

Principles for land use planning for disaster resilient communities

Speed read

- There are twelve nationally agreed principles for land use planning for disaster resilient communities.
- These principles provide context for good practice.
- Integrated land use planning plays an important role in building disaster resilient communities.

Key points

1	<p>Prioritise life and relief of suffering:</p> <p>Land use planning is a multi-objective process. A genuine attempt to consider the current and future risk implications of planning decisions prioritises the protection and preservation of human life of existing and new communities over all other considerations. This also includes considering the protection of emergency responders.</p>
2	<p>Sustainability:</p> <p>Risk avoidance, limitation of growth in risk, and reduction is a fundamental subset of overall sustainability. This means that land use planning must seek to ensure that cities, towns and regions can sustain and improve their functions over time, including avoiding, limiting and withstanding the impacts of the full range of risk associated with natural hazards. This also recognises the need to respect and maintain the natural systems upon which human systems rely in land use planning processes, in tandem with the recognition that sustainable economic, social and environmental sustainability are linked with improved resilience.</p>
3	<p>Pursue resilient, sustainable and liveable communities:</p> <p>Planning decisions are to support improvements to resilient, sustainable and liveable communities, and to minimise the effects of socioeconomic inequalities on vulnerable members of the community.</p>
4	<p>Support the preservation, maintenance and enhancement of functional natural systems/ ecosystems:</p> <p>Planning decisions are to support the preservation, maintenance and where possible enhancement of functional natural systems / ecosystems. Human systems rely on and are ultimately subservient to natural systems, even though we may damage and affect them. Decision criteria and mechanisms to support this are in place to ensure the intensification of development is compatible with the natural hazard potential and functionality of natural systems.</p>

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Recognise that some land may be unsuitable for certain activities or development:

Planning decisions are to recognise that not all land is suitable for intensification of development and not all development types are viable at a particular location. Decision criteria and mechanisms to support decision-making based on hazard information are to be in place to ensure the intensification of development is compatible with the risk profiles of natural hazards to both existing and future development and its users.

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Consider cumulative impacts of changes in development and demographics:

Land use planning processes are to consider the cumulative effects of new development on both the demographics of the community and on the behaviour of natural hazards and their impacts on both the risks of natural hazards to the existing community and the emergency response of the existing community.

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Consider how natural hazards vary with climate change for an appropriate planning horizon for development decisions:

Planning decisions need to build in consideration of how natural hazards vary with climate change within the planning horizon related to the development decision. Forward planning for the consideration of climate change impacts on natural hazards is the best approach to mitigate these risks on communities. The distinction between a planning horizon and the horizon of the hazard assessment needs to be considered in the decision-making processes.

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Promote multidisciplinary collaboration:

Risk management in communities requires coordinated and integrated action across a range of sectors and capabilities. Land use planning needs to be supported by reliable expert information on natural hazards and where possible relies on processes that draw on a diversity of stakeholders, views and capabilities. Management of natural hazards and protecting ecological processes and sustainability can be mutually beneficial if Principle 9 is utilised.

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Consider natural hazards early in and throughout land use planning processes:

All land use planning processes, starting with strategic planning are to consider the management of natural hazard risks to the community. Land use planning is to consider the full range of risks from natural hazards early in the planning processes, particularly by directing new development to suitable locations to avoid or reduce the exposure of new development to natural hazards and the impact of new development on the ecosystems and their behaviour as natural hazards.

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Support evidence-based land use planning processes, risk assessment and scenario testing:

Land use planning processes are underpinned by a range of information to support decisions based on risk. Scenario testing and appropriate decision support tools are to be used where possible. These processes are to include deliberate data capture for information considering:

- information specific to different natural hazards and how they may vary between events of different scales and across the geographic locations in a range of scenarios.
- data analysis linked to an understanding of dynamic change (e.g. social and demographic change, changing risk factors etc.), external factors, identification of a range of risk scenarios, and risk acceptance alternatives.

11

Use the full range of risk treatment mechanism options prioritising avoiding risks:

Land use planning is to use the full range of mechanisms available to treat disaster risk, emphasising forward and strategic planning. These include: avoidance or reduction of exposure and reduction of vulnerability. These measures can reduce impacts upon development and the impacts of new development upon natural systems, and impacts to the community.

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Monitoring and review of land use planning decisions:

Strategic land use planning should include ongoing monitoring and review of the effectiveness of plans in managing the growth of the impacts of natural hazards on the community.

Take action

- Familiarise yourself with the principles of land use planning and save a copy for easy reference.
- Set aside some time to reflect on how these principles might be applied in your work.

More information

- [Land Use Planning for Disaster Resilient Communities](#) (AIDR 2020)
- Watch the land use planning for disaster resilient communities [handbook showcase webinar](#).