Southport Priority Development Area (PDA) Development Scheme

The Southport PDA Development Scheme (Southport PDA Scheme) was adopted by the State Government on 5 September 2014, marking a major milestone in planning for the Gold Coast CBD.

The Southport PDA Scheme now supersedes the interim Land Use Plan which no longer has effect. All development applications will now be assessed against the Southport PDA Scheme.

The Southport PDA Development Scheme Submissions Report summarises the submissions received during public notification of the Southport PDA Scheme.

All submissions were considered by City of Gold Coast (City) and the Minister for Economic Development Queensland (MEDQ) and amendments were made to the Southport PDA Scheme where appropriate.

Guiding development in the Southport PDA

The Southport PDA Scheme will guide planning and development within the Southport PDA.

The principles guiding the scheme are simple, by removing barriers to development, investor and developer confidence is boosted within Southport, ensuring the delivery of a vibrant CBD - the definitive centre for commerce on the Gold Coast.

The Streetscape Design Guidelines (SDG) support the Southport PDA Scheme, providing clear direction for the development industry and other stakeholders to create a consistent, legible streetscape within the PDA.

The Southport PDA

The Southport PDA significantly boosts our plans to revitalise Southport as the Gold Coast CBD.

Southport was declared a PDA on 4 October 2013 by the Minister for Economic Development Queensland (MEDQ) under the provisions of the Economic Development Act 2012.

The Southport PDA includes the former Gold Coast hospital site, Gold Coast Aquatic Centre for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games™, Broadwater Parklands and residential areas located directly north of Railway Street and south of Queen Street, in an area of 195.7 hectares.

Find the link to the Priority Development Area boundary map below.

The Southport PDA will:

- attract national and international investment through a streamlined and facilitated approach to development
- engage residents and visitors through high quality urban design
- connect to local and regional centres as a multi-modal public transport hub
- celebrate Southport’s unique natural setting and connection to the Broadwater by continuing to provide attractive and functional public spaces
- maximise infrastructure investments including Gold Coast Chinatown, light rail, the Aquatic Centre for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games™ and the Southport Broadwater Parklands.

Related information

- Centre Improvement Program
- Centre Improvement Program Showcase
- Cr Dawn Crichlow OAM, Councillor for Southport
- Gold Coast CBD
- Gold Coast Chinatown
- PD Online (Planning & Development Online)
- Planning and building
- Southport PDA Development Scheme Submissions Report
- Southport PDA Streetscape Design Guidelines

Jump to key information
What is the Southport PDA Scheme?

The Southport PDA Scheme is the regulatory document that controls land use, infrastructure planning and development within the PDA. It also outlines the implementation strategy that complements/supports the land use and infrastructure plans for the PDA.

Where can I obtain a copy of the Southport PDA Scheme?

The Southport PDA Scheme can be viewed and downloaded [here](#).

Who will be responsible for approving future development?

City of Gold Coast is the assessment manager for the Southport PDA. All development applications within the PDA will be assessed under the Southport PDA Scheme.

Were any amendments made to the Southport PDA Scheme as a result of the submissions received during public notification?

Public notification of the Southport PDA Scheme was undertaken in accordance with the Economic Development Act 2012 from 7 April 2014 to 22 May 2014. During this period the community, residents and businesses were invited to view the Proposed Southport PDA Scheme and make a submission.

All submissions have been considered by the City of Gold Coast and the Minister for Economic Development Queensland (MEDQ). Where appropriate, amendments were made to the Southport PDA Scheme.

A collated response to all submissions provided to the City is contained in the Submission Report. This report includes a list of amendments made to the Southport PDA Scheme as a result of submissions received.

What is a Priority Development Area (PDA)?

A PDA is a site declared by the State Government to facilitate the development of land in Queensland for economic development and development for community purposes.

When a PDA is declared, the local government planning scheme no longer applies and a new planning instrument, known as a Development Scheme must be prepared and approved by the Minister for Economic Development Queensland.

Where is the Southport Priority Development Area (PDA)?

The Southport PDA is located over the existing Southport Central Business District (CBD) and includes the former Gold Coast hospital site, Gold Coast Aquatic Centre, Broadwater Parklands and residential areas located directly north of Railways Street and south of Oyster Street. The Southport PDA contains a diverse mix of uses centred on Hastings and Scarborough Streets and includes retail, commercial, financial, educational, legal and community uses, while the residential areas offer a diversity of dwelling types and sizes.

The PDA has an area of approximately 195.7 hectares.

Download the Priority Development Area Boundary Map.

Why was Southport declared a Priority Development Area (PDA)?

Southport is the traditional centre of the Gold Coast, focused on knowledge-based employment, regional government administration, medical, retail and commercial as well as regional community and recreation facilities. Southport has always been the pre-eminent centre of the city with the highest concentration of employment with the largest share of office spaces (108,240 square metres) attracting a workforce in excess of 24,400 people. Southport is the most populated centre in the city with a resident population of more than 28,300.

The declaration of a PDA provides the opportunity to facilitate development, remove barriers and encourage flexibility and innovation. This will support the growth and advancement of Southport as the CBD of the Gold Coast.
Is Open Space included in the Southport PDA?

Precinct 4 of the Southport PDA is dedicated to open space. This will provide a connected network of functional and attractive open spaces and provide opportunities for passive and active recreation and sporting, cultural and civic events. Contributing to the overall amenity of the PDA, the Open Space Precinct includes the Southport Broadwater Parklands and opportunities for park and water-based recreation and leisure activities.

What is the City of Gold Coast’s role in relation to the Southport Priority Development Area (PDA)?

City of Gold Coast (City) is responsible for plan-making and development assessment in the Southport PDA. The City drafted a development plan for the PDA and undertook the notification of the Proposed PDA Scheme in collaboration with, and under the delegation of, the Minister. The City will also be responsible for assessing development applications within the PDA.

What is Economic Development Queensland’s role in relation to the Southport Priority Development Area (PDA)?

Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) guided and supported the preparation of the Southport PDA Scheme, public notification of the Proposed Southport PDA Scheme and is responsible for coordinating the State approval process. EDQ is also responsible for ensuring State interests are addressed in the development assessment process.

How will the infrastructure required to support development of the site be financed?

The delivery of infrastructure is a key component to facilitating development within Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and ensuring adequate funding for this infrastructure is vital.

Various processes exist which allow City of Gold Coast to collect infrastructure contributions from parties undertaking development in the Southport PDA. Other funding sources, such as external funding programs, may also be sought by the City to fund major works such as community facilities within the PDA.

What happens to a development application that was lodged with the City of Gold Coast prior to declaration?

When a Priority Development Area is declared, development applications already lodged with local government for the area continue to be assessed and decided by the local government under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the provisions of the relevant planning scheme.

How does the Economic Development Act 2012 development assessment process differ from the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 process?

Development applications over land within a Priority Development Area (PDA) are assessed by the City of Gold Coast as a delegated entity under the Southport PDA Scheme and the Economic Development Act 2012. Under this Act, the decision process must occur within 40 business days.

Development applications on land outside the PDA are made to and assessed by the City under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the planning scheme.

What happens to a building application?

Applications continue to be made under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, which provides for private certification.

What will happen when a development application is lodged with the City of Gold Coast?

When making a Priority Development Area (PDA) development application, the application will be assessed using the process set out in the Southport PDA Scheme and the Economic Development Act 2012. The Southport PDA Scheme now supersedes both the Interim Land Use Plan for the Southport PDA and the planning scheme.

How can I lodge a PDA development application with the City of Gold Coast?

Following declaration, all development applications are required to be made to the City of Gold Coast. Application forms are available on the City’s website. The forms are to be used for all new development applications within the Southport PDA.

Facilitated meetings with City officers are recommended and encouraged prior to lodging a PDA development application in order to address any planning issues early on.

What is the future of the former Gold Coast Hospital site?

The State Government has rezoned the Community Infrastructure Designation over the former Gold Coast Hospital site. Under the Southport PDA Scheme the site is within Precinct 1 of the Southport PDA, identified as the Central Business District. The site is suitable for development subject to Precinct 1 provisions with preferred land uses including commercial office space, high residential densities and high-end retail uses.

Is Open Space included in the Southport PDA?

Precinct 4 of the Southport PDA is dedicated to open space. This will provide a connected network of functional and attractive open spaces and provide opportunities for passive and active recreation and sporting, cultural and civic events. Contributing to the overall amenity of the PDA, the Open Space Precinct includes the Southport Broadwater Parklands and opportunities for park and water-based recreation and leisure activities.

What extent and type of development is expected in the Southport PDA?
The vision for the Southport PDA is to deliver the Gold Coast Central Business District (CBD). The CBD will be the definitive centre for commerce on the Gold Coast, attracting national and international investment through a streamlined and facilitated approach to development.

Southport will build on its economic, lifestyle and environmental opportunities to become a world-class centre and the Southport PDA will accommodate a diverse mix of land uses to help guide this. These will include commercial office space, medium to high residential densities with a mix of dwelling sizes and types, high-density retail uses, small-scale neighbourhood and local services where appropriate and public open space.

Existing infrastructure investments will also be maximised such as the Gold Coast Light Rail, Gold Coast Aquatic Centre for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games™ and the Southport Broadwater Parklands.

Is public transport proposed for the Southport PDA?

Reducing congestion by providing convenient public transport alternatives to cars is a key consideration in the planning for the Southport PDA as the Gold Coast CBD. The CBD Precinct is serviced by four stations of the Gold Coast light rail, providing connections to the wider transport network.

Active travel, including walking and cycling, is also encouraged in the Southport PDA through safe and pleasant environments using appropriate lighting and landscaping.

The Gold Coast City Transport Strategy will also guide the city’s transport system to 2031, creating a smart, connected and liveable city under a one network approach.

Is the Southport PDA different to the Parklands PDA?

Yes. The Southport PDA is a separate declaration to the Parklands PDA. The Parklands PDA was a site previously declared by the State Government to support delivery of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games™ and the Commonwealth Games Village.

The Southport PDA is identified as the Gold Coast CBD and will be a world-class centre for employment, community services, commerce and retail, while offering a diverse range of housing options and highly desirable lifestyle amenity.

Does the Southport PDA include development for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games™?

Yes. The Southport PDA includes the Gold Coast Aquatic Centre for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games™. This key piece of infrastructure is located in the Broadwater Parklands in Precinct four of the PDA.