

# Sovereign Hills Urban Philosophy



  
SOVEREIGN HILLS  
port macquarie

*A whole new town An exciting new life...*

# SOVEREIGN HILLS\_URBAN PHILOSOPHY

An 'Urban Philosophy' has been developed to underpin and guide the design and development of the new urban community of Sovereign Hills.

This Urban Philosophy is based upon a set of 'core' *Community Development Principles* that are considered fundamental to the development of this community. These core principles integrate with a series of *Community Design Principles*, which will guide the design of the overall community.

## SOVEREIGN HILLS\_COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The new community of SOVEREIGN HILLS will be:

SUSTAINABLE	A sustainable place > liveable > competitive > environmentally sensitive
RESPONSIVE	A place designed in response to its setting, climate and needs of the community
INNOVATIVE	A creative place that provides opportunity, variety and choice
CONNECTED	A place that is easy to get to, move through and make contact
ADAPTABLE	A place designed for change, with lasting and adaptable buildings and spaces
IDENTITY	A place with a clear identity and character

## SOVEREIGN HILLS\_COMMUNITY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The new community of SOVEREIGN HILLS will:

Create new places that respond to and optimise setting and location

Create a sustainable community

Establish a well connected community

Encourage walking and cycling and travel by public transport and reduce dependence upon the private car

Celebrate the public realm

Ensure high quality design and promote innovation

Ensure responsive and sustainable design

Engage the Sovereign Hills community

# SOVEREIGN HILLS\_COMMUNITY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## Create new places that respond to and optimise setting and location

### *Establish a sustainable urban structure*

A sustainable urban structure creates housing and employment opportunities for people in relative proximity, help them to move about with ease, provide a choice of different types of places in which to live and work and a diversity of recreational opportunities. These are arranged around a coherent structure of places, streets and buildings that is intuitively understandable and easy to move around.

### *Create a mix of uses and densities in key focal areas*

Locating uses that are active at different times of the day in close proximity creates an active environment. A mix of housing, employment, retail, community service and leisure uses around key focal points will create opportunities for people to live and work in close proximity, and to foster vitality and synergy between uses.

### *Restore and enhance unique natural features*

Natural features such as watercourses, topographic features and flora, such as trees and wildlife habitats, are retained and rehabilitated where possible. These are important in changing the image of the area and establishing a context for attracting economic and residential investment. Careful placement of structures, open spaces and connections in relation to natural features enhance the area's unique sense of place and contributes to the safety and enjoyment of residents and visitors.

### *Enhance bio-diversity*

A diversity of habitats is an essential element in achieving sustainability to ensure long-term bio-diversity. Sovereign Hills will seek to protect and enhance the existing local habitats, especially the threatened species that inhabit the area.

## Create a sustainable community

### *Ensure housing with a high quality of design and amenity*

New housing must be of high quality in design, amenity and accessibility. Well located and well designed quality housing is key to sustainability.

### *Provide a range of housing types and forms*

Housing at Sovereign Hills will appeal to a wide cross-section of the community in terms of size, lifestyle, income level and age and offer a range of live-work opportunities. A range of housing, in terms of built form, size and tenure, will help foster diversity and sustainability.

### *Support residents with a full range of community and social services*

Local services and facilities will form a central role in the Sovereign Hills community. Libraries, health services, schools, community facilities, recreational facilities, and less formal places for community gatherings, all add to the quality of life will be integral to the community.

### *Create high quality education*

High quality education provision is a priority. High quality educational facilities - pre-school, primary and high schools are essential. The development of the new **Catholic Regional Campus** adjacent to the town centre constitutes a major act of confidence in the future of the area.

#### *Create high quality shopping*

High quality convenience shopping will include the full range of retail services at realistic sizes and locations. A hierarchy of shopping will allow for 'corner shops', neighbourhood groups of shops, and a new town centre anchored by a large supermarket store.

#### *A diverse and mixed-use town centre*

A wide range of uses will activate Sovereign Hills Town Centre – business, retail, community, recreation, entertainment, live-work space, medium density residential and open space. Uses will be mixed both within individual town centre blocks and vertically within buildings. The town centre will have active street edges and spaces in a traditional street grid structure, with uses 'sleeved' around larger town centre uses and with well designed community spaces, places and links.

#### *Create a diverse employment base*

A range of employment opportunities is required to support a robust and diverse future population. The focus is on '**new economy**' businesses of varying sizes and types in high quality development.

### **Establish a well connected community**

#### *Establish a diversity of connections.*

A variety of connections will link future neighbourhoods. Visual connections such as views and vistas; physical connections such as roads, walking trails, paths, creeks, and other natural features, whilst allowing for differences between communities, continuity in built form and scale will all create a sense of connection.

#### *Create a continuous and connected street grid to provide easy and understandable connections*

A simple, connected grid street pattern is the backbone of a healthy urban structure. It enhances connections within and between neighbourhoods and provides understandable addresses. The finer the street grid, the finer the mix of uses that can be supported and the more intricate can be the patterns of movement among those uses, creating a more physically and visually appealing environment. This approach maximises neighbourhood surveillance and increases security.

#### *Telecommunications*

Being well connected is also about telecommunications. Sovereign Hills will be a smart community, both residents and business users connected through state of the art fibre optic technology and a community intranet.

### **Encourage walking and cycling and travel by public transport in order to reduce dependence upon the private car**

#### *Create a high quality safe environment for walking and cycling*

A safe and high quality environment will be created to make travel on foot and by bicycle practical, inviting, comfortable and safe, both on and off-street. High quality design and materials will improve the experience for walkers and cyclists and situating active uses in close proximity will foster a sense of safety. Bicycle lanes and pedestrian footpaths will be included within the street wherever possible, making it clear that roads are to be used and shared by all.

#### *Locate related uses within walking distance wherever possible*

Related uses should be situated within close proximity, walking distance where possible. For example, well used facilities and services are ideally situated close to main transport routes

and housing. Clustering related facilities will also help to reduce walking distances.

*Create a street hierarchy that identifies landscape character and role within the town structure*  
Streets will have a clearly defined role within an overall hierarchy. High volume traffic and transport routes, high streets, neighbourhood, arterial and local streets will have particular design and landscape characters.

*Link land use and public transport strategies*

Promote land use that seeks greater densities and mix of uses around more accessible places and public transport routes.

*Conserve heritage*

Aboriginal heritage sites are to be incorporated as part of the new community.

## **Celebrate the public realm**

*Develop a hierarchy of diverse public spaces that identifies regional, local and community places*

Parks and open spaces that respond to each of these scales are to be established. A hierarchy of diverse spaces that respond to modern day needs - active and passive, formal and informal, large and small, naturalised and urban, parks, squares and courtyards – will be created. Each park will have a well-defined identity and purpose. Open spaces will be fully integrated with the surrounding area.

*Provide each community with accessible open space amenities*

Open spaces will provide focal points within the community when they are safe, appropriately designed and managed. The community will contain a range of open spaces to foster a high quality and diverse urban environment and facilitate ready access to local and neighbourhood parks.

*Ensure streets provide a safe and quality environment for public use*

The design and the quality of landscape and street furniture will balance the needs of vehicles with those of pedestrians and cyclists, creating safe, inviting, high-quality places for the public to use and enjoy and adding to the sense of community pride and security.

*Locate active uses adjacent to and overlooking public places to enhance the sense of safety*

Open spaces and streets can be more successful if people feel secure in them. A combination of good design, community surveillance and sensible management procedures are necessary to ensure safety. By enclosing parks and open spaces with a mix of active uses such as housing, shops, other commercial uses, community facilities, and streets, such spaces can feel much more safe, the general level of vitality can be increased and the distinction between public and private spaces distinguished.

*Foster a sense of ownership over public places*

The maintenance and safety of open spaces can be improved by fostering a sense of shared, community responsibility, and making sure that each open space “belongs” to someone. Involving the community in design and maintenance is part of a long-term strategy to foster a sense of ownership. Public places will be located in coherent and logical locations where there is a clear relationship to adjacent uses can also encourage a sense of ownership.

*Ensure accessibility and long-term maintenance of public places*

Clear mechanisms for the long-term maintenance of the public spaces will be established. Part of the long-term future of these quality spaces will rely on affording access to the widest range of users possible.

*Encourage active use of the public realm*

A variety of events, functions and celebrations will be managed, promoted and encouraged within the public spaces of Sovereign Hills, whether it be an outdoor film night in the town square or a birthday BBQ in the local park.

## **Ensure high quality design and promote innovation**

*Establish detailed development guidelines*

Sovereign Hills is committed to the promotion and development of good practice in the design and implementation of accessible buildings, environment and transport. To achieve the right mix of good urban design and creativity, and to establish a benchmark and expectations early on, detailed development guidelines will be created for discrete neighbourhoods, sites and/or individual buildings. Development guidelines will address such matters as scale, density, building type, massing, height, layout, access, setbacks and street walls, public and private open spaces, parking and materials. The guidelines will encourage architectural diversity and technological innovation. Different neighbourhoods will develop their own distinct character.

*Use the development process to stimulate creativity*

Competitive design and development processes will be used to foster creativity.

*Promote adaptable and flexible building types*

Business and residential buildings will be designed for change, in that they will be flexible to allow for adaptation to new uses as economic and demographic forces change over time.

*Provision and maintenance of high quality public open spaces*

High quality public open spaces play a major role in establishing an overall sense of quality. To ensure all new development appears as high quality as possible, responsibility for financing the creation and maintenance of a high quality public realm will be established early on.

*Long-term management and maintenance of residential neighbourhoods*

The mechanisms for long-term quality management of residential neighbourhoods will be established early on and factored into both development and longer term management budgets.

## **Ensure responsive and sustainable design**

*Create a walkable place*

Reduce car travel, encourage walking/cycling and the use of public transport. Good design is essential to make streets attractive for walking aesthetically appealing and comfortable to use.

*Ensure energy is used as efficiently as possible*

Business and domestic developments will incorporate technology to harness renewable energy resources for lighting and heating. Sustainability also requires that every effort be made to reduce the amount of non-renewable resources utilised in the range of construction processes.

*Conserve water*

Water conservation is a fundamental principle for both residential or business buildings and the wider environment. Initiatives will range in size from small-scale rainwater tanks and household water saving devices, to large-scale recycling facilities and dual reticulation of grey

water.

*Minimise waste*

Waste should be minimised. A framework for maximising recycling, reuse and composting of waste both in domestic and commercial sectors will be implemented, from design of developments, through site clearance and construction and throughout their usage.

*Improve air, water and soil quality.*

Sustainability requires good air, water and soil quality. Deterioration in water quality will be prevented by adequate control of discharges from urban stormwater drainage. Every effort will be made to reduce flood flows into watercourses and treat stormwater runoff to remove polluting material.

**Engage the Sovereign Hills community**

*Foster community stewardship*

Sustainability requires community stewardship and partnerships. The emerging residential and business communities will need to become involved with and support the creation and development of a sustainable community. Sovereign Hills will seek to nurture, encourage community stewardship and partnerships.