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SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING

Key issues and influences

It is expected that outward pressure from the Melbourne metropolitan area, the location of the Shire on one of the State’s major regional transport corridors and proximity to the regional centres of Ballarat and Geelong will continue to reinforce the advantages of the Shire as a place to live and invest.

Bacchus Marsh has been identified in *Plan Melbourne* and the *Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan* as a suitable location to accommodate growth due to its regional service centre role, its relative accessibility to Melbourne, Geelong and Ballarat, its well established town centre and the availability of greenfield and infill development opportunities.

The growth potential of Ballan is also recognised in both *Plan Melbourne* and the *Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan*.

Population growth in Moorabool Shire is influenced by people choosing to live in rural areas and small towns particularly where they are serviced by the regional transport corridor.

A limited number of small towns have been identified as appropriate for population growth within the Moorabool Shire Small Towns and Settlements Strategy (2016). The Strategy also identifies that growth is not appropriate for most small towns and settlements for reasons such as an absence of community support, constraints such as bushfire or flooding risk, isolation and lack of services. A key hurdle to growth is the fact that most small towns reside within a Special Water Supply Catchment, meaning dwelling development is often costly or impossible.

The communities and towns of Moorabool Shire have a very strong rural setting and character that is defined by the local agricultural base, spectacular scenic landscapes and diverse vegetation. There is a need to ensure that these values, which draw people to the area, are protected.

Planning for residential and other urban growth must recognise the range of physical and infrastructure constraints particularly in relation to resource management and environmental values.

While there is an existing ‘pool’ of small, vacant lots in the rural areas, potential development on many of these lots is constrained because they are located within a Special Water Supply Catchments area.

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Objectives—Urban growth management

- To ensure that Bacchus Marsh and Ballan accommodate the most residential growth in the municipality.
- To maintain an adequate long term land supply to accommodate the projected increase in population.
- To improve social and physical infrastructure in the Shire to support the growing population.
- To promote sustainable urban growth including increasing densities around activity centres and the public transport network.
- To direct growth to preferred locations and away from non-preferred locations.

Strategies

- Ensure the supply of residential land is sufficient to accommodate projected rates of growth.
- Facilitate and promote a range of residential development options, including high quality ‘master-planned’ developments.
- Direct the majority of the population and employment growth to Bacchus Marsh with supporting growth in Ballan.

- Consolidate established urban areas by promoting infill development of land zoned for urban purposes.
- Retain the non-urban break between Bacchus Marsh and the metropolitan area.
- Ensure a clear separation between urban development and farming activities is retained.
- Limit urban development where it is likely to impact on highly productive agricultural land, environmental values and the long-term sustainability of natural resources.
- Ensure planning and management of urban growth in designated towns takes account of existing and proposed infrastructure capacity.
- Discourage development in settlements where reticulated sewerage systems are not available and onsite treatment of effluent cannot be provided.
- Manage urban growth through Development Plans or Precinct Structure Plans and the implementation of Development Contributions Plans where appropriate.
- Discourage large subdivisions unless they are in accordance with an approved Precinct Structure Plan or a Development Plan.

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Objectives—Residential development

- To achieve high quality residential environments which enhance liveability, sustainability, healthy and active neighbourhoods.
- To promote Environmentally Sustainable Design principles to reduce the cost of living and improve liveability.
- To improve the diversity of housing stock within the municipality.
- To design housing to be adaptable for use by smaller households, the aged and people with disabilities.

Strategies

- Facilitate the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods that encourage integrated, liveable, walkable neighbourhoods
- Encourage subdivision patterns that promote a diversity of lot sizes.
- Encourage higher density development close to activity centres.
- Encourage a combination of greenfield and infill opportunities to enhance the diversity of housing choices and affordability.
- Encourage high quality design of dwellings, open space and the public realm as an important contributor to achieving sustainable developments.
- Encourage natural light, orientating dwellings to the north to allow for solar gain in the winter while also addressing the street for safety and access.
- Promote the delivery of affordable, diverse and accessible housing opportunities which are flexible, adaptable and cater for differing household types, housing tenures, lifecycles, incomes and disabilities.
- Encourage the delivery of alternative housing models in appropriate locations, such as co-housing and eco-villages.
- Provide for non residential uses, including convenience shops and medical centres, in locations that are compatible, with the scale and character of the area.
- Encourage non residential uses to be located on lots fronting roads in a Road Zone.

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Objective—Landscape and neighbourhood character

To ensure new development in all zones respects the existing character, landscape setting and amenity of the local area.

Strategies

- Ensure development protects and enhances the existing character, built form, natural environment, country town scale and rural atmosphere of each town.
- Encourage development in growth areas to respect its landscape setting.
- Ensure new development protects the visual, aesthetic, and environmental values of escarpments, ridgelines and views from the Bacchus Marsh valley.
- Facilitate community identity of townships through design of new development, landscapes and streetscapes, signage and open space.
- Retain non-urban breaks between towns and settlements.
- Discourage residential development in the farming areas unless it is required for the agricultural use of the land.
- Protect and reinforce the Shire’s built and natural heritage.
- Ensure that new development is appropriately sited, designed and constructed to blend with the significant landscape values, native vegetation and rural settings.
- Discourage inappropriate development on scenic hilltops, ridge lines and areas of visual prominence.
- Ensure housing and subdivision design complements the existing environment and has regard to the town’s landform.
- Ensure the impact of small lot development in greenfield areas is minimised by incorporating larger lots in other locations, widened road reserves with provision for enhanced street tree plantings and other design based initiatives to avoid emergence of a typical suburban character.

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Objective – Small town development

To support the sustainable development of small towns and settlements in accordance with the direction of the Moorabool Small Towns and Settlements Strategy (2016).

Strategies

- Consider the role and function of small towns and settlements when considering future development and planning.
- Plan for population growth, service delivery and investment on a cluster basis, rather than a town specific basis having regard for the social and economic linkages between towns.
- Guide growth to Bungaree, Wallace, Dunnstown and Myrniong.
- Protect declared water supply catchments and facilitate growth by investigating and supporting the development of reticulated sewerage and water systems in the priority growth investigation settlements identified within the Small Towns and Settlements Strategy (2016).
- Limit the potential for the expansion of small towns and settlements where extreme bushfire risk, isolation and other serious constraints make expansion impracticable.

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Objective—Rural lifestyle opportunities

To support development opportunities in rural lifestyle areas as an additional residential choice.

Strategies

- Prevent the fragmentation of farm land through inappropriate subdivisions.
- Limit rural lifestyle development in areas without reticulated services where the development would compromise water quality (particularly in Special Water Supply Catchments), adversely affect agricultural production, or impact on native vegetation and habitat values.
- Provide for planned rural living development in appropriate locations in recognition of the attractiveness of rural lifestyle options.
- Provide for limited residential development in areas zoned Rural Living. Preference will be given to subdivision where the following criteria can be met:
 - the overall density of residential development satisfies environmental and physical requirements, including appropriate on-site treatment of effluent and stormwater management;
 - development does not restrict agricultural and horticultural production;
 - sealed access roads service all lots;
 - reticulated water services are provided; and
 - the development leads to an overall enhancement in the condition of the environment.
- Focus rural living development in areas close to urban centres with good access to services and facilities where there is minimal impact on productive agriculture and horticulture or areas with environmental values.

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Implementation

Zones and overlays

Specific application of zones and overlays to achieve the strategic objectives includes:

- Apply the Neighbourhood Residential Zone Schedule 1 to Gordon to reflect the landscape character and minimum lot size requirements (infrastructure capacity constraints) within the Gordon Structure Plan;
- Apply Development Plan Overlays to provide for density patterns, road networks, open space networks, staging, and integration between new and existing development, supply of reticulated water and sewerage, drainage, fire prevention, and vegetation and landscape protection to zoned greenfield residential areas requiring development;
- Apply the Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1 to Barkstead and Dales Creek to reflect the location of these towns within a Special Water Supply Catchment.
- Review the Restructure Overlay to the old Crown townships of Blakeville, Old Wallace, Elaine North, and Rowsley and other measures necessary to support the implementation of restructure plans; and,
- Review the Rural Conservation Zone Schedule in Korweinguboora/Spargo Creek and Dales Creek with a view to limiting the growth potential of these towns due to the fire risks and constraints applicable to these towns.

Local policy and exercise of discretion

- Provide heavily vegetated buffers of at least 50 metres between industrial and residential land to protect the amenity of the residential areas.
- Where possible, provide opportunities for pedestrian and cycling links in line with Council's hike and bike strategy (June 2014).

MOORABOOL PLANNING SCHEME

- Where relevant require a report to accompany planning applications that explains how the siting and design of the proposal has responded to objectives and strategies of this MSS, the topography, environmental constraints, and the landscape significance and character of the area.
- One dwelling may be constructed on each lot created in accordance with an incorporated restructure plan subject to appropriate responses to environmental issues, siting, construction details and effluent disposal.
- Ensure that new buildings and works are sited, designed and constructed to:
 - minimise the removal and disturbance of native vegetation;
 - avoid protruding above ridgelines, hill tops and tree canopies;
 - avoid construction on slopes greater than 20%;
 - minimise soil disturbance and levels of excavation and fill;
 - avoid the use of reflective building materials such as zincalume; and
 - use external colours, materials and finishes of subdued tones that blend with the surrounding landscape and vegetation.
- Prevent the construction of buildings that create an appearance of bulk, scale and size in visually prominent and significant landscape areas.
- Encourage the planting of indigenous vegetation to assist in screening new development.
- Require the design and construction of all weather access roads and driveways that traverse slopes and minimise visual intrusion and soil erosion.
- Require applications for buildings and works to be accompanied by a report that explains how the proposal has been sited and designed to respond to the topography, landscape significance and character of the surrounding area and achieve the objectives and performance criteria of this policy.

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Further strategic work

- Prepare structure plans for Bungaree, Dunnstown, Wallace and Myrning subject to a residential growth investigation and a commitment to provide reticulated sewer and water to the towns or a localised solution (where applicable) as per the Moorabool Small Towns and Settlements Strategy (2016).
- Develop a partnership with relevant water authorities to inform and guide the inclusion of reticulated sewer and water projects for towns identified in the Moorabool Small Towns and Settlements Strategy (2016) within their 5 year capital works programme, subject to the provision of a viable business case.
- Prepare a Structure Plan for Blackwood in accordance with the Small Towns and Settlement Strategy (2016).
- With water authorities develop agreed municipality-specific provisions for the Shire's Special Water Supply Catchments to provide the basis for a revised schedule to ESO1 and review of associated policies.
- Prepare Urban Design Frameworks for Elaine, Greendale, Lal Lal and Mount Egerton in accordance with the ST&SS.
- Prepare Settlement Improvement Plans for Balliang and Balliang East, Clarendon, Korweinguboora/Spargo Creek and Yendon in accordance with the Small Towns and Settlement Strategy (2016).
- Undertake a Flood Study and provide flood mapping for Blackwood, Bungaree, Clarendon, Dunnstown Elaine, Lal Lal, Wallace and Yendon.

- Develop protocols for involvement of water authorities in urban growth strategies and rezoning proposals.
- Develop a Local Policy or overlay(s) to manage development to address heritage, landscape, vegetation, and environmental values in Blackwood, Barry's Reef, and Simmons Reef.
- Review absorption and contamination risk of land in existing Rural Living Zones in Special Water Supply Catchments.
- Integrate the Bushfire Management Overlay and the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan.
- Develop a Social Impact Assessment Policy to ensure consideration of the social impacts of major developments proposals.

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Other actions

- Investigate and continue support for capital works programs of infrastructure agencies to:
 - Sewer Bungaree, Wallace, Dunnstown and Myrning if financially feasible, in accordance with the Moorabool Small Towns and Settlements Strategy (2016).
 - Improve public transport in identified growth towns to provide efficient levels of services that meet community needs.
 - Provide other utilities (including natural gas) to small towns.
- Facilitate future transport infrastructure planning through local structure plans.