

<p>CITY OF GREATER GERALDTON</p> <p><b>AGROFORESTRY (including Plantations)</b></p> <p><b>Local Planning Policy</b></p>	<p>Version; 1</p> <p>Originated Date; 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2012</p> <p>Review Date; Annually</p>
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**AGROFORESTRY (including Plantations)  
Local Planning Policy**

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**1.0 PURPOSE:**

Local Planning Policies are guidelines used to assist the local government in making decisions under the Scheme. The Scheme prevails should there be any conflict between this Policy and the Scheme.

It is not intended that a policy be applied rigidly, but each application be examined on its merits, with the objectives and intent of the policy the key for assessment. However, it should not be assumed that the local government, in exercising its planning discretion, be limited to the policy provisions and that mere compliance will result in an approval. This approach has produced many examples of inappropriate built form that has a long-term impact on the amenity and sustainability of the locality.

The City encourages applicants to produce innovative ways of achieving the stated objectives and acknowledges that these may sit outside the more traditional planning and architectural approaches. In these instances the local government is open to considering (and encourages) well presented cases, during pre-application consultation, having due regard to the outcome of any public consultation undertaken and the orderly and proper planning of the locality.

**2.0 SCOPE:**

A Local Planning Policy is not part of the Scheme and does not bind the local government in respect of any application for planning approval but the local government is to have due regard to the provisions of the Policy and the objectives which the Policy is designed to achieve before making its determination.

### 3.0 OBJECTIVE:

- 3.1 To support and encourage the development of agroforestry for its combined economic, environmental and social benefits and its greater contribution to sustainability in rural areas.
- 3.2 To actively encourage the integration of agroforestry and plantations with existing agricultural uses as a complementary, but primarily ancillary use.
- 3.3 To encourage the selection of tree species that are complimentary to native remnant vegetation to assist in maintaining landscape value and assist in the reduction of salinity, waterlogging and erosion.
- 3.4 To encourage planting areas with linkages to existing remnant vegetation on the same or adjacent land parcel.
- 3.5 To generally discourage the use of whole farming properties (which may include several land titles) for plantations, particularly where it contains a residence.
- 3.6 To achieve agroforestry and plantation designs which do not compromise the fire safety of the local community, biodiversity conservation or management of reserves.

### 4.0 POLICY STATEMENT:

#### 4.1 Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy:

**“Agroforestry”** means land used commercially for tree production and agriculture where trees are planted in blocks of more than 1 hectare.

**“Farm Forestry”** means any commercial tree production on farmland. It includes private timber plantations undertaken on land for single purpose production and the commercial planting of trees where there is some degree of planned integration with conventional agriculture (agroforestry).

**“Fire Management Plan”** means specified procedures for preventing and controlling fires.

**“Plantation”** has the same meaning as defined in the *Code of Practice for Timber Plantations in Western Australia*. The code of practice defines Plantation as a stand of trees of 10 hectares, or larger, that has been established by sowing or planting of either native or exotic tree species selected and managed intensively for their commercial and/or environmental value. A plantation includes roads, tracks, firebreaks and small areas of native vegetation surrounded by plantations. Implicit in this definition is the recognition that plantations will be harvested.

**“Plantation Harvest Plan”** means a plan developed before harvesting a plantation detailing the time of harvest, procedure for harvesting (including measures to protect local environmental and social values) and the route by which the products will be transported to a processor.

“**Plantation Management Plan**” means specific details of the development and management of a plantation. A plantation management plan may include plantation maps, establishment, maintenance and fire management procedures (refer to Appendix 1 of the code of practice).

## 4.2 Background

Agroforestry (including tree plantations and farm forestry) in Western Australia have an important role in providing a sustainable resource for economic development, as well as providing a means for improving farmland degradation by salinity and erosion caused by over-clearing.

The prospect of the widespread introduction of farm forestry initially created several significant planning issues for local governments including:

- the absence of any comprehensive code of practice which created confusion about and misunderstanding of many aspects of farm forestry;
- impacts on the local road system caused by logging trucks at harvesting time and the costs imposed on local government for road construction and upgrading;
- fire management and increased requirements for funding fire fighting equipment;
- the potential visual impact of plantations on the landscape and areas of high scenic quality;
- the potential social impacts arising from changing employment patterns; and
- concern over the potential loss of prime agricultural land to plantations.

These issues now have been addressed in various ways, the most significant being the release of the *Code of Practice for Timber Plantations in Western Australia* by the Australian Forest Growers (WA) group in conjunction with the Department of Conservation and Land Management, and the subsequent review of that document.

The code of practice is available from: [www.forestindustries.com.au](http://www.forestindustries.com.au)

## 4.3 General Planning Considerations

In planning for agroforestry consideration should be given to:

- a. The provisions of the code of practice.
- b. Impact on high-value land and water resources in areas of agricultural significance.
- c. The environmental, social and economic effects of agroforestry developments.
- d. The capacity of the regional and local road network to service timber harvesting needs.
- e. The visual landscape, including the need to protect and enhance areas of high scenic quality.
- f. The compatibility of agroforestry with adjacent land uses.
- g. The preference for agroforestry to be ancillary to the agricultural use of the land.
- h. The proximity to any land zoned or earmarked for residential development, with the desire to maintain at least a 1 kilometre buffer.

- i. Acceptable separation distances between the agroforestry use and any use which may be sensitive to the proposal or the exposure of pesticides (mainly if any aerial spraying is proposed).

#### 4.4 Minimum Application Requirements

All agroforestry applications should include the following information:

- a. A site plan to a scale of between 1:500 and 1:2,000 showing:
  - i. If the lot is used in combination with other lots as one farm operation, then this should be reflected on the plan or explained in the written submission.
  - ii. All existing roads abutting the lot and the names of the roads.
  - iii. Existing physical features such as rock outcrops, watercourses, existing dams, drains, sumps or sumps on the land.
  - iv. All existing trees or groups of trees with a clear indication of retention or proposed clearing.
  - v. The location and type of all existing structures such as dwellings and sheds (and clearly marked 'existing' or 'to be removed').
  - vi. An indication of the different existing agricultural pursuits operating on the land.
  - vii. The location of existing overhead or underground infrastructure (e.g. power lines, telecommunications cables) and any registered easement or other encumbrances over or in the vicinity of the land. If this cannot be shown on the plan it should be explained in the written information.
  - viii. Existing and proposed driveway location and all proposed internal access ways (must show trafficable access to water points, turnaround bay for fire access if relevant and gates for firebreaks crossing any fencing).
  - ix. All proposed compartments are to be clearly numbered on the plan with a legend listing the total planting area in each compartment. The plans to clearly show the form of planting (i.e. block or belts).
  - x. The existing and proposed land contours plotted at 1m contours.
  - xi. The location and description of existing and proposed fences/gates around the land.
- b. Detailed submission in support of the proposed application which includes information on:
  - i. Description of existing agricultural activities conducted on the land, explanation of how the proposed planting areas have been selected and details on how the application complements continued agricultural activities.
  - ii. Address the objectives of the applicable zoning in the relevant Town Planning Scheme.
  - iii. Explanation of how the application complies with the code of practice (for applications 10 hectares or larger).
  - iv. A fire management plan which should include details on access, setbacks from dwellings, firebreaks and water supply for fire fighting

purposes. Reference should be made to the Bushfires Act (1954), the FESA 'Guidelines for Plantation Fire Protection' and also FESA's 'Firebreak Location, Construction and Maintenance Guidelines'.

- v. Details of planting of areas to provide vegetation corridors, linkages to remnant vegetation or assist to protect remaining cropping/grazing areas on the same property from wind erosion.
- vi. A description of the measures to be taken to minimise sand drift, dust measures, erosion, watercourse siltation etc.

#### **4.5 Consultation**

Any application seeking approval for agroforestry 10 hectares, or larger will require consultation with effected landowners and/or occupiers and neighbour consent should preferably be given.

#### **5.0 REFERENCE:**

The City of Greater Geraldton Town Planning Scheme(s) and the Planning & Development Act 2005.

#### **6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Town Planning Services Team as per the Delegations Policy and Register.

#### **7.0 ADOPTION:**

Version 1 (draft for advertising)

28<sup>th</sup> August 2012