



# Cayman Islands Development Plan **PLANNING STATEMENT**

March 2024 | **DRAFT** rev.5.1

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**PART ONE -  
STRUCTURE AND CONTEXT**

# 1. BACKGROUND

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Planning Statement is formulated under the Development and Planning Act (2021 Revision).

The Development Plan (the 'Plan') is intended to be a long-range comprehensive plan to guide physical development and the overall use of land in the Cayman Islands.

Development Planning in the Cayman Islands has its origins in the passing of the Development and Planning Law in 1971. This law established the Central Planning Authority ("CPA") and charged that authority with responsibility for preparing a Plan and for administering its provisions once it was approved in Parliament. This resulted in the 1977 Development Plan.

A review of the 1977 Plan commenced in 1991. In order to gain greater public involvement in the review process a Development Plan Review Committee was established, along with committees for each of the 5 districts in Grand Cayman. In December 1994, the draft Plan was put on public display for 3 months. A total of 313 objections and representations were received during this period, which were later heard in full during a series of Tribunal hearings that took place from January to July 1996. After careful consideration of the Tribunal reports, the Development Plan was prepared by the CPA in 1997 and subsequently approved in Parliament.

Although there have subsequently been a number of more recent attempts to update the Plan, the 1997 Plan is still the current Plan for guiding physical development in Grand Cayman. The 1997 Plan only included Appendices which offered guidelines for development control of the Sister Islands. As such there is still no plan in place for either Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. The new Plan seeks to finally include guidance for all three islands and the Development Control Board ("DCB") is a partner with the CPA in the preparation of the Plan.

In 2018, the Ministry of Commerce, Planning and Infrastructure at the time and Department of Planning ("DoP") commenced the 'Plan Cayman' exercise to develop a holistic National Planning Framework ("NPF") for Grand Cayman. Consultation on the draft NPF commenced in November 2018 and was extended to February 2019 to allow additional time for feedback. Over 2,000 comments were submitted, from 356 respondents. These have all been considered in full and amendments to the NPF document have been proposed, where necessary.

In September 2019 the Central Planning Authority ("CPA") approved the final draft NPF document for transmission to the Ministry of Planning, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure ("MPAHI") for adoption. In August 2022, the CPA reviewed the draft NPF, which has been revised to incorporate both Grand Cayman and the Sister Islands, and forwarded same to the Ministry of Planning in September 2022. The final draft NPF was published on the [www.plancayman.ky](http://www.plancayman.ky) website in February 2023.

The NPF document is a policy document, a flexible framework which forms the overarching basis for more specific components of the Plan. These components are:

- i. Planning Statement;
- ii. Area Plans; and
- iii. Zoning Map & Regulations.

The Proposed structure of the Cayman Islands National Development Plan is set out in figure 1.1.

## 1.2 DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW CYCLE

The structure of PlanCayman, where Area Plans are prepared in a cascading sequence over the 5-year plan review period, allows for a process of continuous review and community engagement. This enables the plan review process to be more responsive to changing pressures and the needs of the community and invites public involvement on a more regular basis. The intention is that this will make the plan review more accountable to the community and provide greater clarity about how individuals can contribute to the process and have more of a say in the future of their neighbourhood.

## 1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE PLANNING STATEMENT

This Planning Statement sets out the policies which the Authority and the Board will apply to a range of Zones and Overlays and the Area Plans. As indicated in section 1.2, the specific detail of these zones and overlays will vary depending on the Area Plan within which a given zone is located.

### 1.3.1 Planning Zones (see Section 3)

Land use planning through the identification of Zones provides a means of organising between competing and sometimes conflicting uses of land and property. It allows for the orderly development of land and ensures a balance between different activities and makes more efficient use of resources. Ownership of land has always been an important part of the way of life in the Cayman Islands and therefore a flexible approach to land zoning has been adopted as the policy of this Planning Statement.

The zoning map shall be read in conjunction with the Planning Statement and the Area Plans and designates the following categories of planning zones.

### 1.3.2 Overlay Zones (see section 4)

There are several special circumstances that require additional considerations above and beyond those of the underlying zoning classification. Overlay Zones do not change the underlying zoning of a site but instead identify areas with special needs, such as building height limits within the airport approach area.

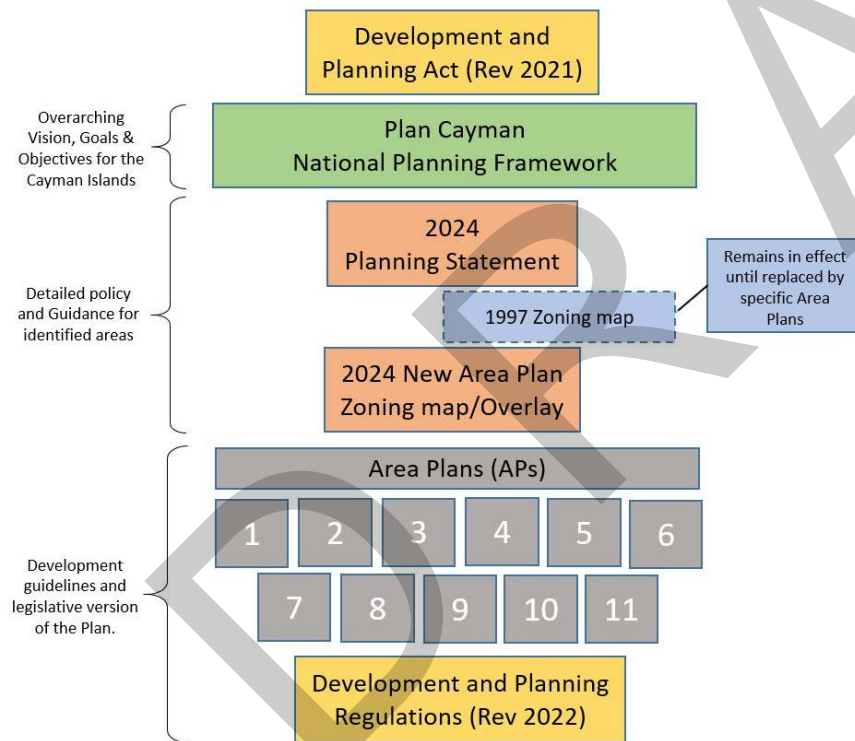


Figure 1.1: Proposed structure of the Cayman Islands National Development Plan

PLANNING ZONES	
<b>Agriculture</b>	Agricultural Zone (AG)
<b>Residential</b>	Estate Residential (ER)
	Single-family Residential (SFR)
	Low-Density Residential (LDR)
	Medium-Density Residential (MDR)
	High-Density Residential (HDR)
<b>Commercial</b>	General Commercial (GC)
	Neighbourhood Commercial (NC)
	Marine Commercial (MC)
<b>Industrial</b>	Light Industrial (LI)
	Heavy Industrial (HI)
	Transit Industrial (TI)
<b>Community</b>	Institutional Zone (INS)
	Education Zone (EDU)
	Civic Zone (CZ)
<b>Tourism</b>	Hotel/Tourism (HT)
	Resort Residential (RR)
	Neighbourhood Tourism (NT)
<b>Open Space</b>	Public Open Space (POS)
	Community Open Space (COS)
<b>Coastal</b>	Coastal Mangrove Buffer (CMB)

OVERLAY ZONES
Natural Resource Preservation Overlay (NRPO)
Airport Approach Overlay (AAO)
Heritage Preservation Overlay (HPO)
Land Subject to Acquisition Overlay (LSAO)
Sensitive Coastline Overlay (SCO)

### 1.3.3 Other Policy Considerations (see section 5)

This Planning Statement also sets out the policies which the Authority will apply in respect of other considerations, irrespective of the zone in which such features may be located. These considerations include:

- Planned Area Developments;
- Circulation and Transport;
- Infrastructure;
- Design;
- Natural Resources;
- Community Facilities;
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space; and
- Economy.

### 1.4 AREA PLANS

A key aspect of the structure of the Plan is the introduction of Area Plans, which provide a mechanism to implement national objectives and policies in a manner that is applicable to individual locations.

Area Plans are intended to be consistent with the NPF and the Planning Statement but offer area-specific variations to meet the particular needs of that place. This is a recognition that the character of the Cayman Islands varies significantly over a relatively small area and so policies that might be appropriate in more developed and urbanised locations may not be suitable for other less developed or tranquil places.

The Area Plan process also allows for different techniques and policy interventions to be implemented in different locations. For example, issues relating to urban design, public realm and built form will be of utmost importance in some locations and so zoning criteria and codes could be introduced in those places to best achieve the desired outcomes. Meanwhile, in other locations, issues concerning the natural environment, open space and coastal protection may be more pressing and so policy interventions that respond to those challenges will take precedence in the Area Plans for those places.

As each Area Plan is prepared, the boundaries for Planning Zones and Overlay Zones for that area will be determined and then, once approved, it will create a new section in the overall Zoning Map for the Cayman Islands. Each Area Plan will state how the Authority would apply the zoning considerations within that area (i.e. the maximum building height for a Neighbourhood Commercial zone may vary between different Areas).

The indicative boundaries for the Area Plans are shown in Figure 1.2. These boundaries have been selected based on existing and potential future character of the places and therefore do not follow electoral district boundaries.

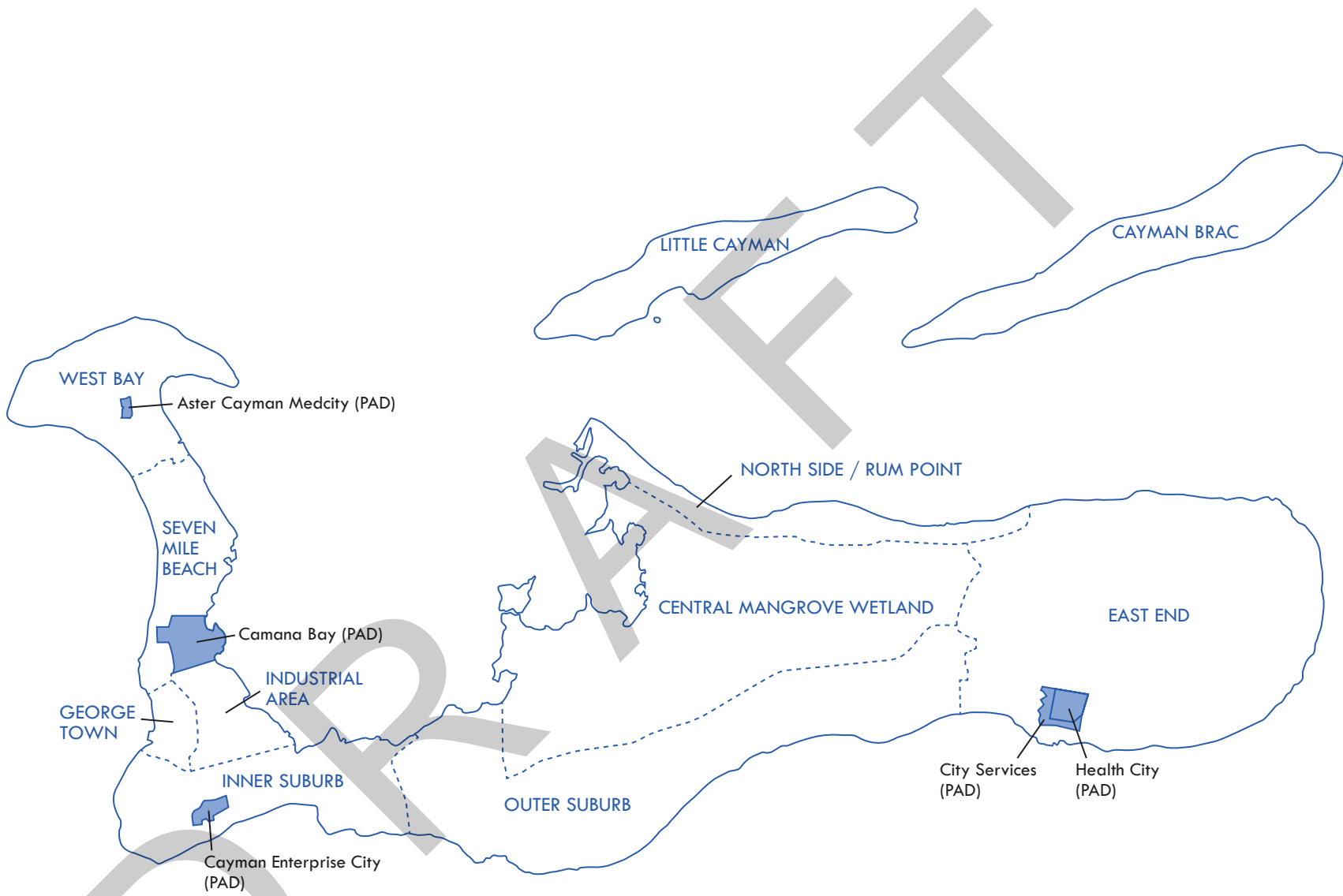


Figure 1.2: Indicative Area Plan boundaries and names (approved Planned Area Developments (PADs) also shown for context)

## 1.5 VISION

The general vision of the Plan is to:

**“Maintain and enhance quality of life in the Cayman Islands by ensuring that development promotes the most desirable balance of economic, social and environmental outcomes, while safeguarding the culture, health and general welfare of its people.”**

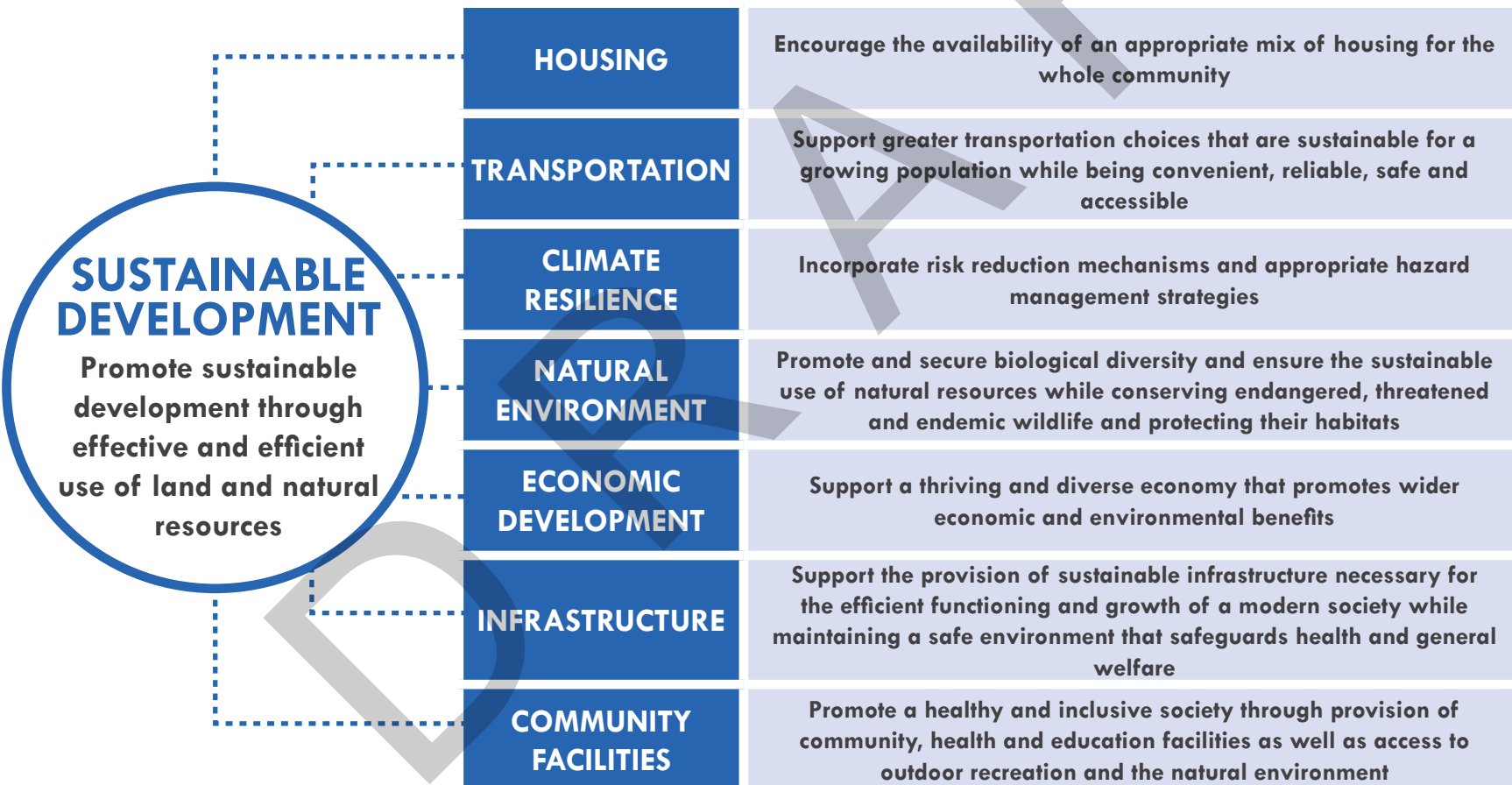
This vision is adapted from that contained within the National Planning Framework (2023).

## 1.6 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the Plan is to maintain and enhance the economy, society and environment of the Cayman Islands. It is intended that the planning strategy for the Islands is flexible enough in concept and implication to accommodate individual requirements, special circumstances and changing conditions while also ensuring that all development seeks to balance and integrate social, environmental and economic considerations to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Achieving a sustainable economy requires collaboration between the government, businesses, the community and individuals. As such, a secondary objective of the Planning Statement is to provide for and encourage better coordination and co-operation among all interested entities, be they private or public.

Key strategic objectives of the Planning Statement are as follows:





# 2. THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES WE FACE

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Cayman Islands are changing. From the “Islands that time forgot” in the 1950’s, the Cayman Islands are now a major financial centre and tourism destination that has experienced rapid population growth. Significant development continues to take place throughout all three islands with new homes, hotels, office buildings and the construction of new roads and other supporting infrastructure.

Cayman represents a unique situation where a small population has grown significantly around the opportunities presented by global economies. The role of the Plan is to ensure a balance between different activities and to articulate ways to achieve high quality of life standards.

This section sets out some of the key challenges we need to address in our planning policies.

## 2.2 ADAPTING TO A GROWING POPULATION

Few communities have seen their population grow at the rate experienced in the Cayman Islands. Between 1990 and 2022 the population has tripled from 26,969 to 81,546<sup>1</sup>. In fact, the estimated resident population for 2022 is the highest ever recorded and there are 18,000 more people living in the Cayman Islands than there were just 5 years ago.

In addition, the Cayman Islands have one of the highest rates of migration in the world and now support more than 130 nationalities.

This ever growing population has a huge impact on the built and natural environment, infrastructure, transportation, accommodation, services, recreation spaces and the community of the Cayman Islands. Our response to that is one of the key challenges for this Plan.

## 2.3 APPROPRIATE AND EFFICIENT USE OF LAND

Being an island community of 93 sq miles, land is limited in the Cayman Islands and so it is vital that appropriate and efficient use is made of this resource. Land use planning is necessary to organise between competing and sometimes conflicting desires, to ensure orderly development of land. Decisions made should ensure that the way land is developed and used, and the effects on existing levels of amenity and available infrastructure, do not significantly impact an area.

<sup>1</sup> Compendium of Statistics 2022, Economics and Statistics Office, Cayman Islands Government

### RESIDENT POPULATION

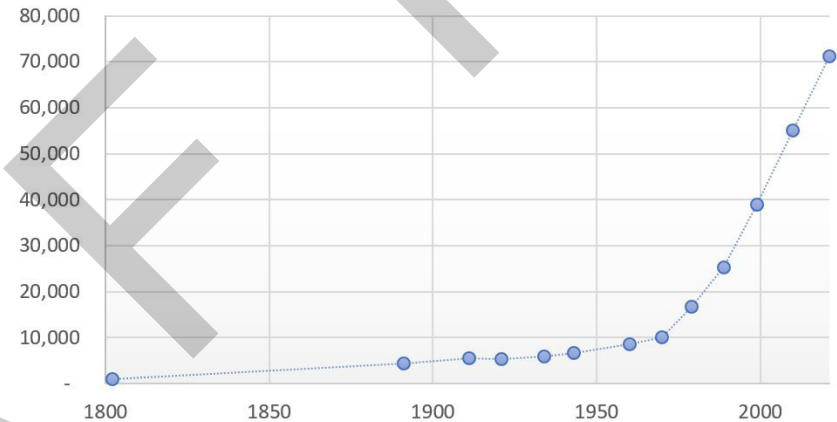


Figure 2.1: Cayman Islands Resident Population Growth (Source: Economics and Statistics Office)

## 2.4 QUALITY OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Cayman Islands boast a variety of natural features such as forests, shrublands, mangrove wetlands and scenic coastlines which provide unique benefits to the country's economy, society and biodiversity. The Cayman Islands Government ecosystem accounts, updated on an annual basis, provide a partial monetary value of these natural environmental features to national gross domestic product, fisheries, agriculture, carbon sequestration, coastal protection, tourism and amenity value.

As the Cayman Islands grow there is increasing pressure on these natural features and so it is important that growth and development is balanced with protection of the natural environment. A careful balance must be struck between what is a valuable natural feature and desirable development. Areas of particular concern include virgin forests, beaches and the mangrove wetlands which can also provide storm and hurricane protection.

## 2.5 THE SUPPLY AND COST OF HOUSING

Providing places for people to live, at all income levels, is a fundamental responsibility and the challenge has become significantly greater as the population grows. While the industry has sought to keep up with demand, prices are high in both the rental and sales markets. It is important to ensure that we provide a range of housing types to meet the needs of all residents within mixed and sustainable communities.

## 2.6 MAINTAINING A SUCCESSFUL ECONOMY

The tourism and financial services industries have driven the economy of the Cayman Islands for decades and have been central to the success of the islands. These industries need to be supported by providing the necessary facilities and built environment for them to prosper. Stable economies also need diversity and so other emerging economic sectors - such as healthcare, high-technology and the green economy - should be encouraged and supported.

## 2.7 RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

A number of significant climate change impacts are affecting the Cayman Islands, including changes in storms, cyclones, winds, waves and storm surges; changes in ocean circulation; changes in freshwater input; ocean acidification; changes in salinity; sea-level rise; increasing air and sea temperature (including humidity); increasing coastal erosion; and decreasing dissolved oxygen of seawater. These impacts and the resulting risks to the Cayman Islands economy, society, biodiversity and habitats are detailed in the Cayman Islands Climate Change Risk Assessment which is updated every five years.

The ongoing and predicted impacts of climate change have the potential to affect every individual, organisation and sector in the Cayman Islands, including but not limited to: human health and wellbeing, the natural environment, food security and water supply, economic prosperity, human settlements and infrastructure, and national security.



## 2.8 ENHANCING PLACE QUALITY

Great communities have attractive and comfortable places where people can meet, interact, relax and enjoy themselves. The Cayman Islands have a number of places with these characteristics but opportunities to improve our streets and public spaces to the standards that are expected in a modern, inclusive and safe community should be encouraged.

## 2.9 IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION

The Cayman Islands have grown and developed around the automobile and the vast majority of trips are made by car. This dependence on private vehicles contributes to congestion, decreases air quality and negatively impacts health. Safe and appealing alternatives are required, such as public transportation, walking and cycling. If properly planned and supported these forms of transport can be enjoyable, non-polluting, efficient and safe.

## 2.10 MEETING DEMANDS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Physical infrastructure is the backbone of a developed country's economy and its quality of life standards and is essential to economic growth and development. The rapid population growth in the Cayman's Islands has placed considerable pressure on existing infrastructure facilities and so there is a need for a sustainable infrastructure system that meets these demands in a cost effective manner to safely and efficiently serve the community in the long term.



**PART TWO -  
PLANNING POLICY**

DRAFT

# 3. PLANNING ZONES

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Assessing the appropriate use of land helps to facilitate long term decision making, minimizes costs associated with public services and preserves the qualities that make an area special. A land use plan is required to manage the development of land, ensure a balance between different activities and make more efficient use of resources. The purpose of this is to promote more desirable and sustainable economic, social and environmental outcomes.

The Authority shall apply the provisions of the Development and Planning Act and Regulations, and other relevant planning policies of the Planning Statement, in a manner which:

- a. Is consistent with the policies of the Planning Statement which gives the Authority certain powers of discretion with respect to details of planning; and,
- b. Will achieve and satisfy the policies and purposes set out in each respective zone.

The 1997 Zoning Map and Zone definitions (see Schedule 2) will remain in effect until such time as the new zones outlined in this Planning Statement come into effect through Parliament's approval of the relevant Area Plan and amended zoning.

This section sets out the purpose and key considerations for each Planning Zone.

The Planning Zones identified in this Planning Statement will be applied more flexibly in the Sister Islands and the Board will determine which zones may be appropriate, and how they will be applied, through the preparation of Area Plans.



### 3.2 AGRICULTURAL ZONE (AG)

The Agriculture industry currently represents a relatively small part of the Cayman Islands' economy but continues to grow and plays a key role in the Islands' food security. Given the limited landmass of the Islands, development pressure will likely continue in the limited areas suitable for agriculture if they are not preserved or if alternative agriculture opportunities are not determined and embraced. It is therefore important to ensure that the necessary policies are in place to protect remaining agricultural land, particularly those designated as Class I and II.

Subject to the Development and Planning Act and Regulations, the Authority shall support agricultural zoning policies and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement in order to ensure that prime agricultural land remains viable for agricultural<sup>1</sup> use.

The Agricultural Zone (AG) is proposed for those properties that:

1. Are in their natural undeveloped state;
2. Are primarily used for agricultural purposes; or
3. Have the potential to be used for agricultural purposes because of soil and terrain characteristics and are located over freshwater lenses.

This zone replaces the former Agricultural/Residential Zone in the 1997 Planning Statement.

#### Agricultural Zone (AG)

The Authority shall apply the Agricultural Zoning (AG) policies, and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement, to

1. Ensure that prime agricultural land remains viable for agricultural use.
2. Restrict development on AG zoned land to:
  - Single family residences on larger lots;
  - Agricultural related buildings and facilities; and
  - Other uses that are accessory to the primary agricultural use (such as agricultural product processing, agri-tourism and the vending of agricultural merchandise produced on-site).
3. Restrict commercial uses in the AG zone to those which are accessory and directly related to the primary agricultural use of the site
4. Prohibit aggregate extraction activities on prime agricultural land.
5. Promote and support alternative agriculture technologies. Subject to other considerations, such technologies may also be permitted in Industrial and Commercial zones.

<sup>1</sup> Agriculture as defined in the Development and Planning Act.

### 3.3 RESIDENTIAL ZONES

Residential zones occupy the top tier of the land use hierarchy, due to their importance on the social fabric of the community. Within these zones the Authority will seek to provide zoning opportunities for safe and comfortable housing options for all income levels while preserving high quality of life standards and strong sense of community within neighbourhoods.

There are five proposed residential zones that allow for single-family, duplex, and multi-family residences at respectively increasing densities. Minimum lot sizes decrease as the permitted densities increase.

- Estate Residential (ER) Zone, which addresses the need for large-lot single-family residences typically located outside of urban areas.
- Single-Family Residential (SFR) Zone, which will be developed for application on the periphery of urban residential districts
- Low-Density Residential (LDR) Zone, which will be developed for application in urban residential districts where more intensive residential development is inappropriate.
- Medium-Density Residential (MDR) Zone, which will be developed to establish areas for higher density residential while preserving a high-quality residential environment.
- High-Density Residential (HDR) Zone, will be developed for application in condensed urban residential areas where more intensive residential development is needed.

#### **Residential Zones**

The policy in respect of proposals for development in Residential Zones will be that:

1. The primary land use is residential.
2. The Authority may permit other compatible uses, such as parks, schools, community buildings, churches, and utility facilities, on a case by case basis, provided that they are not the primary use of the site and do not cause a significant negative impact on surrounding residences from noise, traffic and other issues.
3. Home occupied businesses may be allowed in the residential zones though some restrictions on the nature and aspects of the type of business may apply.

4. Retail sales may only be permitted in residential zones where they do not cause a negative impact on surrounding residences.
5. Notwithstanding all other policies of this Planning Statement, no use of land in a residential zone shall be dangerous, obnoxious, toxic or cause offensive odours, conditions or noise, or otherwise create a nuisance or annoyance to surrounding residents.
6. Planning applications for dwelling units on land zoned for other forms of development will be considered on their merits having regard to the effect they may have on the character and efficient usage or potential of the surrounding area.

#### **Estate Residential Zone (ER)**

7. The Authority may permit large-lot single-family residences in ER zones. Duplexes and multifamily residences are prohibited in these zones.
8. Accessory uses in ER zones may include small agricultural uses including gardens, limited livestock raising, non-commercial stables, limited agricultural production and related retail / commercial operations. These uses shall be limited to secondary uses of the site.

#### **Single-Family Residential Zone (SFR)**

9. The Authority may permit single-family residences only in SFR zones. Duplexes and multifamily residences are prohibited in these zones.

#### **Low-Density Residential Zone (LDR)**

10. The Authority may permit detached houses, duplexes and, in suitable locations, multifamily residences (such as apartment buildings and townhouses) an LDR zone.

#### **Medium-Density Residential Zone (MDR)**

11. The Authority may permit multifamily residences (such as apartment buildings and townhouses) and, in appropriate locations, detached houses and duplexes, in MDR zones.

#### **High-Density Residential Zone (HDR)**

12. The Authority may permit multifamily residences (such as apartment buildings and townhouses) in HDR zones. Detached houses and duplexes will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances in HDR zones.

### 3.4 COMMERCIAL ZONES

Commercial centres are a focus for activity and community and provide character and identity for individual neighbourhoods, and the Islands as a whole. They may include places of employment, retail, tourism, leisure and services.

The Authority shall ensure an adequate supply of commercial land in appropriate locations throughout the Islands to meet market demand. This includes primary commercial centres as well as neighbourhood-scale commercial within district centres.

There are three proposed types of Commercial Zones in the Cayman Islands:

- General Commercial (GC) zone, which is suitable for the higher density and intensity commercial developments typically found in urban core areas. These zones maximize site coverage and building height allowances;
- Neighbourhood Commercial (NC) zone, provides for low intensity commercial, retail and/or office uses with limits on building height and site coverage. These zones are suitable for a mix of commercial and residential uses appropriately assigned as part of an overall development master plan.
- Marine Commercial (MC) zone which shall apply to waterfront commercial areas dedicated primarily to marine activities.

Within the central George Town area there are additional GC zones that permit varying building height / storey and parking allowances.

#### **Commercial Zones**

The policy in respect of proposals for development in Commercial Zones will be that:

1. The Authority shall encourage the creation of vibrant and dense commercial centres and may permit developments that include a mix of commercial and associated non-commercial uses on a single site.

#### **General Commercial Zone (GC)**

2. The Authority may permit a mix of commercial and residential uses within a single structure in GC zones.
3. The primary use should remain commercial within GC zones.
4. The Authority may permit hotels in GC zones.

#### **Neighbourhood Commercial Zone (NC)**

5. The Authority may permit retail and business type developments that service the local community within NC zones.

#### **Marine Commercial Zone (MC)**

6. The Authority may permit marine-based business/activity within MC zones.





### 3.5 INDUSTRIAL ZONES

Dedicated industrial areas are vital to support employment, infrastructure and commercial activities. The Authority shall ensure adequate long-term supply of industrial land to meet market demand. This will be both within existing industrial areas as well as identifying areas suitable for locally-serving light industrial uses in outlying districts.

#### ***Industrial Zones***

The policy in respect of proposals for development in Industrial Zones will be that:

1. Industrial development should be confined to the areas zoned for that purpose. However, Light Industrial uses serving the needs of local communities may be permitted within a residential zone, subject to the policies in section 3.3 of this Planning Statement.
2. The Authority will prohibit residential uses within Industrial Zones.
3. The Authority will limit new commercial development within industrial zones to only those that are an accessory use to industrial activity or provide service for industrial users (lunch restaurants, hardware, etc.)
4. The Authority will ensure that industrial property has minimal impact on adjacent non-industrial uses and natural resources from noise, air pollution and other environmental issues.
5. The Authority shall require an acceptable standard of overall (site and structures) layout, design, construction and landscaping. Industrial buildings and structures, and areas for storage, waste disposal, parking and loading shall be sufficiently screened from public roads and adjoining non-industrial properties.

#### **Light Industrial Zone (LI)**

6. The Light Industrial zone shall accommodate uses such as storage and warehouses, agricultural related industry, marine related industry, and small-scale industrial uses that are non-noxious and relatively benign in nature through its proposed activities.

#### **Heavy Industrial Zone (HI)**

7. The Heavy Industrial zone shall accommodate a broad range of manufacturing and industrial uses that by their very nature produce noise, odors, hazardous materials, and heavy vehicle traffic.

#### **Transit Industrial Zone (TI)**

8. This zone shall allow for transit operations in the Cayman Islands (such as ports and airports) as well as accessory uses including, but not limited to, cargo and fuel services, associated food and hotel services and premises related to the administrative function of the transit of services, products or persons into or out of the islands.



### 3.6 COMMUNITY ZONES

The adequate provision of community facilities helps to enhance quality of life and social cohesion, improve general and personal health and wellbeing and can support a sense of belonging and identity of the community.

Community facilities include, but are not limited to, childcare, education, adult learning and training, healthcare, police stations, libraries, community halls and places of worship. Facilities may be indoor or outdoor.

This broad range of facilities will be separated into three zones in order to give residents more clarity about the type of facility that could be located adjacent to their property.

#### ***Community Zones***

The policy in respect of proposals for development in Community Zones will be that:

1. The Authority shall support institutional, education & civic zoning provisions to ensure adequately distributed community facilities in all districts.
2. Area requirements such as lot sizes, setbacks and height limitations shall be at the discretion of the Authority.
3. Religious, social and educational institutions, including recreational facilities and public and civic buildings, are permissible in any zone where they meet the needs of the community.

#### **Institutional Zones (INS)**

4. Institutional Zones will be established to provide locations for hospitals, health care centres, correctional and rehabilitation facilities, police and fire stations.

#### **Education Zone (EDU)**

5. Education Zones will be established to provide locations for schools, and other educational related facilities.

#### **Civic Zone (CIV)**

6. Civic Zones will be established to provide locations for civic buildings such as public meeting halls/civic centers, as well as parks, and cemeteries. These facilities help to create social inclusion as they act as gathering places for members of the community.

### 3.7 TOURISM ZONES

Tourism is one of the pillars of Cayman's economy. In order to support this, the Authority shall guide future development of tourist accommodation and facilities into identified suitable locations.

There are three tourism zones; Hotel Tourism, Neighborhood Tourism and Resort Residential.

#### **Tourism Zones**

The policy in respect of proposals for development in Tourism Zones will be that:

1. The Authority shall ensure sustainable, diverse, and appropriately-scaled tourism developments in suitable locations.

#### **Hotel/Tourism Zones (HT)**

2. The Hotel/Tourism zones are areas that will see high-intensity tourist development including large resorts, hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, entertainment facilities, condominiums, and recreation facilities such as golf courses.
3. Development in HT zones will be carefully regulated to ensure that new buildings are guided by the needs of the industry.

4. The Authority shall apply the Hotel/Tourism Zone policies, and other relevant policies of this Planning Statement in a manner best calculated to:
  - a. Provide for the orderly development, expansion and upgrading of facilities required to maintain a successful tourism industry;
  - b. Ensure that all development enhances the quality and character of the Cayman Islands' tourism accommodation;
  - c. Prevent the over-development of sites and ensure that the scale and density of development are compatible with and sensitive to the physical characteristics of the site;
  - d. Ensure proposals are not detrimental to the natural or visual quality of the area by reason of its location, size, design or appearance and, where applicable, ensure unobstructed public access to beaches and public open spaces;
  - e. Ensure minimal traffic impacts on surrounding properties and existing public roads;
  - f. Ensure that proposals contribute to the public realm, where possible, by providing safe, attractive and comfortable spaces for walking and cycling;



- g. Ensure that waterfront developments are designed to avoid interference with natural coastal processes and reef systems and incorporate hazard risk reduction measures;
- h. Ensure adequate and appropriate landscaping and planting while encouraging native plantings and natural vegetation;
- i. Ensure adequate and unrestricted public access to the beaches and the sea, including fire and rescue vehicles; and
- j. Ensure provision of adequate recreation amenities.

**Neighbourhood Tourism Zone (NT)**

- 5. Neighborhood Tourism zones shall allow for small-scale hotels and resorts, condominiums and supporting commercial uses and apartments.
- 6. The Authority will ensure that the visual and physical impacts of development within the NT zone will be minimal.
- 7. Development within this zone will generally have the appearance of Hotel/Tourism development but will be less dense in scale and massing than those in the Hotel/Tourism zone.
- 8. The Authority shall apply the Neighbourhood Tourism Zone policies, and other relevant policies of this Planning Statement in a manner best calculated to ensure:
  - a. That development is designed to be safe and compatible with surrounding properties;
  - b. That developments are built to appropriate densities by limiting density and site coverage requirements; and
  - c. Developments are aesthetically pleasing and designed with sensitivity towards the surrounding landscape, built and natural environment and character of the area and, where applicable, ensure unobstructed public access to beaches and public open spaces.

**Resort Residential Zones (RR)**

- 9. Resort Residential zones shall provide a transition between the Hotel Tourism zones and adjacent residential zones. Development within the RR zone shall have the general appearance of residential development in scale and massing.
- 10. The Authority shall apply the Resort Residential Zone policies, and other relevant policies of this Planning Statement in a manner best calculated to ensure:
  - a. Harmonious and compatible land use with adjacent properties and their zones;
  - b. That sites and areas do not become overly dense by limiting densities and site coverage;
  - c. That project sites are aesthetically pleasing and sensitive towards heritage assets and, where applicable, ensure unobstructed public access to beaches and public open spaces;
  - d. That projects are safe and built to appropriate standards.
- 11. Allowable development in the RR zone shall include detached and semi-detached houses, beach resorts and in suitable locations guest houses, apartments, cottage colonies and other tourist-related development.

### 3.8 OPEN SPACE ZONES

Open Space zones contain two classifications that can be applied to both public (Public Open Space-POS) and privately owned (Community Open Space-COS) properties. The only allowable land uses for these properties are either active or passive recreational open space.

Active open space can be defined as improved recreation spaces and facilities such as parks, playgrounds, ball fields, picnic areas, boat launches, and other such facilities. Passive open space is typically undeveloped natural areas such as mangroves and natural beaches.

The Authority recognises that, in certain situations, public access to Open Spaces (both 'Public' and 'Community' Open Spaces) may be restricted by management and/or conservation arrangements.

#### **Open Space Zones**

The policy in respect of proposals for development in Open Space Zones will be that:

1. The Authority shall preserve land for public enjoyment, and protect them from non-recreational development.

#### **Public Open Space Zone (POS)**

2. The Public Open Space Zone includes land already owned by the Crown / Government including playing fields, public beaches, public parks, nature preserves, and established public rights of way.

#### **Community Open Space Zone (COS)**

3. The Community Open Space Zone Includes land privately owned to which the immediate community may have a right to access, including those lands required to be dedicated by subdivision developers (currently known as Land for Public Purpose).

### 3.9 COASTAL MANGROVE BUFFER (CMB)

Mangroves are among the most productive and complex ecosystems on the planet and are highly valuable in terms of carbon dioxide absorption, coastal protection and contribution to biodiversity. The Coastal Mangrove Buffer zone affords protection for existing mangroves in order to maintain both their storm buffer function and their ecological role.

#### **Coastal Mangrove Buffer (CMB)**

The Authority shall apply the Coastal Mangrove Buffer policies, and any other relevant policies of this Planning Statement, to ensure the long-term protection of Mangrove Buffer areas from development.

# 4. OVERLAY ZONES

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

There are several special circumstances that require additional considerations above and beyond those of the underlying zoning classification. The Overlay Zones do not change the underlying zoning of a site but instead identify areas with additional considerations and requirements.

Overlay Zone boundaries will be determined during the preparation of Area Plans.

## 4.2 NATURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION OVERLAY (NRPO)

The purpose of the Natural Resource Preservation Overlay (NRPO) is to provide a mechanism to ensure that development is sensitive to natural resources and ecological features with the underlying zone remaining in effect.

Within Protected Areas and defined Critical Habitats (under the National Conservation Act) any development or activities should be in accordance with the relevant Protected Area Management Plan and/or Conservation Plan. In all other identified NRPO's development which is consistent with the policies of this Plan and the Development and Planning Regulations will be permitted, although certain elements of the Natural Resource may be recommended for protection from development.

### **Natural Resource Preservation Overlay (NRPO)**

Subject to the Development and Planning Act and Regulations, the Authority shall apply the Natural Resource Preservation Overlay policies, and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement, to:

1. Preserve and protect key habitats, sensitive landscapes and vulnerable ecological areas;
2. Ensure that development is sensitive to natural resources and protects important natural and ecological features;
3. Apply development standards for any development within the NRPO to address issues including, but not limited to, foundation construction techniques, road construction, site grading, drainage, and solid and liquid waste disposal;
4. Apply additional design and submittal requirements, where necessary, to help protect the property's natural resources; and
5. Require mitigation measures, where necessary, to offset development impacts.



### 4.3 AIRPORT APPROACH OVERLAY (AAO)

The purpose of the Airport Approach Overlay (AAO) is to ensure the safety and compatibility of both users of structures on the ground as well as those within aircraft.

#### **Airport Approach Overlay (AAO)**

Subject to the Development and Planning Act and Regulations, the Authority shall apply the Airport Approach Overlay policies, and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement, to:

1. Ensure safe and compatible land uses within the approaches of airports;
2. Prohibit or restrict lands uses which are deemed inappropriate due to safety, noise or public welfare concerns, such as schools, hospitals and fuel storage; and
3. Apply airport-specific safety and security requirements, such as building height, lighting controls, roofing material glare, and perimeter security requirements.

### 4.4 HERITAGE PRESERVATION OVERLAY (HPO)

The purpose of the Heritage Preservation Overlay (HPO) is to preserve and protect heritage sites and structures with the underlying zone remaining in effect. Development within the Overlay will be strictly controlled to conserve the Cayman Islands' historical and architectural heritage.

#### **Heritage Preservation Overlay (HPO)**

Subject to the Development and Planning Act and Regulations, the Authority shall apply the Heritage Preservation Overlay policies, and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement, to:

1. Preserve and protect the historical, architectural or cultural character of the area;
2. Preserve and promote a sense of place by incorporating traditional design and development patterns;
3. Preserve any significant aspect, appearance or view of the area; and
4. Protect buildings and structures worthy of preservation due to their historic, architectural, traditional or other interest.



#### 4.5 LAND SUBJECT TO ACQUISITION OVERLAY (LSAO)

The purpose of the Land Subject to Acquisition Overlay (LSAO) is to establish a method to designate property that the Government intends to acquire. These acquisitions may be necessary for items such as public parks, future road alignments, utilities and public buildings. The LSAO can also reflect properties that the Government intends to acquire for nature reserves, environmental protection and endangered and threatened species habitat under the National Conservation Act.

##### **Land Subject to Acquisition Overlay (LSAO)**

Subject to the Development and Planning Act and Regulations, the Authority shall apply the Land Subject to Acquisition Overlay policies, and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement, to ensure that Government land acquisitions occur in a manner that is equitable and transparent to all concerned parties.

#### 4.6 SENSITIVE COASTLINE OVERLAY (SCO)

The purpose of the Sensitive Coastline Overlay (SCO) is to ensure that proposed growth in identified potentially vulnerable coastal areas is balanced with hazard risk reduction considerations that aim to prevent coastal erosion. Development within the Overlay will be controlled to minimise threats to human safety, properties and the natural environment.

Sensitive Coastline Overlays will be determined based on risk analysis models and policies applied will be based on local context and area-specific requirements.

##### **Sensitive Coastline Overlay (SCO)**

Subject to the Development and Planning Act and Regulations, the Authority shall apply Sensitive Coastline Overlay policies, and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement, to:

1. Control development of highly vulnerable coastal areas and incorporate appropriate building, site and landscape design;
2. Prevent coastal erosion, reduce flood risk and accommodate flood storage; and
3. Protect critical community and transportation infrastructure.





# 5. OTHER POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the Planning Statement sets out the additional policies that the Authority will apply in respect of other considerations, irrespective of the zone or overlay in which such feature may be located.

## 5.2 PLANNED AREA DEVELOPMENTS (PADs)

Planned Area Developments are master planned developments of large tracts of land that provide for a mix of land uses, densities and open space.

PAD's are required to include at least three (3) different land uses on a given site. These uses may include a combination of residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, open space and agricultural uses, and may occur among or within buildings as long as the uses are compatible with each other and with existing and potential uses surrounding the Planned Area Development.

### Planned Area Developments (PADs)

The Authority shall apply the Planned Area Development policies, and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement, to allow for high-quality, mixed-use developments that are compatible with the surrounding area. The Authority may require natural buffers and/or transitional massing and scale at site peripheries in order to ensure that proposed PAD developments do not adversely affect the character and value of surrounding land uses.

Planned Area Developments are permissible in all areas of the Islands and all zones except Industrial, Open Space and Mangrove Buffer.

## 5.3 SUBDIVISION OF LAND

Subdivision is the process of splitting larger parcels of land into smaller parcels, the adjustment of boundaries between existing parcels, and the creation of rights or easements over land.

Plans of subdivision must conform to the zoning requirements of the land to which they relate and should embrace the natural environment by retaining natural vegetation, key landscape features, and environmentally significant elements while controlling and retaining storm-water runoff and protecting property from flood damage.

### Subdivision of Land

The Authority shall apply the Subdivision of Land policies, and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement, in a manner best calculated to:

1. Ensure that the layout and design of subdivision proposals are sensitive to a site's physical and environmental characteristics.
2. Make the most efficient use of land designated for the intended purposes; and
3. Prevent the unnecessary fragmentation of large tracts of open land.
4. Incorporate infrastructure and transportation related design elements that can be linked with surrounding or general infrastructure / public transportation.

In considering a draft plan or an application for a subdivision, the Authority shall have regard, among other matters, to the health, safety, convenience and welfare of the future inhabitants.

Normally land shall not be subdivided unless it is suited to the purpose for which the subdivision is intended.

Land clearing should be reserved until the development of individual parcels is imminent through the granting of planning permission for development on those parcels.

The subdivision of land encompassing important or prime agricultural land shall not, except in exceptional circumstances, be permitted where it may:

- a. Fragment into separate lots neighboring fields which function as a farm unit or agricultural holding; or
- b. Result in good quality arable land being taken out of production.

## 5.4 CIRCULATION AND TRANSPORTATION

Significant and rapid growth in the Cayman Islands, in particular Grand Cayman, has put a strain on the Island's transportation network and this has a daily direct effect on all residents and visitors to the Cayman Islands.

Opportunities for development to contribute to improvements in the transportation system, for all users, will be encouraged.

### Circulation and Transportation

The Authority shall apply the Circulation and Transportation policies, and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement, in a manner best calculated to:

#### Corridor Plans

1. Plan and coordinate the transportation, adjacent land uses, aesthetic and design element for identified transportation corridors;

#### Roads

2. Support long-range plans for building and maintaining a safe and efficient network of roads, having regard to national and economic growth strategies.

#### Parking Standards

3. Apply parking requirements that appropriately address diverse land uses, unique traffic characteristics and demands;
4. Encourage the use of alternative transportation modes;

#### Public Transportation

5. Support existing and future public transport operations;

#### Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

6. Ensure adequate and safe facilities for pedestrians and cyclists;
7. Encourage conditions for bicycle and pedestrian travel;

#### Sea Ports and Marine Facilities

8. Address the long-term needs for sea ports in the islands;
9. Ensure safe and sustainable standards of marine facilities;
10. Ensure adjacent land uses are compatible with future and existing port facilities;



#### Airports (Commercial, Private, Cargo)

11. Support the long-range needs and alternatives for all types of airport facilities throughout the Cayman Islands; and
12. Ensure that developments in the area surrounding airport lands do not impose a detrimental impact on airport operations.

## 5.5 INFRASTRUCTURE

Sustainable physical infrastructure, such as wastewater, potable water, roads, electricity, gas, and telecommunication facilities, is essential to supporting a growing population and maintaining its quality of life standards. These assets represent a long-term investment in the physical, social, and financial development of a country. Assets of this nature require significant development time and funding and thus their impacts can easily span multiple generations.

Physical infrastructure (whether funded and provided by private or public sectors) should be developed in a cost-effective manner that safely, efficiently and sustainably serves the community in the long term; through proper planning and development and the funding of routine maintenance.

### **Infrastructure**

The Authority shall apply the Infrastructure policies, and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement, in a manner best calculated to:

#### Infrastructure Fund

1. Ensure that adequate and equitable fees are being collected from developers in order to fund and maintain community infrastructure (such as schools, parks, roads);
2. Support a coordinated multi-agency integrated approach to infrastructure development;

#### Solid Waste

3. Support long-range plans for future solid waste disposal facilities;
4. Ensure compatible land uses are adjacent to and in the vicinity of existing landfill sites and any planned future solid waste management facilities;

#### Wastewater

5. Encourage alternatives to individual septic tanks in order to minimise negative environmental impacts; and
6. Encourage the implementation the latest technologies to minimize the environmental impact of wastewater treatment practices.

#### Stormwater and Drainage

7. Support long-range plans for a holistic Storm Water Management Plan;
8. Ensure adequate stormwater infrastructure and design standards;

#### Potable Water

9. Ensure an adequate supply and distribution of safe drinking water for all developments;
10. Encourage the use of water conservation practices and alternative water sources;

#### Roads

11. Support long-range plans for building and maintaining a safe and efficient network of roads, having regard to national and economic growth strategies;

#### Electricity and Street Lighting

12. Support the long-term strategy to utilise alternative energy sources;

#### Communication

13. Support the provision of the latest communication technology for residents and businesses
14. Minimize the visual impact of communication infrastructure; and

#### Fuel

15. Ensure fuel storage areas and surrounding land uses are compatible

## 5.6 DESIGN

Design elements are the details that help define the feel of a particular building, street, neighbourhood or community. They can help create a sense of place, enhance the public realm and can contribute to crime reduction and community safety.

### Design

The Authority shall apply the Design policies, and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement, in a manner best calculated to:

#### Site Design

1. Ensure aesthetically appealing, compatible and functional site design for all developments, including setback and landscaping requirements;
2. The provisions for development setbacks are for achieving the following purposes:
  - i. To provide adequate natural light, ventilation and privacy to all buildings;
  - ii. To provide amenity space and to facilitate landscaping around buildings;
  - iii. To maintain and enhance the quality and character of development fronting a road;
  - iv. To provide a buffer between buildings on neighbouring lots; and
  - v. To avoid or minimise any negative impact the development or use of one lot may have on the occupants of a neighbouring lot.

#### Building Design

3. Encourage appropriate aesthetics and compatibility with surrounding uses;
4. Encourage building design to take full advantage of passive solar energy and natural ventilation, whilst avoiding excessive solar gain.
5. Design should also reflect that it meets a minimum level of compliance with the various local codes especially with respect to human safety and accessibility.



6. To help maintain continuity between planning policies, regulations, building code and other applicable regulations, the Authority may have regard to an application's design/development components in terms of the application's likely compliance with these requirements.

#### Resiliency

7. Encourage resilient design as a protective measure against climate change, storm surge and severe weather events, and demand on infrastructure and utilities.

#### Public Realm

8. Encourage larger projects to make a positive contribution to the public realm, in appropriate situations; and

#### Signage

9. Apply appropriate design standards for commercial and wayfinding signage.

## 5.7 NATURAL RESOURCES AND COASTLINE

Natural resources make a vital contribution to the character of the Islands and the quality of life for its residents and appeal to visitors. Problems arise when these resources come into conflict with competing demands for development. It is therefore essential that the quality of these features is protected in order to maintain a high quality natural environment and to prevent the interruption of natural drainage systems, fragmentation of habitats and marine and land-based pollution.

### Natural Resources

The Authority shall apply the Natural Resources policies, and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement, in a manner best calculated to:

#### Environmental Preservation

1. Minimise the impact of major developments on the natural environment;
2. Preserve or mitigate for the loss of important vegetation;
3. Minimise the impact on natural ecosystems and biologically diverse areas found within development sites;
4. Minimise the impact of development on surface or ground water quality;
5. Preserve the unique geological characteristics of the Bluff in Cayman Brac.

#### Coastal Zone Management

6. Ensure that development on the coast, and particularly near to marine protected areas, critical habitats and protected species minimises impacts on aquatic and other natural resources;
7. Apply appropriate coastal setbacks based on shore conditions, offshore conditions and climatic considerations;
8. Ensure developments in coastal areas incorporate hazard risk reduction measures.
9. Ensure that the open character of the coastline is preserved, in particular that of beaches;
10. Prevent the removal of sand from beaches and preserve the beach ridge;
11. Safeguard the public's right to access and use beaches through public rights of way; and
12. Maintain panoramic views and vistas provided by the Islands' coastline.



## 5.9 WATER LENSES

Freshwater lenses contribute to the health of the overlying environment and are vital sources of water for agriculture, horticulture and as an emergency potable water source.

### Water Lenses

The policy in respect of proposals for development on land above water lenses will be that:

1. Residential development will in general be permitted over a water lens;
2. Agricultural development will in general be permitted over a water lens;
3. An industrial development will be permitted over a water lens only in the following circumstances:
  - a. If the development is a small industrial land use;
  - b. If it requires a supply of water readily available; and
  - c. If it can be demonstrated that this facility cannot be provided elsewhere.
4. Aggregate excavation above or adjacent to a fresh water lens will be prohibited; and
5. Strict conditions will be imposed to ensure that the water in the lens will not be contaminated by the development or by the effluent therefrom, and that the quantity of water used will not deplete the lens to the disadvantage of existing or future users.

## 5.10 PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Parks, trails, recreation facilities and natural open spaces not only promote good health and well-being but also contribute to social cohesion and the strength of a community.

### Parks, Recreation and Open Space

The Authority shall apply the Parks, Recreation and Open Space policies, and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement, in a manner best calculated to:

1. Ensure an adequate supply of active/passive recreation facilities to meet the community's needs and demands;
2. Utilise Lands for Public Purposes (LPP) requirements to enable the provision of:
  - a. Active/passive recreation facilities;
  - b. Public rights of way; and/or
  - c. The protection of valuable natural resources.
3. Require major developments, including multi-family residential and large commercial projects, to provide open space or active/passive recreation facilities, where appropriate.

## 5.11 ECONOMY

Supporting Cayman's economic sectors is essential to maintaining high quality of life standards. The Authority will therefore seek to ensure that the finance, tourism, retail, commerce and industrial industries continue to develop and thrive.

### **Economy**

The Authority shall apply the Economy policies, and other relevant policies of the Planning Statement, in a manner best calculated to:

1. Encourage the reuse or conversion of existing buildings in commercial zones;
2. Allow mixed use in infill development projects;
3. Ensure that retail developments do not adversely affect the vitality and viability of other shopping centres
4. Encourage economic diversification and new types of business activity; and
5. Ensure a range of unit sizes are created to support smaller businesses.





# CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT



**Ministry of Planning,  
Agriculture, Housing  
& Infrastructure**  
Cayman Islands Government



**Ministry of Sustainability  
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