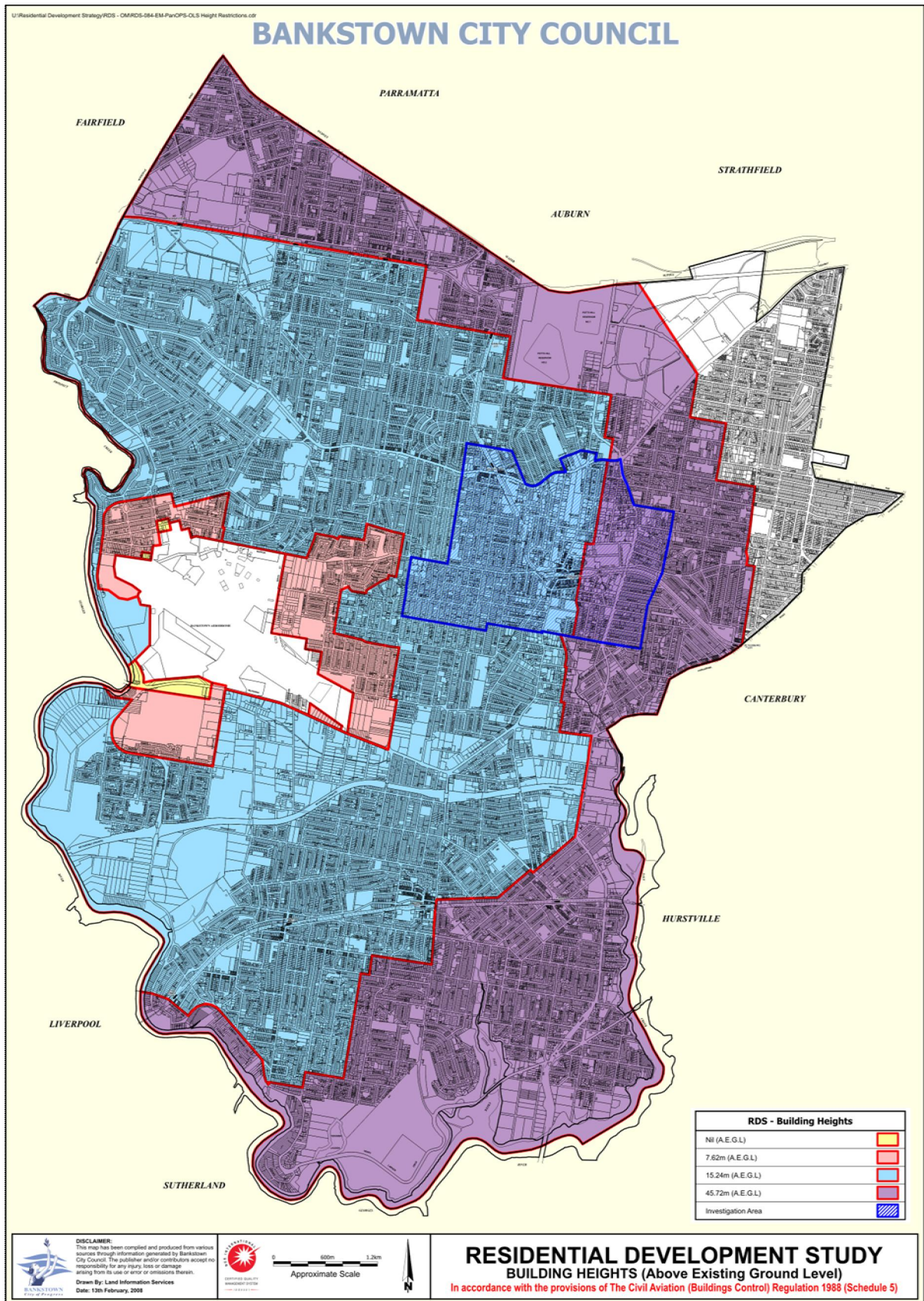
Building height versus Bankstown Airport airspace restrictions

The State Government has adopted a Ministerial (section 117) direction requiring councils to comply with the Airports Act 1996 and Civil Aviation (Building Control) Regulations 1988. The objective is to prohibit development that may obstruct aircraft flying within a certain distance of an airport. The prescribed airspace comprises:

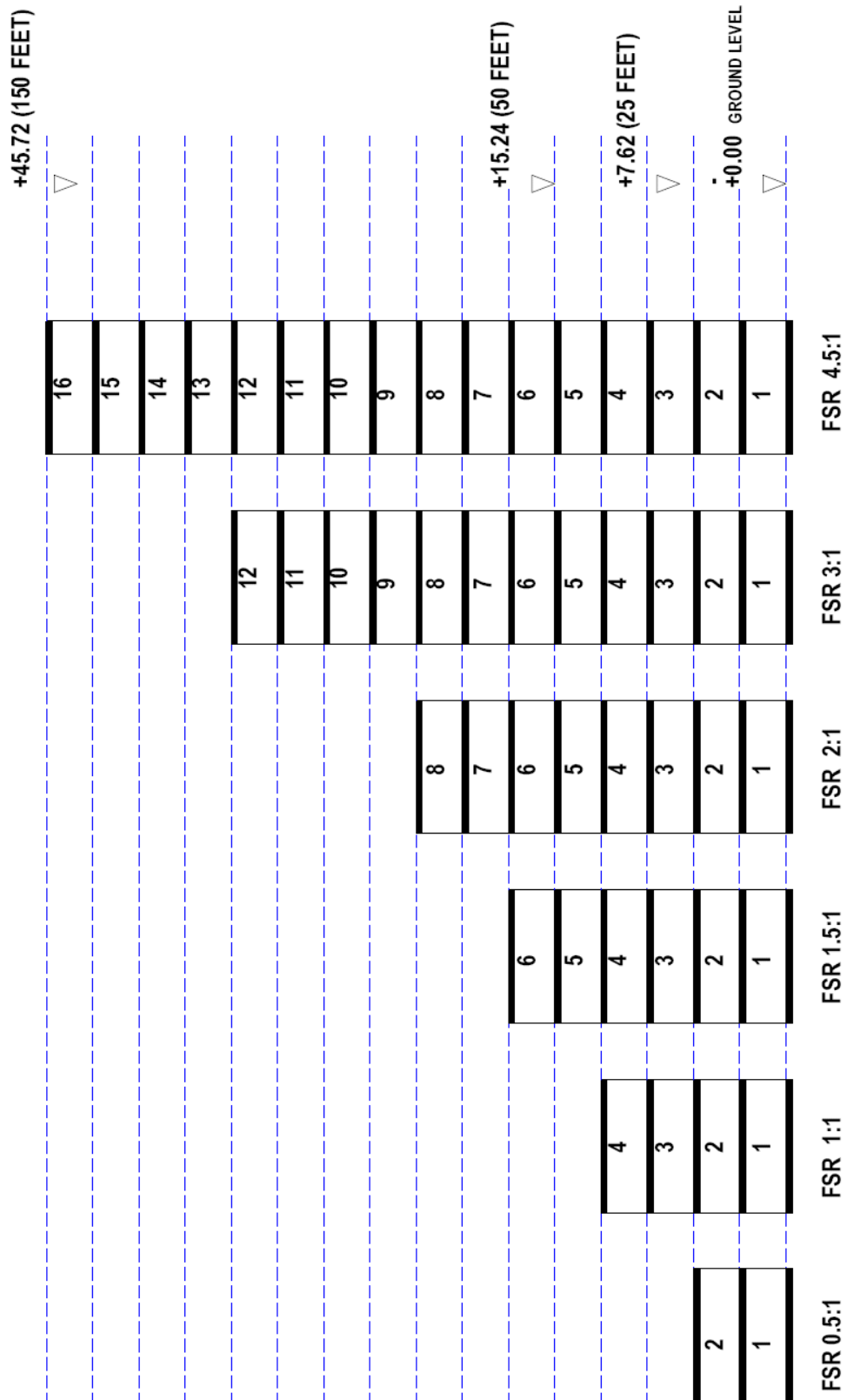
- The Obstacle Limitation Surfaces. The OLS defines the airspace to be protected for aircraft operating visually during the initial and final stages of flight, or manoeuvring in the vicinity of an airport.
- The Procedures for Air Navigation Services–Aircraft Operations Surfaces. The PANS–OPS protects the stages of take–off, landing or manoeuvring when aircraft are operating in non–visual (instrument) conditions. The PANS–OPS cannot be infringed in any circumstances.

In the case of the City of Bankstown, any rezoning proposal or development that encroaches the prescribed airspace requires the specific approval of the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development & Local Government.

In 2007, Council commissioned a study to investigate whether development in the Bankstown CBD may encroach the Obstacle Limitation Surfaces. The study found development to a height of 86 metres Australian Height Datum do not impinge on the Bankstown Airport OLS. It is noted that significant structures such as the Civic Tower at thirteen storeys and 79.6 metres AHD currently encroach the OLS.








This illustration shows the general relationship between floor space ratios and building heights to comply with SEPP 65 and the Residential Flat Design Code. This illustration also shows how building heights relate to the Bankstown Airport airspace restrictions (measured as feet above the ground).



Future considerations

Council is taking action to see continued improvements in housing design. These actions include adopting the Policy Paper on the "Housing Strategy Review" and establishing the Major Development Design Assessment Panel.

Council is also reviewing the development controls to complement the range of housing choice that could be made available in the future. This review aims to have:

-  A clear and practical long-term vision for centres.
-  Good quality urban design controls to distinguish the City of Bankstown and strengthen the liveability of centres.
-  Housing design that responds to community expectations. The Housing Strategy Review suggests residents want to see changes in the design of dual occupancies, villas and home units with regard to urban design, landscaping, privacy, garden spaces, off-street parking and their relationships to neighbouring houses.
-  Economic testing to assess whether building envelope controls correspond with market expectations. It is noted that density increases is less critical compared to infrastructure investment and the way the public transport system is managed. This applies to frequency and extent of services, and the design of accessible stations and interchanges.
-  Practical and workable building envelopes that allow the building height to match the floor space ratio in keeping with SEPP 65 urban design principles and airport regulations.



Examples of housing choice that could be made available in the future

