



Agenda

Scheduled Council Meeting

Tuesday 22 July 2025 at 6pm

Council Chamber,
25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang



**City of
Whittlesea**

Councillors

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Cr Martin Taylor, Mayor | South Morang Ward |
| Cr Daniela Zinni, Deputy Mayor | Bundoora Ward |
| Cr Nic Brooks | Thomastown Ward |
| Cr Blair Colwell | Mill Park Ward |
| Cr Lawrie Cox | Ganbul Gulinj Ward |
| Cr Deb Gunn | Painted Hills Ward |
| Cr Jarrod Lappin | Mernda Ward |
| Cr David Lenberg | Epping Ward |
| Cr Christine Stow | North Ward |

Executive Leadership Team

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Craig Lloyd | Chief Executive Officer |
| Emma Appleton | Director Planning & Development |
| Agata Chmielewski | Director Community Wellbeing |
| Sarah Renner | Director Customer & Corporate Services |
| Debbie Wood | Director Infrastructure & Environment |
| Janine Morgan | Executive Manager Public Affairs |
| Jacinta Stevens | Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO |

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1 Opening

1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions

The Chair, Cr Martin Taylor will open the meeting and introduce the Councillors and Chief Executive Officer:

Cr Daniela Zinni, Deputy Mayor

Cr Nic Brooks

Cr Blair Colwell

Cr Lawrie Cox

Cr Deb Gunn

Cr Jarrod Lappin

Cr David Lenberg

Cr Christine Stow

Craig Lloyd, *Chief Executive Officer*

The Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd will introduce members of the Executive Leadership Team:

Emma Appleton, *Director Planning and Development;*

Agata Chmielewski, *Director Community Wellbeing;*

Sarah Renner, *Director Corporate and Customer Services;*

Debbie Wood, *Director Infrastructure and Environment;*

Janine Morgan, *Executive Manager Public Affairs;* and

Jacinta Stevens, *Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO.*

1.2 Apologies

1.3 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement

The Chair will read the following statement:

“On behalf of Council, I recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

I would also like to acknowledge Elders past, present and emerging.”

1.4 Diversity and Good Governance Statement

The Chair will read the following statement:

“At the City of Whittlesea we are proud of our diversity and the many cultures, faiths and beliefs that make up our community. We strive to be an inclusive welcoming City that fosters active participation, wellbeing and connection to each other and this land. We commit as a Council to making informed decisions to benefit the people of the City of Whittlesea now and into the future, to support our community’s vision of A Place For All.”

1.5 Acknowledgements

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s

Recommendation

THAT Council confirm the minutes of the Scheduled Council Meeting held on 17 June 2025, as circulated.

4 Public Questions, Petitions and Joint Letters

Due to the Lalor Ward by-election and in accordance with our Governance Rules, there will be no public question time as Council is in Election Period (caretaker) until 2 August 2025.

5 Officers' Reports

5.1 Draft Community Plan 2025-29 and Community Action Plan 2025-26

Director/Executive Manager: Director Customer & Corporate Services

Report Author: Unit Manager Corporate Planning

In Attendance: Manager ePMO & Change
Unit Manager Corporate Planning

Executive Summary

The draft Community Plan 2025-29 (Attachment 1) is a comprehensive four-year strategy designed to support all residents of the City of Whittlesea, regardless of background or stage of life. Communicated through 12 key themes, the Plan addresses diverse aspects of community life, including safety, connectivity, transport, enjoying the natural environment and full participation in community activities.

Developed through extensive engagement with over 1,000 community members via surveys, pop-up sessions and focus groups, the draft Community Plan reflects the priorities and aspirations of local residents. It commits to 55 Strategic Priorities aimed at delivering meaningful and lasting improvements, such as safer roads, enhanced transport infrastructure, vibrant parks and open spaces and welcoming community facilities.

Grounded in community feedback and local data, the draft Community Plan also tackles pressing challenges including violence prevention, physical and mental wellbeing, homelessness and barriers to employment and participation. It integrates key Council initiatives, including the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Disability Action Plan, into a unified framework. To ensure effective delivery, an annual Community Action Plan will guide the implementation of priorities, starting with the draft Community Action Plan 2025-26 (Attachment 2). This roadmap aligns with the long-term vision of Whittlesea 2040 and reinforces Council's commitment to transparent progress reporting.

Through this draft Community Plan, Council aims to foster a more connected, inclusive and vibrant community where everyone belongs, everyone matters and everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

- 1. Endorse the following Plans for community consultation between the period 24 July 2025 to 31 August 2025:**
 - a. Draft Community Plan 2025–2029 at Attachment 1; and**
 - b. Draft Community Action Plan 2025–2026 at Attachment 2.**
- 2. Note following community consultation, a subsequent report will be brought back to Council on 21 October 2025 seeking formal approval of the Community Plan 2025-2029 and Community Action Plan 2025-2026.**

Background / Key Information

Our new draft Community Plan 2025-29 is designed for everyone, regardless of background or stage of life. It is focused on supporting our communities to live well across the City of Whittlesea.

This four-year draft Community Plan is structured around 12 themes, each reflecting a different aspect of community life, including feeling safe and connected, to improving transport, enjoying our natural environment, and enabling full participation in community activities. It highlights the ongoing everyday work of Council and outlines how we will deliver the services, projects and programmes that matter most to our community over the next four years. Furthermore, it commits to 55 meaningful Strategic Priorities across these key themes to bring about impactful and lasting change.

More than 1,000 community members contributed their time, ideas and experiences through surveys, pop-up sessions and focus groups to help shape this Plan. Among the top community priorities are safer roads, improved transport and connected footpaths, well-maintained parks, playgrounds and open spaces for everyone to enjoy and welcoming community facilities that bring people together.

The voices of our communities have shaped a draft Community Plan for 2025–29 that genuinely reflects the needs and aspirations of our residents. Grounded in both community feedback and local data, the draft Community Plan also addresses some of our community's most urgent challenges. It focuses on preventing violence, supporting physical and mental wellbeing, tackling homelessness, and removing barriers to employment, access and participation.

We are proud to unify Council's effort and have incorporated in the draft Community Plan our Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Disability Action Plan. To deliver the draft Community Plan we will draft an annual coordinated roadmap for action, known as the Community Action Plan.

The draft Community Action Plan 2025–26 is the first annual supplement to the draft Community Plan 2025–29 and outlines the community and internal outcomes that guide our strategic direction, with actions prioritised for delivery in the 2025–26 financial year.

This draft Action Plan plays a pivotal role in advancing the vision and strategic direction embedded in Whittlesea 2040 and the draft Community Plan 2025–29. Council is united in its commitment to delivering this Plan and regularly reporting on our progress.

With this draft Community Plan we want to work with our community towards a more connected, inclusive and vibrant community where everyone belongs, everyone matters, and everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

High Performing Organisation

We engage with the community, to deliver efficient and effective services and initiatives, and to make decisions in the best interest of our community and deliver value to our community.

Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

Financial Management

The cost to develop the draft Community Plan 2025-29 and draft Community Action Plan 2025-26 are included in the current budget.

Community Consultation and Engagement to inform the draft Community Plan

In 2024 and early 2025, the City of Whittlesea invited community to share their visions and priorities for the future. Over 1,339 people participated through various channels, including online surveys, in-person engagement and focus groups. A total of 4,181 community comments were gathered via 793 in-person surveys, engagement at community events, 20 pop-up stalls across multiple suburbs, focus groups in Lalor, South Morang and Whittlesea township, 504 online surveys, workshops with key stakeholders, and a multi-channel communications campaign.

This extensive community input has played a crucial role in shaping the draft Community Plan, with further consultation planned for mid-2025 including the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Community Consultation and Engagement on the draft Community Plan

The upcoming phase of engagement will see Council showcasing how community feedback has been translated into the draft Community Plan and draft Community Action Plan. Community will be presented with key highlights taken from the plan to provide a snapshot of what's included in each plan as well as having the ability to view the draft Community Plan and draft Community Action Plan in full (digital download or hard copy at in-person engagement activities). Where possible Council will illustrate how community feedback has been heard and has contributed to shape the plan.

Our engagement will include the following activities:

| Activity | Location | Date |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Focus Group | Civic Centre Great Hall | 31 July |
| 15 Pop-up Sessions | At least one on each Ward | 24 July – 31 August |
| Online survey | Council engage page | 24 July – 31 August |
| Posters and QR codes | At selected Council owned facilities | 24 July – 31 August |

Other Principles for Consideration

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
- (e) Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.

Public Transparency Principles

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.

Council Policy Considerations

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

Policies align with the draft Community Plan 2025-29 and draft Community Action Plan 2025-26.

Social, Cultural and Health

Policies align with the draft Community Plan 2025-29 and draft Community Action Plan 2025-26.

Economic

Policies align with the draft Community Plan 2025-29 and draft Community Action Plan 2025-26.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

The draft Community Plan, also referred to as the Council Plan, is the City of Whittlesea's key strategic document that outlines our vision, goals and initiatives for the next four years in accordance with Section 89 and Section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. It guides our priorities and actions in alignment with the needs of the community and sets the direction for Council's work and partnerships.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

We will undertake a comprehensive communications campaign to inform our community of the new draft Community Plan 2025-29 and draft Community Action Plan 2025-26. Through a variety of methods and channels, including online and traditional channels, as well as direct communications where possible, we will share information about the draft Community Plan and draft Action Plan and provide details of the consultation program undertaken.

Critical Dates

Below are the critical dates before adoption of the draft Community Plan 2025-29 and draft Community Action Plan 2025-26:

| Sessions | Date | Activity |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Council Meeting | 22 July 2025 | Endorse draft for consultation |
| Community Engagement | 24 July 2025 to 31 August 2025 | Community exhibition |
| Council Briefing | 7 October 2025 | Present final documents |
| Council Meeting | 21 October 2025 | Final adoption of documents |

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Attachments

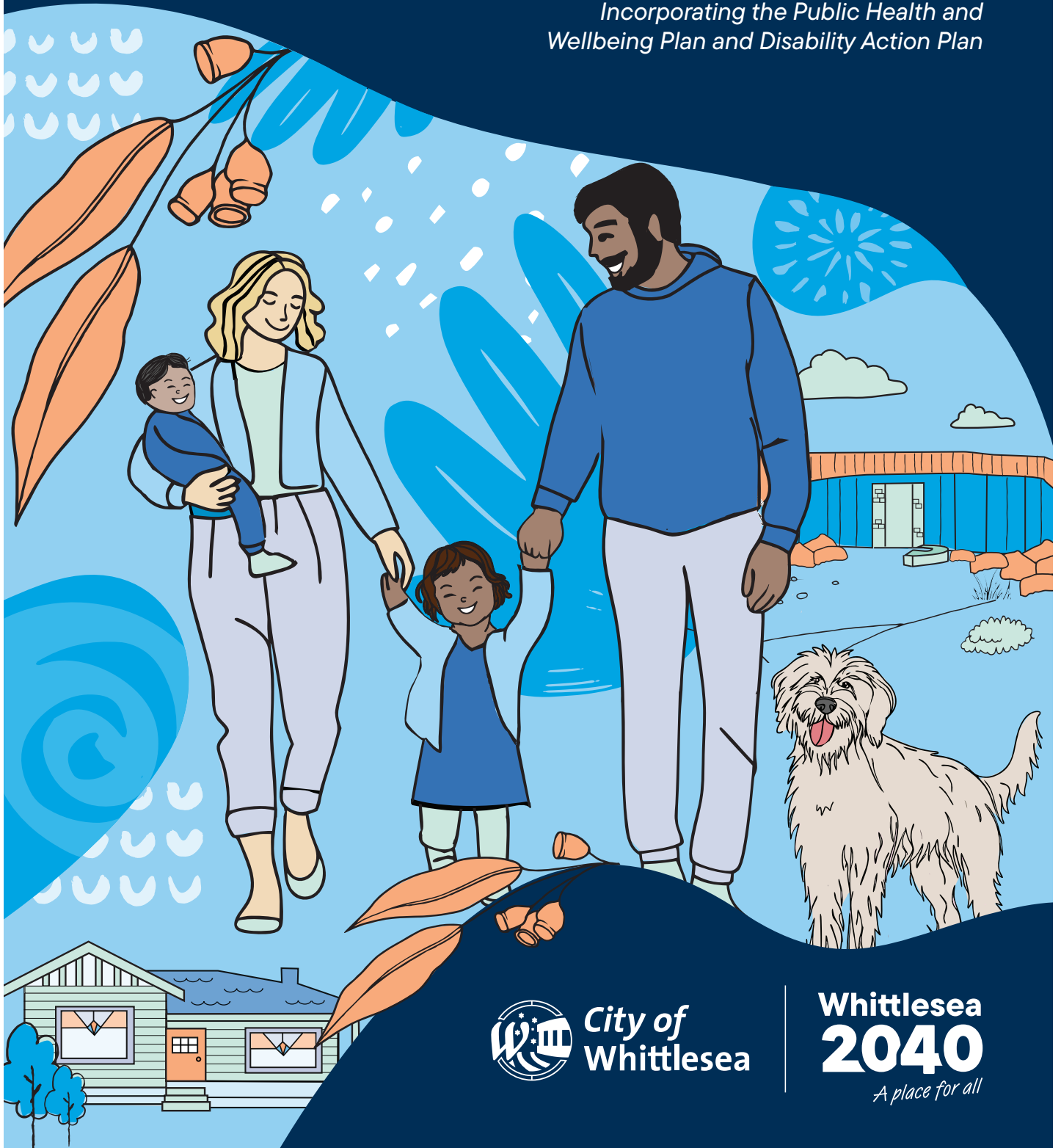
1. Draft Community Plan 2025-29 [5.1.1 - 29 pages]
2. Draft Community Action Plan 2025-26 [5.1.2 - 15 pages]
3. Appendix 1 Our Story and Suburbs [5.1.3 - 10 pages]
4. Appendix 2 Alignment with Integrated Planning Framework [5.1.4 - 14 pages]
5. Appendix 3 Supporting evidence [5.1.5 - 18 pages]
6. Appendix 4 - Linkage to the Health Plan and Disability Action Plan [5.1.6 - 5 pages]

City of Whittlesea

DRAFT COMMUNITY PLAN

2025 – 2029

Incorporating the Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Disability Action Plan



City of
Whittlesea

Whittlesea
2040
A place for all



Artwork © Mandy Nicholson, 2017

Acknowledgement

The City of Whittlesea recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

The lands along the Birrarung River and its tributaries –the Merri, Edgars and Darebin Creeks and the Plenty River were home to the Wurundjeri Willum and Taungurung Peoples. These lands offered more than just sustenance; they provided fresh water, food, shelter and a thriving environment rich with fish and birdlife.

For countless generations, these lands and waterways were not only places of living, but of gathering. Cultural ceremonies, trade and important business were conducted at sacred sites –places that continue to hold deep cultural and spiritual significance today. More than seventy of these sites remain in the City of Whittlesea, along with many scarred trees, standing as living testaments to an enduring connection to Country.

In acknowledging this heritage, we honour the knowledge, resilience and custodianship of the Traditional Owners, whose care for this land stretches back tens of thousands of years and continues today.

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Welcome to your Community Plan

Councillor Message

It is with great pride that we present the Community Plan 2025–2029 our shared commitment to creating A place for all.

This plan reflects the hopes, priorities and aspirations of the people who call our community home.

This Community Plan is a plan for everyone; no matter your age, background or stage of life. Whether you're growing up here, raising a family, running a business, settling into retirement, or simply going about your everyday life, this plan is about supporting you to live well in the City of Whittlesea.

We are pleased to present our plan to you in 12 themes that reflect different aspects of community life from feeling safe and connected, to getting around more easily, enjoying our natural environment, and being able to participate fully in community life.

It is our hope that every person in our community can see through these themes how this plan relates to them and how it will support them to thrive.

It showcases the everyday ongoing work of Council and sets out how we will be delivering the services, projects and programs that matter most to you over the next four years. In addition, it commits to 55 meaningful initiatives across our key themes to deliver impactful and meaningful change.

More than 1,000 community members generously shared their time, ideas and experiences through surveys, pop-up sessions and focus groups to help shape this plan.

You told us safer roads, better transport and connected footpaths, beautiful parks, playgrounds and open spaces for everyone to enjoy and welcoming community facilities that bring people together are most important to you. Thanks to your voices, we've shaped a Community Plan for 2025–2029 that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of our community.

Grounded in both your feedback and local data, the plan also responds to some of our community's most urgent challenges. It focuses on preventing violence, supporting physical and mental wellbeing, addressing homelessness and breaking down barriers to employment, access and participation.

This Community Plan is our Council Plan and is our key strategic document. It includes the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and the Disability Action Plan. It outlines our vision, goals and initiatives for the next four years. It guides our priorities and actions in alignment with the needs of the community and sets the direction for Council's work and partnerships.

We are proud to bring together all of the work of Council including health, wellbeing and disability inclusion into one clear and coordinated roadmap for action.

Council is united in our commitment to delivering this plan during our term and reporting back regularly on our progress.

Together, we are working towards a more connected, inclusive and vibrant community where everyone belongs, everyone matters and everyone has the opportunity to thrive.



Local government and what we do

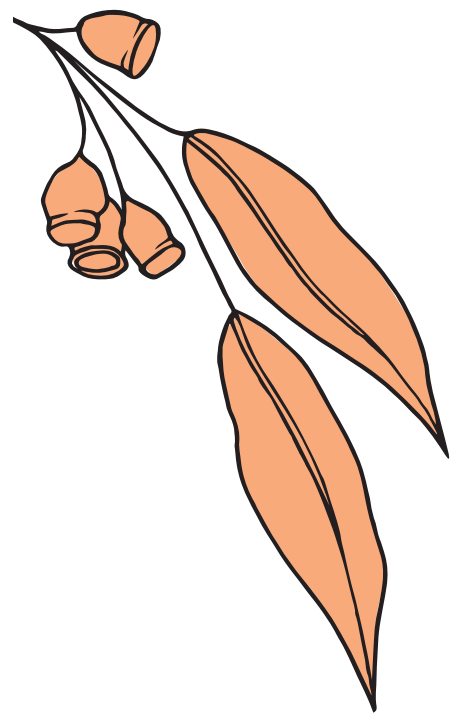
As the level of government closest to the community, local government plays a vital role in delivering services, facilities and programs that reflect the unique needs and aspirations of local people.

From parks and sporting grounds to waste collection and planning decisions, councils ensure public resources and infrastructure are shaped by, and work for, the communities they serve.

Local government also strengthens democracy by giving people meaningful opportunities to engage, contribute and influence decisions that shape their neighbourhoods. Councillors are elected to represent local interests, set the Council's strategic direction and advocate for the issues that matter most to residents and businesses. Their role is to ensure that services, priorities and policies reflect community needs and values.

The City of Whittlesea is represented by 11 Councillors, elected for a four-year term. Each year, a Mayor and Deputy Mayor are chosen from within the group to lead its work and serve as spokespersons.

Council staff, led by the Chief Executive Officer, are responsible for implementing Council decisions. They manage daily operations, deliver services and programs, and oversee the planning and delivery of projects that support the wellbeing and quality of life of everyone in the City of Whittlesea.



Our story

Our distinctive landscape

The City of Whittlesea is shaped by a rich and diverse landscape, sitting across two major geological regions of Victoria. The south and west of the municipality lie on the volcanic Eastern Plains, while the north and east are part of the older Eastern Uplands.

The steep slopes of the Great Dividing Range mark the north, and the striking Granite Hills and Quarry Hills rise through the centre. Flowing through the municipality from north to south are key waterways; the Plenty River, Merri Creek, Darebin Creek and Edgars Creek, fed by smaller creeks and tributaries. These waterways, along with our majestic River Red Gums, form a defining part of our natural environment.

Aboriginal cultural landscape

Aboriginal people have lived in Victoria for at least 35,000 years. The Wurundjeri Willum clan of the Kulin Nations are the Traditional Owners of most of the area now known as the City of Whittlesea, with a smaller section in the northeast of deep cultural significance to the Taungurung People.

Thousands of archaeological sites across the city, including artefact scatters, hearths, scarred trees and ancestral burial sites, tell the deep story of First Nations peoples' connection to Country. Their relationship with the land is ongoing, guided by spiritual, cultural and seasonal cycles and underpinned by strong family and community ties.

Historic cultural period

European exploration began in the 1820s and 1830s along the Merri Creek. By 1838, the Whittlesea and Geelong areas were among the first in Victoria to be subdivided for land sales. In 1837, George Sherwin established a sheep station in Upper Plenty, and the township of Whittlesea was surveyed in 1853. The Plenty and Merri valleys became thriving centres for agriculture, from wheat and flour in the 1860s to large-scale milk production. A rail line connected Whittlesea to Melbourne from 1889 until 1959.

Westgarthtown was established by German Wendish settlers in the 1850s, with a Lutheran church and cemetery still standing today. The Yan Yean Reservoir, completed in 1857, was a major engineering feat, supplying water to Melbourne. Dry stone walls, many still standing between Epping, Wollert and Donnybrook, reflect the farming and grazing heritage of the area.

Growth, diversity and our future

Post-World War Two, suburbs like Thomastown and Lalor became home to new migrant communities. Since the 1980s, government planning has guided growth across Mernda, Doreen, Epping North, Wollert and Donnybrook. Our population has more than doubled since 2001 and remains one of Victoria's most diverse, with 45% speaking a language other than English at home.

As we grow, we continue to protect what makes Whittlesea unique; its environment, heritage and people, while finding new ways to build a sustainable, inclusive future.

Our municipality

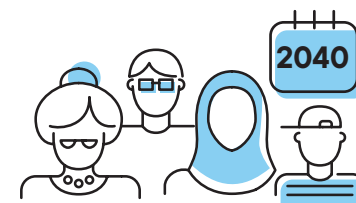
The City of Whittlesea is located in Melbourne's northern suburbs, about 20 kilometres from the city centre. It is one of Melbourne's largest municipalities, covering a land area of approximately 490 square kilometres. A city in its own right, with a thriving and growing economic base, it includes rural areas to the north, the emerging neighbourhoods and suburbs in the greenfield areas and the established suburbs to the south.





Quick facts about the City of Whittlesea

People



Our population continues to grow

A population of **257,000** in 2025, projected to be **355,000** by 2040 – a 38% increase.¹



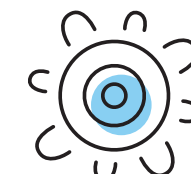
We're home to many young families

54% of households are families with children. **27%** of the population is under 19.³



We have a growing older population

17% of our population is over 60.¹ Our median age is expected to shift from 35 to 39 by 2040.⁴



We have a growing First Peoples population

38% increase from 2016 to 2021²



We're a diverse and multicultural community

37.6% of residents were born overseas² and **45%** speak a language other than English at home.²



Discrimination is impacting the lives of many in our community

More than half of First Peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse residents have experienced racism⁵. **1 in 10** Australians experience discrimination because of a disability.

¹ Population projections for City of Whittlesea from .id, 2024

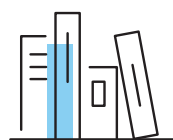
² ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2021

³ Population forecast, Place Info Pty Ltd, 2025

⁴ Population forecast, Place Info Pty Ltd, 2025

⁵ City of Whittlesea Anti-racism community Project, Vic Uni, 2022

Health and wellbeing



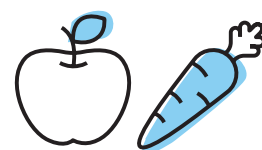
Our residents seek out ways to engage and connect

our libraries had more than **half a million** visits in 2023-24, **94,000** people attended community events and **10,000+** people played sport at Council facilities.



Our physical activity levels are comparatively low

32% of residents meet global physical activity guidelines.⁶



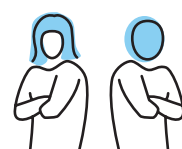
Healthy food intake is insufficient for many

15.9% of residents consume take away food at least once a week. Most residents (**66%**) consume at least one or two servings of fruit daily, only **6%** of residents meet the recommended daily intake of 5 serves or more of vegetables.⁹



Demand for mental health support is rising

Almost **1 in 5** residents over the age of 18 sought professional mental health support in 2023.⁷



Some households are experiencing family violence

1,149 family violence incidents were reported per 100,000 people in 2023-24, a **6.8%** increase compared to 2022-23.⁸



Gambling losses are significant

On average, **\$2.6 million** is lost per week on Electronic Gaming Machines.¹¹



Demand for inclusive programs and participation is increasing

The most common social activities where people with disability face barriers are:
Socialising in someone else's home: **43.2%**
Visiting a restaurant, café, bar, club: **35.7%**
Participating in sports, recreation and exercise: **34.3%**



More people are experiencing homelessness

People sleeping rough and experiencing homelessness has increased by **150%** over the last 20 years.¹²

Housing and transport



Housing growth is continuing

In 2040, it is estimated there will be around **134,000** dwellings, a **43%** increase from 2025.¹³



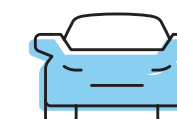
Demand for affordable housing is growing

In 2024 there was an estimated shortage of more than **4000** affordable homes.¹⁴



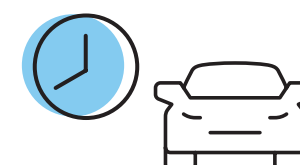
We have a wide range of neighbourhood types

Old areas built in the **1950s-60s** through to new communities being built in our growth areas, as well as green wedge suburbs and farmland.



Most people travel by car

76% of people travel to work by car.¹⁶



Many people have long commutes to work

Nearly **30%** of working residents spend more than an hour getting to and from work and **7%** spend more than two hours commuting.¹⁷



Not all venues and facilities are accessible by all ages and abilities

In 2018, **30%** of working age people with a disability affecting mobility or communication, had difficulty accessing public buildings or facilities.¹⁸

⁶ North Eastern Public Health Unit (NEPHU), Population Profile of the NEPHU Catchment Area 2025, p150

⁷ North Eastern Public Health Unit (NEPHU), Population Profile of the NEPHU Catchment Area 2025, p132

⁸ North Eastern Public Health Unit (NEPHU), Population Profile of the NEPHU Catchment Area 2025, p167

⁹ City of Whittlesea, Community Insights Survey, Wave 1.3, 2024

¹⁰ Crime Statistics Agency, Family Violence Dashboard, 2024

¹¹ VGCCC, Monthly LGA EGM Expenditure, Monthly expenditure data by Local Government Area (LGA) - Report | vgccc.vic.gov.au

¹² Census 2006 and Census 2021

¹³ Dwelling Projections for City of Whittlesea, from .id, 2024

¹⁴ Affordable Housing Need, compiled by .id, 2024

¹⁵ Affordable Housing Need, compiled by .id, 2024

¹⁶ City of Whittlesea, Community Insights Survey, Wave 1.1, 2024

¹⁷ City of Whittlesea, Community Insights Survey, Wave 1.2, 2024

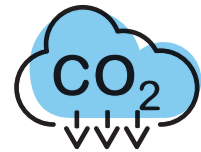
¹⁸ AIHW, People with and Disability in Australia, 2018.

Environment



More waste is being diverted from landfill

Tonnes of garbage increased by **2%** between 2019-20 and 2023-24, lower than the population increase of just over **8%**.



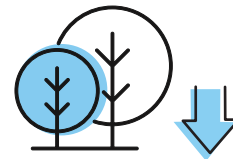
Greenhouse gas emissions in the municipality have decreased

1.6 million tonnes of carbon emissions in 2022-23, down from **1.9 million** in 2018-19



Climate events are becoming more frequent and severe

Since 2000, heatwaves have **tripled** across Australia, the intensity of rain downpours has increased, bushfire seasons are more intense and sea levels have risen.²¹



Tree coverage is low in urban areas

In established suburbs tree cover varies from **7 - 11%**. In growth areas the canopy cover is significantly lower – as low as **6%**.²²



About half our people have close access to parks and open space

The proportion of dwellings located within 400m of a large park increased from **48%** (2021) to **53%** (2024).²³

¹⁹ City of Whittlesea, Waste Team, 2025

²⁰ CO2e stands for "carbon dioxide equivalent". It is a way to measure the total impact of different greenhouse gases on global warming

²¹ State of the Climate 2022, Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO

²² Greening Whittlesea Strategy 2020-2040, 2021

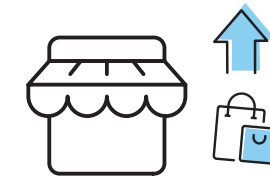
²³ Australian Urban Observatory, City of Whittlesea Liveability Index Scorecard, 2021 and 2024.

Economy



We have a broad range of retail and service precincts

More than **60** retail precincts ranging from regional level to strip shops.



The number of local businesses is growing

22,808 businesses in 2024, a **35%** increase since 2016.²⁴



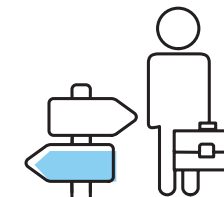
The number of local jobs is increasing

Almost **82,000** local jobs in 2022-23, a **19%** increase since 2017-18.²⁵



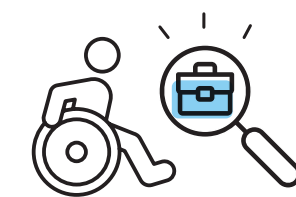
The highest employing sectors are

Healthcare and Social Assistance: **17.8%**
Construction: **13.4%**
Retail: **11.5%**
Manufacturing: **11.1%**²⁶



Many residents work outside the municipality

63% of working residents commute to other areas.²⁷



A comparatively higher proportion of residents with a disability are unemployed

The number of residents with daily support needs not in the labour force increased by **24%** between 2016 and 2024.²⁸

²⁴ ABS, Counts of Australian Businesses, including entries and exits, compiled by .id, 2024

²⁵ NIEIR, 2023, compiled and presented in economy .id by .id

²⁶ NIEIR, 2023, compiled and presented in economy .id by .id

²⁷ NIEIR, 2023, compiled and presented in economy.id by .id

²⁸ ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021. Compiled and presented by .id

Community voices have shaped this plan

In 2024 and early 2025, we invited our community to dream big and share what matters most for the future of the City of Whittlesea. More than 1,339 people took part; online, in person and through focus groups, offering their ideas, hopes and priorities for the years ahead.

4,181 community comments helped shape this plan

How we engaged

793
in-person surveys
completed in person

Engagement activities at community events

20 pop-up engagement stalls
across the municipality including Bundoora, Donnybrook, Doreen, Epping, Lalor, Mernda, Mill Park, South Morang, Thomastown and Whittlesea township

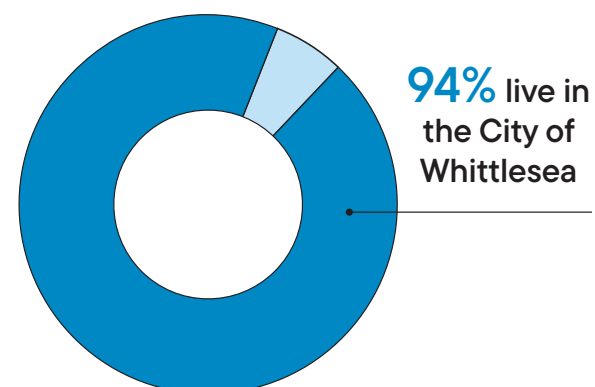
Community focus groups
across the municipality in Lalor, South Morang and Whittlesea township held with representative cohorts

504 surveys
completed online at
engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Workshops and meeting with key stakeholders

Multi-channel communications campaign

Of those who participated in community engagement:



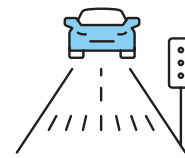
15% from Thomastown
10% from Doreen
10% from Mill Park
9% from Epping
9% from Lalor
9% from Mernda
9% from Whittlesea township
9% from Wollert
7% from South Morang
5% from Bundoora
3% from Donnybrook

16% people indicated they are a person with a disability or an unpaid carer of a person with a disability or an older person
2% identified as First Peoples
6% identified as members of the LGBTQIA+ community
58% speak a language other than English at home

Whittlesea 2040 -
"A place for all."

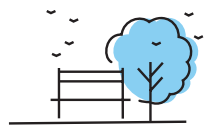


What you told us was important to you



Roads, transport and footpaths

You told us that maintaining and renewing local roads and shared paths is a top concern. Just as important are road safety, traffic management, better transport planning, public transport advocacy, parking, cycling infrastructure and the creation of new shared paths to help people stay connected.



Parks, playgrounds and open space

You also shared how much you value access to green spaces and play areas. You want to see new playgrounds developed, older ones renewed and our much-loved parks and open spaces maintained. Some local favourites you mentioned include Mill Park All Abilities Playspace, Whittlesea Public Gardens, Quarry Hills and Redleap Recreation Reserve including Peter Hopper Lake.



Health and Wellbeing

You told us improving mental wellbeing and social connection was the highest health priority, with 46% ranking it in their top three. For the Disability Action Plan the top priority was increasing services to enable safe and independent living, with 67% ranking it in their top three.



Community facilities

Sporting and aquatic facilities are important to you, closely followed by libraries and community activity centres; places that bring people together, support wellbeing and foster connection.



Community safety

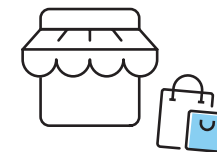
You want us to prioritise safety. Lighting, education and enforcement of local laws were key themes, along with strong support for programs that prevent violence against women, supporting safer school crossings and providing immunisation services.



Arts, culture and events

You told us that arts, culture and celebrations make our city vibrant and inclusive. PRACC (Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre) stood out as a much-valued facility, along with festivals and events like the Community Festival, Walking Thomastown and Carols by Candlelight. You also expressed a desire for more public art, creative workshops and consideration of a dedicated community art gallery.

Other important priorities included:



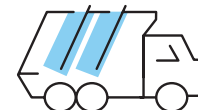
Support for local business

You highlighted the need for strong support for local businesses, investment in retail and activity centres and a focus on boosting our visitor and night-time economy.



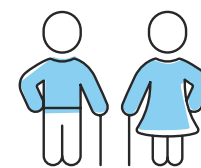
Youth services

Our young people and their families prioritised more social and recreational opportunities like movie nights, youth takeover nights and karaoke. Programs that support leadership and personal development such as the Young Women's Leadership Program and teen Mental Health First Aid were also seen as important.



Waste management

You want to see a strong focus on recycling, managing dumped rubbish, hard waste collections and kerbside services, along with more education and awareness about how we can all reduce waste.



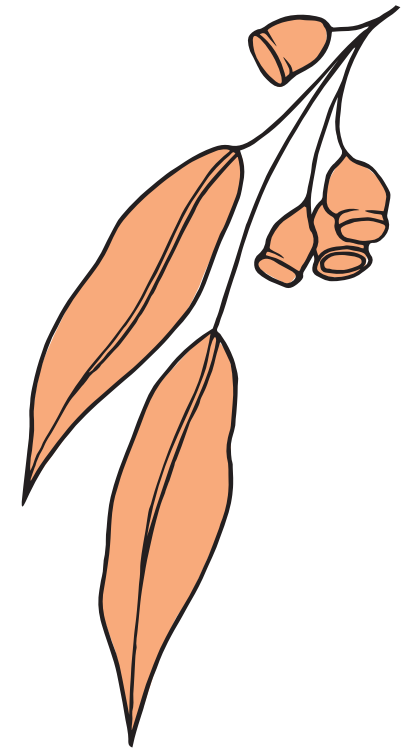
Ageing well

You told us that home care services including domestic assistance, delivered meals and personal care are vital. Just as important is helping older residents stay socially connected through positive ageing programs, seniors' clubs and social support.



Housing Diversity and Affordability

You told us you want increased availability of affordable, accessible, and diverse housing options that are well-located near services, employment opportunities, and community facilities.



Community Vision



Our community vision, **Whittlesea 2040: A place for all**, reflects the hopes and aspirations of our diverse community. First shaped through extensive consultation in 2017–2018 and reviewed again in 2025, it continues to guide our planning and priorities, ensuring we remain focused on what matters most to our residents now and into the future.

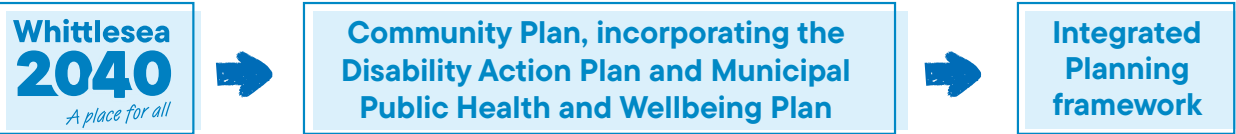
This vision paints a picture of a compassionate and inclusive community where people feel supported, connected and proud to call the City of Whittlesea home. It’s a place where the simple things matter - feeling safe, knowing your neighbours, or having work and services close by. Whether you’ve lived here for generations or recently arrived, the City of Whittlesea is a welcoming city where everyone belongs and contributes to a shared future.

The Whittlesea 2040 vision is built around five key goals: a connected community, liveable neighbourhoods, a strong local economy, a sustainable environment, and a high-performing organisation. These goals underpin everything we do and provide a clear direction for the years ahead.

This Community Plan 2025–2029 brings that vision to life. It outlines how Council will deliver services, projects and programs that respond directly to the needs of our growing and changing municipality.

Developed through extensive engagement and grounded in local data, the plan also integrates our Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and Disability Action Plan ensuring our work supports health, inclusion and equity for all.

As we look to the future, we are committed to building neighbourhoods that are vibrant, green and accessible. We’ll continue supporting people at every stage of life whether that’s staying active as we age, helping children thrive, improving how we get around, or creating opportunities to connect, participate and belong.



Our priority areas for health and wellbeing and disability inclusion

Council plays a vital role in protecting and enhancing community health and wellbeing under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. To keep health and wellbeing at the core of our work, the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is embedded within this Community Plan.

In line with our commitment to equity and inclusion, we have also embedded the Disability Action Plan to ensure everyone in our community has the opportunity to participate fully and thrive.

We have identified six health and wellbeing priority areas and four disability inclusion priority areas. The priorities have been informed by community voices, local data and the key challenges facing our municipality. In shaping these priorities, we considered the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027, the State Disability Plan 2022-2026, the Victorian Climate Change Act 2017, and the findings of the 2016 Royal Commission into Family Violence.

The health and wellbeing and disability action priorities are outlined below and integrated throughout the Community Plan and identified with icons. More information about how we arrived at these is outlined in Section x (Municipal snapshot) and Appendix x/



QR code to be supplied

Health and wellbeing priority areas

- 1. **Advance gender equality and prevention of gendered violence** by addressing its root causes, challenging harmful gendered norms, and supporting safe, respectful communities.
- 2. **Help protect community health in a changing climate** by supporting people to stay safe, well and prepared during events like heatwaves, floods and bushfires.
- 3. **Enhance mental health and social connection by:**
 - a. providing programs and facilities that offer safe, welcoming spaces for people to come together and build community; and
 - b. awareness-raising, reduce gambling harm to give people back time, resources, and space to connect, feel supported, and take part in community life.
- 4. **Improve access to healthy, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food** by supporting local food programs and providers.
- 5. **Support and promote active lifestyles** by providing a range of programs and creating spaces that increase participation and support people to be more physically active.
- 6. **Enhance homelessness prevention** by advocating for and supporting programs that provide stable housing solutions and assistance to people at risk or without secure housing.

Priority areas for disability inclusion and equity

- 1. **Deliver and facilitate fair and equitable access to local services and facilities** by eliminating and preventing physical, economic, attitudinal, technological and communication barriers.
- 2. **Support access to meaningful and sustained local job opportunities** by building awareness, facilitating training and providing support and advice around identification, reduction and removal of barriers.
- 3. **Support equal participation** by creating inclusive programs and spaces where everyone can be involved
- 4. **Drive real change in discriminatory attitudes and behaviours** by promoting respect, inclusion, and greater understanding across the community.



Themes

We are pleased to present our Community Plan to you in 12 themes that reflect different aspects of community life.

Each theme starts with a simple question that reflects a real need or concern from our community -for example, *How will you help me stay active? How will you support my child to thrive? or How will you make sure our neighbourhood is clean and welcoming?* These questions have guided how we've shaped our priorities, so the actions we take speak directly to the everyday experiences of the people who live, work, study and visit here.

The plan also recognises that no two people are the same. We've made sure it considers the unique experiences of different groups in our community including older

people, young people, people with disability, multicultural communities, First Nations people, families, carers and business owners. It responds to our health and wellbeing and disability action priorities and draws on community insight and local data to make sure we're not only meeting current needs, but also planning for the future.

Together, these themes form a blueprint for how we will work with you to make the City of Whittlesea a more connected, inclusive, sustainable and vibrant place for all.

Council's role

This is Council's plan for the community and the goals and strategic priorities that will deliver on the Community vision. However, Council cannot do it alone. We have many partners that work to make a difference in our community, including the Victorian and Australian Governments, private industry, health providers, education providers, community organisations, clubs and groups. Council's role in delivering on community needs varies depending on regulatory and legislative responsibilities, land ownership, funding, resourcing capacity and expertise required. Council has seven different roles:



Deliverer/provider/partner:

Council directly delivers services and infrastructure, either on its own, or in partnership with other levels of government, the community or private organisations.



Regulator/statutory authority/monitor:

Council enforces laws, policies and regulations that maintain public safety, health, and wellbeing.



Funder/enabler:

Council provides financial and/or in-kind support to organisations that are better positioned to manage or deliver specific services or infrastructure.



Facilitator:

Council facilitates partnerships, connects stakeholders and ensures that local needs are heard and addressed.



Planner:

Council develops and implements plans that ensure sustainable, well-organised and quality growth and change in the community. This includes land use, housing, transport, town centres, business precincts and community facilities.



Advocate:

Council represents the interests of the community to other levels of government, or other stakeholders. This could involve making the case and negotiating funding, policy changes, or programs that benefit the local community.

THEME 1 :

As I get older, I want to maintain my independence. How will you support me in this?

Our ongoing work

We provide services to enable older adults to remain in their own homes and communities.

- Deliver home support services to enable individuals to live independently, including assistance with household chores, shopping, personal care, social connection, food delivery and home maintenance.

We deliver programs for older adults to support their independence, connection with community and wellbeing.

- Deliver, support and facilitate a range of regular programs to support social connection, mental wellbeing and creative expression.
- Facilitate intergenerational engagement opportunities, such as connecting community playgroups with aged care services.
- Deliver quarterly bus tours to showcase local services and infrastructure to new and existing older residents.

We support seniors’ groups to promote active participation of older adults within the community.

- Provide senior citizen clubs with grants to support their operations and provide regular training, advice and support.
- Facilitate and subsidise facility hire for seniors’ groups in Council-owned community and sporting facilities.

Community quote:

“Strong social connections reduce loneliness and isolation, and mental wellbeing helps to make life bigger not smaller and helps you to thrive not just survive.”

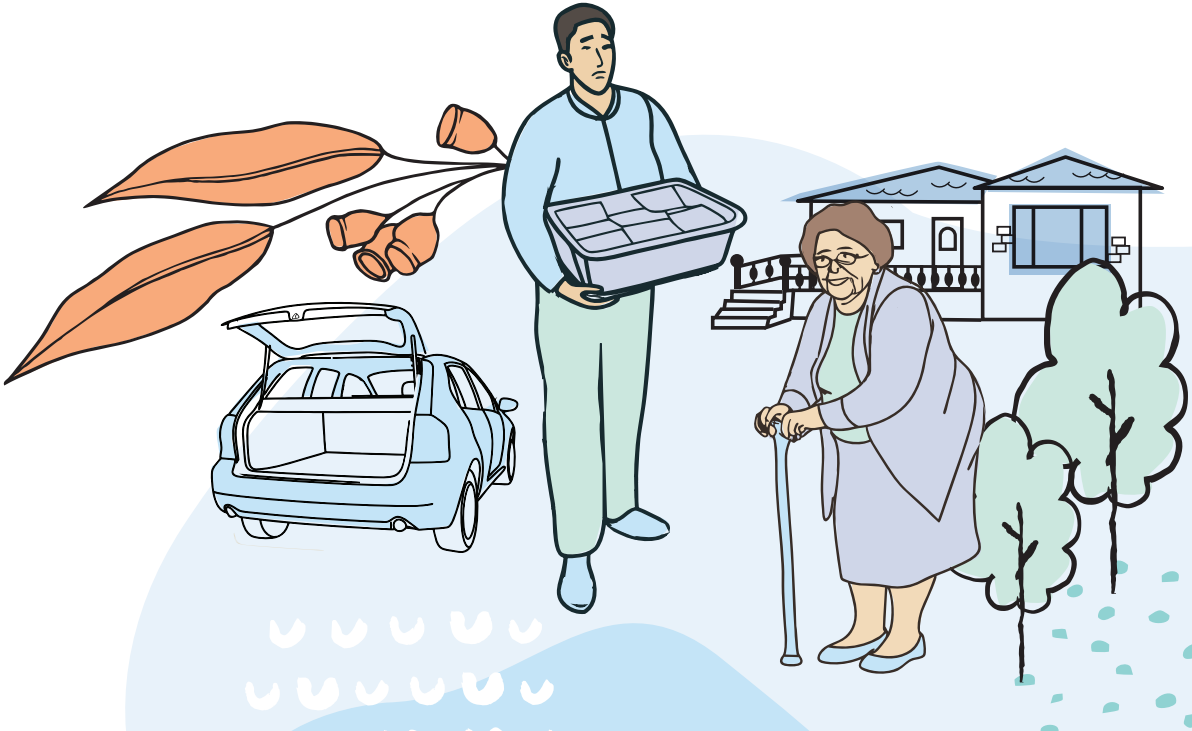
Strategic Priority

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| SP1 | Deliver and facilitate expansion of programs and services that keep older residents independent, connected and supported close to home. | HP |
| SP2 | Deliver the commencement of Home Care Packages to help older residents stay in their own homes, live independently and enjoy a high quality of life as their needs change. | HP |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan

Responsibility of others

| Service or program by others | Who |
|--|---|
| Aged care facilities | Private or not-for-profit providers |
| Aged care assessments | Private and public health organisations |
| Emergency planning for older Australians | Australian Red Cross |



THEME 2:

I’m a parent or carer. How will you help children thrive through different life stages?

Our ongoing work

We facilitate and support delivery of early childhood education, enhancing the learning, development and wellbeing of young children.

- Facilitate provision of kindergarten programs in Council-owned and maintained kindergarten buildings.
- Deliver the centralised kindergarten application and enrolment service to provide a single, central point of contact for families and kindergarten providers.
- Partner with early childhood services to reduce barriers that prevent families participating in early childhood education.
- Deliver an ongoing kindergarten bathroom upgrade program to ensure bathrooms and change facilities in Council-owned kindergartens are accessible and meet the needs of children.
- Deliver and facilitate a range of programs to engage children in learning, creative expression and building social skills.

We provide guidance on children’s health and facilitate local care and support.

- Deliver Maternal and Child Health and supporting services, including consultations at different stages of a child’s development, breastfeeding support, nutrition advice, health referrals, early parenting information and links to community resources and new parents’ groups.
- Provide immunisation services for children under the age of 18 through public and school immunisation programs.
- Partner with local services to help connect families to health and support programs run by community health groups and other support services.

We support parents and caregivers by helping them feel confident, connected and equipped to raise healthy, happy children.

- Deliver training programs to support parents, caregivers and professionals in their role in caring for, educating and raising children and young people.
- Deliver targeted support to children and families facing additional challenges such as unstable housing, family violence, trauma or financial hardship to assist them to engage in early childhood education and health services.
- Deliver supported playgroups to help children and families doing it tough to connect with others, learn and get the help they need. Provide guidance and support to enable the community to confidently run and manage their own playgroups.

We support children approaching adolescence to build confidence and develop the skills they need to thrive as they approach their high school years.

- Deliver evidence-based programs, events and initiatives that respond to the current and emerging needs of middle years children (7–11) and young people (12–25). This includes opportunities for positive social connection, entertainment, community participation, developing new skills and the promotion of healthy and respectful relationships. This will be via school holiday programs, targeted leadership training sessions, music/art events and life skills workshops.
- Deliver education and parenting support programs for parents of middle years and young children through the Raising Children and Young People training and programs.

We support young people in their transition to adulthood by creating pathways to education, training and employment, strengthening life skills and championing youth voices and leadership.

- Support local services to provide opportunities for young people to re-engage with education and/or pathways to employment.
- Partner with other services to make it easier for young people to get the help they need, such as mental health support.
- Facilitate and support the Youth Council to continue to provide valuable advice on matters affecting young people and create opportunities for young people to engage with Council and have their voices heard.

Community quote:

“Fantastic kinder services... I appreciate the larger space and smaller group sizes”

Strategic Priority

| | | | |
|-----|--|----|-----|
| SP3 | Partner with the Victorian Government and stakeholders to implement the Best Start, Best Life Reform, including free kindergarten for 3- and 4-year-old children and extending kindergarten hours. | HP | DAP |
| SP4 | Deliver and facilitate culturally safe services and programs for First Peoples children and their families, suited to local needs. | HP | DAP |
| SP5 | Advocate for funding from other levels of government to establish a dedicated youth hub and create additional youth-friendly spaces where young people can thrive. | HP | DAP |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan

Responsibility of others

| Service or program by others | Who |
|---|--|
| Childcare centres and childcare provision | A range of private and not for profit providers |
| Community playgroups | Volunteers |
| Integrated family services | Not for profit providers (Berry Street, Kinds First) and Victorian Government funded The Orange Door |



THEME 3:

I will have different transportation needs across my lifetime. How will you help me get around easily?

Our ongoing work

We plan, build and maintain local roads, paths, carparks and crossings, and advocate for timely and well-planned large-scale transport infrastructure such as highways, major roads, rail lines and public transport services.

- Deliver ongoing renewal and maintenance of Council-owned local roads, paths and bridges.
- Deliver and facilitate new safe transport networks in the growing areas of the City of Whittlesea to connect people to essential services and other parts of the community.
- Deliver and strategically manage car parking across the municipality to ensure safe streets, support economic activity in our town centres and high streets and balance the needs of residents and visitors.
- Advocate for timely transport infrastructure and maintenance for highways, major roads, rail lines and public transport services.

We implement and monitor safety measures within the local transport network to support safe travel for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

- Deliver measures to slow down traffic and check roads regularly to keep everyone safe.
- Deliver improved local traffic management solutions, including active travel options in neighbourhoods, to make it easier and safer around schools.
- Partner with industry to ensure safe and efficient movement on Council roads of traffic related to construction.

- Provide safe road crossings, signs, drinking fountains, seating, lighting and shade in busy transport areas to make walking and cycling easier, safer and more comfortable.
- Deliver the school crossing supervisor and the safe routes to school programs to ensure safe travel to school.
- Deliver and facilitate programs that help people get active through walking and cycling.

We deliver projects and programs to make transport inclusive and accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities, older adults, parents with prams and others who may face mobility challenges.

- Provide accessible parking spaces in convenient locations and issue permits for people with disabilities.
- Provide assistance to people with a disability to get to appointments or activities independently as part of the Home and Community Care for Younger People (HACCPYP) service.
- Deliver and facilitate improved disability access to public transport through an ongoing program of upgrades to bus stops, footpaths and pram crossings.
- Partner with the Whittlesea Disability Network to ensure that transport planning and infrastructure meet the needs of people with disabilities.

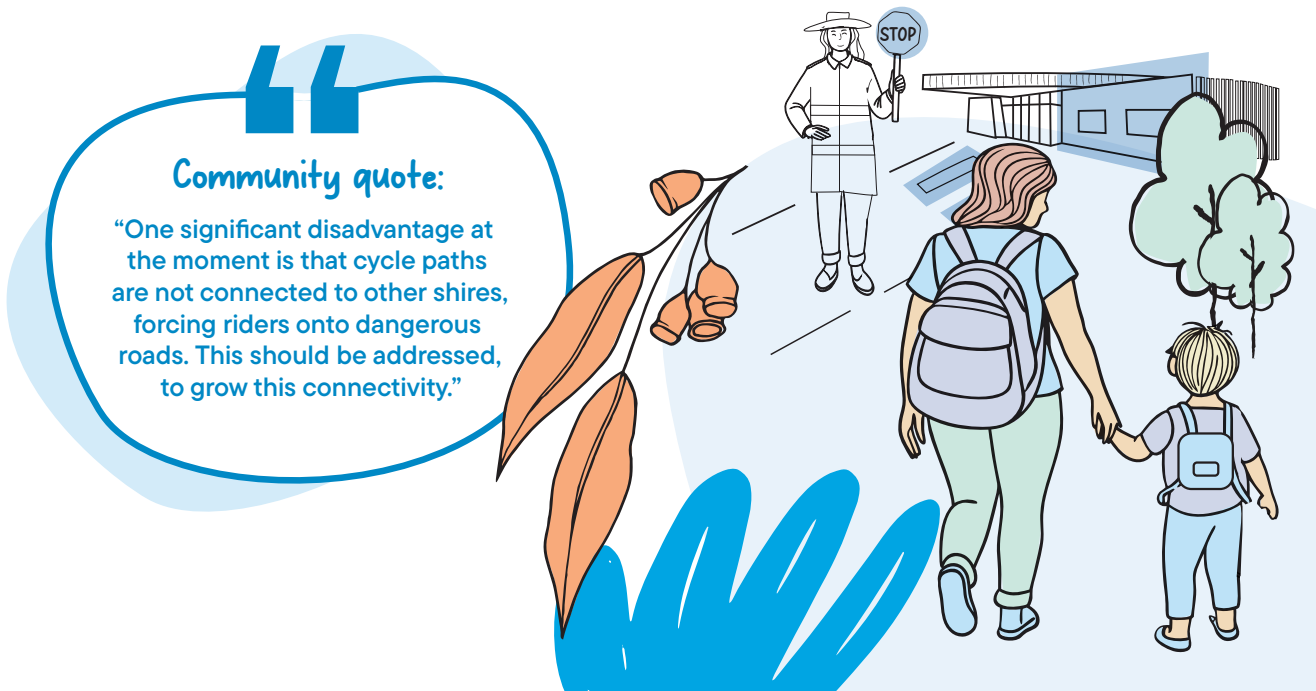
Strategic Priority

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| SP6 | Deliver the Yan Yean Pipe Track and Edgars Creek Trail shared paths to increase recreation opportunities and sustainable transport options in line with the City of Whittlesea Walking and Cycling Plan and Northern Trails Strategy. | HP | DAP |
| SP7 | Deliver a Parking Policy to manage the allocation and regulation of parking, balancing the needs of all users while supporting Council’s safety, efficiency and environmental sustainability goals. | DAP | |
| SP8 | Advocate for expanded transportation options and improvements to the transport network, including road upgrades, enhanced shared pathways and increased public transport, such as the Wollert Rail. | HP | DAP |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan

Responsibility of others

| Service or program by others | Who |
|--|--|
| Construction and maintenance of freeways and arterial roads (arterial roads are the major connecting roads across the state) | Victorian Government |
| Construction and maintenance of footpaths, bridges and tracks on non-Council land | Victorian Government or private landowners |
| Delivery and management of public transport | Victorian Government |
| Road rules and speed enforcement | Victoria Police |



Community quote:

“One significant disadvantage at the moment is that cycle paths are not connected to other shires, forcing riders onto dangerous roads. This should be addressed, to grow this connectivity.”

THEME 4:

I want to protect the environment and be ready for a changing climate. How will you support our community and neighbourhood to be green and sustainable?

Our ongoing work

We protect and preserve natural areas such as bushland, waterways, parks, and wildlife habitats so that ecosystems stay healthy and communities can enjoy clean, green and nature-rich neighbourhoods.

- Deliver the maintenance of nature conservation reserves, waterways and roadsides to protect animals and plants and provide opportunities for the community to connect to nature.
- Monitor and protect local plants and animals on Council owned and managed land through regular surveys and wildlife management practices.
- Partner with local groups to bring cultural knowledge into land management and preservation practices.
- Deliver the protection of significant and heritage trees to preserve their history, cultural and environmental importance.
- Enforce building and land use rules to protect the environment and save water.
- Support water conservation and quality through monitoring, water management projects and planning waterway corridors, along with water-saving measures in new Council buildings and public spaces.
- Deliver ongoing monitoring and care for closed landfill sites to protect the surrounding environment.

We actively address climate change by reducing Council’s emissions and continuously enhancing the sustainability of our operations.

- Deliver a growing tree canopy cover across the municipality by planting new trees and caring for existing ones to reduce urban heat.
- Partner on regional climate action initiatives with a focus on carbon reduction and climate adaptation.
- Deliver continued reduction of Council’s carbon emissions, including converting Council facilities to all-electric and upgrading public streetlights.
- Plan for gas-to-electricity conversion at Council-owned aquatic centres to reduce carbon emissions, improve efficiency and reduce power costs.

We support the community to take local climate action, make sustainable choices and prepare for the impacts of a changing climate.

- Deliver community education to raise awareness about the benefits of trees and canopy cover.
- Provide the community with tools and advice on living sustainably, adapting to climate change, responding to extreme heat and fire safety.
- Partner with local Landcare and ‘Friends of’ groups to help care for nature.
- Partner with other organisations to deliver bush kindergarten programs and pop-up bush playgroups.
- Provide guidance to those managing land in rural areas on best practices for sustainable land care and pest control for introduced species.

Strategic Priority

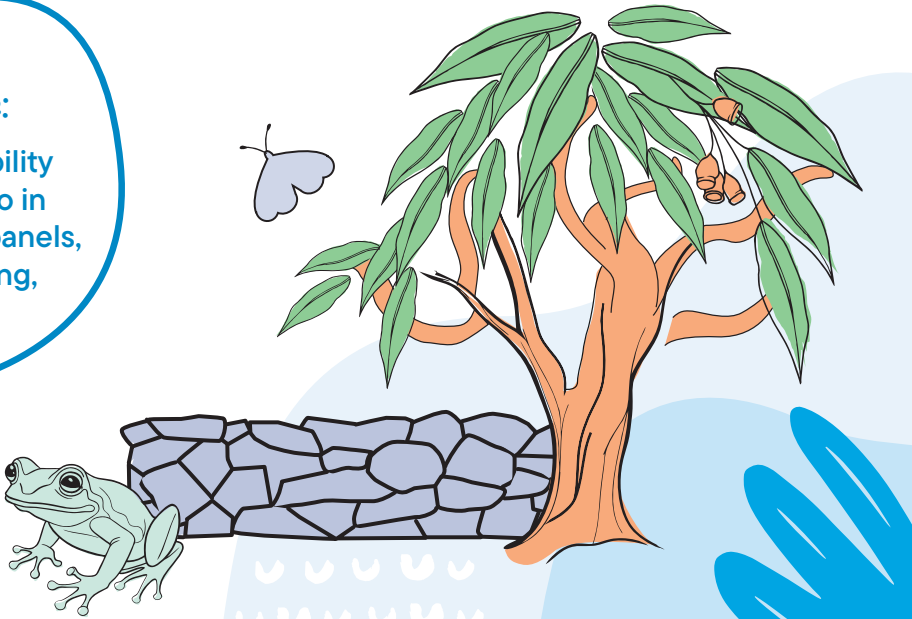
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| SP9 | Deliver and advocate for initiatives that help people and businesses make homes and workplaces more comfortable, energy-efficient and environmentally friendly. | HP | DAP |
| SP10 | Provide additional opportunities to generate local carbon offsets on Council owned and private land to help reduce municipal wide carbon emissions. | HP | DAP |
| SP11 | Deliver the City Forest program, planting more than 60,000 trees and working towards a target of an additional tree per resident across the municipality, to increase canopy cover, decrease urban heat and enhance biodiversity. | HP | DAP |
| SP12 | Deliver new stormwater harvesting at Council-owned sports fields and facilities to reduce potable water reliance, enhance water conservation and generate savings. | HP | DAP |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan

Responsibility of others

| Service or program by others | Who |
|---|--|
| Conservation management of State government owned land, such as the Plenty Gorge Parklands and Yan Yean Reservoir | Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, Department of Environment, Energy, Water and Climate Action |
| Secure the Grassy Eucalypts Woodland Reserve within the Green Wedge | Department of Environment, Energy, Water and Climate Action |
| Continue to invest in home energy upgrades to support the thermal efficiency and comfort of our residents’ homes | Victorian Government, Australian Government |

Community quote:
“Education on sustainability and what people can do in their own homes - solar panels, water tanks, composting, recycling.”



THEME 5:

I want our streets, neighbourhoods and waterways to be clean. How will you manage waste and encourage people to do the right thing?

Our ongoing work

We provide waste management services, including the collection, disposal and recycling of household and commercial waste.

- Deliver kerbside waste, recycling and organics collection services to comply with Victorian Government requirements.
- Deliver kerbside hard waste collection services and bundled branch collection services.
- Deliver regular cleaning of Council owned buildings, roads, footpaths and public toilets.
- Deliver rapid removal, investigation and prosecution of people and organisations illegally dumping rubbish and shopping trolleys.
- Deliver a feasibility assessment into an integrated waste transfer station within the municipality to reduce illegal rubbish dumping.

We support residents and businesses to help them adopt sustainable waste practices and reduce their environmental impact.

- Deliver drop-off events and recycling stations for waste not collected as a kerbside service.
- Provide affordable waste and recycling vouchers to support the community to dispose of waste responsibly.
- Deliver programs to support community groups and partner organisations to give good quality items to people who can benefit from them instead of sending them to landfill.
- Deliver waste education to local schools, community groups and at community events.
- Support community groups to organise clean-up events within their local community.

- Deliver litter enforcement by installing cameras at litter hot spots to monitor, deter illegal dumping and allow for enforcement and prosecution.
- Deliver information to households about the amount of waste typically generated in their community to support awareness, encourage personal accountability and promote waste reduction behaviours.

We provide management and maintenance to our waterbodies and raingardens and support service authorities in improving the health and function of waterways.

- Deliver and clean out Gross Pollutant Traps (GPTs) which intercept our stormwater drainage network to collect rubbish and green waste washing off our catchments.
- Deliver routine landscape maintenance around our wetlands, lakes and raingardens to filter out harmful nutrients in stormwater.
- Advocate for the best stormwater management practices in new community projects.
- Enforce better stormwater management practices in new land developments to reduce the strain on waterways by using improve infrastructure and new technologies.
- Partner with Melbourne Water to investigate, plan and deliver new stormwater harvesting schemes to reduce stress on our waterways while providing alternative water sources to our sporting facilities.
- Deliver cleaning of our sedimentation basins to restore their capacity and prevent harmful silts from entering creeks and rivers.
- Support creek management committees to share waterway health education programs.

Strategic Priority

| | | |
|------|--|--------|
| SP13 | Deliver a targeted program to eliminate rubbish dumping, including stronger enforcement, shorter wait times for collection and community education on waste minimisation, illegal dumping and recycling. | HP DAP |
| SP14 | Deliver the food and garden waste service to all households in the municipality and trial new waste and recycling collection services for waste such as soft plastics. | HP |
| SP15 | Deliver increased reuse and repurposing of materials in Council's asset maintenance and renewal programs. | HP |
| SP16 | Deliver the revitalisation of Peter Hopper Lake in Mill Park to improve water quality and habitat for flora and fauna and enhance local area. | HP DAP |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan

Responsibility of others

| Service or program by others | Who |
|--|----------------------|
| Setting the Landfill Levy fee per tonne Council pays for waste | Victorian Government |
| Distribution of the Landfill Levy for services that address waste generation and supporting the circular economy | Victorian Government |
| Management of litter and waste dumped on VicRoads roadside and State Government land | Victorian Government |

Community quote:

"We had a meet your neighbour event in Wollert and came together to clean the streets of rubbish - could this be a regular thing Council organises?"



THEME 6:

I like being physically active and enjoy the outdoors. How will I be able to do this locally?

Our ongoing work

We deliver and maintain parks and outdoor recreation facilities to support physical health, mental well-being and social interaction.

- Plan, deliver and maintain a range of parks and green spaces to provide safe, inclusive spaces to the whole community to relax, play and exercise.
- Plan, deliver and maintain a variety of facilities that enable the community to enjoy the outdoors, such as playgrounds, skate parks, dog parks and splash parks.
- Plan, deliver and maintain sporting facilities, including sports fields, aquatic facilities, gymnasiums, a golf course and an athletics stadium to enable participation in sport and physical activity for all ages and abilities.
- Partner with marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parkland working group and stakeholders to advocate for the delivery of the future directions plan.
- Collaborate with developers delivering parks and recreational facilities in new neighbourhoods to ensure they are high-quality, inclusive and meet community needs.

We provide inclusive recreational and leisure opportunities that welcome everyone, regardless of their abilities or background.

- Deliver an ongoing program of facility upgrades to improve accessibility and meet Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements, enabling more people with disability to participate fully in community life.
- Partner with other organisations to facilitate shared access to non-Council facilities, increasing the number and variety of recreation facilities available for community use.
- Deliver community festivals and events that promote physical activity and health and wellbeing.
- Support local sporting clubs by leasing Council’s sporting facilities, enabling them to grow participation in sport and strengthen community connections.
- Deliver development programs for sporting clubs to promote safe, welcoming and well-run sporting environments in line with Council’s Fair Access Policy.
- Facilitate investigations into barriers that prevent the community from using parks and recreation facilities and inform improvements that make them welcoming and accessible for everyone.

Community quote:

“Thank you so much for upgrading the dog park. It’s been a long time coming. It’s a great area, awesome dog park size. It just needed more done. Can’t wait to be able to use it more.”



Strategic Priority

| | | |
|------|---|--------|
| SP17 | Deliver Council’s Fair Access Policy to ensure women and girls can equally use local sports facilities and feel supported to get involved in sport and recreation. | HP DAP |
| SP18 | Deliver the Granite Hills Major Community Park featuring an adventure park and playground, open-air pavilion, public barbecues, giant slides, nature and water play and public toilets with a Changing Places facility. | HP DAP |
| SP19 | Deliver and operate the Regional Sports Precinct in Mernda consisting of an indoor stadium with multi-purpose courts, lit outdoor netball courts, a netball pavilion, car parking, pathways, lighting, landscaping and wetlands. | HP DAP |
| SP20 | Deliver the new Wollert Sports Reserve consisting of playing fields with lighting, multi-purpose sporting spaces, playground, car parking and a community pavilion. | HP DAP |
| SP21 | Deliver the Huskisson Reserve Multi-Purpose Facility in Lalor consisting of a new multi-purpose community pavilion, redevelopment of the existing tennis courts into new courts with lighting, car parking, pathways and landscaping. | HP DAP |
| SP22 | Deliver the new Edgars Creek Recreation Reserve in Wollert consisting of a new multi-purpose community pavilion, an additional oval, outdoor sport courts, open space and a recreation area and car parking. | HP DAP |
| SP23 | Deliver the new Ashley Park Recreation Reserve in Doreen consisting of playing fields with lighting, a new multi-purpose community pavilion, playground and car parking. | HP DAP |
| SP24 | Deliver the staged construction of VR Michael Reserve Master Plan in Lalor providing an upgraded dog off leash area, central lawn, circuit paths, toilet facilities, exercise fitness station and car parking. | HP DAP |
| SP25 | Deliver the staged construction of Whittlesea Park Master Plan in Whittlesea Township providing trees, play spaces, circuit paths, bridges and car parking. | HP DAP |
| SP26 | Deliver the staged construction of Lalor Recreation Reserve Master Plan in Lalor, Lowalde Recreation Reserve Master Plan in Epping, Nick Ascenzo Reserve in Thomastown, Whittlesea Public Gardens in Lalor and Mernda Recreation Reserve Master Plan in Mernda. | HP DAP |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan

Responsibility of others

| Service or program by others | Who |
|--|--|
| Develop joint agreements to provide community access to school facilities | Department of Education |
| Management of regional and state parks such as Plenty Gorge Park and marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands. | Parks Victoria, Victorian Government and others. |

THEME 7:

I want to feel physically, culturally and psychologically safe in my community. What will you do to keep me free from harm and promote responsible and respectful behaviour?

Our ongoing work

We work with the community to build a culture of safety, equality and respect.

- Advocate gender equity and help the community recognise, prevent, and seek support for all forms of violence.
- Advocate an inclusive, safe and respectful environment in all council facilities and services for the LGBTIQ+ community.
- Partner with external groups to create and deliver programs that address gender inequity and prevent violence against women and provide a comprehensive response to family violence.
- Partner with local service providers to enhance support and referral pathways for families experiencing family violence and associated legal concerns.
- Promote equity and inclusion, raising community awareness on the harm of racism with information on how to report it as well as how to access relevant support services.
- Support and partner with external stakeholders to deliver initiatives that focus on increasing understanding of culture and diversity, building positive relationships and empowering community-led responses.

We enforce Victorian Government legislation and Council's Community Local Law to ensure the whole community can live well and feel secure.

- Partner with Victoria Police, Liquor Control Victoria and Emergency Management Victoria to ensure a holistic approach to community safety.
- Enforce planning laws and policies to ensure buildings and developments are in appropriate areas, are well-designed and protect environmental values and heritage.
- Deliver the management of parking across the municipality to support safe, accessible and welcoming neighbourhood streets, as well as ensuring access to services and local town centres to help boost local business.
- Facilitate safe driving and parking practices around schools to ensure safety for children and reduce traffic congestion.
- Continue to deliver a fine appeal process for the community in line with Victorian legislation and Fines Victoria guidelines.
- Deliver event permits to ensure events adhere to local laws and are managed effectively, responsibly and safely.
- Deliver further awareness of Council's Community Local Law and how they help support local communities.
- Deliver regular audits of Bushfire Management Overlays to help reduce the risk to people and property.

We monitor and regulate businesses and activities that can affect the safety and health of people and neighbourhoods.

- Deliver public health services and education on topics including food safety, tobacco control, registered businesses, accommodation, aquatic facilities, septic tanks, emergency management and communicable disease management in high-risk settings.

We help the community to be prepared and safe during unexpected events such as natural disasters, health emergencies or accidents.

- Maintain community reserves including planned burns to reduce fire risks.
- Partner with emergency response agencies and other groups to prepare for, respond to and manage emergencies quickly and effectively.
- Deliver and support education campaigns to help the community prepare for emergencies, including the Municipal Fire Prevention Inspection program and responsible land management.
- Provide relief centres for our community in the event of an emergency.

We undertake local animal management to support the safety, wellbeing and harmony of the community and its animals.

- Deliver the services of the wat djerring Animal Facility to align with Council's municipal Domestic Animal Management Plan.
- Deliver animal management services including pet registration, addressing complaints regarding potentially dangerous animals, promoting responsible pet ownership and ensuring responsible management of animals in urban and rural settings.

We monitor and enhance the safety of Council-owned facilities, parks, streets and neighbourhoods.

- Monitor new housing developments to ensure they are designed well, including consideration of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles.
- Facilitate the delivery of aquatic education programs to improve water safety and ensure people feel more comfortable in and around water.

Community quote:

"I feel more confident walking through the reserve and use the path more at night due to the solar lighting."



Strategic Priority

| | | | |
|------|---|----|-----|
| SP27 | Deliver improved lighting of shared paths to provide the community with extended hours for exercise and recreation, enhance perceptions of safety and provide increased sustainable transport options. | HP | DAP |
| SP28 | Deliver the Suburb Place Frameworks to enhance the municipality’s distinct character, improve safety, enhance public spaces and upgrade infrastructure. | HP | DAP |
| SP29 | Partner with external emergency and welfare services to explore the feasibility of a Safer Neighbourhoods Expo to enhance community education and awareness of available services. | HP | DAP |
| SP30 | Advocate for equality and partner on initiatives that build a safe, respectful community with zero tolerance for all forms of violence, including family, gender-based, racial, faith-based and LGBTIQ+ violence. | HP | DAP |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan

Responsibility of others

| Service or program by others | Who |
|---|---|
| Noise, air and light pollution coming from private property | Environmental Protection Authority Victoria |
| Enforcing crimes and criminal behaviour | Victoria Police |
| Enforcing anti-social behaviour such as hoon driving and speed observation | Victoria Police |
| Maintaining private property from dumped rubbish, graffiti or long grass | Various |
| Setting policy and enforcement capabilities in regard to public health issues including alcohol and other drugs, gambling, smoking and vaping | Victorian Government |
| Provision of Public Intoxication Response Service in line with decriminalisation of public intoxication. | Victorian Government |
| Management and enforcement of registered infringement notices and court-ordered fines | Fines Victoria |
| Animal welfare enforcement | RSPCA |



THEME 8:

I’m proud to live here. How will you ensure my neighbourhood meets our diverse housing needs, is functional and well-designed?

Our ongoing work

We advocate to increase the supply of affordable housing in the City of Whittlesea, so community have access to diverse housing options.

- Advocate and seek to secure available funding from State and Federal Government to support social and affordable housing in our municipality.
- Partner with neighbouring and other local governments in Melbourne’s outer areas to address housing affordability challenges through a coordinated regional approach.
- Advocate with our community, developers and Community Housing Associations to increase the delivery of affordable housing to build strong and inclusive communities.

We plan and manage neighbourhood development and change, ensuring that land use and infrastructure meet the community’s current and future needs.

- Deliver new strategic land use plans, planning policy updates and place-based frameworks to enable good growth and ensure high quality development and public spaces across the City of Whittlesea.
- Monitor strategic land use plans and planning policy updates prepared by others, including the Victorian Government, to ensure they deliver the best outcomes for our community in accordance with Council’s planning policies.
- Deliver the management of Council’s property and land portfolio to deliver best value for our community, in line with Council’s priorities.

We regulate and guide how the municipality grows by making sure new neighbourhoods and buildings are well-designed, reflect the local area, are environmentally sustainable and respect our heritage.

- Deliver planning and heritage overlays and guidance to protect cultural heritage, significant landscapes and heritage buildings.
- Deliver and monitor development against Council’s Neighbourhood Design Manual and design policies in the Planning Scheme to promote high quality design and sustainable developments.
- Facilitate planning and design of transport and civil infrastructure for new developments in our growth corridor for new neighbourhoods to be safe, functional and well connected.
- Deliver and maintain public art in community spaces that enhances the local landscape and celebrates communities.
- Deliver the management of the Ziebell’s museum and farmhouse to educate and engage people with the heritage of Thomastown.
- Partner and provide guidance to local heritage and historical societies.
- Deliver and maintain attractive streets with trees, footpaths, bins, lighting and seating.
- Deliver the Town Centre Revitalisation program to make our shopping strips and public spaces more vibrant, inviting, safe and accessible.
- Establish Design Review processes to support the delivery of good design and high use areas in our municipality.

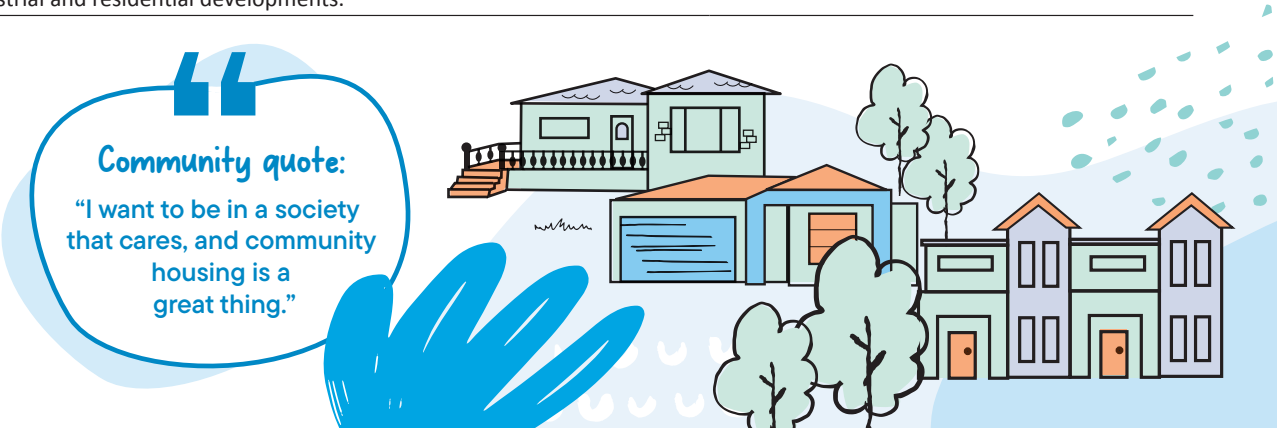
Strategic Priority

| | | | |
|------|--|----|-----|
| SP31 | Deliver revitalised and upgraded neighbourhood streetscapes and shopping precincts to enhance accessibility and local character and support local spending. | HP | DAP |
| SP32 | Deliver a review of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to ensure planning policies and controls achieve high quality design and sustainable development outcomes. | HP | DAP |
| SP33 | Deliver an affordable housing plan which defines Council’s role and proposes future projects that deliver diverse housing opportunities for our community. | HP | DAP |
| SP34 | Deliver the Ashline Street Affordable Housing Project in Wollert, partnering with a community housing organisation to provide affordable homes and a community park. | HP | DAP |
| SP35 | Deliver the Johnsons Road residential development in Mernda, comprising at least 35 homes, including affordable housing, open spaces and pathways linking to the Plenty River. | HP | DAP |
| SP36 | Deliver feasibility assessments for key future infrastructure for our growing community. | HP | DAP |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan

Responsibility of others

| Service or program by others | Who |
|--|---|
| Approval of Planning Scheme Amendments | Minister for Planning |
| Adviser to Minister for Planning | Department of Transport and Planning |
| Planning for Precinct Structure Plan areas and Epping Activity Centre to guide development in growth areas. | Victorian Government |
| Preparation of state planning policy and approval of local planning policies to guide new development. | Victorian Government |
| Approval of State Government infrastructure including roads, schools and health facilities. | Victorian Government |
| Maintenance of State Government road reserves, drainage reserves and parks. | Victorian Government, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria |
| Maintenance of roads, parking areas and landscaping in private developments including shopping centres and some commercial, industrial and residential developments. | Private landowner, Body Corporate |



THEME 9:

I’m a business owner. How will you support the local economy and help businesses create local employment opportunities?

Our ongoing work

We assist local business and industry by providing timely information, simplifying processes and creating opportunities to connect through events and professional networks.

- Partner to provide a program that supports small businesses to grow by identifying their challenges and strengths in business, management, leadership, knowledge and skills.
- Work with emerging small business to ensure they are registered and compliant with community expectation and standards, ensuring high quality local products.
- Facilitate the Business Advisory Panel, business network program and events to provide businesses with networking events, learning and promotional opportunities.
- Deliver a monthly business e-Newsletter to inform businesses about services, programs, events, training and grant opportunities.
- Deliver the annual business awards program to recognise and celebrate business excellence and achievements in the municipality.
- Partner with property owners, agents and entrepreneurs to bring life to vacant commercial spaces.
- Partner with local retail businesses to promote and sell locally made produce through restaurants and markets.
- Facilitate collaboration and futureproofing of the agri-food sector by facilitating collaboration between industry, education and research and development.
- Facilitate and support agriculture businesses through discounted rates to primary producers who are enhancing local food security and preserving green space.
- Provide support to small-scale farms to explore and grow sustainable agriculture.

We deliver investment attraction programs to encourage new businesses and industries, help the local economy grow and increase local job opportunities.

- Partner with neighbouring municipalities to promote the region’s attractions and encourage tourism investment.
- Showcase the City of Whittlesea to residents and visitors to promote local tourism and inspire greater exploration of areas such as the Township of Whittlesea.
- Deliver industry attraction programs to health care, manufacturing, logistics, professional services, education, construction and food and beverage sectors.
- Advocate for the establishment of the Melbourne Food, Innovation and Export Hub (MFIH) to help grow the northern region as a leading centre for food production and innovation.

We facilitate employment pathways for residents and work with local business and industry to connect them with qualified local workers.

- Deliver a program that provides individuals facing barriers to employment with meaningful work experience at Council.
- Provide work experience opportunities for university and school students through structured placements at Council.
- Facilitate employment and training opportunities for people with disability.
- Deliver the enhancement of Council as a welcoming, accessible and inclusive employer for people with a disability.
- Facilitate connections between education, industry and community to shape training programs that prepare residents for future jobs and reduce skill shortages.

- Partner with local providers to support young people to access job opportunities and build career pathways close to home.
- Facilitate and support programs and events to provide early childhood educators with local professional development and networking opportunities.

We support new businesses to establish and grow by providing resources and connecting them with support.

- Deliver and facilitate information provision, mentoring and support local businesses need to start and grow successfully.
- Provide free WiFi at Council-owned and managed community centres and libraries.
- Support business owners to apply for Council grants and other funding opportunities to support their operation.

We help build the local circular economy by promoting resource recovery, supporting local initiatives that reduce waste and facilitate economic opportunities through reuse, repair and recycling.

- Support and connect local businesses to help them develop, promote and expand their circular economy products and services.
- Partner with businesses to explore opportunities to repurpose their waste and decrease energy consumption.

Community quote:

“I love that I can shop at my local strip shop without having to go to a big centre. When you upgrade the streets and shopfronts, they become more welcoming and people spend more time and money there.”

Strategic Priority

| | | |
|------|---|--------|
| SP37 | Develop and implement a new Strong Local Economy Strategy to support the growth of the local business community, promote investment, local employment and education opportunities, enhancing social connections and economic sustainability. | HP DAP |
| SP38 | Advocate for the creation of local jobs and other community benefits as outcomes from the planning and development of the Intermodal Freight Precinct in Beveridge which on completion will be the largest intermodal precinct in Australia transforming the nation’s supply chain and providing economic benefits to the region. | DAP |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan

Responsibility of others

| Service or program by others | Who |
|---|---|
| Programs delivered or funded through industry | Federal and State Government, NorthLink, Consultants, Sustainability Victoria, Victorian Tourism Industry Council, Mainstreet Australia |
| Planning, construction and management of schools and school grounds | Victorian Government or independent school providers |
| Tertiary and vocational education courses | RMIT, Melbourne Polytechnic, La Trobe University, Libraries, Hume Whittlesea Local Learning Employment Network |

THEME 10:

I love being part of my community – meeting people, getting involved and exploring different neighbourhoods. How will you help me stay connected, feel welcome and enhance my health and wellbeing?

Our ongoing work

We deliver and support a range of creative activities and events that provide opportunities for creative expression, social interaction, celebrating different cultures and champion local voices.

- Deliver a creative arts program at PRACC to enable the community enjoy performances and participate in programs locally.
- Deliver and support a diverse range of events and festivals across the City of Whittlesea, engaging people of all ages, backgrounds and interests, while celebrating our community, places and cultures.
- Facilitate engagement with the local disability community to find out what makes participation hard and support inclusive programs, events and activities across Council.
- Provide venue hire at PRACC to enable professional and community artists to showcase their work and nurture creative talent.
- Support community groups to produce local festivals that reflect the diversity of the municipality through an event permit program.
- Deliver programs and activities that help people connect with the community, explore heritage and develop their creative skills.
- Deliver a visual arts program including public art, annual art exhibition and creative workshops for people to express their voices.
- Facilitate the celebration of culture, history and the diverse interests in our community by recognising dates of significance through events and information sharing opportunities.
- Deliver first time parent groups and facilitate the delivery of community playgroups to foster local connections between families.

We promote lifelong learning by supporting education and skill development at every stage of life.

- Partner with local neighbourhood houses to deliver community education programs.
- Deliver library services to provide free access to books, technology, learning opportunities and social connections.
- Deliver the Community Leadership Program to empower local residents with the skills and knowledge to drive positive change and leadership in the community.
- Provide creative workshops and opportunities to encourage life-long learning.
- Deliver heritage, creative and educational programs at Ziebell's Museum and Farmhouse.
- Provide free WiFi at Council-owned and managed community centres and libraries to promote on-line connection and ease financial burden.

We empower the community to create and lead their own events and projects by providing support, resources and networks.

- Deliver a community grants program to support community-led, grassroots initiatives.
- Provide Council facilities for individuals and community groups to access safe, inclusive and well-equipped spaces that support social, cultural, recreational and educational activities.
- Partner with local environmental groups to run events to support the natural environment.
- Facilitate a network of local artists and creative practitioners for networking, collaboration and capacity building.
- Deliver an annual art exhibition to enable local artists to showcase their artworks.

- Partner and support community and sporting groups to provide programs to enhance health, wellbeing and participation opportunities.
- Partner with volunteering organisations to enhance community participation and extend the reach of community services.

Work to ensure everyone can access the programs, services and information they need to feel included and supported in their community.

- Deliver the Home and Community Care for Younger People (HACCPYP) Program to help people who want to live as independently as possible in their homes and community, but who are not eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- Deliver programs and partnerships to build inclusive attitudes and support initiatives that strengthen the voice, participation and leadership of people with disabilities.
- Facilitate engagement with the local disability community to identify barriers to social participation and support the delivery of all abilities and specialist disability programs, events and activities throughout Council.
- Deliver community forums, newsletters and networking opportunities for people with a disability and carers.
- Facilitate the Whittlesea Community Futures alliance of local services providers to coordinate access to human and health services and advocate for local community needs.
- Partner with service providers to strengthen and simplify mental health referral pathways, ensuring people of all ages can access the support they need.

Community quote:

"When people are drawn into something from a place of fun, then barriers are reduced and people are open to other experiences."



Strategic Priority

| | | | |
|------|---|----|-----|
| SP39 | Partner with First Peoples communities to co-design and deliver programs and activities at the Aboriginal Gathering Place and throughout the municipality that support social, physical, cultural, emotional and wellbeing needs. | HP | DAP |
| SP40 | Facilitate increased awareness and advocate about the risks of gambling harm in the City of Whittlesea. | HP | DAP |
| SP41 | Advocate and facilitate the expansion of local services to support individuals experiencing homelessness and those at risk. | HP | DAP |
| SP42 | Facilitate local services to improve access to fresh, healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food; respond to food insecurity and promote healthy eating. | HP | DAP |
| SP43 | Advocate for and facilitate improved access to mental health services and partner to raise awareness and deliver preventative programs. | HP | DAP |
| SP44 | Support service providers to expand initiatives that promote inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in community life, employment and education. | | DAP |
| SP45 | Deliver a campaign to attract major festivals and events to the region to increase visibility and promote social cohesion. | HP | DAP |
| SP46 | Deliver a revitalisation program for the Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre (PRACC) to enhance its role as a hub for performing arts and creative industries. | HP | DAP |
| SP47 | Facilitate greater community use and activation of Council-owned facilities to encourage a broader range of uses, participation across all life stages and improved accessibility for everyone in the community. | HP | DAP |
| SP48 | Deliver accessible precincts for people living with a significant disability and their carers, including enhanced facilities, sensory spaces and greater flexibility in utilising community facilities. | | DAP |
| SP49 | Partner with other Councils to renew the regional Library Services Agreement and to transition the service to a new entity as required by the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> . | HP | DAP |
| SP50 | Deliver the West Wollert Community Centre providing kindergarten/early years rooms, maternal child health consulting rooms, a community hall, lounge and library space, meeting rooms and a community garden. | HP | DAP |
| SP51 | Deliver the Murnong Community Centre in Donnybrook providing kindergarten/early years rooms, maternal child health consulting rooms, a community hall, lounge and mini-branch library space and meeting rooms. | HP | DAP |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan

Responsibility of others

| Service or program by others | Who |
|---|--|
| Legislation, enforcement of human rights and other equity principles. | Human Rights Commission - Victorian and Federal Government |
| Direct service provision for family violence victim-survivors or affected family members and people using violence (with exception of Children & Family Services including Maternal Child Health Nurses). | Not for profit Victorian and Federal government funded bodies |
| Case management, direct outreach and funding or provision of emergency accommodation for people experiencing homelessness. | Victorian Government |
| Emergency/crisis response i.e. for mental health or alcohol or drug related episodes | Victorian and Federal Government |
| Delivering public housing, social and affordable housing | Victorian and Federal Government |



THEME 11:

I want to contribute to Council decisions and stay up to date. How will you keep me informed, seek my views and make it easy for me to engage with Council?

Our ongoing work

We create opportunities for the community to share what matters most to them and shape Council decisions.

- Facilitate opportunities for the community to provide feedback and share ideas through a variety of methods, such as pop-ups, surveys, Coffee with Council, Council’s engagement website and deliberative engagement opportunities such as focus groups.
- Deliver Council’s Community Engagement Framework, ensuring we hear a variety of voices including young people, First Peoples, people with disability and our multicultural community.
- Facilitate self-determination for First Peoples through culturally informed approaches that ensure active involvement in decisions that impact their communities.
- Facilitate and support the City of Whittlesea Youth Council, providing young people with opportunities to develop leadership skills and actively participate in decision-making.
- Deliver consultation with children, young people and those directly involved in their lives to understand current and emerging needs.
- Facilitate advisory groups and committees to deepen understanding of the diverse experiences within our community and strengthen Council’s connection with different groups.
- Deliver creative ways to engage with the community, including using an engagement vehicle to make it easier for our community to stay informed and have their say on matters that are important to them.
- Facilitate community to attend Council meetings, ask questions and make submissions.
- Facilitate community input on statutory planning matters.

We keep the community informed about Council decisions and share updates on services, programs and facilities available to support residents.

- Provide the community with information about Council services, facilities, programs, projects, events and Council decisions using a variety of methods, including digital and traditional channels to foster participation and build trust between Council and the community.
- Deliver Council communication in a variety of accessible formats so our diverse community have access to the information they need to live safely, stay informed and be involved in the community.
- Deliver real-life examples of how people are using Council services in their daily lives to increase understanding, encourage participation and to build a sense of community.

We provide a variety of ways for community members to interact and seek support from Council.

- Provide the community with options to make enquiries and payments in-person, over the phone and online.
- Deliver surveys to measure how satisfied community members are after engaging with Council and use our learnings to continually improve our customer service.

Strategic Priority

| | | | |
|------|---|----|-----|
| SP52 | Deliver innovative and technology-driven solutions to continually enhance customer experience and improve the effectiveness, transparency and efficiency of Council’s operations. | HP | DAP |
| SP53 | Facilitate the reduction, removal and prevention of barriers for marginalised and at risk groups to contribute to Council decisions. | HP | DAP |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan

Responsibility of others

| Service or program by others | Who |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Emergency response communications | Led by other agencies, amplified by Council |



THEME 12:

As a ratepayer, I expect Council to operate efficiently and effectively. What will you do to ensure resources are being used wisely?

Our ongoing work

We use clear budgeting and monitoring processes to maintain Council’s long-term financial health and ensure the transparent, responsible use of public funds.

- Deliver prudent financial management including responsible budgeting, cost control, and long-term financial planning to maximise value for ratepayers.
- Facilitate the collaboration with Councillors and the community to align financial decisions with strategic priorities.
- Deliver yearly operational budgets by assessing each expense individually, ensuring that all spending is necessary and responds directly to community needs.
- Deliver the Long-Term Financial Plan to demonstrate to the community the long-term financial sustainability of Council.

Our work is guided by legal and Council-approved processes that support good decision-making and ensure everyone’s role is clearly understood.

- Deliver on the requirement to maintain long-term financial viability of the Council with priority in achieving the best outcomes for the community, including future generations.
- Provide gender impact assessments on key initiatives, in line with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, to enhance gender equity in public spaces, Council projects and programs.

- Develop and make available on Council’s website, a four-year professional development training program in line with the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*.
- Deliver ongoing mandatory councillor professional development training annually by December in line with the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*.
- Coordinate and deliver Mayor and Deputy Mayor training annually within one month after their election to those respective positions in line with the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- Annually review the councillor group commitment to work as a team.

We undertake continuous improvement across all Council operations to ensure responsible use of public funds, effective service delivery and the ability to adapt to the changing needs of the community.

- Deliver responsible and best practice investment in, and maintenance of, community assets to support long-term service delivery through the Asset Management Plans.
- Deliver training and practical opportunities for staff to develop their skills and ensure a highly skilled, effective workforce.

Strategic Priority

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|------|---|--------|
| SP54 | Deliver service and innovation reviews to identify ways to improve efficiency, investing in technology like artificial intelligence to boost productivity, optimise resource use and lower costs. | DAP |
| SP55 | Deliver the long-term financial sustainability of Council through the optimisation of resources, infrastructure and asset management. | HP DAP |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan

Community quote:

“I appreciate the difficulties Council faces in balancing the budget and appreciate the challenge this poses to Councillors.”



How we will measure and report progress

In our long-term vision, *Whittlesea 2040: A place for all*, Council has a clear picture of what we want to achieve. It sets the direction of Council's work and future partnerships with the community and others and ensures Council is responding to community need now and in the future.

This Community Plan is our roadmap for creating A place for all in the City of Whittlesea. We are committed to regularly tracking our progress through clear indicators, and reporting back to you, so you can see how your ideas and priorities are being brought to life.

As our city grows and changes, so too will the needs of our community. That's why we'll continue to review and refine this plan through yearly action plans to ensure it remains relevant, responsive and grounded in what matters most to you.

The Whittlesea 2040 indicators are a great way to measure the progress of our Community Plan 2025-2029 and constitute Council's strategic indicators under section 90 (2) (d) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. They form the pinnacle of Council's outcomes and measurement framework which supports strategic alignment, transparency and accountability.

Together, we're building a stronger, more inclusive and connected community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.



Appendix

- APPENDIX 1Our story and suburbs
- APPENDIX 2Alignment with Integrated Planning Framework (IPF)
- APPENDIX 3Supporting evidence
- APPENDIX 4Linkages to the Municipality Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Disability Action Plan

Scan to access Appendix 1-4



APPENDIX 1



APPENDIX 2



APPENDIX 3



APPENDIX 4



**COUNCIL OFFICES**

Civic Centre
25 Ferres Boulevard
South Morang VIC 3752

Opening hours

Monday – Friday, 8.30am-5pm

Whittlesea Services Hub

63 Church Street,
Whittlesea VIC 3752

Opening hours

Monday – Friday, 9.30am-5pm

Telephone 03 9217 2170

National Relay Service 133 677
(ask for 9217 2170)

Postal address

Locked Bag 1, Bundoora MDC, VIC 3083

 info@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

 whittlesea.vic.gov.au

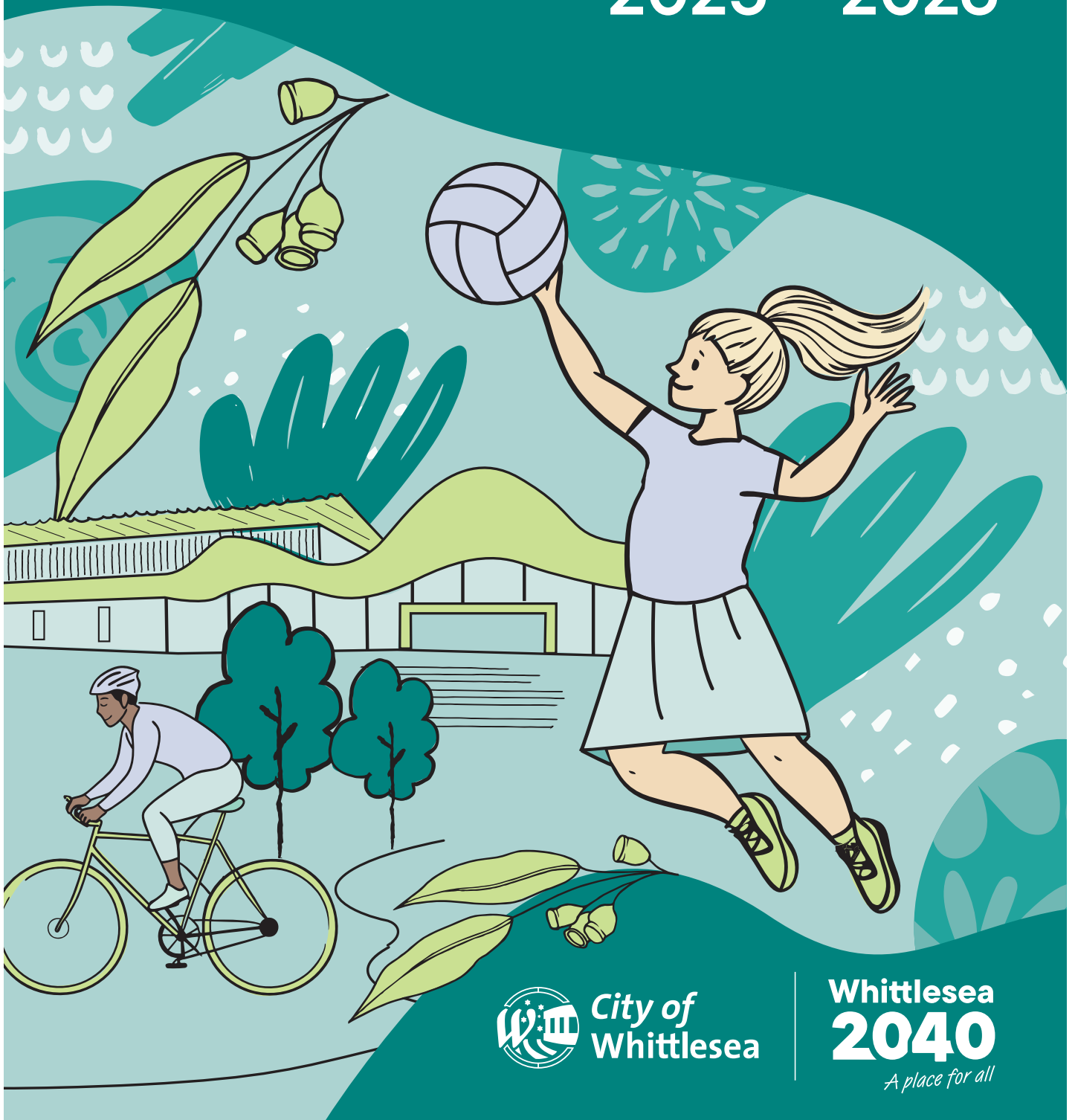
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City of Whittlesea

DRAFT COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

2025 – 2026



City of
Whittlesea

Whittlesea
2040
A place for all



Artwork © Mandy Nicholson, 2017

Acknowledgement

We recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

The lands along the Birrarung River and its tributaries -the Merri, Edgars and Darebin Creeks and the Plenty River were home to the Wurundjeri Willum and Taungurung Peoples. These lands offered more than just sustenance; they provided fresh water, food, shelter and a thriving environment rich with fish and birdlife.

For countless generations, these lands and waterways were not only places of living, but of gathering. Cultural ceremonies, trade and important business were conducted at sacred sites -places that continue to hold deep cultural and spiritual significance today. More than seventy of these sites remain in the City of Whittlesea, along with many scarred trees, standing as living testaments to an enduring connection to Country.

In acknowledging this heritage, we honour the knowledge, resilience and custodianship of the Traditional Owners, whose care for this land stretches back tens of thousands of years and continues today.

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About this plan

The Community Action Plan 2025–26 (CAP) sets out the actions Council will focus on delivering in the first year of the Community Plan 2025–29. The Community Action Plan 2025–26 is the first annual supplement to the Community Plan 2025–29. It articulates the community and internal facing outcomes that set our strategic direction and these actions are prioritised for delivery in the financial year 2025–26. The Action Plan plays a pivotal role in working towards the vision and strategic direction embedded in Whittlesea 2040 and the Community Plan 2025–29.



Council’s roles



Deliverer/provider/partner:
Council directly delivers services and infrastructure, either on its own, or in partnership with other levels of government, the community or private organisations.



Regulator/statutory authority/monitor:
Council enforces laws, policies and regulations that maintain public safety, health and wellbeing.



Funder/enabler:
Council provides financial and/or in-kind support to organisations that are better positioned to manage or deliver specific services or infrastructure.



Facilitator:
Council facilitates partnerships, connects stakeholders and ensures that local needs are heard and addressed.



Planner:
Council develops and implements plans that ensure sustainable, well-organised and quality growth and change in the community. This includes land use, housing, transport, town centres, business precincts and community facilities.



Advocate:
Council represents the interests of the community to other levels of government or other stakeholders. This could involve making the case and negotiating funding, policy changes or programs that benefit the local community.

Connected Community



KEY DIRECTION 1

A socially cohesive community

| Actions | | |
|--|--|--------|
| Outcome: All members of our community feel that they belong, are valued and respected | | |
| Strategic priority 17: | Deliver Council's Fair Access Policy to ensure women and girls can equally use local sports facilities and feel supported to get involved in sport and recreation. | HP DAP |
| Action 1: | Deliver education modules to sports clubs and undertake an Expression of Interest for usage of the Regional Sports Precinct as part of the implementation of Council's Fair Access Policy. | |
| Strategic priority 44: | Support service providers to expand initiatives that promote inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in community life, employment and education | DAP |
| Action 2: | Support service providers to develop a work readiness program that will engage local employers and community organisations to build awareness and capacity to create viable work and volunteer opportunities for young people with disability. | |
| Outcome: Our community strengthens connections between diverse cultures | | |
| Strategic priority 4: | Deliver and facilitate culturally safe services and programs for First Peoples children and their families, suited to local needs. | HP DAP |
| Action 3: | Provide First Peoples children and their families with culturally responsive local family engagement opportunities. | |
| Outcome: Our community shares stories and learns from one another | | |
| Strategic priority 49: | Partner with other Councils to renew the regional Library Services Agreement and to transition the service to a new entity as required by the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> . | HP DAP |
| Action 4: | Continue to consider the future arrangements for the delivery of Library Services, including opportunities for collaboration with other Councils. | |
| Outcome: Our community values and respects First Peoples peoples and celebrates their rich, diverse cultures | | |
| Strategic priority 39: | Partner with First Peoples communities to co-design and deliver programs and activities at the Aboriginal Gathering Place throughout the municipality that support social, physical, cultural, emotional and wellbeing needs. | HP DAP |
| Action 5: | Partner with First Peoples communities to co-design and establish programs and activities at the Aboriginal Gathering Place. | |

KEY DIRECTION 2

A healthy and safe community

| Actions | | |
|--|--|--------|
| Outcome: Our community is healthy, well and physically active | | |
| Strategic priority 19: | Deliver and operate the Regional Sports Precinct in Mernda consisting of an indoor stadium with multi-purpose courts, lit outdoor netball courts, a netball pavilion, car parking, pathways, lighting, landscaping and wetlands. | HP DAP |
| Action 6: | Continue construction of Stage 2 of the Regional Sports Precinct including the indoor stadium and outdoor netball courts. | |
| Strategic priority 20: | Deliver the new Wollert Sports Reserve consisting of playing fields with lighting, multi-purpose sporting spaces, playground, car parking and a community pavilion. | HP DAP |
| Action 7: | Commence the design of a new sports reserve in Wollert (Edgars Creek). | |
| Strategic priority 21: | Deliver the Huskisson Reserve Multi-Purpose Facility in Lalor consisting of new multi-purpose community pavilion and redevelopment of the existing tennis courts into new courts with lighting, car parking, pathways and landscaping. | HP DAP |
| Action 8: | Commence the redevelopment of the Huskisson Recreation Reserve sports facilities with fencing and lighting, a new community sports pavilion, additional car parking, connecting paths and landscaping. | |
| Strategic priority 22: | Deliver the new Edgars Creek Recreation Reserve in Wollert consisting of a new multi-purpose community pavilion, an additional oval, outdoor sport courts, open space and a recreation area and car parking. | HP DAP |
| Action 9: | Complete design of a natural turf sports oval and synthetic cricket wicket with lighting, netball courts with fencing and lighting, community sports pavilion, additional car parking, connecting paths, passive open space and landscaping. | |
| Strategic priority 23: | Deliver the new Ashley Park Recreation Reserve in Doreen consisting of playing fields with lighting, a new multi-purpose community pavilion, playground and car parking. | HP DAP |
| Action 10: | Complete design of soccer pitches with lighting, community sports pavilion, playground, additional car parking, connecting paths, passive open space and landscaping. | |
| Strategic priority 42: | Facilitate local services to improve access to fresh, healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate food; respond to food insecurity and promote healthy eating. | HP DAP |
| Action 11: | Advocate and partner for better access to fresh, healthy, safe, affordable and culturally appropriate food systems to increase healthy eating. | |
| Outcome: Our children and young people are supported to thrive | | |
| Strategic priority 3: | Partner with the Victorian Government and stakeholders to implement the Best Start, Best Life Reform, including free kindergarten for 3- and 4-year-old children and extending kindergarten hours. | HP DAP |
| Action 12: | Develop a Kindergarten Position Paper for Council endorsement that outlines Council's future role in implementing the Victorian Government's Best Start, Best Life Reform. | |
| Strategic priority 5: | Advocate for funding from other levels of government to establish a dedicated youth hub and create additional youth-friendly spaces where young people can thrive. | HP DAP |
| Action 13: | Advocate for funding to develop a dedicated youth hub and youth-friendly spaces for middle years and young people, providing access to services, programs and support. | |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan

KEY DIRECTION 2

A healthy and safe community

| | | |
|---|--|--------|
| Outcome: Our children and young people are supported to thrive | | |
| Strategic priority 50: | Deliver the West Wollert Community Centre providing kindergarten/early years rooms, maternal child health consulting rooms, a community hall, lounge and library space, meeting rooms and a community garden. | HP DAP |
| Action 14: | Continue construction of the West Wollert Community Centre. | |
| Strategic priority 51: | Deliver the Murnong Community Centre in Donnybrook providing kindergarten/early years rooms, maternal child health consulting rooms, a community hall, lounge and mini-branch library space and meeting rooms. | HP DAP |
| Action 15: | Complete the construction of the Murnong Community Centre and commence operations of the new community facility including a library. | |
| Outcome: Our community experiences financial wellbeing | | |
| Strategic priority 40: | Facilitate increased awareness and advocate about the risks of gambling harm in the City of Whittlesea. | HP DAP |
| Action 16: | Partner with health providers to develop local awareness about gambling harm. | |
| Strategic priority 41: | Advocate for and facilitate the expansion of local services for individuals experiencing homelessness and those at risk. | HP DAP |
| Action 17: | Partner with external agencies to pilot a homelessness outreach program. | |
| Outcome: Our community feels safe and supported | | |
| Strategic priority 43: | Advocate for and facilitate improved access to mental health services and partner to raise awareness and deliver preventative programs. | HP DAP |
| Action 18: | Partner with local organisations to increase access to services that are culturally safe, inclusive and accessible to diverse communities including marginalised groups. | |
| Strategic priority 48: | Deliver accessible precincts for people living with a significant disability and their carers, including enhanced facilities, sensory spaces and greater flexibility in utilising community facilities. | DAP |
| Action 19: | Deliver a feasibility study on the development of an accessible neighbourhood pilot project to better meet the needs for people living with a significant disability and their carers. | |
| Outcome: Our community experiences healthy, equal and respectful relationships and live free from abuse and family violence | | |
| Strategic priority 30: | Advocate for equality and partner on initiatives that build a safe, respectful community with zero tolerance for all forms of violence, including family, gender-based, racial, faith-based and LGBTIQA+ violence. | HP DAP |
| Action 20: | Partner with local health services to pilot a program that engages men to help stop gender-based violence and promote gender equity. | |
| Outcome: Our community is prepared and able to respond and recover from emergencies | | |
| Strategic priority 29: | Partner with external emergency and welfare services to explore the feasibility of a Safer Neighbourhoods Expo to enhance community education and awareness of available services. | HP DAP |
| Action 21: | Deliver a feasibility assessment for a Safer Neighbourhoods Expo to enhance community education and awareness of available services. | |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan



Liveable Neighbourhoods



KEY DIRECTION 1

Smart, connected transport network

| Actions | | |
|---|---|--------|
| Outcome: Our community has options to easily travel where they need to go | | |
| Strategic priority 6: | Deliver the Yan Yean Pipe Track and Edgars Creek Trail shared paths to increase recreation opportunities and sustainable transport options in line with the City of Whittlesea Walking and Cycling Plan and Northern Trails Strategy. | HP DAP |
| Action 22: | Complete design for Edgars Creek Shared Path from Main Street to Kingsway Drive, Lalor. | |
| Action 23: | Commence construction of the Yan Yean Shared Path from Childs Road to Centenary Drive, Mill Park. | |
| Strategic priority 8: | Advocate for expanded transportation options and improvements to the transport network, including road upgrades, enhanced shared pathways and increased public transport, such as the Wollert Rail. | HP DAP |
| Action 24: | Commence the signalisation of the intersection of Findon Road and The Great Eastern Way to improve safety, ease congestion and improve local access to surrounding community facilities. | |

KEY DIRECTION 2

Well designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres

| Actions | | |
|--|--|--------|
| Outcome: Our neighbourhoods are attractive and desirable places to live, work and play | | |
| Strategic priority 18: | Deliver the Granite Hills Major Community Park featuring an adventure park and playground, open-air pavilion, public barbecues, giant slides, nature and water play and public toilets with a Changing Places facility. | HP DAP |
| Action 25: | Complete the Granite Hills Playground featuring an adventure park and playground, open-air pavilion, public barbecues, giant slides, nature and water play, boardwalks and connecting paths, landscaping and public toilets with a Changing Places facility. | |
| Strategic priority 28: | Deliver the Suburb Place Frameworks to enhance the municipality's distinct character, improve safety, enhance public spaces and upgrade infrastructure. | HP DAP |
| Action 26: | Complete the Mill Park Place Framework identifying opportunities to address the distinct needs for the area, including safer streets, enhanced public places and improved infrastructure and develop an implementation action plan. | |
| Strategic priority 31: | Deliver revitalised and upgraded neighbourhood streetscapes and shopping precincts to enhance accessibility, local character and support local spending. | HP DAP |
| Action 27: | Commence the upgrade of The Boulevard Shops in Thomastown including tree planting, garden beds, improved pedestrian footpaths, reconfigured car parking, raised pedestrian crossings, road resurfacing and improved drainage. | |
| Strategic priority 32: | Deliver a review of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to ensure planning policies and controls achieve high quality design and sustainable development outcomes. | HP DAP |
| Action 28: | Commence a review of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to ensure planning policies and controls continue to deliver high quality design and sustainable development outcomes. | |
| Outcome: Our neighbourhoods are well-designed and enable all people to connect | | |
| Strategic priority 24: | Deliver the staged construction of VR Michael Reserve Master Plan in Lalor providing an upgraded dog off leash area, central lawn, circuit paths, toilet facilities, exercise fitness station and car parking. | HP DAP |
| Action 29: | Commence the design of dog off-leash area, playground and picnic facilities, new public toilet, lighting, upgraded access road and car park, connecting paths, passive open space and landscaping at VR Michael Reserve. | |
| Strategic priority 25: | Deliver the staged construction of Whittlesea Park Master Plan in Whittlesea Township providing trees, play spaces, circuit paths, bridges and car parking. | HP DAP |
| Action 30: | Continue upgrading pedestrian bridges over the Plenty River and the construction of connecting paths. | |
| Strategic priority 26: | Deliver the staged construction of Lalor Recreation Reserve Master Plan in Lalor, Lowalde Master Plan in Epping, Nick Ascenzo Reserve in Thomastown, Whittlesea Public Gardens in Lalor and Mernda Recreation Reserve Master Plan in Mernda. | HP DAP |
| Action 31: | Commence design of the park improvements at Nick Ascenzo Reserve. | |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan



KEY DIRECTION 3

Housing for diverse needs

| Actions | | |
|---|--|--------|
| Outcome: Our community has the right mix and supply of housing to provide choices for all | | |
| Strategic priority 33: | Deliver an affordable housing plan which defines Council’s role as well as future projects that deliver diverse housing opportunities for our community. | HP DAP |
| Action 32: | Deliver an affordable housing plan which defines Council’s role and identifies associated actions over the short, medium and longer term that deliver diverse housing opportunities for our community. | |
| Strategic priority 34: | Deliver the Ashline Street Affordable Housing Project in Wollert, partnering with a community housing organisation to provide affordable homes and a community park. | HP DAP |
| Action 33: | Commence construction of Ashline Street Affordable Housing Project in Wollert, providing affordable homes and a community pocket park. | |
| Strategic priority 35: | Deliver the Johnsons Road residential development in Mernda, comprising at least 35 homes, including affordable housing, open spaces and pathways linking to the Plenty River. | HP DAP |
| Action 34: | Complete the design and commence the construction of the Johnsons Road residential development in Mernda, including affordable housing. | |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan



Strong Local Economy



KEY DIRECTION 1

Increased local employment

| Actions | |
|---|---|
| Outcome: Our municipality attracts investment to provide more local jobs to match population growth | |
| Strategic priority 38: | Advocate for the creation of local jobs and other community benefits as outcomes from the planning and development of the Intermodal Freight Precinct in Beveridge, which on completion will be the largest intermodal precinct in Australia transforming the nation's supply chain and providing economic benefits to the region. DAP |
| Action 35: | Advocate as part of the planning for the Intermodal Freight Precinct in Beveridge, led by the Federal Government, including for enhanced environmental outcomes, accessible open space, protection of heritage assets, upgrades to the road network and increased employment land supply. |
| Outcome: Our economy is inclusive and accessible for all | |
| Strategic priority 45: | Deliver a campaign to attract major festivals and events to the region to increase visibility and promote social cohesion. HP DAP |
| Action 36: | Develop an industry prospectus to promote local function and event spaces through tourism networks and support PRACC to position itself as a venue of choice for the performing arts and creative industries. |

KEY DIRECTION 3

Successful, innovative local businesses

| Actions | |
|---|---|
| Outcome: Our economy has a diverse base that fosters small business development | |
| Strategic priority 37: | Develop and implement a new Strong Local Economy Strategy to support the growth of the local business community, promote investment, local employment and education opportunities, enhancing social connections and economic sustainability. HP DAP |
| Action 37: | Develop a new Strong Local Economy Strategy. |
| Action 38: | Develop a night-time economy plan to respond to current and continued growth in the municipality. |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan



Sustainable Environment



KEY DIRECTION 1

Valued natural landscapes and biodiversity

| Actions | |
|---|--------|
| Outcome: Our landscapes, waters and species are protected, improved and valued | |
| Strategic priority 16: Deliver the revitalisation of Peter Hopper Lake in Mill Park to improve water quality and habitat for flora and fauna and enhance local area. | HP DAP |
| Action 39: Complete the rehabilitation of Peter Hopper Lake and commence the refilling of the lake. | |

KEY DIRECTION 2

Climate ready

| Actions | |
|---|--------|
| Outcome: Our city's green cover is enhanced to reduce the risk of extreme heat | |
| Strategic priority 11: Deliver the City Forest program, planting more than 60,000 trees and working towards a target of an additional tree per resident across the municipality, to increase canopy cover, decrease urban heat and enhance biodiversity. | HP DAP |
| Action 40: Deliver the annual tree planting programs for main roads, residential streets, parks, creek corridors and conservation reserves. | |

KEY DIRECTION 3

Leaders in clean, sustainable living

| Actions | |
|--|--------|
| Outcome: Our city becomes a net zero emissions municipality | |
| Strategic priority 9: Deliver and advocate for initiatives that help people and businesses make homes and workplaces more comfortable, energy-efficient and environmentally friendly. | HP DAP |
| Action 41: Partner with providers to deliver a pilot household program for energy upgrades. | |
| Strategic priority 10: Provide additional opportunities to generate local carbon offsets on Council owned and private land to help reduce municipal wide carbon emissions. | HP DAP |
| Action 42: Commence the bunjil nganga Parkland (Quarry Hills) tree planting program. | |
| Outcome: Our city is low waste and transitions to a circular economy | |
| Strategic priority 13: Deliver a targeted program to eliminate rubbish dumping, including stronger enforcement, shorter wait times for collection and community education on waste minimisation, illegal dumping and recycling. | HP DAP |
| Action 43: Enhance the hard waste collection service including the trial of a home collection service for whitegoods, e-waste, clothing and small household items. | |

HP Health Plan DAP Disability Action Plan



High Performing Organisation



KEY DIRECTION 1

Driving better community outcomes

| Actions | | |
|---|---|--------|
| Outcome: Our community finds it easy to interact with Council | | |
| Strategic priority 52: | Deliver innovative and technology-driven solutions to continually enhance customer experience and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Council's operations. | HP DAP |
| Action 44: | Increase our digital offering to enable self-service and make it easier for our community to interact with us online. | |

KEY DIRECTION 2

More informed council decisions

| Actions | | |
|---|---|--------|
| Outcome: Our communities engage with us on issues and activities that affect them | | |
| Strategic priority 53: | Facilitate the reduction, removal and prevention of barriers for marginalised and at risk groups to contribute to Council decisions. | HP DAP |
| Action 45: | Establish a Disability Advisory Committee to facilitate communication and consultation between people with disabilities and Council on matters that affect their lives. | |

KEY DIRECTION 3

More cost-effective investment and engaged workforce

| Actions | | |
|--|---|-----|
| Outcome: Our community is confident that City of Whittlesea can fund community needs in the future | | |
| Strategic priority 54: | Deliver service and innovation reviews to identify ways to improve efficiency, investing in technology like artificial intelligence to boost productivity, optimise resource use and lower costs. | DAP |
| Action 46: | Commence the review of Council Fees and Charges, in accordance with Council's Pricing policy to ensure Council services are financially sustainable. | |
| Action 47: | Begin a review of Council services that considers financial sustainability and alignment with Council priorities. | |



Appendix 4: Linkages to the Municipality Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Disability Action Plan

| ID | Strategic Priority | Health Plan | | | | | | DAP | | | |
|------|---|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|-------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| | | Climate change | Family violence | Social connection | Healthy eating | Active living | Homelessness | Goods | Employment | Inclusion | Discrimination |
| SP1 | Deliver and facilitate expansion of programs and services that keep older residents independent, connected and supported close to home. | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | |
| SP2 | Deliver the commencement of Home Care Packages to help older residents stay in their own homes, live independently and enjoy a high quality of life as their needs change. | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | |
| SP3 | Partner with the Victorian Government and stakeholders to implement the Best Start, Best Life Reform, including free kindergarten for 3- and 4-year-old children and extending kindergarten hours. | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP4 | Deliver and facilitate culturally safe services and programs for First Peoples children and their families, suited to local needs. | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP5 | Advocate for funding from other levels of government to establish a dedicated youth hub and create additional youth-friendly spaces where young people can thrive. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP6 | Deliver the Yan Yean Pipe Track and Edgars Creek Trail shared paths to increase recreation opportunities and sustainable transport options in line with the City of Whittlesea Walking and Cycling Plan and Northern Trails Strategy. | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP7 | Deliver a Parking Policy to manage the allocation and regulation of parking, balancing the needs of all users while supporting Council's safety, efficiency and environmental sustainability goals. | | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP8 | Advocate for expanded transportation options and improvements to the transport network, including road upgrades, enhanced shared pathways and increased public transport, such as the Wollert Rail. | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP9 | Deliver and advocate for initiatives that help people and businesses make homes and workplaces more comfortable, energy-efficient and environmentally friendly. | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| SP10 | Provide additional opportunities to generate local carbon offsets on Council owned and private land to help reduce municipal wide carbon emissions. | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| SP11 | Deliver the City Forest program, planting more than 60,000 trees and working towards a target of an additional tree per resident across the municipality, to increase canopy cover, decrease urban heat and enhance biodiversity. | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| SP12 | Deliver new stormwater harvesting at Council-owned sports fields and facilities to reduce potable water reliance, enhance water conservation and generate savings. | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| SP13 | Deliver a targeted program to eliminate rubbish dumping, including stronger enforcement, shorter wait times for collection and community education on waste minimisation, illegal dumping and recycling. | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP14 | Deliver the food and garden waste service to all households in the municipality and trial new waste and recycling collection services for waste such as soft plastics. | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| SP15 | Deliver increased reuse and repurposing of materials in Council's asset maintenance and renewal programs. | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| SP16 | Deliver the revitalisation of Peter Hopper Lake in Mill Park to improve water quality and habitat for flora and fauna and enhance local area. | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| SP17 | Deliver Council's Fair Access Policy to ensure women and girls can equally use local sports facilities and feel supported to get involved in sport and recreation. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP18 | Deliver the Granite Hills Major Community Park featuring an adventure park and playground, open-air pavilion, public barbecues, giant slides, nature and water play and public toilets with a Changing Places facility. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |

| ID | Strategic Priority | Health Plan | | | | | | DAP | | | |
|------|--|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|-------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| | | Climate change | Family violence | Social connection | Healthy eating | Active living | Homelessness | Goods | Employment | Inclusion | Discrimination |
| SP19 | Deliver and operate the Regional Sports Precinct in Mernda consisting of an indoor stadium with multi-purpose courts, lit outdoor netball courts, a netball pavilion, car parking, pathways, lighting, landscaping and wetlands. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP20 | Deliver the new Wollert Sports Reserve consisting of playing fields with lighting, multi-purpose sporting spaces, playground, car parking and a community pavilion. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP21 | Deliver the Huskisson Reserve Multi-Purpose Facility in Lalor consisting of a new multi-purpose community pavilion, redevelopment of the existing tennis courts into new courts with lighting, car parking, pathways and landscaping. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP22 | Deliver the new Edgars Creek Recreation Reserve in Wollert consisting of a new multi-purpose community pavilion, an additional oval, outdoor sport courts, open space and a recreation area and car parking. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP23 | Deliver the new Ashley Park Recreation Reserve in Doreen consisting of playing fields with lighting, a new multi-purpose community pavilion, playground and car parking. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP24 | Deliver the staged construction of VR Michael Reserve Master Plan in Lalor providing an upgraded dog off leash area, central lawn, circuit paths, toilet facilities, exercise fitness station and car parking. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP25 | Deliver the staged construction of Whittlesea Park Master Plan in Whittlesea Township providing trees, play spaces, circuit paths, bridges and car parking. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP26 | Deliver the staged construction of Lalor Recreation Reserve Master Plan in Lalor, Lowalde Recreation Reserve Master Plan in Epping, Nick Ascenzo Reserve in Thomastown,Whittlesea Public Gardens in Lalor and Mernda Recreation Reserve Master Plan in Mernda. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP27 | Deliver improved lighting of shared paths to provide the community with extended hours for exercise and recreation, enhance perceptions of safety and provide increased sustainable transport options. | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP28 | Deliver the Suburb Place Frameworks to enhance the municipality’s distinct character, improve safety, enhance public spaces and upgrade infrastructure. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP29 | Partner with external emergency and welfare services to explore the feasibility of a Safer Neighbourhoods Expo to enhance community education and awareness of available services. | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP30 | Advocate for equality and partner on initiatives that build a safe, respectful community with zero tolerance for all forms of violence, including family, gender-based, racial, faith-based and LGBTIQ+ violence. | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP31 | Deliver revitalised and upgraded neighbourhood streetscapes and shopping precincts to enhance accessibility and local character and support local spending. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP32 | Deliver a review of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to ensure planning policies and controls achieve high quality design and sustainable development outcomes. | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP33 | Deliver an affordable housing plan which defines Council’s role and proposes future projects that deliver diverse housing opportunities for our community. | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP34 | Deliver the Ashline Street Affordable Housing Project in Wollert, partnering with a community housing organisation to provide affordable homes and a community park. | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP35 | Deliver the Johnsons Road residential development in Mernda, comprising at least 35 homes, including affordable housing, open spaces and pathways linking to the Plenty River. | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP36 | Deliver feasibility assessments for key future infrastructure for our growing community. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

| ID | | Strategic Priority | Health Plan | | | | | | DAP | | | |
|------|---|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|-------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| | | | Climate change | Family violence | Social connection | Healthy eating | Active living | Homelessness | Goods | Employment | Inclusion | Discrimination |
| SP37 | Develop and implement a new Strong Local Economy Strategy to support the growth of the local business community, promote investment, local employment and education opportunities, enhancing social connections and economic sustainability. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP38 | Advocate for the creation of local jobs and other community benefits as outcomes from the planning and development of the Intermodal Freight Precinct in Beveridge which on completion will be the largest intermodal precinct in Australia transforming the nation’s supply chain and providing economic benefits to the region. | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| SP39 | Partner with First Peoples communities to co-design and deliver programs and activities at the Aboriginal Gathering Place and throughout the municipality that support social, physical, cultural, emotional and wellbeing needs. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP40 | Facilitate increased awareness and advocate about the risks of gambling harm in the City of Whittlesea. | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| SP41 | Advocate and facilitate the expansion of local services to support individuals experiencing homelessness and those at risk. | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP42 | Facilitate local services to improve access to fresh, healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food; respond to food insecurity and promote healthy eating. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| SP43 | Advocate for and facilitate improved access to mental health services and partner to raise awareness and deliver preventative programs. | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP44 | Support service providers to expand initiatives that promote inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in community life, employment and education. | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP45 | Deliver a campaign to attract major festivals and events to the region to increase visibility and promote social cohesion. | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP46 | Deliver a revitalisation program for the Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre (PRACC) to enhance its role as a hub for performing arts and creative industries. | | | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | |
| SP47 | Facilitate greater community use and activation of Council-owned facilities to encourage a broader range of uses, participation across all life stages and improved accessibility for everyone in the community. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP48 | Deliver accessible precincts for people living with a significant disability and their careers, including enhanced facilities, sensory spaces and greater flexibility in utilising community facilities. | | | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP49 | Partner with other Councils to renew the regional Library Services Agreement and to transition the service to a new entity as required by the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> . | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP50 | Deliver the West Wollert Community Centre providing kindergarten/early years rooms, maternal child health consulting rooms, a community hall, lounge and library space, meeting rooms and a community garden. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP51 | Deliver the Murnong Community Centre in Donnybrook providing kindergarten/early years rooms, maternal child health consulting rooms, a community hall, lounge and mini-branch library space and meeting rooms. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP52 | Deliver innovative and technology-driven solutions to continually enhance customer experience and improve the effectiveness, transparency and efficiency of Council’s operations. | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP53 | Facilitate the reduction, removal and prevention of barriers for marginalised and at risk groups to contribute to Council decisions. | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP54 | Deliver service and innovation reviews to identify ways to improve efficiency, investing in technology like artificial intelligence to boost productivity, optimise resource use and lower costs. | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| SP55 | Deliver the long-term financial sustainability of Council through the optimisation of resources, infrastructure and asset management. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

26

DRAFT Community Action Plan



**COUNCIL OFFICES**

Civic Centre
25 Ferres Boulevard
South Morang VIC 3752

Opening hours

Monday – Friday, 8.30am-5pm

Whittlesea Services Hub

63 Church Street,
Whittlesea VIC 3752

Opening hours

Monday – Friday, 9.30am-5pm

Telephone 03 9217 2170

National Relay Service 133 677
(ask for 9217 2170)

Postal address

Locked Bag 1, Bundoora MDC, VIC 3083

 info@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

 whittlesea.vic.gov.au

 facebook.com/cityofwhittlesea

 [CityWhittlesea](https://www.instagram.com/CityWhittlesea)

Appendix 1: Our story and suburbs



City of
Whittlesea

Whittlesea
2040
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Our story

Our distinctive landscape

The City of Whittlesea owes its distinctive landscape to a location spanning the boundary of two major geological regions of Victoria.

The south and west of the municipality is underlain by the eastern extent of the vast volcanic plain where the most recent eruption of Mount Fraser 800,00 years ago cloaked the country in lava flows.

The north and east are defined by the geologically older, lower relief of the eastern uplands. The steep slopes of the Great Dividing Range are situated in our north, and the isolated horseshoe-shaped elevations of Granite Hills and Quarry Hills located in the centre of the City.

Traversing through the municipality from north-south are key waterways including the Plenty River which has cut a gorge through the lava fill from the Mt Fraser eruption, and the Merri, Darebin and Edgars creeks which are all fed by a number of smaller creeks, streams and tributaries.

Aboriginal cultural landscape

Aboriginal people have occupied Victoria from about 35,000 years ago. The Wurundjeri Willum clan of Kulin Nations people are Traditional Owners of 99.83% of the area now known as City of Whittlesea. Small areas of our northeast, where isolated slopes of the Great Dividing Range face the Murray River drainage, are lands of the Taungurung people. Thousands of archaeological sites are registered for the Whittlesea local government area including subsurface remains, stone and glass artefact scatters, hearths, ancestral burials and Aboriginal scarred trees

Aboriginal connections to Country then and now reflect deep, indivisible associations between land, people and culture. Physical attributes of land and environment, management practices, resource exploitation and subsistence activities combine in a wholistic cultural landscape permeated with Aboriginal oral traditions, ancestral ties, social and cultural behaviours, shared cultural norms and spiritual beliefs. Family groups lived, travelled and gathered across Country, following a cycle of six seasons each year.

Historic cultural period

Beginning from the 1820's, early explorers ventured out along the Merri Creek to the area now known as the City of Whittlesea including Hume and Hovell in 1824, Batman in 1835 and JT Gellibrand in 1836. In 1837, George Sherwin established a sheep station in Upper Plenty, the area surrounding present-day Whittlesea township and in 1838 the Whittlesea and Geelong areas were the first two regions of Victoria to be subdivided for major land sales.

The Plenty and Merri valleys were soon recognised as major agricultural regions of the Port Phillip district from the 1860s, first as centres of wheat growing and flour production, and later as commercial scale suppliers of whole milk from farms located from Thomastown to Epping and Wollert.

The township of Whittlesea was surveyed in 1853 and a rail line connected the town to the south from 1889, until it was removed in 1959. In 1850, the arrival of five German Wendish families who settled along Edgars Creek in Thomastown established the Westgarthtown enclave of houses, a cemetery and a Lutheran church by 1856.

In 1857, the Yan Yean Reservoir and water supply system was completed to supply the burgeoning Melbourne with water, an engineering marvel of its day.

The City of Whittlesea is also noteworthy for the intensity of dry stone walls surviving in areas from Epping through to Wollert and Donnybrook, a direct consequence of land management practices of small farmers who settled after 1850. The walls reflect the agrarian history of our City and are some of our most enduring historic cultural heritage assets.

Growth and Diversity

In the time period after World War Two, suburbs including Thomastown, Lalor and Bundoora became home to many new migrants fleeing Europe for a better life. This has set the tone for the diverse multicultural population in the City of Whittlesea today.

Since the approval of the State Government's Plenty Valley Strategic Plan in the 1980s which designated areas in South Morang, Mernda/Doreen and Whittlesea Township for future residential growth, the City of Whittlesea has been on a defining journey of managing urban growth and change.

The addition of the State significant Cooper Street Employment Precinct in Epping and major residential precincts of Epping North, Wollert and Donnybrook in the western corridor of the municipality in the 2000's has only accelerated the growth in recent years.

This has resulted in the City's population growing by over 100% since 2001 and so diverse that 45 per cent of our residents speak a language other than English at home. Our newer growth areas are dominated by young families moving in whilst our more established suburbs have many older families and couples.

The City of Whittlesea has been at the forefront of strategic planning for its new communities and actively engaged in shaping the City's future. This has included leading the structure planning for its growth areas and key activity centre, leveraging development to deliver community benefits. This is highlighted by the development of the bunjil nganga Parkland Quarry Hills, an open space of regional significance which will ultimately be over 1000 hectares in size. It will protect significant ecological and cultural values and provide significant open space for both the growing population of the City of Whittlesea and for visitors across greater Melbourne.

Council has also been a strong advocate for affordable housing to meet an increasing need for more affordable homes in our growing community and has successfully incorporated affordable housing outcomes in a number of precincts.

As the population has grown, Council has also been at the forefront of planning for new employment precincts and local job opportunities. We have prioritised the designation and planning for dedicated employment areas in Thomastown and Epping and within our town centres. This has supported our residents having opportunities to work close to where they live. Improvements to the transport network highlighted by rail line extensions to South Morang in 2012 and Mernda in 2018 have also provided our residents with greater access to jobs and services further afield.

We have also ensured the neighbourhoods are well designed to ensure that residents have easy access to local services including schools, shops, community centres and open space. The planning and design for new areas has sought to create walkable town centres, attractive streetscapes, residential neighbourhoods characterised by tree lined boulevards, active street frontages, high quality built form and protection of Whittlesea's significant environmental and heritage assets.

Protecting our Environment and Heritage

The City of Whittlesea has an incredibly rich landscape and heritage, highly valued by our community. As growth has occurred, we have needed to balance competing interests and look to maximise opportunities to achieve the best possible outcomes for our current and future residents and the environment. Our environment and heritage continues to be what makes the City of Whittlesea special and which connects the community to the places where they live.

Our majestic River Red Gums, many hundreds of years old, are our signature landscape character element. The creeks and waterways flow through the municipality providing corridors of biodiversity habitat and recreational pathways. Our remnant grasslands, forests and eucalypt woodlands are home to many endangered species and ecological communities.

Our ancient stony knolls and dry stone walls characterise the rich heritage of this place. Our rural and green wedge areas provide panoramic landscapes, areas of environmental significance and intersected with agriculture and other rural activities. And our distinctive neighbourhoods reflect the waves of development, the people who live there and the environmental and heritage features unique to each place.

Our Future

The future is becoming increasingly dynamic. As our growth areas continue to develop our established areas will begin to regenerate. This is likely to see a densification of our established suburbs, which will see more people living close to existing services, facilities and transport options. This will consequentially place additional pressure on our existing infrastructure and evolve the appearance of our neighbourhoods.

As our suburbs grow, we will aim to ensure that new development is sustainable, integrates with its surroundings and is of high quality. We will also continue to advocate and support opportunities to provide more well located affordable housing for those in our community who need it. New and expanded employment precincts such as the Beveridge Intermodal Precinct and the Epping Activity Centre will provide many more opportunities for people to work locally within the municipality. We will also take action to increase tree canopy coverage, enhance our open space areas and improve our transport network to make it easier for people to get around our City.

While managing growth and change will continue to be a significant challenge facing the community, the impact of short to medium term issues such as changes in government policy, demographic change, fiscal constraints and increasing environmental risks such as bushfire and flooding, coupled with broader strategic issues including climate change and technological change, will add to the complexity.

It will necessitate finding and developing innovative solutions and partnerships to support the future quality of life for our community and to protect our natural environment and significant assets.

Our Municipality

The City of Whittlesea is located in Melbourne's northern suburbs, about 20 kilometres from the city centre. It is one of Melbourne's largest municipalities, covering a land area of approximately 490 square kilometres.

Council has captured the priorities and values of people living in the City of Whittlesea's established, growth and rural areas based on almost 5,800 pieces of feedback from people across the municipality. Council also considered relevant health and demographic data about our community and other feedback received through broader engagement. Priorities differ across areas and precincts and reflect the **wide-ranging community aspirations are addressed in this Council Plan 2025-2029.**



Bundoora (established) – Located at the southern end of the municipality, Bundoora is an established suburb which is shared by two other municipalities Darebin and Banyule. The Whittlesea part of the suburb has an existing population of 14,361 and is expected to grow slowly to around 19,000 in 2040. The suburb is flanked by Plenty River on its eastern edge and the Darebin Creek on its western edge. Existing residential development to the south dates back to the 1960's with more recent developments located north of the Metropolitan Ring Road including the Rivergums Estate and University Hill. The part of the suburb in the City of Whittlesea is serviced by two neighbourhood activity centres being University Hill and Bundoora Square shopping centre. The suburb also has two university campuses including RMIT university which is located in the City of Whittlesea. Owing to its two universities, Bundoora has a high number of 18 to 24 year olds (11.3% compared to CoW 8.5%) who are renting alone or living in group households. Students share the suburb with older families and couples, many of whom have called Bundoora home for several decades.

Donnybrook (growth) – The suburb of Donnybrook is located in the west of the municipality adjoining the Merri Creek and City of Hume. The suburb is the source of the Darebin Creek which runs from north to south through the western part of the suburb. The suburb is currently undergoing rapid change with many new housing estates developing along Donnybrook Road. Propelled by this recent surge in greenfield housing development, Donnybrook is transforming from a small rural town into an urban community that will grow from 3,763 to a population of more than 45,000 people by 2040. Donnybrook is dominated by young families moving into the area and housing stock which is primarily single storey detached dwellings on small lots. Donnybrook has an existing train station currently supported by V-Line train services which will be upgraded when the rail line is electrified in the future. Council is currently in the process of delivering the Murnong Community Centre to service this growing community which will include kindergarten rooms, maternal and child health, community hall and kitchen. At full development the suburb will be serviced by five new local town centres and seven new local convenience centres. The suburb will also have access to higher order services which will be delivered in the new Cloverton Metropolitan Activity Centre which is located at the junction of the City of Hume, City of Whittlesea and Shire of Mitchell.

Doreen (recently established) – Doreen is a suburb that has developed over the past 25 years and is renowned for its landscape character, river red gums, public spaces and educational facilities. The suburb is split over two municipalities. Its urban area is located in the City of Whittlesea while its rural area is located outside the urban growth boundary in the Shire of Nillumbik. The urban area is serviced by four local neighbourhood centres including Laurimar and Ashley Park. With 28,604 residents now calling Doreen home, it is expected to have around the same number of residents in 2040. Doreen has a high number of primary and secondary schoolers compared to other age groups (22.8% compared to CoW 17.5%). The suburb is also home to the Costa Mushroom exchange which is one of the largest employers in the municipality and is located on the eastern bank of the Plenty River. The Plenty Gorge park adjoins the river to the south of Bridge Inn Road and protects significant environmental values in the vicinity of the river.

Epping (established) – This vibrant precinct plays a critical role in the City of Whittlesea's economy and will continue to attract investment into the future. At the heart of the suburb, is the Epping Central Activity centre which is identified as a Metropolitan Activity Centre in the State Governments *Plan for Victoria* (2025) and services the wider region with higher order services. The activity centre supports a significant health precinct anchored by the Northern Hospital and also includes two private hospitals, the Northern Centre for Health Education Research and other health services. The activity centre also supports educational providers including a campus of Melbourne Polytechnic and an established retail, dining and entertainment precinct within Pacific Epping shopping centre. The activity centre has recently had new planning controls applied through the State Government's Activity Centre program which aims to provide additional opportunities for higher density housing and commercial development close to existing public transport and services. At the western edge of the activity centre is the New Epping development which is one of the largest urban renewal developments in metropolitan Melbourne and upon completion will support over 2,000 new homes, a new health precinct, commercial development and open space along the rehabilitated Edgars Creek. The suburb also has a state significance employment precinct including the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit Vegetable and Flower Markets and a number of high profile industrial estates lining Cooper Street. The employment area is home to many large businesses across the food and beverage, advanced manufacturing, transport and logistics and waste recovery sectors. With a

current population of 34,354 residents, Epping is currently forecasted to grow marginally to around 47,000 residents in 2040 however this is likely to be accelerated as a result of the new planning controls introduced by the State Government in and around the activity centre.

Lalor (established) – Lalor is a diverse and vibrant established suburb which developed in the post war period. Until 1945, Lalor was a part of Thomastown when Leo Purcell, a patient at a military hospital on the Atherton Tablelands, devised a scheme to provide low cost homes for ex-servicemen. In February 1947 he formed the Peter Lalor Home Building Co-operative Society with a group of ex-servicemen and a program of house building began. This continued until 1954 when it was taken over by the War Service Homes Commission. Heritage listing of parts of the Peter Lalor Estate in Lalor, which was developed as part of this program, commemorate this important social history. Today, the hub of Lalor remains the Lalor Shopping centre; a vibrant and thriving shopping precinct with around 100 specialty shops which front onto Station Street, May Road and the Peter Lalor walk. The precinct is also home to Lalor library. The suburb has a high number of senior residents aged in their 70s and above (13.9% compared to CoW 8.9%) but is also popular with young couples and families, many of whom were born overseas from countries including India, Iran and Iraq. 62.3% of Lalor residents speak a language other than English at home (compared to CoW 45.1%). Lalor's population of 23,701 is not expected to exceed 28,000 residents by 2040. Lalor is also home of the Whittlesea Public Gardens located in the western part of the suburb.

Mernda (recently established) – Mernda is a historic township first settled in the 1850's, with many original buildings and heritage sites protected. These include the Bridge Inn Hotel on the corner of Plenty Road and Bridge Inn Road, Mayfield Farm and flour mill and Turners bakehouse. The suburb is located in the Plenty Valley between the Plenty River on its eastern border and the Quarry Hills to the west. The suburb has developed rapidly over the past two decades with a current population of 27,500. The residential areas which sit in the foothills of the Quarry Hills are embellished by tree lined streets, remnant river red gums and high quality open space areas. The Mernda Train Station re-opened in 2018 following the completion of the Mernda rail extension project. In the vicinity of the station, a major town centre is beginning to emerge. The first stage of the retail development is now open and includes a supermarket, specialty stores and the Mernda library. The new Whittlesea Community Hospital which is located on Riverdale Boulevard is also nearing completion. Mernda continues to attract young families to the area with the population expected to hit 31,000 by 2033 and plateau around the same mark through to 2040.

Mill Park (established)– This established suburb which has developed since the 1970s. Mill Park's residential areas follow a curvilinear subdivision pattern. The neighbourhood is centred around the Stables shopping centre located on Childs Road. Nearby to the shopping centre is the Peter Hopper Lake which is a significant waterbody in the area. The lake is currently undergoing an extensive revitalisation project, led by Council to improve its water quality. The community is characterised by mature families and empty nester couples aged in their 50s and 60s (28.6% compared to CoW 16.1%). With a population of 28,935, Mill Park has limited opportunity for new housing growth and is forecast to reach just over 30,000 residents by 2040. At the northern end of the suburb is the regionally significant Plenty Valley Town Centre which is anchored by the Westfield Plenty Valley Shopping Centre.

Rural north (including Beveridge, Eden Park, Humevale, Kinglake West, Woodstock and Yan Yean) –

The City of Whittlesea's rural north, containing a mix of natural biodiversity, agricultural businesses and rural residential properties, is home to older families and retirees. Much of the land in the rural north is also covered by national park and the catchment for the Yan Yean Reservoir which is a major water storage for Melbourne. The rural North currently has a population of 3,129 which is forecast to grow marginally to 3,350 in 2040. In 2023, Council adopted a Green Wedge Management Plan to help guide its management of the 'green wedge' or rural parts of the municipality. The plan reaffirms the communities' priorities in protecting biodiversity, natural landscapes and rural characters of the Whittlesea Green Wedge. The rural north is also significant to Whittlesea's economy in respect to its local food production and the visitor economy. Planning is also underway for the Beveridge Intermodal Precinct located in the northwest corner of the municipality adjoining Mitchell Shire Council and when completed will be a major employment generator providing local jobs for residents across both municipalities.

South Morang (established)– The village of South Morang located on Plenty Road dates back to the late 19th century. The area was opened up for development in the 1990's and was the first major development precinct in the Plenty Valley growth corridor. The suburb is flanked by parklands including the Quarry Hills Parkland to the north and west and the Plenty Gorge Park to the east. At Granite Hills in the larger Quarry Hills Parkland, a major community park is currently under development. Nearby, the Aboriginal Gathering Place is also under construction which will be an important community hub for our aboriginal community. At the southern end of the suburb is the Plenty Valley Town Centre which straddles the border on adjoining suburbs Mill Park and Epping. The South Morang Train station was reopened in this location in 2012 after the train line was extended from Epping. The civic centre of the City of Whittlesea and Plenty Ranges Arts and Community Centre are also located in South Morang within the Plenty Valley Town Centre. This community is largely made up of families who have lived in the area for more than 10 years, with children who are at, or approaching, secondary school age. The current population is 25,268 residents which is forecast to grow slightly to 28,400 in 2040.

Thomastown (established) – Thomastown is home to the historically significant Westgarthtown enclave established by German Wendish families and comprising houses, a cemetery and a Lutheran church by 1856. The precinct is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register. The suburb grew significantly in the post war period particularly in the 1950's and 1960's and the current character of the suburb is defined by the post-war residential development. Today, Thomastown is our most culturally diverse community, more than half of Thomastown's residents were born overseas (51.6% compared to CoW 37.6%). One in four residents are aged over 60 years (27.4% compared to CoW 17.6%), making it an ageing community. The current population of 22,200 is likely to grow steadily to 27,900 people in 2040 subject to the rate of regeneration of older properties. The main shopping precinct in Thomastown is the retail strip on High Street located opposite the Thomastown Train Station. There are some new developments currently underway in this area including a new apartment building on High Street close to the station. The suburb also has a state significant employment precinct including a number of high profile manufacturers, established eco-system and a cluster of various dairy manufacturers which are all attracted to the precinct due to the proximity to the Metropolitan Ring Road and freeway access including local, national, and international trade gateways.

Whittlesea Township – The township of Whittlesea is located on the Plenty River, at the foot of the Great Dividing Range. It is located within the Whittlesea green wedge area and nestled between the Whittlesea Hills to the west and Eastern Hills to the east. This service hub for the City's rural north and green wedge areas has a distinctive regional character in its main street and residential areas. Some of the early heritage buildings constructed from 1860 onwards still remain including various public and commercial buildings, and residences and ruins from the earliest pastoral settlements. Council's Whittlesea Township Plan aims to protect the existing rural 'country feel' of the township. Around the township are a number of existing rural residential estates which act as a transition between the township and surrounding rural areas. The township currently has a population of 5,600, which is largely made up of maturing families with teenage children, empty nester couples and is forecasted to grow to just over 6,300 in 2040 via 500 new houses.

Wollert (growth)– A booming suburb located in the west of the municipality; Wollert is set to grow from 28,700 current residents to 59,000 residents in 2040. The area is renowned for its large River Red Gum trees, some hundreds of years old, which are being protected in conservation reserves or integrated into new parks. New development in Wollert integrates around large conservation reserves which have been designated to protection biodiversity and areas of environmental significance. The landscape also features many stony rises which are of significance to the traditional owners of the land, the Wurundjeri people. The plan for the development of Wollert includes a number of new town centres, schools, community centres and open space reserves which will be located in close proximity to new residential areas. The plan also includes provision of improved transport options including upgrades to existing roads and the reservation for a future train line to the proposed Wollert town centre. The culturally diverse community is dominated by first home buyers and young families (Ages 25-34 cohort 21.3% compared to CoW 15.6%). 64.4% of Wollert residents speak a Language other than English at home compared to CoW 45.1%.

Appendix 2:

Alignment with Integrated Planning Framework



City of
Whittlesea

Whittlesea
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GOAL 1

Connected Community

Over the next four years we will continue to work to foster an inclusive, healthy, safe and welcoming community where all ways of life are celebrated and supported. Our community priorities are: Public safety, festivals, events, arts, culture, heritage and markets, social connection: access and inclusion, sports facilities and infrastructure and community groups and community infrastructure.

Our outcomes



Strategic Priorities

Council recognises that communities are strengthened by their connections with others and the importance of aligning strategic outcomes with the needs and aspirations of our community. Informed by an understanding of our community and research on the challenges and opportunities related to achieving a connected community, Council has eight key focus areas.

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| Deliver and facilitate expansion of programs and services that keep older residents independent, connected and supported close to home. |
| Deliver the commencement of Home Care Packages to help older residents stay in their own homes, live independently, and enjoy a high quality of life as their needs change. |
| Partner with the Victorian Government and stakeholders to implement the Best Start, Best Life Reform, including free kindergarten for 3- and 4-year-old children and extending kindergarten hours. |
| Deliver and facilitate culturally safe services and programs for First Peoples children and their families, suited to local needs. |
| Advocate for funding from other levels of government to establish a dedicated youth hub and create additional youth-friendly spaces where young people can thrive. |
| Deliver Council's Fair Access Policy to ensure women and girls can equally use local sports facilities and feel supported to get involved in sport and recreation. |
| Deliver and operate the Regional Sports Precinct in Mernda consisting of an indoor stadium with four multi-purpose courts, lit outdoor netball courts, a netball pavilion, car parking, pathways, lighting, landscaping and wetlands. |
| Deliver the new Wollert Sports Reserve consisting of playing fields with lighting, a new multi-purpose sporting spaces, playground, car parking and a community pavilion, |
| Deliver the Huskisson Reserve Multi-Purpose Facility in Lalor consisting of new multi-purpose community pavilion, redevelopment of the existing tennis courts into new courts with lighting, car parking, pathways and landscaping. |
| Deliver the new Edgars Creek Recreation Reserve in Wollert consisting of a new multi-purpose community pavilion, an additional oval, outdoor sport courts, open space and a recreation area and car parking. |
| Deliver the new Ashley Park Recreation Reserve in Doreen consisting of two playing fields with lighting, a new multi-purpose community pavilion, playground and car parking. |

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| Partner with external emergency and welfare services to explore the feasibility of a Safer Neighbourhoods Expo to enhance community education and awareness of available services. |
| Partner with First Peoples communities to co-design and deliver programs and activities at the Aboriginal Gathering Place throughout the municipality that support social, physical, cultural, emotional and wellbeing needs. |
| Facilitate increased awareness and advocate about the risks of gambling harm in the City of Whittlesea. |
| Advocate and facilitate the expansion of local services to support individuals experiencing homelessness and those at risk. |
| Facilitate local services to improve access to fresh, healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate food; respond to food insecurity and promote healthy eating. |
| Advocate for equality and partner on initiatives that build a safe, respectful community with zero tolerance for all forms of violence, including family, gender-based, racial, faith-based and LGBTQIA+ violence. |
| Advocate for and facilitate improved access to mental health services and partner to raise awareness and deliver preventative programs. |
| Support service providers to expand initiatives that promote inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in community life, employment and education. |
| Deliver a revitalisation program for the Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre (PRACC) to enhance its role as a hub for performing arts and creative industries. |
| Deliver accessible precincts for people living with a significant disability and their carers, including enhanced facilities, sensory spaces and greater flexibility in utilising community facilities. |
| Partner with other Councils to renew the regional Library Services Agreement and to transition the service to a new entity as required by the Local Government Act 2020. |
| Deliver the West Wollert Community Centre providing kindergarten/early years rooms, maternal child health consulting rooms, a community hall, lounge and library space, meeting rooms and a community garden. |



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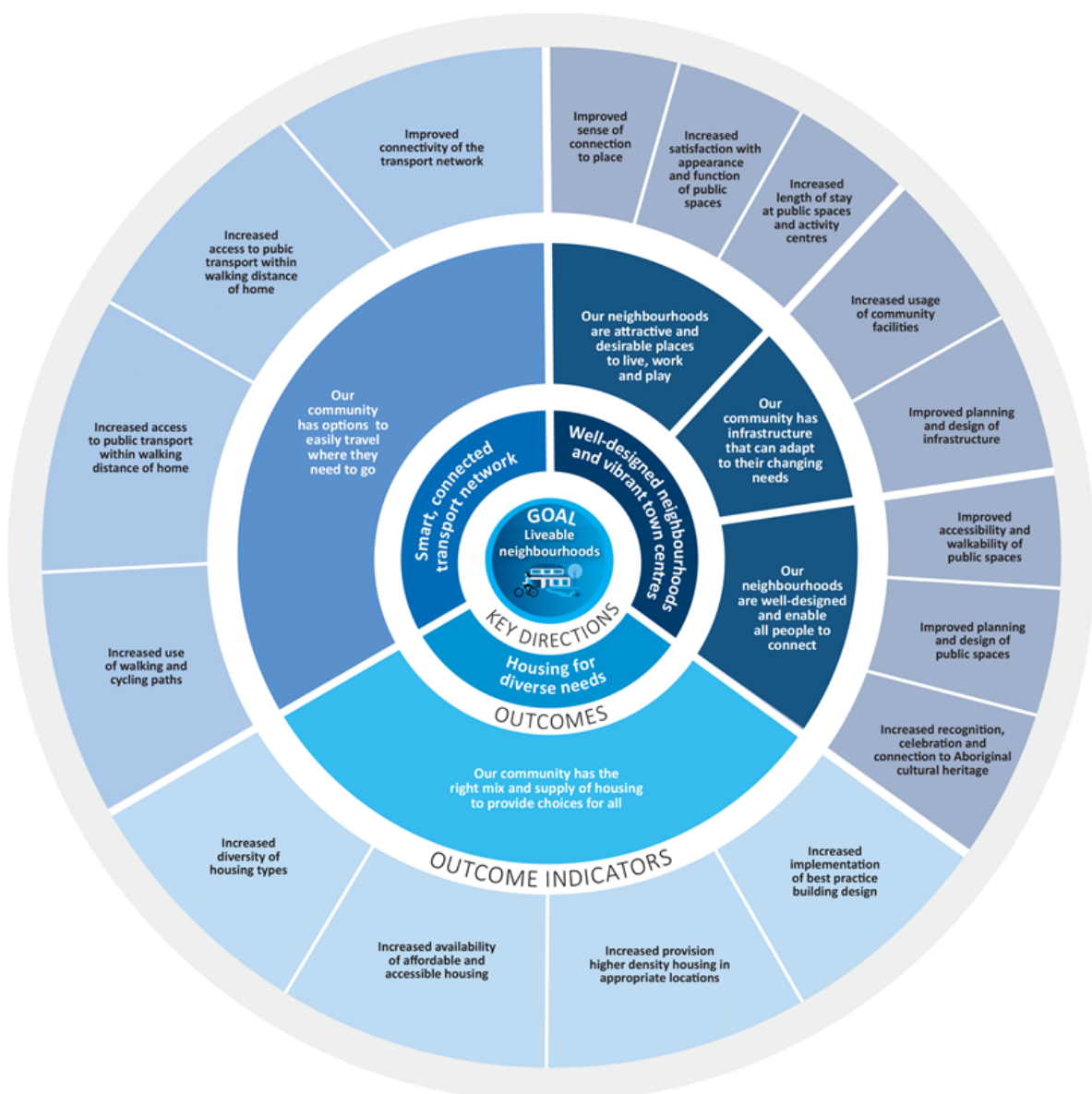
Deliver the Murnong Community Centre in Donnybrook providing kindergarten/early years rooms, maternal child health consulting rooms, a community hall, lounge and mini-branch library space and meeting rooms.

GOAL 2

Liveable Neighbourhoods

Over the next four years we will ensure our City is well planned and that our neighbourhoods and town centres are convenient and vibrant places to live, work and play. Our community priorities are: new and upgraded parks and playgrounds, transport improvements, local shops, social and affordable housing, clean streets and spaces, traffic management and road safety.

Our outcomes



Strategic Priorities

Our neighbourhoods comprise a range of elements that contribute to their liveability. Council has four key focus areas related to neighbourhood liveability.

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| Deliver the Yan Yean Pipe Track and Edgars Creek Trail shared paths to increase recreation opportunities and sustainable transport options in line with the City of Whittlesea Walking and Cycling Plan and Northern Trails Strategy. |
| Deliver a Parking Policy to manage the allocation and regulation of parking, balancing the needs of all users while supporting Council's safety, efficiency, and environmental sustainability goals. |
| Advocate for expanded transportation options and improvements to the transport network, including road upgrades, enhanced shared pathways, and increased public transport, such as the Wollert Rail. |
| Deliver the Granite Hills Major Community Park featuring an adventure park and playground, open-air pavilion, public barbecues, giant slides, nature and water play and public toilets with a changing places facility. |
| Deliver the staged construction of VR Michael Reserve Master Plan in Lalor providing an upgraded dog off leash area, central lawn, circuit paths, toilet facilities, exercise fitness station and car parking. |
| Deliver feasibility assessments for key future infrastructure for our growing community. |

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| Deliver the staged construction of Whittlesea Park Master Plan in Whittlesea Township providing trees, play spaces, circuit paths, bridges and car parking. |
| Deliver the staged construction of Lalor Recreation Reserve Master Plan in Lalor, Lowalde Recreation Reserve Master Plan in Epping, Nick Ascenzo Reserve in Thomastown, Whittlesea Public Gardens in Lalor and Mernda Recreation Reserve Master Plan in Mernda. |
| Deliver improved lighting of shared paths to provide the community with extended hours for exercise and recreation, enhance perceptions of safety, and provide increased sustainable transport options. |
| Deliver the Suburb Place Frameworks to enhance the municipality's distinct character, improve safety, enhance public spaces and upgrade infrastructure. |
| Deliver revitalised and upgraded neighbourhood streetscapes and shopping precincts to enhance accessibility local spending. |
| Deliver a review of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to ensure planning policies and controls achieve high quality design and sustainable development outcomes. |
| Deliver an affordable housing plan which defines Council's role and proposes future projects that deliver diverse housing opportunities for our community. |
| Deliver the Ashline Street Affordable Housing Project in Wollert, partnering with a community housing organisation to provide affordable homes and a community park. |
| Deliver the Johnsons Road residential development in Mernda, comprising at least 35 homes, including affordable housing, open spaces, and pathways linking to the Plenty River. |

GOAL 3

Strong Local Economy

Over the next four years we will seek to make our City a smart choice for innovation, business growth and industry investment as well as supporting local businesses to be successful, enabling opportunities for local work and education. Our community priorities are: supporting local business, local employment, economic development, delivering libraries, schools and early years education, technology and innovation and creating employment pathways.

Our outcomes



Strategic Priorities

Advocate for the creation of local jobs and other community benefits as outcomes from the planning and development of the Intermodal Freight Precinct in Beveridge which on completion will be the largest intermodal precinct in Australia transforming the nation's supply chain and providing economic benefits to the region.

Deliver a campaign to attract major festivals and events to the region to increase visibility and promotion and promote social cohesion.

Facilitate greater community use and activation of Council-owned facilities to encourage a broader range of uses, participation across all life stages and improved accessibility for everyone in the community.

Develop and implement a new Strong Local Economy Strategy to support the growth of the local business community, promote investment, local employment, and education opportunities, enhancing social connections and economic sustainability.

GOAL 4

Sustainable Environment

Over the next four years we will prioritise our environment and take action to reduce waste, preserve local biodiversity, protect waterways and green spaces and address climate change. Our community priorities are: waste management, biodiversity, community education and awareness, maintaining and increasing the number of trees, sustainable energy and infrastructure, water quality and security and climate change action and awareness.

Our outcomes



Strategic Priorities

Our environment is a complex system comprising of dynamic and interacting natural, built, and human elements. This Strategy covers seven key focus areas related to environmental sustainability.

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|--|
| Deliver and advocate for initiatives that help people and businesses make homes and workplaces more comfortable, energy-efficient, and environmentally friendly. |
| Provide additional opportunities to generate local carbon offsets on Council owned and private land to help reduce municipal wide carbon emissions. |
| Deliver the City Forest program, planting over 60,000 trees and working towards a target of an additional tree per resident across the municipality, to increase canopy cover, decrease urban heat and enhance biodiversity. |
| Deliver new stormwater harvesting at Council-owned sports fields and facilities to reduce potable water reliance, enhance water conservation and generate savings. |
| Deliver a targeted program to eliminate rubbish dumping, including stronger enforcement, shorter wait times for collection, and community education on waste minimisation, illegal dumping, and recycling. |
| Deliver the food and garden waste service to all households in the municipality and trial new waste and recycling collection services for waste such as soft plastics. |
| Deliver increased reuse and repurposing of materials in Council's asset maintenance and renewal programs. |
| Deliver the revitalisation of Peter Hopper Lake in Mill Park to improve water quality and habitat for flora and fauna and enhance local area. |

GOAL 5

High Performing Organisation

Over the next four years we will work to ensure Council engages effectively with the community, delivers efficient and effective services and initiatives, makes decision in the best interest of the community and delivers value to the community. Our community priorities are: customer service and responsiveness, communication and engagement with our community, service quality and Council performance.

Our outcomes



Strategic Priorities

The City of Whittlesea is responsible for enabling the rapid growth and development of our region, meeting the ever-expanding needs of our community, and maintaining our commitment to excellence in all that we do. This Strategy covers the seven key focus areas identified as critical to the organisation's performance.

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|---|
| Deliver innovative and technology-driven solutions to continually enhance customer experience and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Council's operations. |
| Facilitate the reduction, removal and prevention of barriers for marginalised and at risk groups to contribute to Council decisions. |
| Deliver service and innovation reviews to identify ways to improve efficiency, investing in technology like artificial intelligence to boost productivity, optimise resource use and lower costs. |
| Deliver the long term financial sustainability of Council through the optimisation of resources, infrastructure and asset management. |

Appendix 3: Supporting evidence



City of
Whittlesea

Whittlesea
2040
A place for all

Every age and every stage themes

1. As I get older, I want to maintain my independence. How will you support me in this?

The community told us...

- You value at home services including domestic assistance, delivered meals and personal care
- You want more support services to enable safe and independent living
- You want programs that improve mental wellbeing and social connection such as seniors' clubs
- You want to be more aware of available programs and services offered by Council and other service providers

The data tells us...

Australia is experiencing a demographic shift, with the proportion of people aged 65 and over steadily increasing. This is largely driven by longer life expectancy, which has risen to about 81 years for men and 85 years for women¹. This national trend is evident in the City of Whittlesea, with the population of residents aged 65 and over forecast to grow by over 70 per cent (estimated an additional 24,000 people) between 2025 and 2040². In 2040, this will be around 16% of the population, consistent with the current percentage of Australia aged over 65.

Research shows that living independently within one's own community enhances wellbeing by allowing older adults to stay connected to familiar environments and social networks, maintain autonomy, and engage in meaningful daily activities that support mental, physical, and cognitive health. Over 1300 residents currently in Council's 'Let Everyone Participate' program, which provides a range of free physical and social activities for residents over 50.

More than 2,600 clients currently receive support from Council through the Commonwealth Home Support Program, helping them to age safely and independently at home. Services include domestic assistance, personal care, meal delivery and home maintenance.

2. I'm a parent or carer. How will you help children thrive through different life stages?

The community told us...

- Kindergarten and Maternal Child Health services are important to you
- You value programs that support youth leadership and personal development including the Young Women's Leadership Program and teen Mental Health First Aid
- You want more information and education on issues families are dealing with including cyber safety and managing kids screen time

¹ AIHW, Life Expectancy, 2025 - [Deaths in Australia, Life expectancy - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#)
 AIHW, Life Expectancy, 2025 - [Deaths in Australia, Life expectancy - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#) (accessed 15/05/2025)

² Population Forecasts by .id and Place Info Pty age population forecasts, 2024.

- You are reasonably satisfied with local amenities including libraries parks, gardens and trails and sports and recreation facilities

The data tells us...

On average, 8 to 9 babies are born each day in the City of Whittlesea, and households with children are the most common household type³. By 2040, the number of households with young children (aged 0-11) is expected to grow by 10,000 compared to today⁴.

Around 10 percent of young children in the City of Whittlesea are considered developmentally vulnerable when starting school, similar to the Victorian average. Research shows that for young children to develop well, it is important they have a nurturing and supportive environment, access to quality early education, positive relationships with caregivers, adequate nutrition, regular physical activity, and opportunities for play and exploration to build their cognitive, emotional, and social skills. To support early childhood education, Council currently owns and maintains 44 sessional kindergartens across the municipality and delivers Family Day Care for around 100 children. There are over 40 community playgroups in the City of Whittlesea and parents and carers are supported through parenting sessions delivered by Council.

There are currently over 40,000 young people aged 12-24 living in the City of Whittlesea, increasing to over 60,000 by 2040⁵. Young people in growth areas have comparatively higher rates of social isolation, loneliness and disengagement from education, which is evident in the City of Whittlesea, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. Young people flourish when they have access to safe public spaces, affordable housing, mental health and wellbeing support, opportunities for meaningful social connection, access to quality education and pathways to training and employment. Council's EDGE facility in South Morang provides support services for young people through external agencies.

3. I will have different transportation needs across my lifetime. How will you help me get around easily?

The community told us...

- You appreciate when local roads and paths are regularly maintained and updated
- You would like to see more lighting added to shared used paths to increase safety
- You want Council to advocate for additional bus services, especially in growth areas
- Less than half of families are satisfied with their commute to work or school

The data tells us...

³ ABS, Census of Housing and Population, 2021

⁴ Population Forecasts by .id and Place Info Pty age population forecasts, 2024

⁵ Population Forecasts by .id and Place Info Pty age population forecasts, 2024

Motor vehicles are the main mode of transport for residents in the City of Whittlesea. Over 60% of households have two or more motor vehicles⁶. In 2024, 5% of residents reported walking or cycling to work and 26% walking or cycling to school or study⁷.

More than 60% of City of Whittlesea residents travel outside the municipality for work⁸. Nearly 30% of working residents spend more than an hour getting to and from work and over 7% spend more than two hours commuting.⁹

While train accessibility has increased slightly for City of Whittlesea residents, the proportion of households within 400 metres of any type of public transport stop has remained steady at about 65% between 2018 and 2024.¹⁰

Residents in the municipality have increasingly diverse transport needs. Over 6% report requiring assistance with daily activities due to disability; more parents are navigating the municipality with young children; the older population is growing; the proportion of electric vehicles is rising; and there is a growing demand for transport options that do not depend on private cars.

4. I want to protect the environment and be ready for a changing climate. How will you support our community and neighbourhood to be green and sustainable?

The community told us...

- You want to see more urban greening in the City of Whittlesea to help increase shade canopy
- You want to see more community education programs that focus on preparing for climate change and supporting biodiversity
- You love spending time in nature, surrounded by trees and wildlife like kangaroos and birds
- You see addressing climate change as an important priority for your health and wellbeing

The data tells us...

Climate change is being increasingly recognised as a critical global issue, with the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as heatwaves, droughts, floods, and storms on the rise, impacting the environment and communities in many ways.

Data shows that at a local level, climate change can be reduced through sustainable practices such as using renewable energy, reducing energy consumption, minimising waste and using sustainable transportation. Greenhouse gas emissions from the City of Whittlesea decreased by over 15 per cent between 2018/19 and 2022/23.

Green spaces and trees contribute to climate change reduction by soaking up greenhouse gases, keep neighbourhood's cooler, and boosting the overall health of the environment, making areas better able to handle climate challenges. There are over 5,000 hectares of green spaces in the City of

⁶ ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2021. Compiled and presented by .id

⁷ City of Whittlesea, Community Insights Study, Wave 1.1, 2024

⁸ ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2021. Compiled and presented by .id

⁹ City of Whittlesea, Community Insights Study, Wave 1.1, 2024

¹⁰ AUO, Liveability Index 2018 and 2024.

Whittlesea, however, the municipality has about 11% tree cover (tree shade) in urban areas and 38% in rural areas¹¹. This contributes to higher than average temperatures in the City of Whittlesea compared with Melbourne overall.¹²

5. I want our streets, neighbourhoods and waterways to be clean. How will you manage waste and encourage people to do the right thing?

The community told us...

- Recycling matters most, followed by tackling dumped rubbish, hard waste collections, and waste education
- You would like to see more maintenance to clean up public toilets and remove graffiti
- You would like more education and awareness programs on your how to dispose of waste and recycling properly
- You would like more access to hard waste collections

Your satisfaction with waste management was about 70%¹³

The data tells us...

Council collected 45,000 tonnes of waste for landfill in 2023-24. Additionally, Council collected 18,000 tonnes of recycling, and 19,000 tonnes of food and garden waste, 2,400 tonnes of hard waste, 1,740 tonnes of bundled branches, and 1,155 tonnes of e-waste in 2023-24. The total amount would fill about 35 Olympic swimming pools.

The percentage kerbside waste diverted from landfill has increased from 42.9% in 2020 to 44.5% in 2024. Council worked with Visy to install four reverse container deposit vending machines within the community, which have collected more than 1.5 million containers. Additionally, we undertake compliance and enforcement for illegal waste dumping in our municipality.

6. I like being physically active and enjoy the outdoors. How will I be able to do this locally?

The community told us...

- you love our parks and would like to see continued maintenance and renewal of existing parks and playgrounds
- you appreciate the variety of sporting and aquatic facilities Council provide, but feel there should be more
- you would like more dog and pet friendly spaces
- you love the workout/fitness equipment that has been added to existing parks/playgrounds

¹¹ Greening Whittlesea City Forest Strategy 2020-2040, p19

¹² Greening Whittlesea City Forest Strategy 2020-2040

¹³ LGV CSS Survey 2024

- you have highlighted being physically and socially active as a priority for your health and wellbeing

The data tells us...

Around a third of City of Whittlesea residents meet global physical activity guidelines, which is slightly below the Victorian average¹⁴. Almost half of the women aged 25-34 in the municipality meet the recommended activity level, compared to 66% of men in the same age bracket.

In 2024, 86% of residents reported engaging in 1 to 10 hours of moderate physical activity each week, while 86% also participated in 1 to 10 hours of vigorous activity. Furthermore, nearly half of residents visited sports and recreation facilities at least twice a week¹⁵.

When asked about participation in physical activity for recreation and leisure, 45% of males reported undertaking vigorous physical activity for at least 10 minutes at a time, compared with only 36% of females.¹⁶

A high proportion of residents reported that they understand how certain behaviours can positively impact their future health, including getting adequate sleep, having a balanced diet, reducing smoking/vaping, regulating alcohol/drug consumption and getting regular exercise. Some health conditions such as Arthritis, Cancer and Heart Disease, have lower rates of incidence in City of Whittlesea compared with the average of all LGAs in the North East Public Health area¹⁷. However, the City of Whittlesea has comparatively higher rates of obesity, diabetes, and kidney disease¹⁸.

There are over 5,000 hectares of public open space across the municipality, including 1,500 local parks, four major community parks, 41 exercise and fitness parks, 10 off-leash dog parks and 10 public skate parks and BMX facilities. In addition, Council manages more than 50 sports and leisure facilities.

7. I want to feel physically, culturally and psychologically safe in my community. What will you do to keep me free from harm and promote responsible and respectful behaviour?

The community told us...

- you would like to see more lighting in public spaces
- you would like more programs that promote prevention of violence against women
- you love that Council have school crossing supervisors to keep families and children safe in our community
- most residents feel safe during the day but less than half feel safe after dark

¹⁴ Population Profile of the NEPHU Catchment Area 2025

¹⁵ City of Whittlesea, Community Insights Study, Wave 1.2, 2024

¹⁶ City of Whittlesea, Community Insights Study, Wave 1.2, 2024

¹⁷ Population Profile of the NEPHU Catchment Area 2025, p209

¹⁸ Population Profile of the NEPHU Catchment Area 2025, p209

- walking and cycling paths, local parks, and public transport are the places people feel most unsafe after dark¹⁹
- you support Council programs that prevent all forms of violence in our community
- you support increasing services that enable people with a disability to live safely and independently in the community
- you support events and initiatives that promote mental wellbeing and strengthen social connections
- you see improving mental wellbeing and social connection, preventing all forms of violence, increasing active living, increasing healthy living, reducing homelessness and improving financial wellbeing as your top six health and wellbeing priorities (in order); followed by reducing harm from alcohol, gambling and smoking /e-cigarettes
- you are concerned about social and demographic challenges facing the community include crime and personal safety (particularly family violence), the ageing population, high levels of loneliness and isolation and high demand for mental health services within the community¹⁸

The data tells us...

The data tells us that although the number of offences has risen, the offence rate is lower than neighbouring areas

- There were 14,962²⁰ offences in 2024 in City of Whittlesea. This is up from 12,923 in 2023
- **The offence rate¹⁹ per 100,000 residents by category were** is follows:
 - o “Crimes against the person” 993 compared to Hume 1,238
 - o “Drug offences” 336 compared to Hume 431
 - o “Property and deception offences” 3,321 compared to Hume 4,196
 - o “Public order and security offences” 239 compared to Hume 391

Family violence is rising with 1,149 reported family violence incidents per 100,000 in 2024. This is a 6.8% increase in the rate of incidents compared to 2022-23.

Community perception of safety appears to have been impacted by media and news coverage. 21% told us they feel unsafe during the day on walking & cycling paths¹⁸ and 63% told us they feel unsafe after dark on walking & cycling paths¹⁸

8. I’m proud to live here. How will you ensure my neighbourhood meets our diverse housing needs, is functional and well-designed?

The community told us...

- you want the community to understand the need for diverse and affordable housing and have access to more of it locally
- you would like to see a vibrant events program across different areas of the City of Whittlesea

¹⁹ Community Insights Wave 1.2 July 2024

²⁰ Crime Statistics Agency - Recorded Crime Stats & Offender Incidents (up to June 2024)

- you love our community activity centres and believe they could be used more for a greater variety of activities
- most residents feel proud to live in their neighbourhood and many feel connected to their community
- some trust their neighbours and see a strong sense of community, while others feel there's room to grow
- people are generally happy with local amenities like libraries, parks, gardens, trails, and sports facilities

The data tells us...

Well-designed neighbourhoods help people live healthier, happier lives. Safe streets, local parks, nearby services, and places to walk or ride make it easier to stay active, connect with others and feel part of the community. Having amenities such as shops, schools and health services close by saves time and money on travel, encourages walking, and helps people of all ages be active and independent.

Vibrant town centres are attractive places for people to work, study shop and play. When well-planned they have more usage and longer dwell times. Our municipality includes over 60 town centres (or activity centres) ranging from the state and regional scale of Metropolitan Activity Centres (Epping) and Major Activity Centres to Large and Small Neighbourhood Activity Centres, and convenience stores.

In 2024, 62%²¹ of residents reported that they are proud to live in their neighbourhood while 52% feel that they are part of the community. Additionally, there is a high level of trust with 46% residents that most people in their neighbourhood can be trusted, while 40% felt that people in their neighbourhood have a strong sense of community.

The housing crisis has highlighted the need for affordable housing. It is estimated that there is currently a shortage of 4,400²² affordable homes in the municipality.

The municipality has low numbers of homeless people. However, it is increasing with 21923 more people reported as homeless in 2021 compared to 2019.

In the 12 months to December 2024, only 1% of houses for sale and only 0.2% of rentals were affordable to households on very low incomes. Those on low incomes were only marginally better off in the buyers' market with 8% of houses for sale. However, 48.5% of rentals were affordable to households on low incomes.

Separate houses (85%) are the dominant house type in the City of Whittlesea. Medium-density dwellings account for just 13%²⁴ of stock. However, Bundoora is the suburb with the highest proportion of medium-density dwellings at 30%, followed by South Morang at 23%. Donnybrook has the lowest proportion of high-density housing, at just under 2%

Residents are very reliant on private vehicles with 63.5% of employed people drove to work, while less than 5% caught public transport²⁵.

²¹ Community Insights Survey Wave 1.3 (October 2024)

²² Figures published by .id using data sourced from 2021 ABS Census and Homelessness figures

²³ ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021 and 2016. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

²⁴ ABS Census 2021

²⁵ ABS Census 2021

Around 80%²⁶ of our residents have access to a bus stop within 400 metres of their residence, but only 13%²⁴ have access to a train station with 800 metres (even with the Mernda Rail Extension Project). Tram route 86 connects RMIT, and Uni Hill, Bundoora with municipalities and suburbs to the south through to the Melbourne CBD, with a similarly low proportion of households having close access to tram stops in the City of Whittlesea.

The Walking & Cycling Plan identifies that only 14.9% of residents walk on a daily basis, with 49.6% choosing to not walk at all.

9. I'm a business owner. How will you support the local economy and help businesses create local employment opportunities?

The community told us...

- you want Council to support local business and employment
- you would like to see more retail hubs, including a vibrant night-time economy, to better support local businesses and boost the local community
- you would like to see a growth in tourism providing a boost to the local economy
- you like that Council offers learning programs at community centres
- you love libraries and would like there to be more
- you want more employment opportunities other than fast food restaurants for youth

The data tells us...

In 2024, nearly 23,000 businesses were registered in the City of Whittlesea, a 35% increase since 2016. The most common business sectors include transport, construction, and professional services. The municipality also supports nearly 82,000 local jobs, with healthcare, construction and retail being the largest employers.

Local industries experiencing the strongest recent growth include healthcare, construction, transport and warehousing, and education and training. Demand is expected to stay high for healthcare and education services, housing construction, and to rise for transport and logistics workers, driven by key developments like the Melbourne Wholesale Market and the Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal.

Despite a growing number of businesses and jobs, more than 60% of City of Whittlesea residents currently travel outside the municipality for work. Around half of local workers are employed by small businesses with fewer than 20 employees, many of which only employ the owner/s. Compared to the Hume, Casey and Wyndham growth areas, the City of Whittlesea has seen fewer new employing businesses each year and slower growth in small businesses of 1–4 employees and larger

²⁶ Australian Urban Observatory

businesses with 200+ employees. As of the December 2024 quarter, the City's unemployment rate was 4.4%, slightly higher than the Victorian average of 4.3%.²⁷

Compared to the Victorian average, the City of Whittlesea has a lower proportion of residents with university degrees, a similar proportion with diplomas and a higher percentage with vocational qualifications. In 2021, 9% of residents were enrolled in either university or vocational education.²⁸

10. I love being part of my community – meeting people, getting involved and exploring different neighbourhoods. How will you help me stay connected, feel welcome and enhance my health and wellbeing?

The community told us...

- you support Council programs that improve mental wellbeing and social connection
- you love that Council offers a community grants program that support community groups
- you support inclusive and accessible services including Aboriginal Services, multicultural, disability and LGBTIQ+
- you see improving mental wellbeing and social connection as the highest health and wellbeing priority

The data tells us...

Research shows that strong social connections help people feel supported, improve mental health, and create friendlier, more connected neighbourhoods. However, social isolation and loneliness are on the rise in Australia, affecting people of all ages. Recent data indicates that the frequency of social contact has been declining across all age groups, and of particular note is the 15–24 age group, which has been experiencing a continuous increase in social isolation since around 2008. Across Australia, a quarter of males aged 15–24 reported feeling socially isolated and 17% of females in 2022.²⁹

In 2024, three quarters of residents in the City of Whittlesea reported that they connected with family and friends at least once per week. In the same survey, City of Whittlesea residents reported their participation in community groups, with the highest participation in sports groups (20%), followed by religious groups (9%), multicultural groups (4%) and special interest groups (3%)³⁰. Nearly two-thirds of residents felt very attached to their neighbourhood, and 59% said their neighbourhood felt very special to them. While many residents feel connected, 32% reported feeling lonely in the past week and almost 1 in 5 sought mental health support during the previous year³¹.

²⁷ ABS, Labour force survey catalogue number 6202.0 and Department of Employment Small Area Labour markets. Compiled and presented by .id, 2024

²⁸ ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2021

²⁹ AIHW analysis of Household and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) data, waves 1–22, 2022.

³⁰ City of Whittlesea, Community Insights Study, Wave 1.2, 2024

³¹ City of Whittlesea, Community Insights Study, Wave 1.3, 2024

11. I want to contribute to Council decisions and stay up to date. How will you keep me informed, seek my views and make it easy for me to engage with Council?

The community told us...

- you like to know what the level of influence is when providing feedback on projects
- your preferred method to engage with Council to share insights and feedback is via email or community-based pop-ups
- you like that you have the option to use the website as well as come into Council offices when you need information

The data tells us...

The way people want to engage with local government is changing, with a growing preference for flexible, accessible and digital ways to participate that fit into their daily lives.

In 2024, around 415,000 people visited the City of Whittlesea website, Council's customer service team handled over 150,000 phone calls and assisted more than 12,000 people in person. Additionally, residents shared their views on over 50 Council projects via our community engagement. These included:

- 4,213 contributions made in person
- 138 community-based pop-ups
- 21 Citizenship ceremonies
- 7 Community Focus Groups
- 2 Internal Focus Groups
- 2 Reference Groups
- 1 Community Forum
- 74,959 visits to the Engage Whittlesea website
- 4,756 contributions made on the Engage Whittlesea website

The community are feeling more informed. In the 2021 household survey, very few people said that they had engaged directly with government (7%). Over the last 12 months (as at 2024), residents participated in Council activities through doing surveys (11%), contacted a Council administrator (11%), visited a Council pop-up stall (4%) or attended an information session run by Council (2%)³². In 2024, 1 in 5 City of Whittlesea residents perceived the opportunities to inform Council decision making were good or excellent.

12. As a ratepayer, I expect Council to operate efficiently and effectively. What will you do to ensure resources are being used wisely?

³² City of Whittlesea Community Insights Study, Wave 1.2

The community told us...

- Council offers a broad range of essential services that are a part of our daily life
- Many residents are surprised of the breadth of services available outside of those relevant to their current life stage
- You feel that Council assets such as roads, buildings, stormwater pipes, pathways, parks, sporting fields and recreation facilities meet the diverse and changing needs of the community
- You feel that infrastructure decisions consider environmental, social and financial sustainability

The data tells us...

Technology has advanced faster than ever over the past 10 years, changing how people live, work and interact with services like those provided by Council. Through adoption of new technology, Council has enhanced its efficiency by automating routine tasks, improving data collection and analysis and enabling faster, more transparent service delivery.

As an example, following the implementation of the customer service platform, Council can more accurately track the time it takes to resolve issues and identify and improve the processes across the organisation. There has been a significant reduction in the average resolution time of 8.6 days since the deployment of the new customer service platform. In the period November 2024 to May 2025, 102,781 cases were resolved at an average of 13.65 days. In the year prior there were 132,561 cases resolved at an average of 22.37 days. It is expected that this will improve further as new features are implemented and new processes are adopted.

Under the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF), all councils in Victoria are required to measure and report on their performance and costs across 59 service areas, such as roads, planning, animal management and waste services. In the 2023/24 financial year, the cost per resident of City of Whittlesea services compared to the Interface Councils (Cardinia, Casey, Hume, Melton, Mitchell, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Wyndham, Yarra Ranges) was lower for most services, except for food safety, road resealing and statutory planning. Overall, City of Whittlesea's cost per resident was \$270 lower than the Interface Council average.

Health and wellbeing priority areas

1. Advance gender equality and prevention of gendered violence

The community told us...

Family violence and related deaths are preventable, and every person is entitled to feel safe in their community.

The data tells us...

- Gender inequity is the main cause of family violence, with social norms and behaviors contributing to unequal gender power relationships
- Men are the main perpetrators of family violence against women
- Between 2023–2024, reports of family violence increased by **9.5%** and **181** emergency department visits related to family violence
- **194 incidents of stalking, harassment, and threats involved female residents**, compared to **103 incidents** involving male residents.
- The three most common abuse types recorded between 2023-2024 were verbal abuse (**38.6%**), emotional abuse (**28.4%**) and physical abuse (**15.8%**).

Everyone deserves equal opportunities, no matter their gender – ensuring community can live safely and well in the community. Preventing gender-based violence brings economic, social and health benefits for everyone and is a responsibility for us all to share.

2. Help reduce the negative health impacts of climate change

The community told us...

Urgent action is needed to address climate change, to protect the environment and ensure a fair and sustainable future for young people.

The data tells us...

- Temperatures are expected to rise by **2–3°C** by 2050, with nearly twice as many extremely hot days as the number experienced in the 1990s
- Whittlesea has low tree cover (only 11% in urban areas) compared to more than 20% in other areas.
- Not having enough green spaces makes it harder to stay cool during hot weather.
- Women face higher risks during and after extreme climate events and other natural disasters, including increased risk of family violence and decreased job and income security

Climate change presents serious risks to our health including heat stress, respiratory problems and mental illness. We need to support the community to be better prepared for extreme climate events and to protect their health and wellbeing.

3. A - Improving wellbeing and social connection – mental health

The community told us...

Social interaction and strong connections are essential for good mental health and contribute to high levels of wellbeing across the community.

The data tells us...

High levels of social connection create strong and resilient communities, bringing a sense of belonging and purpose to our lives and reducing the negative impacts of isolation and loneliness on our relationships, work and physical health.

- In 2023, **18.5%** of residents asked for help with mental health issues.
- **22.4%** of residents reported high or very high psychological distress, up from **16.5%** in 2017.
- Women face more mental health challenges than men, including anxiety, mood disorders, PTSD, self-harm, and eating disorders, and higher risk of hospitalizations due to mental illness.
- A range of factors can increase a person's risk of experiencing mental illness, including their age, chronic illness and cultural isolation.

3. B - Address and reduce the negative impacts of gambling

The community told us...

Gambling harm is a serious but preventable issue, that reduces the health and wellbeing of our community and must be addressed.

The data tells us...

Gambling harm can cause individuals, families and the broader community harm in the form of financial problems, damaged relationships, job loss, social isolation, and poor mental health.

- Pokies (electronic gaming machines) cause the most gambling harm, both serious and preventable.
- In 2023–24, Whittlesea residents lost **\$139 million** on pokies - the **third highest loss** in Victoria
- A person's risk of gambling harm can be impacted by where they live, their income, culture, family life, and mental health.

4. Make it easier for everyone to access healthy, nutritious, culturally appropriate food by supporting local food programs and raising awareness about healthy eating options.

The community told us...

We need improved access to fresh, healthy, affordable, and culturally diverse foods, and greater promotion of nutritious cultural food options over fast-food establishments.

The data tells us...

Ensuring everyone has access to fresh, healthy, safe, affordable and culturally appropriate food allows people to maintain a nutrient-rich diet, essential for disease prevention. To support this, we need a robust and sustainable local food production and distribution system that promotes healthy eating options.

- In 2022, 10% of residents ran out of money to buy food, making it harder for them to get healthy food needed for good health
- Only 6.3% of adult residents and 2% of children eat enough vegetables every day, while 66.2% of adults and 71% of children eat enough fruit.
- 57.5% of adult residents are overweight or obese, while 24.9% of 3-5-year-olds and 51.5% of 12-year-olds have decayed, missing, or filled teeth.

5. Support and promote active lifestyles by providing a range of programs and creating spaces that inspire and support people to be more physically active.

The community told us...

We need a greater range of accessible, free spaces and physical activities opportunities to meet the diverse active living needs across the community.

The data tells us...

A majority of Whittlesea residents consider regular physical exercise to be important and central to their health and wellbeing. The aim is to support this community priority through the creation of more accessible and affordable public spaces to meet the differing and diverse needs of the community.

- Only 32% of residents meet the recommended physical activity levels, slightly below the Victorian average of 35.1%.
- 47% of women aged 25-34 meet the recommended activity level, compared to 66% of men.
- The Northeastern Melbourne region has the lowest percentage of children (ages 5-13) meeting activity guidelines, at 42.9%, compared to the Victorian average of 51.2%.
- More active living opportunities are needed for young First Nations people, grandparents who are carers and older adults at risk of social isolation.

6. Support enhanced initiatives to prevent homelessness by supporting programs that provide stable housing and offer assistance to those at risk.

The community told us...

Without stable housing, people struggle to meet basic needs, which impacts their health, wellbeing, and ability to contribute to their community.

The data tells us...

- In 2021, 854 people in Whittlesea were homeless, ranking us twelfth in Victoria. Since 2006, homelessness has increased by 150%.

- The main causes of homelessness include family violence, lack of affordable housing, and high living costs.
- From June 2021 to 2023, the number of employed people seeking homelessness help grew by **23%**, with **74%** of the increased demand from employed women.
- Homelessness disproportionately affect First Nations people, young people, LGBTIQ+ individuals, women over 55, and people with disabilities.

Access to secure housing supports community health and wellbeing. Homelessness can negatively impact education, personal safety, privacy and access to social support services. To address homelessness, we need early intervention and a strong, coordinated prevention approach involving all levels of government.

Priority areas for disability inclusion and equity

1. Support fair and equitable access to services and facilities

The community told us...

- There is a need to improve the accessibility of venues, facilities and amenities across the community
- There are significant gaps in essential health and human services for people with disability

The data tells us...

In 2022 – 23, 50% of disability discrimination complaints received by the Australian Human Rights Commission were about accessing goods, services and facilities.

In 2015, only 15% of complaints to the Australian Human Rights Commission were about disability discrimination. By 2022, this had grown to over half (52%) of all complaints.

Council is committed to upholding the rights of people with disability to access goods, services, and facilities.

2. Facilitate securing and sustaining meaningful employment

The community told us...

- There is a need for more work experience opportunities for students with disability
- There is a lack of sustainable work options for people with disability

The data tells us...

- In 2021, the unemployment rate amongst residents who need daily assistance due to disability is 15.1% compared to 7.2% for the municipality's broader population.
- Between 2016 – 2024, the proportion of residents with daily support needs who are not in the labour force has increased by 24.3%

Having a job and financial stability helps people stay physically and mentally healthy by improving independence, self-esteem and social connection. It's important to create fair opportunities so people with disability have access to the health and wellbeing benefits of employment.

3. Support equal participation in community life

The community told us...

You told us there is a need to create more opportunities to support people with disability to be active in the community, including:

- more information about local activities and groups
- more free and accessible public venues and spaces for people of different ages and cultural backgrounds
- more programs and activity groups
- more venues and public spaces that are accessible to people with extremely high support needs

The data tells us...

The most common social activities where people with disability face barriers are:

- socialising in someone else's home (43.2%)
- visiting a restaurant, café, bar, club (35.7%)
- participating in sports, recreation and exercise (34.3%)

Council recognises social participation is a key contributor to health and wellbeing and is well placed to work with communities to ensure social, recreational and cultural events are affordable and accessible to people with disability.

4. Drive real change in attitudes and behaviours that lead to discrimination

The community told us...

- Young people with disability regularly experience discrimination
- The Companion Card is not accepted at all major community events
- More leadership and group facilitation courses are needed for people with disability

The data tells us...

In the city of Whittlesea, people with disability continue to face discrimination with 1 in 10 Australians known to experience because of a disability including:

- 17% of young people aged 15 – 34 years

- 28% of LGBTIQ+ people

It is a crime under Commonwealth and Victorian law to discriminate against or treat unfairly a person because of a disability. Council is committed to protecting the legal rights of people with disabilities to live free from discrimination and participate fully in the community.

Appendix 4:

Linkages to the Municipality Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Disability Action Plan



City of
Whittlesea

Whittlesea
2040
A place for all

Appendix 4: Linkages to the Municipality Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Disability Action Plan

| ID | Strategic Priority | Health Plan | | | | | | DAP | | | |
|------|---|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|-------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| | | Climate change | Family violence | Social connection | Healthy eating | Active living | Homelessness | Goods | Employment | Inclusion | Discrimination |
| SP1 | Deliver and facilitate expansion of programs and services that keep older residents independent, connected and supported close to home. | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | |
| SP2 | Deliver the commencement of Home Care Packages to help older residents stay in their own homes, live independently and enjoy a high quality of life as their needs change. | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | |
| SP3 | Partner with the Victorian Government and stakeholders to implement the Best Start, Best Life Reform, including free kindergarten for 3- and 4-year-old children and extending kindergarten hours. | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP4 | Deliver and facilitate culturally safe services and programs for First Peoples children and their families, suited to local needs. | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP5 | Advocate for funding from other levels of government to establish a dedicated youth hub and create additional youth-friendly spaces where young people can thrive. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP6 | Deliver the Yan Yean Pipe Track and Edgars Creek Trail shared paths to increase recreation opportunities and sustainable transport options in line with the City of Whittlesea Walking and Cycling Plan and Northern Trails Strategy. | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP7 | Deliver a Parking Policy to manage the allocation and regulation of parking, balancing the needs of all users while supporting Council's safety, efficiency and environmental sustainability goals. | | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP8 | Advocate for expanded transportation options and improvements to the transport network, including road upgrades, enhanced shared pathways and increased public transport, such as the Wollert Rail. | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP9 | Deliver and advocate for initiatives that help people and businesses make homes and workplaces more comfortable, energy-efficient and environmentally friendly. | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| SP10 | Provide additional opportunities to generate local carbon offsets on Council owned and private land to help reduce municipal wide carbon emissions. | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| SP11 | Deliver the City Forest program, planting more than 60,000 trees and working towards a target of an additional tree per resident across the municipality, to increase canopy cover, decrease urban heat and enhance biodiversity. | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| SP12 | Deliver new stormwater harvesting at Council-owned sports fields and facilities to reduce potable water reliance, enhance water conservation and generate savings. | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| SP13 | Deliver a targeted program to eliminate rubbish dumping, including stronger enforcement, shorter wait times for collection and community education on waste minimisation, illegal dumping and recycling. | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP14 | Deliver the food and garden waste service to all households in the municipality and trial new waste and recycling collection services for waste such as soft plastics. | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| SP15 | Deliver increased reuse and repurposing of materials in Council's asset maintenance and renewal programs. | ✓ | | | | | | | | | |
| SP16 | Deliver the revitalisation of Peter Hopper Lake in Mill Park to improve water quality and habitat for flora and fauna and enhance local area. | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| SP17 | Deliver Council's Fair Access Policy to ensure women and girls can equally use local sports facilities and feel supported to get involved in sport and recreation. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP18 | Deliver the Granite Hills Major Community Park featuring an adventure park and playground, open-air pavilion, public barbecues, giant slides, nature and water play and public toilets with a Changing Places facility. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |

| ID | Strategic Priority | Health Plan | | | | | | DAP | | | |
|------|---|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|-------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| | | Climate change | Family violence | Social connection | Healthy eating | Active living | Homelessness | Goods | Employment | Inclusion | Discrimination |
| SP19 | Deliver and operate the Regional Sports Precinct in Mernda consisting of an indoor stadium with multi-purpose courts, lit outdoor netball courts, a netball pavilion, car parking, pathways, lighting, landscaping and wetlands. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP20 | Deliver the new Wollert Sports Reserve consisting of playing fields with lighting, multi-purpose sporting spaces, playground, car parking and a community pavilion. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP21 | Deliver the Huskisson Reserve Multi-Purpose Facility in Lalor consisting of a new multi-purpose community pavilion, redevelopment of the existing tennis courts into new courts with lighting, car parking, pathways and landscaping. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP22 | Deliver the new Edgars Creek Recreation Reserve in Wollert consisting of a new multi-purpose community pavilion, an additional oval, outdoor sport courts, open space and a recreation area and car parking. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP23 | Deliver the new Ashley Park Recreation Reserve in Doreen consisting of playing fields with lighting, a new multi-purpose community pavilion, playground and car parking. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP24 | Deliver the staged construction of VR Michael Reserve Master Plan in Lalor providing an upgraded dog off leash area, central lawn, circuit paths, toilet facilities, exercise fitness station and car parking. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP25 | Deliver the staged construction of Whittlesea Park Master Plan in Whittlesea Township providing trees, play spaces, circuit paths, bridges and car parking. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP26 | Deliver the staged construction of Lalor Recreation Reserve Master Plan in Lalor, Lowalde Recreation Reserve Master Plan in Epping, Nick Ascenzo Reserve in Thomastown, Whittlesea Public Gardens in Lalor and Mernda Recreation Reserve Master Plan in Mernda. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP27 | Deliver improved lighting of shared paths to provide the community with extended hours for exercise and recreation, enhance perceptions of safety and provide increased sustainable transport options. | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP28 | Deliver the Suburb Place Frameworks to enhance the municipality's distinct character, improve safety, enhance public spaces and upgrade infrastructure. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP29 | Partner with external emergency and welfare services to explore the feasibility of a Safer Neighbourhoods Expo to enhance community education and awareness of available services. | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP30 | Advocate for equality and partner on initiatives that build a safe, respectful community with zero tolerance for all forms of violence, including family, gender-based, racial, faith-based and LGBTIQ+ violence. | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP31 | Deliver revitalised and upgraded neighbourhood streetscapes and shopping precincts to enhance accessibility and local character and support local spending. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP32 | Deliver a review of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to ensure planning policies and controls achieve high quality design and sustainable development outcomes. | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP33 | Deliver an affordable housing plan which defines Council's role and proposes future projects that deliver diverse housing opportunities for our community. | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP34 | Deliver the Ashline Street Affordable Housing Project in Wollert, partnering with a community housing organisation to provide affordable homes and a community park. | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP35 | Deliver the Johnsons Road residential development in Mernda, comprising at least 35 homes, including affordable housing, open spaces and pathways linking to the Plenty River. | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP36 | Deliver feasibility assessments for key future infrastructure for our growing community. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

| ID | Strategic Priority | Health Plan | | | | | | DAP | | | |
|------|---|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|-------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| | | Climate change | Family violence | Social connection | Healthy eating | Active living | Homelessness | Goods | Employment | Inclusion | Discrimination |
| SP37 | Develop and implement a new Strong Local Economy Strategy to support the growth of the local business community, promote investment, local employment and education opportunities, enhancing social connections and economic sustainability. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP38 | Advocate for the creation of local jobs and other community benefits as outcomes from the planning and development of the Intermodal Freight Precinct in Beveridge which on completion will be the largest intermodal precinct in Australia transforming the nation’s supply chain and providing economic benefits to the region. | | | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| SP39 | Partner with First Peoples communities to co-design and deliver programs and activities at the Aboriginal Gathering Place and throughout the municipality that support social, physical, cultural, emotional and wellbeing needs. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP40 | Facilitate increased awareness and advocate about the risks of gambling harm in the City of Whittlesea. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| SP41 | Advocate and facilitate the expansion of local services to support individuals experiencing homelessness and those at risk. | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP42 | Facilitate local services to improve access to fresh, healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food; respond to food insecurity and promote healthy eating. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| SP43 | Advocate for and facilitate improved access to mental health services and partner to raise awareness and deliver preventative programs. | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP44 | Support service providers to expand initiatives that promote inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in community life, employment and education. | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP45 | Deliver a campaign to attract major festivals and events to the region to increase visibility and promote social cohesion. | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP46 | Deliver a revitalisation program for the Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre (PRACC) to enhance its role as a hub for performing arts and creative industries. | | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | |
| SP47 | Facilitate greater community use and activation of Council-owned facilities to encourage a broader range of uses, participation across all life stages and improved accessibility for everyone in the community. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP48 | Deliver accessible precincts for people living with a significant disability and their careers, including enhanced facilities, sensory spaces and greater flexibility in utilising community facilities. | | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP49 | Partner with other Councils to renew the regional Library Services Agreement and to transition the service to a new entity as required by the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> . | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP50 | Deliver the West Wollert Community Centre providing kindergarten/early years rooms, maternal child health consulting rooms, a community hall, lounge and library space, meeting rooms and a community garden. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP51 | Deliver the Murnong Community Centre in Donnybrook providing kindergarten/early years rooms, maternal child health consulting rooms, a community hall, lounge and mini-branch library space and meeting rooms. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| SP52 | Deliver innovative and technology-driven solutions to continually enhance customer experience and improve the effectiveness, transparency and efficiency of Council’s operations. | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP53 | Facilitate the reduction, removal and prevention of barriers for marginalised and at risk groups to contribute to Council decisions. | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SP54 | Deliver service and innovation reviews to identify ways to improve efficiency, investing in technology like artificial intelligence to boost productivity, optimise resource use and lower costs. | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| SP55 | Deliver the long-term financial sustainability of Council through the optimisation of resources, infrastructure and asset management. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

**COUNCIL OFFICES**

Civic Centre
25 Ferres Boulevard
South Morang VIC 3752

Opening hours

Monday – Friday, 8.30am-5pm

Whittlesea Services Hub

63 Church Street,
Whittlesea VIC 3752

Opening hours

Monday – Friday, 9.30am-5pm

Telephone 03 9217 2170

National Relay Service 133 677
(ask for 9217 2170)

Postal address

Locked Bag 1, Bundoora MDC, VIC 3083

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🌐 whittlesea.vic.gov.au

📘 facebook.com/cityofwhittlesea

📷 [CityWhittlesea](https://www.instagram.com/CityWhittlesea)

5.2 2021-89: Property Maintenance Contract Variation

Director/Executive Manager: Director Community Wellbeing

Report Author: Manager Ageing Well

In Attendance: Manager Ageing Well

These attachments have been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that they contain Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.

Executive Summary

This report seeks Council's approval to exercise the final extension of Contract 2021-89 for the provision of property maintenance.

Council receives funding to deliver property maintenance as part of its range of services supporting residents under the Commonwealth Home Support Program and Home and Community Care for Young People.

In September 2022, Contract 2021-89 was awarded to a panel of three contractors. The total contract value was \$1,433,055 ex GST.

In July 2024, the first extension of Contract 2021-89 was exercised to accommodate the transition period required for the implementation of the Federal Government's Aged Care Reform. A one-year, \$450,000 ex GST extension through to September 2025 took the total contract sum to \$1,883,055 ex GST.

As the Federal Government's Aged Care Reforms have not been implemented as quickly as anticipated, this report seeks Council's approval to exercise a final extension of Contract 2021-89, from 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026.

This extension will add \$450,000 ex GST to the contract, bringing the total value to \$2,333,055 ex GST.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

- 1. Approve a final extension of Contract 2021-89 for the provision of property maintenance through a panel of providers comprising Borgies Trust and the Auxiliary Services Group.**
- 2. Approve the contract extension from 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026 at a cost of \$450,000 ex GST, bringing the total value to \$2,333,055 ex GST.**
- 3. Note the property maintenance services budget for the Commonwealth Home Support Program and Home Community Care for Young People is included in the 2025-26 financial year budget.**

Background / Key Information

Council is funded to deliver property maintenance to eligible residents through the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and Community Care for Young People Program (HACC PYP). These property maintenance services include activities such as lawn mowing, garden maintenance and home modifications.

A two-year property maintenance contract (Contract 2021-89 for Property Maintenance) was awarded in September 2022 to a panel of providers that included Borgies Trust, Auxiliary Services Group, and iBuilt Group). iBuilt Group was initially on the panel, but later withdrew.

The contract included provisions for two, 12-month extensions. The contract was initially extended for 12 months in July 2024 (and \$450,000) and is now due to expire on 30 September 2025.

The Commonwealth Government's Aged Care Reforms will continue to be implemented over the next few years. There will be changes to the programs under which property maintenance is delivered, but not until at least 2027. This report seeks Council's approval to exercise a final extension to Contract 2021-89 to 30 September 2026 to ensure service continuity for clients during the Aged Care Reform. A new Request for Tender will be prepared prior to the expiry of this contract extension.

Community feedback and contract management reports indicate that both Borgies Trust and Auxiliary Services Group are performing satisfactorily, and the services they provide are highly valued and sought after by the community.

The contractor's prices have also been reassessed and are considered competitive against benchmarked providers.

The current total approved contract amount is \$1,883,055 ex GST, (including the first extension). A further \$450,000 (ex GST) extension will bring the total amount for this contract to \$2,333,055 (ex GST).

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

Connected Communities

We work to foster an inclusive, healthy, safe and welcoming community where all ways of life are celebrated and supported.

This contract supports the safety for ageing clients to safely access and maintain their homes.

Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

Financial Management

The CHSP funded Property Maintenance service is included in the 2025-26 budget endorsed by Council at its meeting on 17 June 2025.

A summary of financial performance of the contract is detailed below.

- Current Approved Contract Sum: \$1,883,055 ex GST.
- Expenditure to date: \$1,539,783 ex GST, (as of 30 April 2025).
- Remaining Expenditure: \$343,272 ex GST.

Community Consultation and Engagement

Community consultation and engagement was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report as it relates to commercial arrangements and contractual obligations that are confidential.

Other Principles for Consideration

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

Public Transparency Principles

- Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.

Council Policy Considerations

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

No implications.

Social, Cultural and Health

No implications.

Economic

No implications.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

No implications.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

If the recommendations are endorsed, the supplier will be notified of the contract extension and contract documents will be updated to include legislative changes and requirements under the new *Aged Care Act 2024*.

Critical Dates

The contract commenced in September 2022 and the current approved end date is 30 September 2025.

One final option exists to extend the contract up to 30 September 2026.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Attachments

1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Confidential Contract Variation Details [5.2.1 - 2 pages]
2. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Memo 2021-89 Property Maintenance [5.2.2 - 2 pages]

5.3 Planning Scheme Amendment C290 - Public Acquisition Overlay - 70 and 80 Boundary Road, Wollert

Director/Executive Manager: Director Planning & Development

Report Author: Strategic Planner Infrastructure Contributions

In Attendance: Manager Strategic Futures
Strategic Planner Infrastructure Contributions

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to consider the commencement of a Planning Scheme Amendment to apply a Public Acquisition Overlay 15 (PAO15) to part of the land at 70 and 80 Boundary Road in Wollert which is required for the future construction of the Boundary Road and Andrew Road intersection. The land to which the PAO15 is proposed to be applied is 2559sqm in total area.

The Boundary Road and Andrew Road intersection is located in the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) area which is experiencing significant growth and development. The intersection upgrade project is identified in the Wollert Development Contributions Plan (DCP). The DCP sets aside the requirement to deliver essential infrastructure projects such as this intersection upgrade and then identifies Council as the responsible delivery agency to acquire land and deliver the project utilising funds from the DCP. Funds are collected from the levies paid from developers upon subdivision and development of land within the Wollert PSP area.

Delivery of this key intersection will improve safety, reduce Council's financial risks, and facilitate development within the Andrew Road precinct of the Wollert PSP area. The upgraded intersection will ultimately service approximately 450 new dwellings and unlock employment land that could support up to 1000 jobs.

The upgrade works to the intersection will be delivered by the developer of adjoining land through a 'works in kind' arrangement, which will assist Council in meeting its infrastructure delivery obligations. Given the current availability of land, it is proposed that the developer will deliver an interim intersection upgrade.

The acquisition of the additional land will enable the ultimate intersection to be delivered by developers as 'works in kind' either instead of an interim intersection (depending on timing) or in the future as part of a further upgrade.

In order to facilitate the upgrade of this intersection in its ultimate form, Council sought to acquire the land through voluntary negotiations with the landowners, which were unsuccessful. As such, the proposal is to compulsorily acquire the land in accordance with Council's obligations under the DCP.

The PAO15 is the statutory mechanism to enable compulsory acquisition under a separate subsequent process. The application of the PAO15 is required to facilitate delivering of the intersection works identified in the DCP. The PAO15 is applied by an amendment to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme which will include notice being given to the subject landowners.

Should the land not be secured by Council in a timely manner, it risks missing the opportunity for the ultimate intersection upgrade to be delivered by others in a timely manner and realising the development opportunities of the Andrews Road precinct. Therefore, this report recommends that Council resolve to commence a Planning Scheme Amendment to apply the PAO15 to the subject land at 70 and 80 Boundary Road in Wollert.

The report recommends, that given the land has been identified for the purposes of the intersection in the Wollert PSP and DCP, that Council request the Minister for Planning to prepare and approve the Planning Scheme Amendment through a fast-track process under 20(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Should the Minister for Planning not agree to be the planning authority for the Amendment, it is recommended that Council request for the Amendment to proceed through the standard Planning Scheme Amendment process.

Further, the report recommends that Council writes to the Minister for Planning to highlight the issues affecting the timely acquisition of land for public purposes in Precinct Structure Plan areas which delay the development land for housing, employment and infrastructure which is needed by growing communities. In this circumstance, despite the land being identified in the Wollert PSP and DCP for the purpose of the intersection upgrade and there being a developer willing to upgrade the intersection, the need to process a Planning Scheme Amendment to apply a Public Acquisition Overlay to the land adds significant delay to the delivery of the infrastructure and the development of land in accordance with the incorporated plans.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. **Authorise the Mayor, on behalf of Council, to write to the Minister for Planning requesting, pursuant to section 20(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, that the Minister prepare and approve Planning Scheme Amendment C290wsea to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme, which seeks to:**
 - a. **apply the Public Acquisition Overlay 15 (PAO15) to parts of land at 70 and 80 Boundary Road, Wollert as shown in *Attachment 1*; and**
 - b. **facilitate the construction of an upgrade to the intersection of Boundary Road and Andrew Road.**

- 2. Note should the Minister for Planning not agree to prepare an Amendment to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme as per point 1 above, that Council authorise the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate to seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit the proposed Planning Scheme Amendment C290wsea.**
- 3. Note the challenges experienced, as detailed in the background section of the report, in respect to accessing and acquiring land for public purposes in Precinct Structure Plan areas which is required to deliver the infrastructure needed to support growing communities.**
- 4. Authorise the Mayor, on behalf of Council, to write to the Minister for Planning, highlighting the barriers affecting the timely acquisition of land for public purposes in Precinct Structure Plan areas, and the delays those barriers cause to the development of land for housing, employment and infrastructure required for growing communities, outline potential solutions and request changes to the planning system to overcome these barriers.**

Background / Key Information

Background

This report relates to a proposed Planning Scheme Amendment C290 which seeks to apply a Public Acquisition Overlay 15 (PAO15) to part of properties at 70 and 80 Boundary Road, Wollert (refer to *Attachments 1 and 2*). Applying the PAO15 reserves the land for a public purpose and will enable the formal acquisition of land which is required to facilitate the construction of the upgrade of the Boundary Road and Andrew Road intersection to be delivered by developers in the precinct.

The upgrade of this intersection is critical to supporting residential and employment land development in the precinct consistent with the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) and Wollert Development Contributions Plan (DCP). The development of the land facilitated by the intersection upgrade will support approximately 450 dwellings and employment uses which may support up to 1000 new jobs.

The Wollert PSP and DCP set the requirements for development of the precinct and provide the basis for essential infrastructure needed to support the new community. The plans set aside land required for infrastructure projects including the additional land required for this intersection. The City of Whittlesea is the delivery agency in the DCP and is responsible for acquiring the subject land. Discussions with the landowners to voluntarily acquire the land have not been successful and therefore the use of the PAO15 tool to facilitate compulsory acquisition is proposed.

Subject site and surrounds

The subject site and regional context are included at *Attachment 2*.

The additional land required for the construction of the Boundary Road and Andrew Road intersection will affect the following properties:

- 70 Boundary Road, Wollert; and
- 80 Boundary Road, Wollert.

70 Boundary Road is 0.4 hectares in size and the proposed PAO15 will apply to 779.27sqm of the property.

80 Boundary Road is 8 hectares in size and the proposed PAO15 will apply to 1779.58 sqm of the property.

Both sites slope gently downwards from north-east to south-west and have been improved by dwellings and associated outbuildings. Each lot is sparsely treed and predominantly grassed. 80 Boundary Road also contains two agricultural dams.

The wider precinct comprises large lots with standalone dwellings and associated outbuildings.

The subject and surrounding land is part of the Wollert PSP area, where development is rapidly occurring. Notably, residential construction has commenced on the adjoining property to the west, and further residential development is underway across Boundary Road to the south-east of the subject site. New development is suburban in nature, comprising of predominantly detached volume-build dwellings.

Land required for infrastructure projects is outlined within the Wollert PSP and DCP. The specific land required for the intersection works is detailed in the preliminary functional layout plan included at *Attachment 3*. *Attachment 4* shows the intersection in relation to the surrounding land uses envisioned by the PSP and Council's obligations under the DCP as the responsible authority to acquire the land required to construct the intersection. *Attachments 1 and 2* show the extent of the land take on the subject site.

The balance of the land required for the works is located within 60 Boundary Road, which is owned by the developer proposing to construct the intersection. The land required for the intersection at 60 Boundary Road will be transferred to Council as a 'land in kind' project as part of the future subdivision of this land in lieu of the payment of developer contributions.

Development in the Wollert PSP

The Wollert PSP is experiencing rapid development across a number of fronts including within two sub-precincts: the Bodycoats Road precinct and the Andrews Road precinct. They can be defined as land north of Boundary Road within the PSP area, shown on *Attachment 5*. Land within this area is currently serviced by rural roads. Planning permits issued for development in the precinct require the rural roads to be upgraded to service the development to an urban standard in accordance with the PSP.

The Boundary Road and Andrews Road intersection is identified in the Wollert DCP as a key infrastructure priority, scheduled for delivery within 5–10 years of development commencing within the PSP (*Attachment 4*). The DCP includes a preliminary functional layout plan (*Attachment 3*) for the ultimate design of the intersection and allocates Development Infrastructure Levy (DIL) funding toward the land acquisition and its construction (*Attachment 4*).

A requirement for delivery of the intersection is embedded within all planning permits issued for land north of Boundary Road in the Bodycoats Road precinct within the PSP area.

Current Development Status

To date, a consortium of developers, Wollert North Infrastructure Consortium (WNIC), have constructed the southern leg of the intersection, connecting the Bodycoats Road precinct to Craigieburn Road through delivery of Equestria Boulevard. These works formed part of Phase 1 of the external infrastructure delivery strategy, including upgrades to Boundary Road up to Bodycoats Road.

However, the majority of the Boundary Road and Andrew Road intersection remains incomplete. Completion of the works is contingent upon development commencing within the Andrews Road precinct, to the north of Boundary Road as identified in *Attachment 5*.

On 17 May 2024, Council issued the first planning permit within the Andrews Road precinct at 60 Boundary Road, Wollert (also known as PSP Property 75).

All planning permits within the Andrews Road Precinct include a standard condition requiring delivery of the full intersection works at Boundary Road and Andrew Road.

Under the planning permit condition, the developer of 60 Boundary Road must complete the intersection to an ultimate standard, including signalisation and construction of the northern leg. The intersection will provide a critical additional access point into the PSP employment precinct, as an alternative to Epping Road, and improve the feasibility of employment development within the PSP.

Andrew Road must also be designed in accordance with the bespoke cross-section identified in the PSP, ensuring an appropriate buffer between residential and employment uses and accommodating industrial traffic movements.

Land Acquisition Requirements

A portion of the land required to deliver the intersection is located within the currently permitted 60 Boundary Road site. This land will be provided for the intersection as part of the future subdivision of this site. However, some additional land required for the intersection is located within the properties at 70 and 80 Boundary Road, Wollert which are not active development sites. The extent of the land required from both properties is outlined in *Attachments 1, 2 and 3*.

Noting the importance of the land to the intersection project, Council officers engaged the landowners to investigate the potential to acquire the subject land at 70 and 80 Boundary Road through voluntary agreement. However, these approaches were not successful.

Amendment Proposal

A PAO is a planning tool used to identify and reserve land for a future public purpose. In this instance the PAO would reserve land which has already been identified in the Wollert PSP and DCP for a future public purpose, being the road intersection.

When applied to a property, a PAO indicates that the land may be compulsorily acquired by a government authority, such as Whittlesea City Council.

The purpose of a PAO is to:

- Identify land proposed for acquisition by a Minister, public authority, or Council;
- Reserve land for a public purpose and ensure that changes to its use or development do not compromise this purpose; and
- Designate a Minister, public authority, or Council as the acquiring authority for the reserved land.

To apply a PAO, the overlay must be applied to the land within the Scheme. Accordingly, a Planning Scheme Amendment is required to apply the PAO15 to the land at 70 and 80 Boundary Road, Wollert, to facilitate the acquisition of land required for construction and delivery of the Boundary Road and Andrew Road intersection.

To amend the Planning Scheme, Council must undertake a Planning Scheme Amendment process in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (refer to *Attachment 6* for more details on the process).

Once the PAO15 has been applied, the relevant land can be acquired by Council in accordance with the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986*. Please note that this is a separate process, which can commence after the PAO15 has been applied to the land.

In this case, the PAO15 will be applied, as this schedule to the overlay reserves the land for a municipal road.

Discussion

Council has a responsibility in accordance with the Wollert PSP and DCP to deliver the land projects identified to facilitate the delivery of new and upgraded infrastructure to the development community.

The subject land is required for the Boundary Road and Andrew Road intersection upgrade and as the land is not likely to be developed in the near future, Council in its role as the delivery agency under the DCP has an obligation to acquire the land.

Council officers initially sought to acquire the subject land through voluntary negotiations. As these negotiations were unsuccessful, compulsory acquisition is now required to ensure the adjoining developer can proceed with delivery of the intersection upgrade as part of their works.

The application of the PAO15 is well supported by planning policy including both the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and the Planning Policy Framework (PPF). This has been outlined in the draft Explanatory Report for the Amendment which is included at *Attachment 7*. The application of the PAO15 also accords with the Wollert PSP which designates the land for this intersection upgrade project.

The proposed amendment will enable the timely, efficient, and coordinated delivery of essential infrastructure. It will also support the logical and orderly development of the Wollert growth area while helping Council manage the impacts of out-of-sequence development on both infrastructure obligations and financial risks.

A key outcome of the proposed PAO15 is that it will unlock approximately 33 hectares of strategically significant employment land within the Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) area, directly contributing to Council's objectives for economic development and job creation. The development of this employment land has the potential to accommodate approximately 1,000 new jobs within the municipality.

At present, planning applications are active for approximately 20 hectares of the employment land, with these projects expected to come to market over the next couple of years once the necessary infrastructure is delivered.

In addition, the infrastructure enabled by this amendment will enhance the development potential of approximately 25 developable hectares within the Andrews Road Precinct for residential purposes. This could yield an estimated 450 new homes, providing important housing supply for the growing community.

In conclusion, the proposed amendment is strongly justified when assessed against the provisions of the Planning Scheme. It is therefore recommended that Council resolve to seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit the proposed amendment to apply the PAO15 to 70 and 80 Boundary Road, Wollert.

Further, it is noted that the City of Whittlesea and other growth area Councils have encountered challenges relating to the delivery of infrastructure set out by the precinct structure plan where land remains in third party private ownership or which is required to be acquired by the State Government. This is despite the land having been identified for the public purpose in a precinct structure plan which has gone through a comprehensive Planning Scheme Amendment process.

The need to process a Planning Scheme Amendment to apply a Public Acquisition Overlay to the land adds significant delay to the delivery of the infrastructure and the activation of land for housing and employment in accordance with the incorporated plans. Further, there are similar issues where land has been identified for a public purpose under a Public Acquisition Overlay however a State Government agency is the acquiring authority and they do not enact on their responsibility to acquire the land. This is also preventing the delivery of infrastructure in some circumstances.

As such, the report recommends that Council resolve to write to the Minister for Planning to highlight and request changes to the planning system in response to the barriers affecting the timely acquisition of land for public purposes in precinct structure plan areas which delay the development land for housing, employment and infrastructure which is needed by growing communities.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

Connected Communities

We work to foster an inclusive, healthy, safe and welcoming community where all ways of life are celebrated and supported.

The application of the PAO15 will enable the construction of an intersection, under a future project by others. This will provide additional transport infrastructure to better connect the Wollert area.

Liveable Neighbourhoods

Our City is well-planned and beautiful, and our neighbourhoods and town centres are convenient and vibrant places to live, work and play.

The proposed Amendment will implement planning controls on two properties within the Wollert PSP to facilitate the acquisition of land under the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986*. This will allow for the completion of critical transport infrastructure strategically identified by the Wollert DCP and will unlock new opportunities for the delivery of housing, services and jobs.

The delivery of the infrastructure may speed up the development of approximately 20 hectares of land in the Andrews Road Precinct for residential purposes. This is projected to create an additional 450 new homes for the community.

Strong Local Economy

Our City is a smart choice for innovation, business growth and industry as well as supporting local businesses to be successful, enabling opportunities for local work and education.

The proposed Amendment will facilitate the development of employment land within the Andrews Road Precinct through the delivery of critical infrastructure required to enable safe access and movement of industrial vehicles. This will create new opportunities for industry investment and economic growth within the municipality by unlocking approximately 33 hectares of developable land strategically identified for employment purposes north of Boundary Road within the Wollert PSP. The development of this employment land is estimated to support up to 1000 jobs.

Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles**Financial Management**

The cost of processing Amendment C290 is included in Councils operating budget.

The Wollert DCP collects levies to acquire the land for the intersection and fund the works. The reserve currently has the capacity to fund the acquisition of the land required. Timely acquisition of the intersection land will minimise Council's financial risks from annual land value escalations. The acquisition of the land will also enable the intersection upgrade works to be delivered by others, further mitigating Council's financial risks in respect to the management of the Wollert DCP and its project obligations as the delivery agency.

Community Consultation and Engagement

As part of preparing the Wollert PSP and DCP there was extensive public notice and consultation with affected landowners. The affected landowners have also been engaged as part of informal discussions in respect to the potential voluntary acquisition of the land in accordance with the PSP and DCP documents.

Should the Planning Scheme Amendment be prepared and approved by the Minister for Planning under section 20(4) Act as recommended, then there will be no public notice given.

Should the Amendment instead progress in the usual manner, public exhibition will be subject to the normal process as per the requirements of section 19 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. This will involve notification of the general public, key stakeholders, owners of the land, beneficiaries to the land and state agencies through a combination of locally circulated newspapers, direct written notification, the government gazette and Council's website. This notification will inform interested parties of the proposed Amendment and details for making a submission.

Other Principles for Consideration

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
- (g) The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured.
- (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

Public Transparency Principles

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.
- (c) Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community.
- (d) Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.

Council Policy Considerations

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

No implications.

Social, Cultural and Health

No implications.

Economic

The Amendment will have a positive economic impact for Council through facilitating works-in-kind. It will also provide broader economic benefits through unlocking land within the PSP for residential and industrial development.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

The Amendment mitigates risks associated with the inability for the adjoining developers to deliver the intersection upgrade which is needed to service development in the precinct and the community. This would enable the developers to comply with their permit conditions for their subdivision proposal. The acquisition will ensure that the intersection upgrade can occur in a timely manner and is not left to Council to deliver. The timely acquisition of the land may also enable the upgrade to be delivered in one stage which would minimise disruptions to the community.

There is a risk to Council if due process is not followed when applying the Public Acquisition Overlay or undertaking subsequent compulsory acquisition. The acquisition process must comply with the requirements of the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986*. Any departures from these statutory procedures may expose Council to legal challenge and potential delays.

Planning Policy Assessment

Ministerial Directions

The Amendment will be prepared considering the following ministerial directions:

- Ministerial Direction: The Form and Content of Planning Schemes.
- Direction No. 11: Strategic Assessment of Amendments.

Planning Practice Notes

The Amendment documents will be prepared considering the following practice notes:

- PPN46: Strategic Assessment Guidelines.

Whittlesea Planning Scheme

The application of the PAO15 is consistent with the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Planning Policy Framework (PPF).

The application of the PAO15 also accords with the Wollert PSP which designates the land for this intersection upgrade project.

A complete strategic assessment has been included in the attached explanatory report (*Attachment 7*).

Implementation Strategy

Communication

The owners of 70 and 80 Boundary Road Wollert will be notified of the Council Meeting on 22 July 2025.

As noted above, should the Planning Scheme Amendment be prepared and approved by the Minister for Planning under section 20(4) Act as recommended, then there will be no public notice given. This recognises the extensive notice and consultation previously undertaken as part of preparing the Wollert PSP and DCP which identified the land for the proposed intersection project.

Should this request not be supported by this Minister, then public notice of the Amendment will be required. The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* outlines the Planning Scheme Amendment process which is described at *Attachment 6*.

Should authorisation be granted, proposed Amendment C290 will be required to undergo a standard exhibition process, including a 28-day notification period to potentially affected landowners, occupiers, prescribed Ministers and relevant Agencies.

The exhibition process will include a letter notifying the owners and occupiers of the land affected by the proposed Amendment and identifying how they may participate in and make a submission through the exhibition process if they choose to do so. It will also identify critical dates for making a submission as required.

It is noted that the future, separate land acquisition process will require additional notification in accordance with the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986*.

Additionally, the report recommends that Council resolves to write to the Minister for Planning to highlight and request changes to the planning system in response to the barriers affecting the timely acquisition of land for public purposes in precinct structure plan areas.

Critical Dates

If authorisation to prepare this Amendment under Section 20(4) proceeds, no exhibition process is required, and the Amendment can be prepared and approved at the Minister for Planning's discretion.

If authorisation from the Minister for Planning for a Council led amendment is granted, it is likely that the exhibition of Amendment C290 will commence shortly after. Council officers will report to Council on the results of the exhibition process at a future Council meeting.

If submissions are received and remain unresolved, these will be considered at a Council meeting and a Council decision made to abandon the amendment or refer the amendment to an independent Planning Panel to hear and consider submissions.

If the amendment is referred to a Planning Panel, there will be a report presented to a subsequent Council meeting to consider the recommendations of the Planning Panel and a Council decision on whether to adopt the amendment.

More information on the planning scheme amendment process is included at *Attachment 6*.

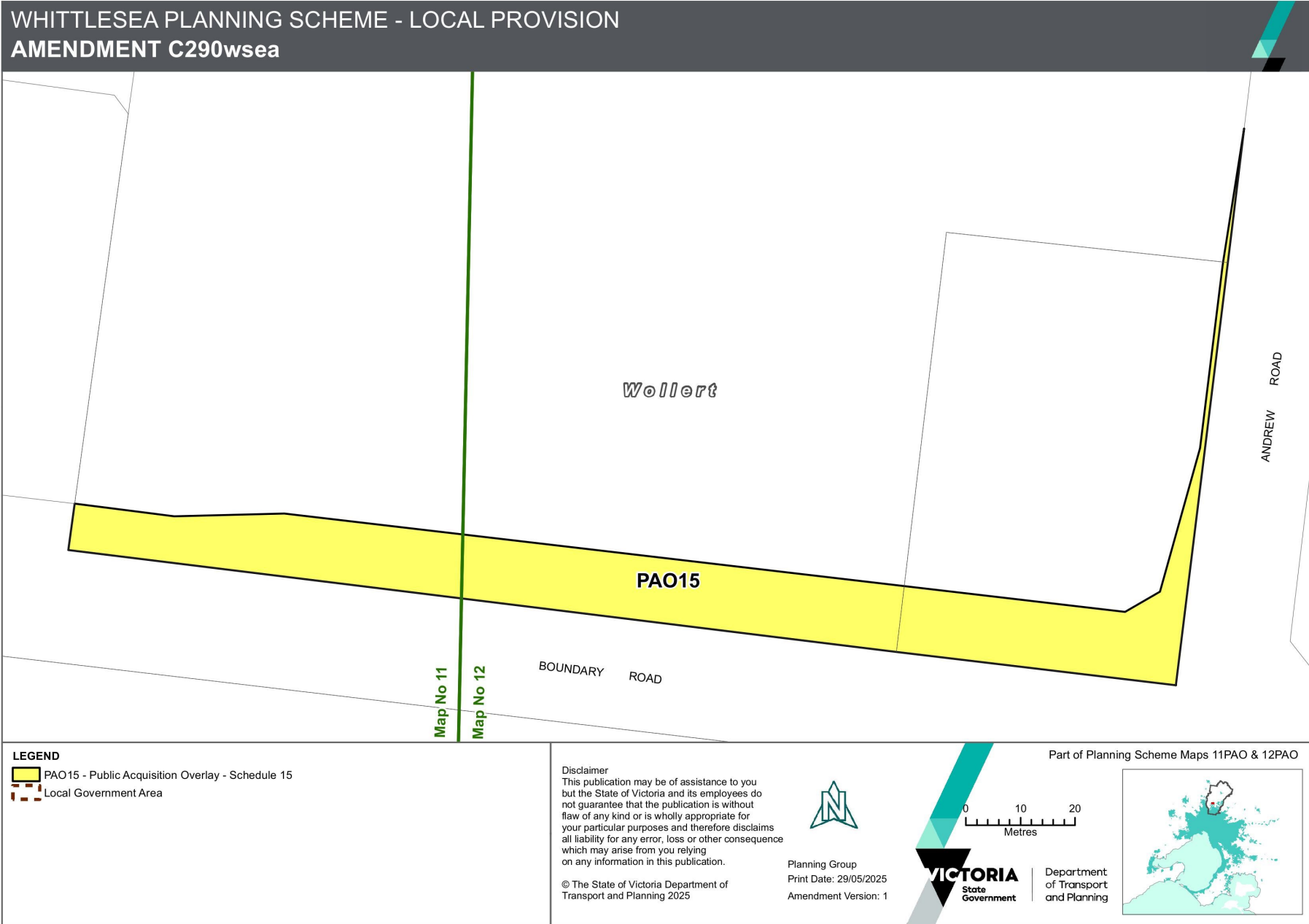
Declaration of Conflict of Interest

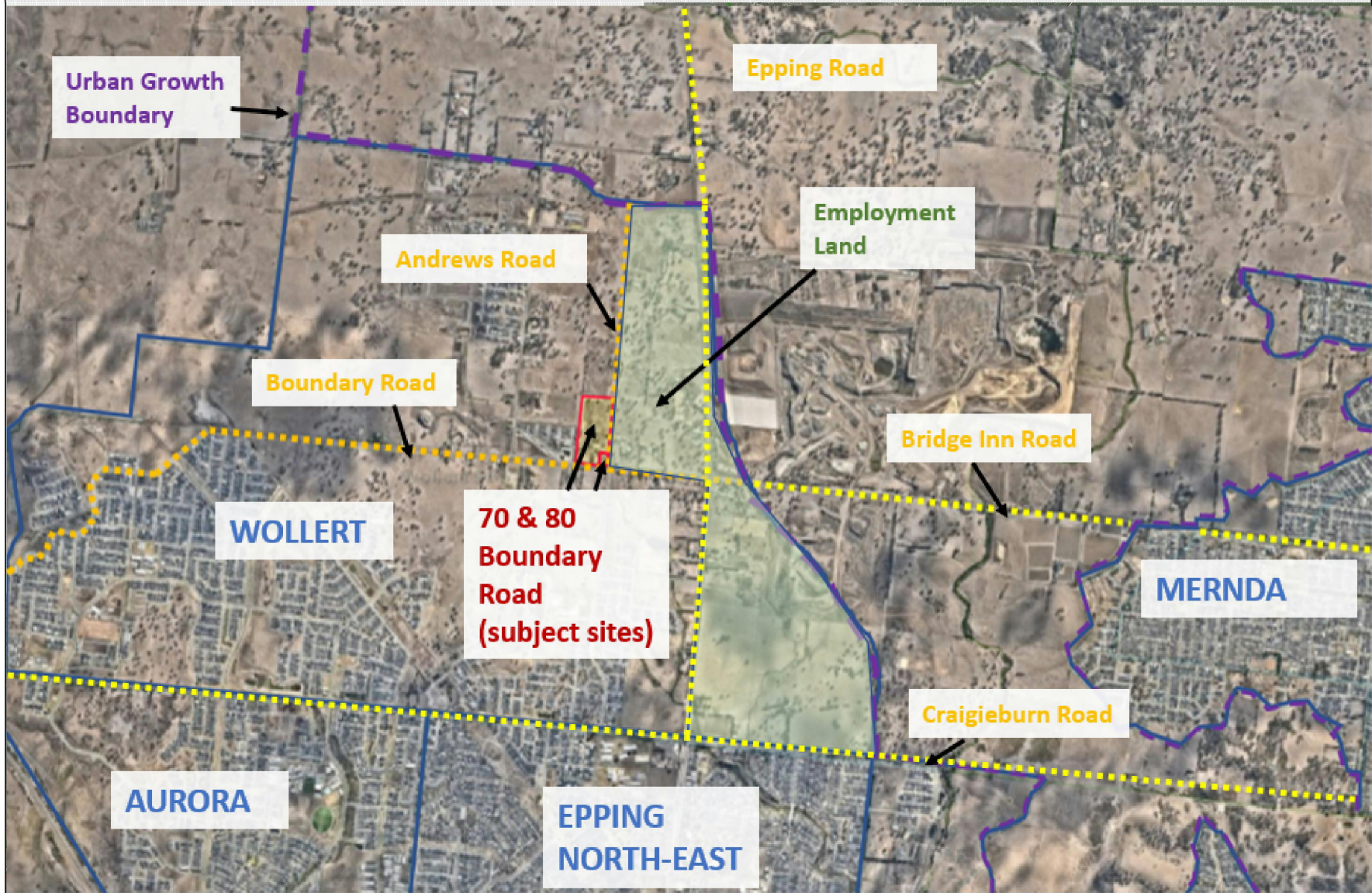
Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.


Attachments

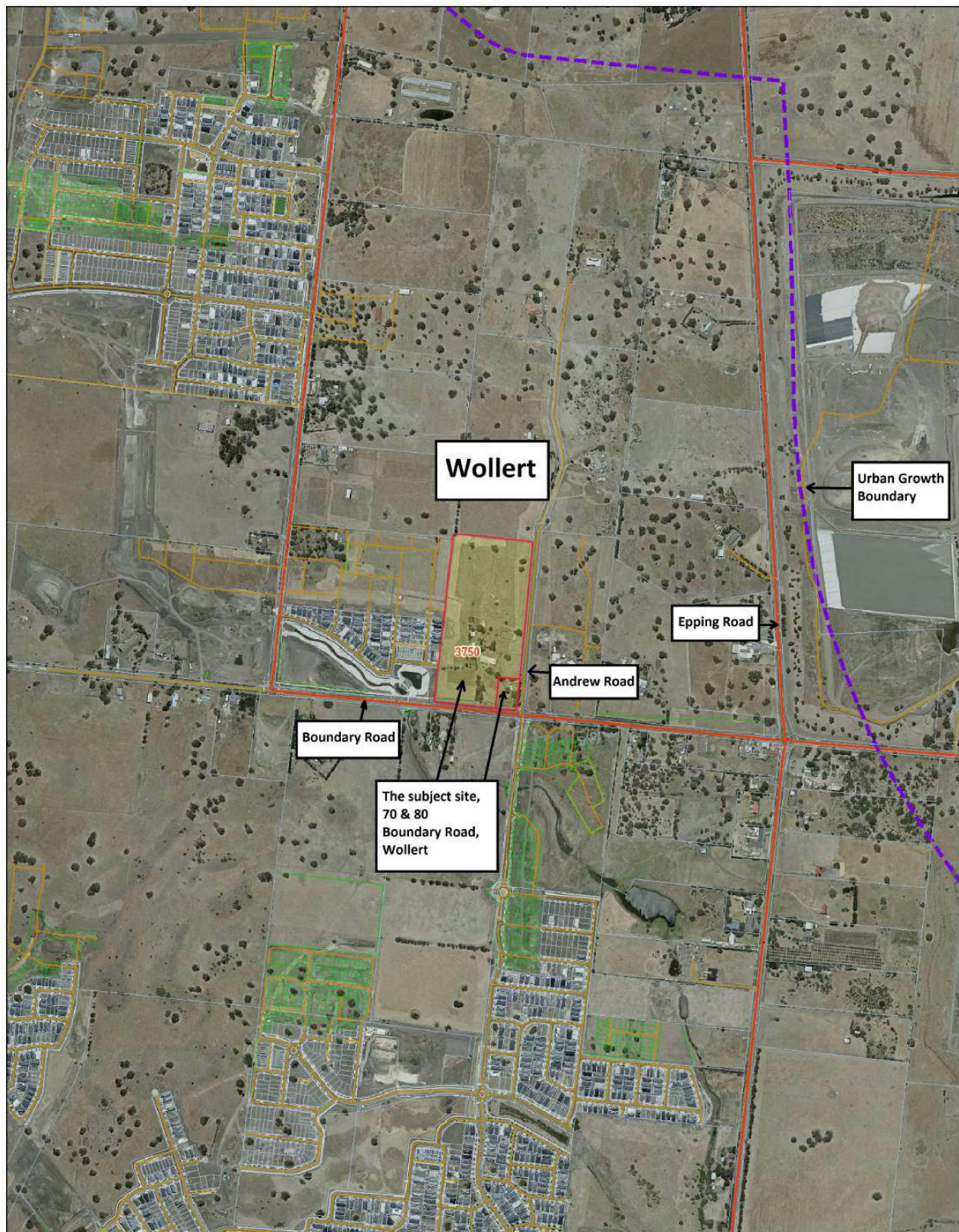
1. Planning Scheme Amendment C290wsea Proposed Public Acquisition Overlay Map [5.3.1 - 1 page]
2. Regional Context and Subject Site [5.3.2 - 3 pages]
3. Boundary Road Andrew Road intersection - Concept Design Plan [5.3.3 - 1 page]
4. Wollert Precinct Structure Plan and Development Contribution Plans excerpts [5.3.4 - 7 pages]
5. Bodycoats Road Precinct, Wollert Precinct Structure Plan [5.3.5 - 1 page]
6. Planning Scheme Amendment Statutory Process [5.3.6 - 1 page]
7. Planning Scheme Amendment C290wsea Draft Explanatory Report [5.3.7 - 8 pages]





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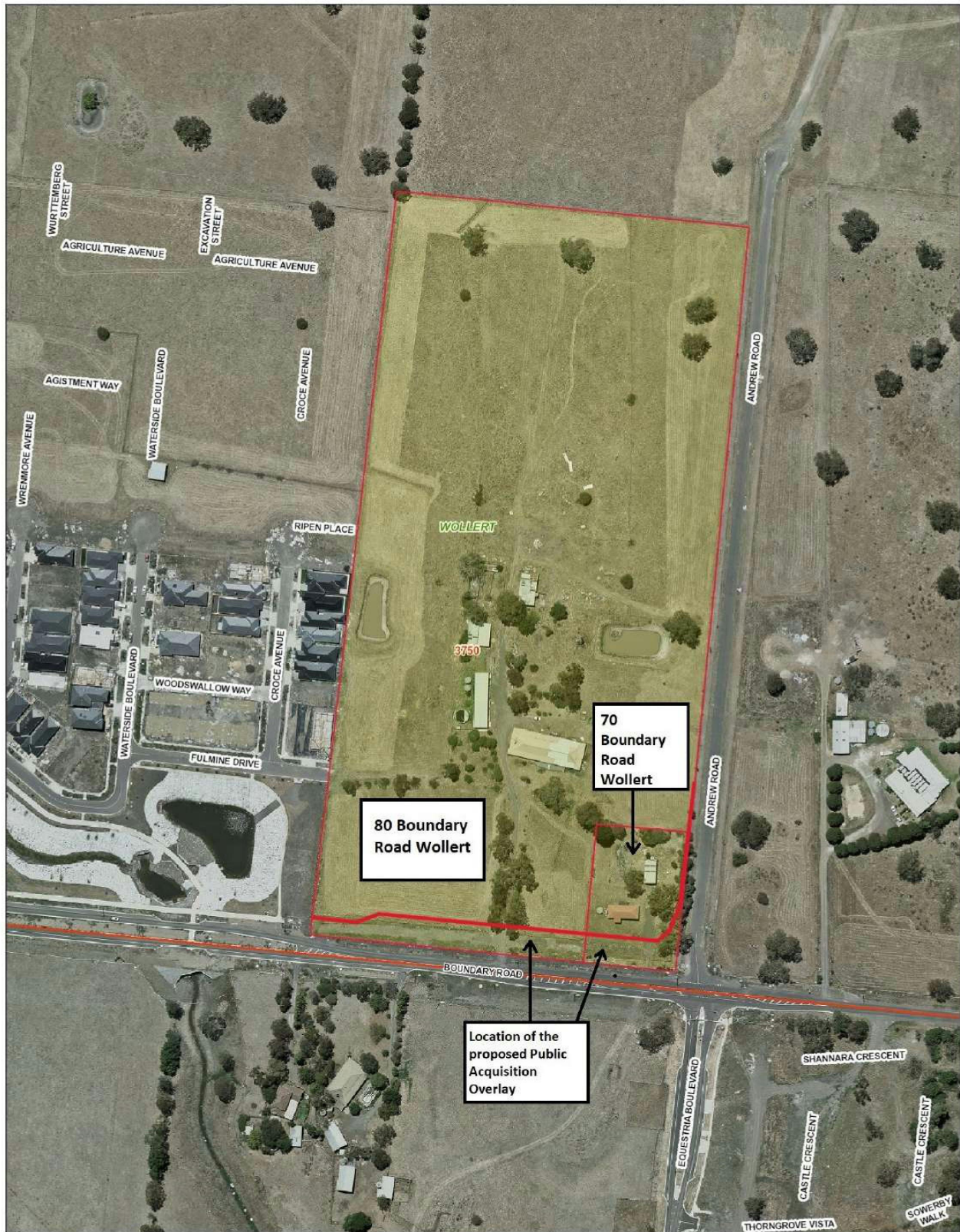

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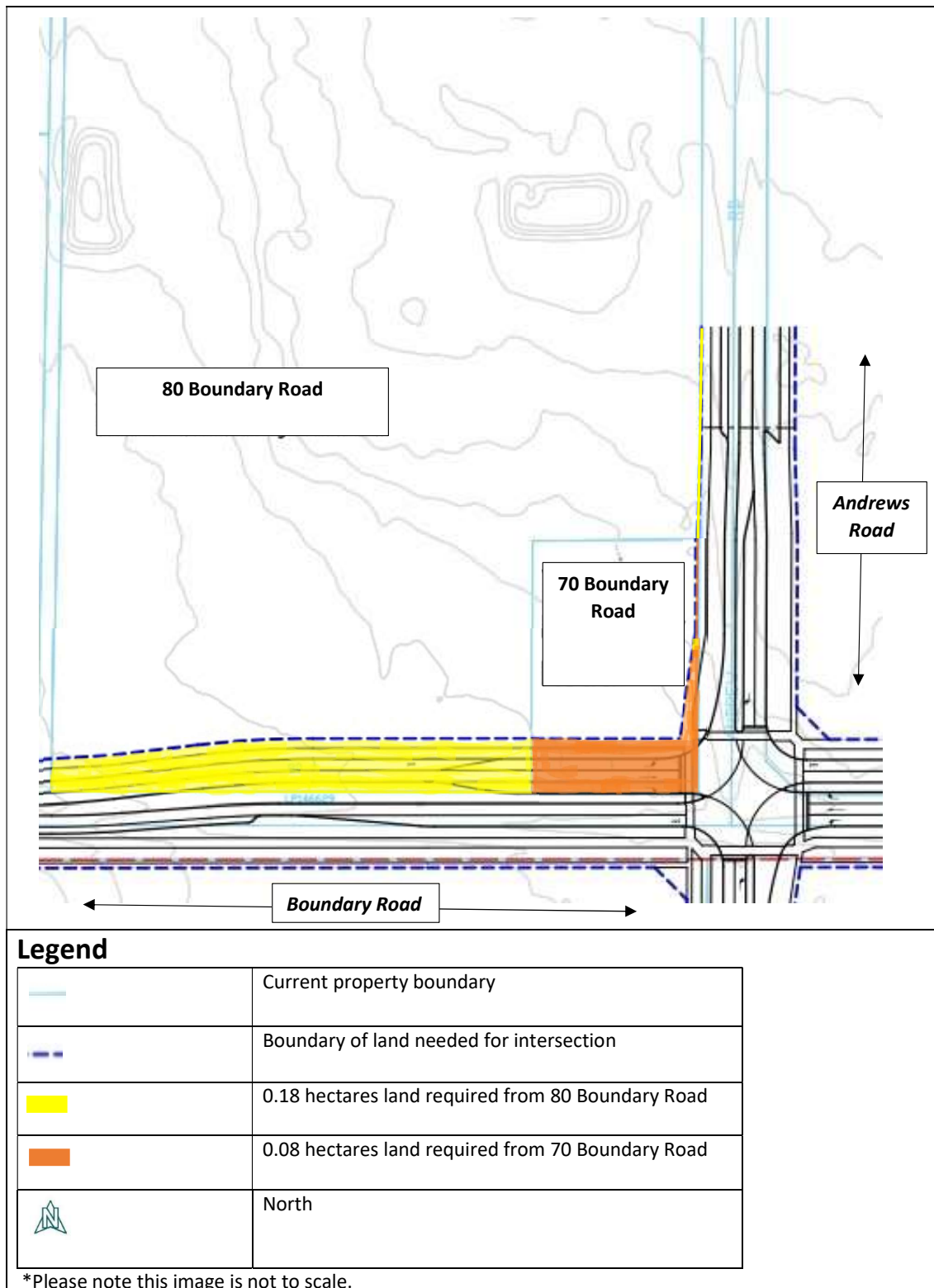


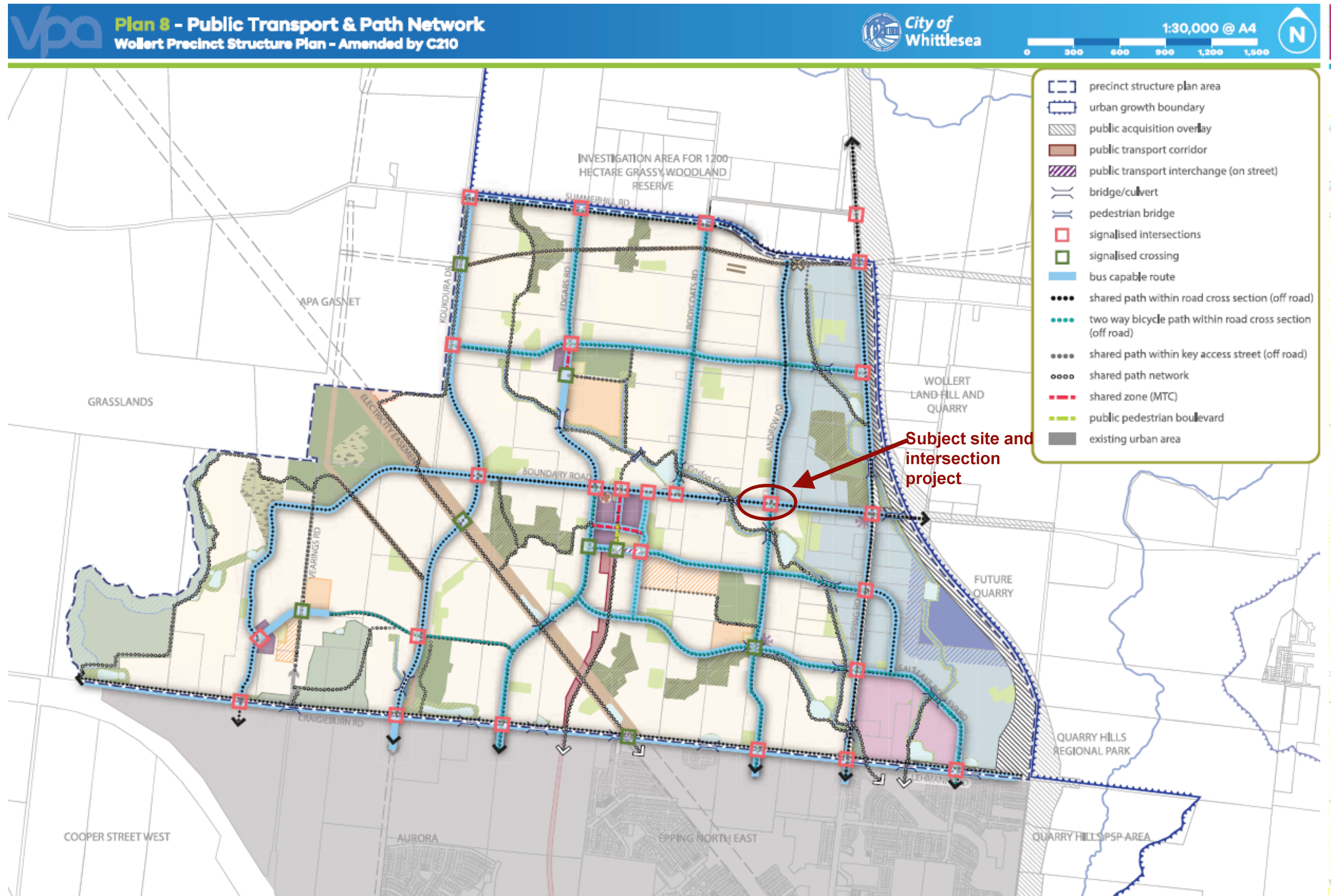
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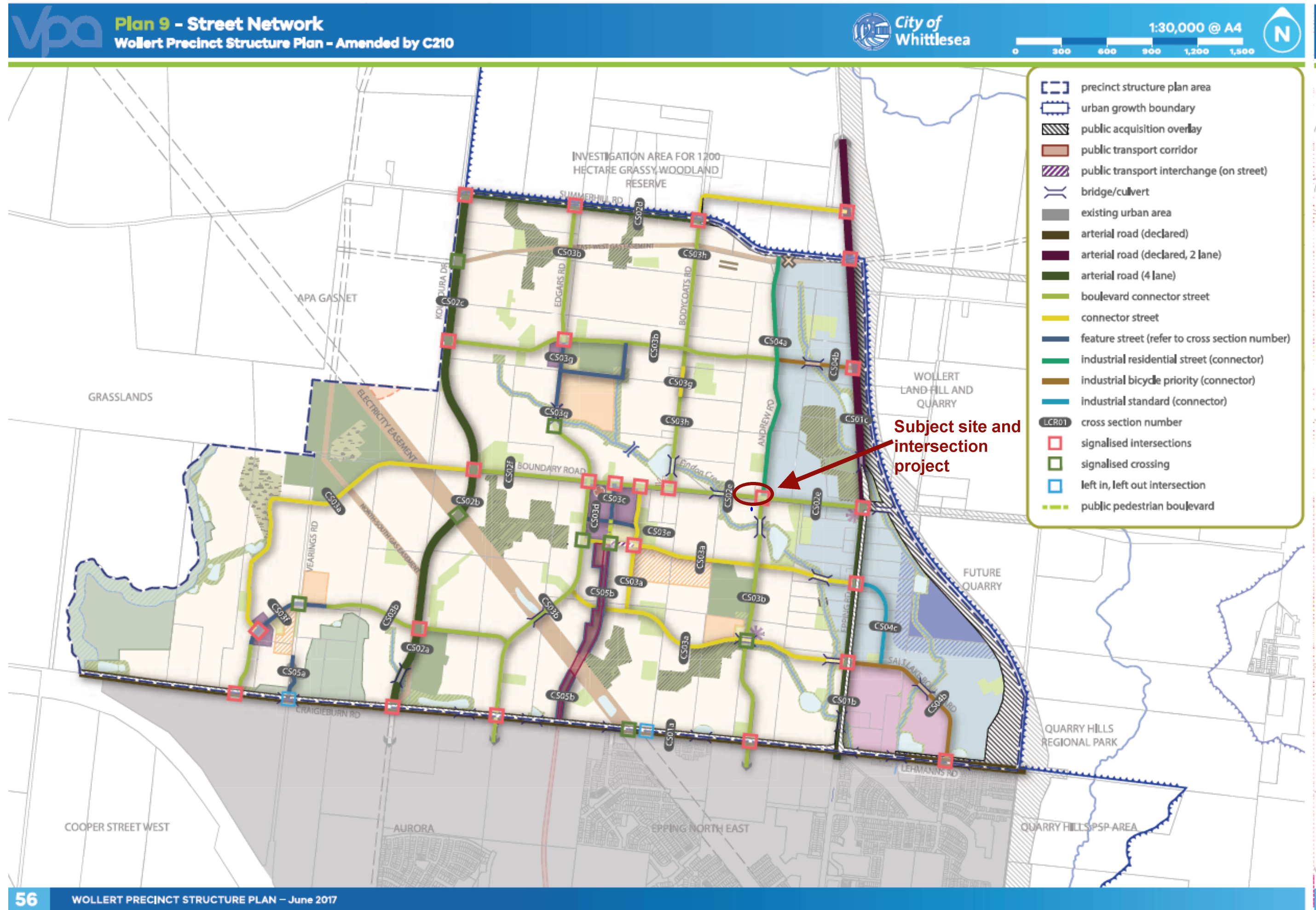


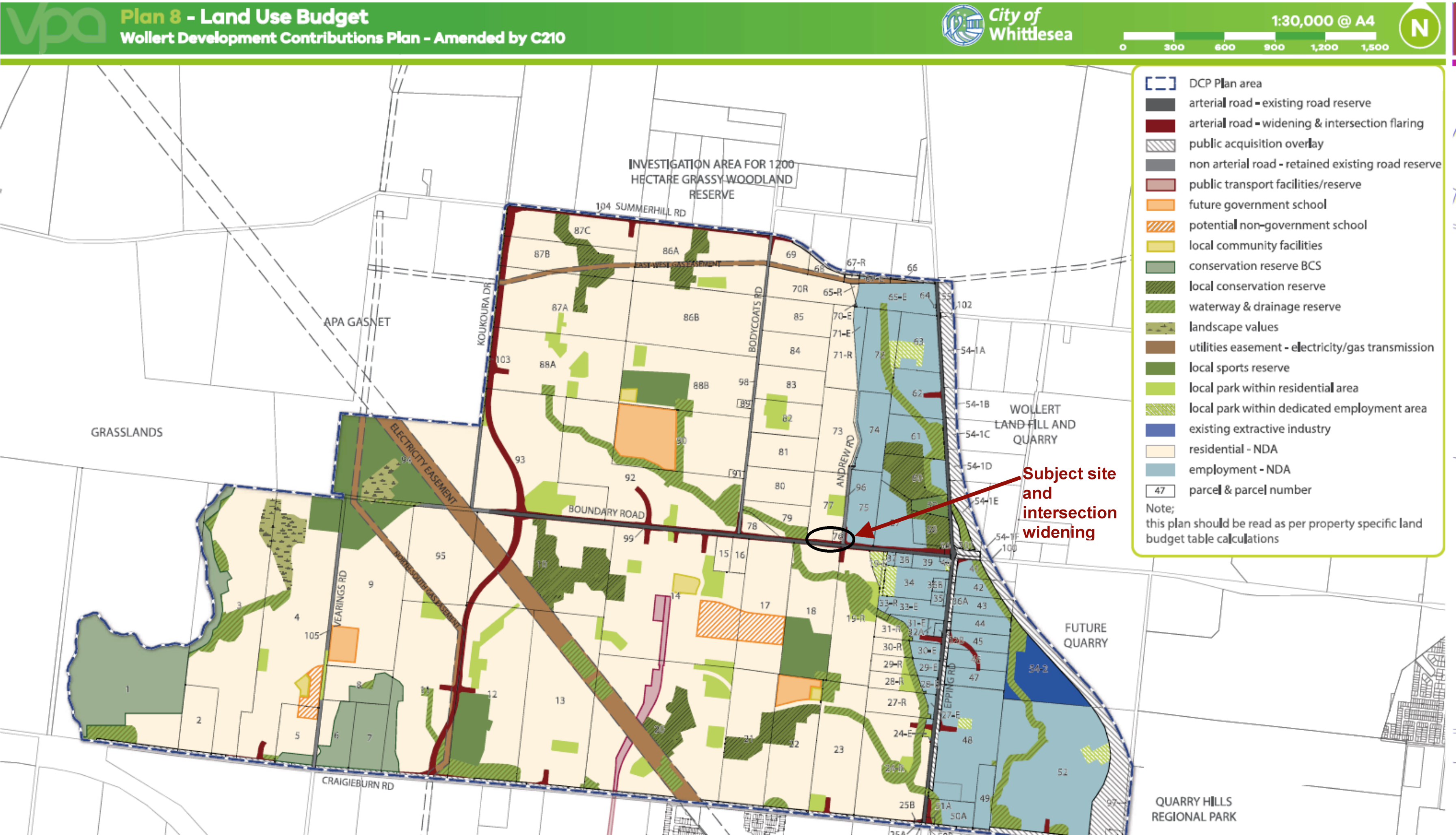
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Attachment 3 - Ultimate Design (Wollert DCP) – Boundary Road / Andrew Road intersection









| DCP PROJECT ID | PROJECT TITLE PROJECT DESCRIPTION | CHARGE AREAS CONTRIBUTING | INDICATIVE PROVISION TRIGGER |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|--|
| IN-21 | Koukoura Drive/ Connector (north of LTC) Purchase of land for intersection (ultimate) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-21c | Koukoura Drive/ Connector (north of LTC) Design and construction of arterial to connector 4- way signalised intersection (interim treatment) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-22 | Boundary Road/ North-South Connector (west edge of MTC) Purchase of land for intersection (ultimate) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-22c | Boundary Road/ North-South Connector (west edge of MTC) Design and construction of boulevard connector to connector 4- way signalised intersection (ultimate) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-23 | Boundary Road/ North-South Connector (east edge of MTC) Purchase of land for intersection (ultimate) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-23c | Boundary Road/ North-South Connector (east edge of MTC) Design and construction of boulevard connector to connector signalised T-intersection (interim treatment) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-24 | Boundary Road/ Bodycoats Road (north) Purchase of land for intersection (ultimate) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-24c | Boundary Road/ Bodycoats Road (north) Design and construction of boulevard connector to connector signalised T-intersection (interim treatment) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-26 | Boundary Road/ Andrew Road Purchase of land for intersection (ultimate) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-26c | Boundary Road/ Andrew Road Design and construction of boulevard connector to connector - industrial/ residential interface connector 4 - way signalised intersection (ultimate) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-31 | Lehmanns Road/ Saltlake Boulevard Purchase of land for intersection (ultimate) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-31c | Lehmanns Road/ Saltlake Boulevard Design and construction of arterial to connector/ industrial connector 4- way signalised intersection (interim treatment) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-32c | Epping Road/ Summerhill Road - Existing alignment to north of PSP area Design and construction of arterial to connector signalised T-intersection (interim treatment) within existing road reserve | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-33 | Boundary Road / MTC north -south main street Purchase of land for intersection (ultimate) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-33c | Boundary Road / MTC north -south main street Design and construction of boulevard connector to connector signalised T-intersection (interim treatment) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-Ped - 01 | Koukoura Drive/ Electricity easement - Pedestrian/ cyclist operated signalised crossing Construction of a signalised pedestrian/ cyclist crossing (interim treatment) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |
| IN-Ped- 02 | Craigieburn Road/ Electricity easement - Pedestrian/ cyclist operated signalised crossing Construction of a signalised pedestrian/ cyclist crossing (interim treatment) | Residential and Employment | At time of subdivision/access demand, subject to availability of DCP funding |

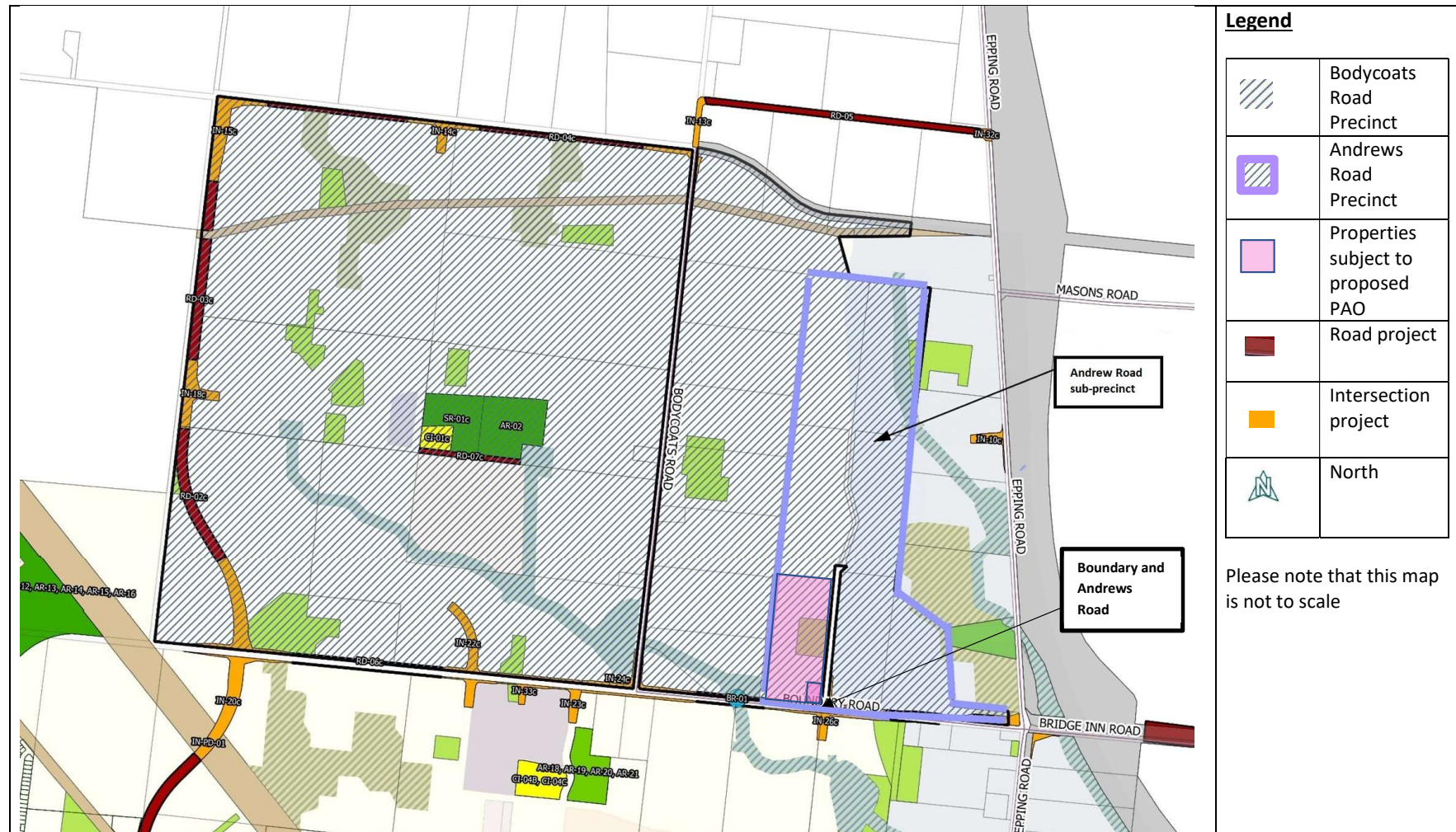
NOTE: See Appendix 3 for detail of pre-interim and interim upgrade methodology.

| DCP PROJECT NO. | PROJECT | INFRASTRUCTURE CATEGORY | LAND AREA HA | ESTIMATED PROJECT COST: LAND | ESTIMATED PROJECT COST: CONSTRUCTION | TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST: LAND & CONSTRUCTION | % APPORTIONED TO DCP (INTERNAL USE) | TOTAL COST RECOVERED BY DCP | RESIDENTIAL - CONTRIBUTION PER NDHA | EMPLOYMENT - CONTRIBUTION PER NDHA |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| IN-14 | Summerhill Road/ Connector Road (Edgars) | Development | 0.63 | \$557,444 | \$0 | \$557,444 | 100% | \$557,444 | \$586 | \$586 |
| IN-14c | Summerhill Road/ Connector Road (Edgars) | Development | 0.00 | \$0 | \$3,524,207 | \$3,524,207 | 100% | \$3,524,207 | \$3,706 | \$3,706 |
| IN-15 | Summerhill Road/ Koukoura Drive | Development | 1.48 | \$1,391,908 | \$0 | \$1,391,908 | 100% | \$1,391,908 | \$1,464 | \$1,464 |
| IN-15c | Summerhill Road/ Koukoura Drive | Development | 0.00 | \$0 | \$4,806,627 | \$4,806,627 | 100% | \$4,806,627 | \$5,055 | \$5,055 |
| IN-18 | Koukoura Drive/ Connector (north of LTC) | Development | 1.11 | \$768,548 | \$0 | \$768,548 | 100% | \$768,548 | \$808 | \$808 |
| IN-18c | Koukoura Drive/ Connector (north of LTC) | Development | 0.00 | \$0 | \$3,522,746 | \$3,522,746 | 100% | \$3,522,746 | \$3,705 | \$3,705 |
| IN-20 | Koukoura Drive/ Boundary Road | Development | 3.32 | \$2,080,451 | \$0 | \$2,080,451 | 100% | \$2,080,451 | \$2,188 | \$2,188 |
| IN-20c | Koukoura Drive/ Boundary Road | Development | 0.00 | \$0 | \$5,663,229 | \$5,663,229 | 100% | \$5,663,229 | \$5,956 | \$5,956 |
| IN-21 | Koukoura Drive/ Connector (north of LTC) | Development | 1.47 | \$1,160,128 | \$0 | \$1,160,128 | 100% | \$1,160,128 | \$1,220 | \$1,220 |
| IN-21c | Koukoura Drive/ Connector (north of LTC) | Development | 0.00 | \$0 | \$5,090,862 | \$5,090,862 | 100% | \$5,090,862 | \$5,354 | \$5,354 |
| IN-22 | Boundary Road/ North-South Connector (west edge of MTC) | Development | 1.29 | \$855,999 | \$0 | \$855,999 | 100% | \$855,999 | \$900 | \$900 |
| IN-22c | Boundary Road/ North-South Connector (west edge of MTC) | Development | 0.00 | \$0 | \$3,773,055 | \$3,773,055 | 100% | \$3,773,055 | \$3,968 | \$3,968 |
| IN-23 | Boundary Road/ North-South Connector (east edge of MTC) | Development | 0.47 | \$298,448 | \$0 | \$298,448 | 100% | \$298,448 | \$314 | \$314 |
| IN-23c | Boundary Road/ North-South Connector (east edge of MTC) | Development | 0.00 | \$0 | \$2,382,351 | \$2,382,351 | 100% | \$2,382,351 | \$2,505 | \$2,505 |
| IN-24 | Boundary Road/ Bodycoats Road (north) | Development | 0.85 | \$1,108,613 | \$0 | \$1,108,613 | 100% | \$1,108,613 | \$1,166 | \$1,166 |
| IN-24c | Boundary Road/ Bodycoats Road (north) | Development | 0.00 | \$0 | \$3,102,840 | \$3,102,840 | 100% | \$3,102,840 | \$3,263 | \$3,263 |
| IN-26 | Boundary Road/ Andrew Road | Development | 1.07 | \$937,602 | \$0 | \$937,602 | 100% | \$937,602 | \$986 | \$986 |
| IN-26c | Boundary Road/ Andrew Road | Development | 0.00 | \$0 | \$4,762,415 | \$4,762,415 | 100% | \$4,762,415 | \$5,008 | \$5,008 |
| IN-31 | Lehmans Road/ Saltlake Boulevard | Development | 0.26 | \$258,803 | \$0 | \$258,803 | 100% | \$258,803 | \$272 | \$272 |

Table 12 Infrastructure Delivery Priorities

| | DCP PROJECT NUMBER | PROJECT TITLE |
|---|--------------------|---|
| PHASE 1 | RD-01 | Koukoura Drive - between Craigieburn Road and northern edge of Wollert to Keon Park gas transmission easement |
| | BR-02 | Edgars Creek - Koukoura Drive |
| | IN-21 | Koukoura Drive / Connector (north of LTC) |
| | IN-02 | Craigieburn Road / Andrew Road |
| | IN-04 | Craigieburn Road / Edgars Road |
| | IN-05 | Craigieburn Road / Koukoura Drive |
| | IN-06 | Craigieburn Road / Connector (west of Vearings) |
| | CI-03 | West Wollert Level 2 multi-purpose community centre |
| TOTAL VALUE OF INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES - 0-5 YEARS | | |
| PHASE 2 | RD-02 | Koukoura Drive - between northern edge of gas easement to connection with historic road reserve near northern boundary of 220 Boundary Road |
| | RD-06 | Boundary Road - between Koukoura Drive and Epping Road |
| | BR-01 | Findon Creek - West branch - Boundary Road |
| | IN-09 | Epping Road / Boundary Road |
| | IN-20 | Koukoura Drive / Boundary Road |
| | IN-22 | Boundary Road / north-south connector (west edge of MTC) |
| | IN-23 | Boundary Road / north-south connector (east edge of MTC) |
| | IN-24 | Boundary Road / Bodycoats Road (north) |
| | IN-26 | Boundary Road / Andrew Road |
| | IN-33 | Boundary Road / MTC north-south main street |
| | RD-07 | Road - north education hub - between sporting reserve (SR01) and government primary school |
| | IN-07 | Epping Road / Saltlake Boulevard |
| | RD-08c | Connector road - between east government primary school and local conservation reserve |
| | CI-02 | East Wollert level 1 children's centre |
| TOTAL VALUE OF INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES - 5-10 YEARS | | |

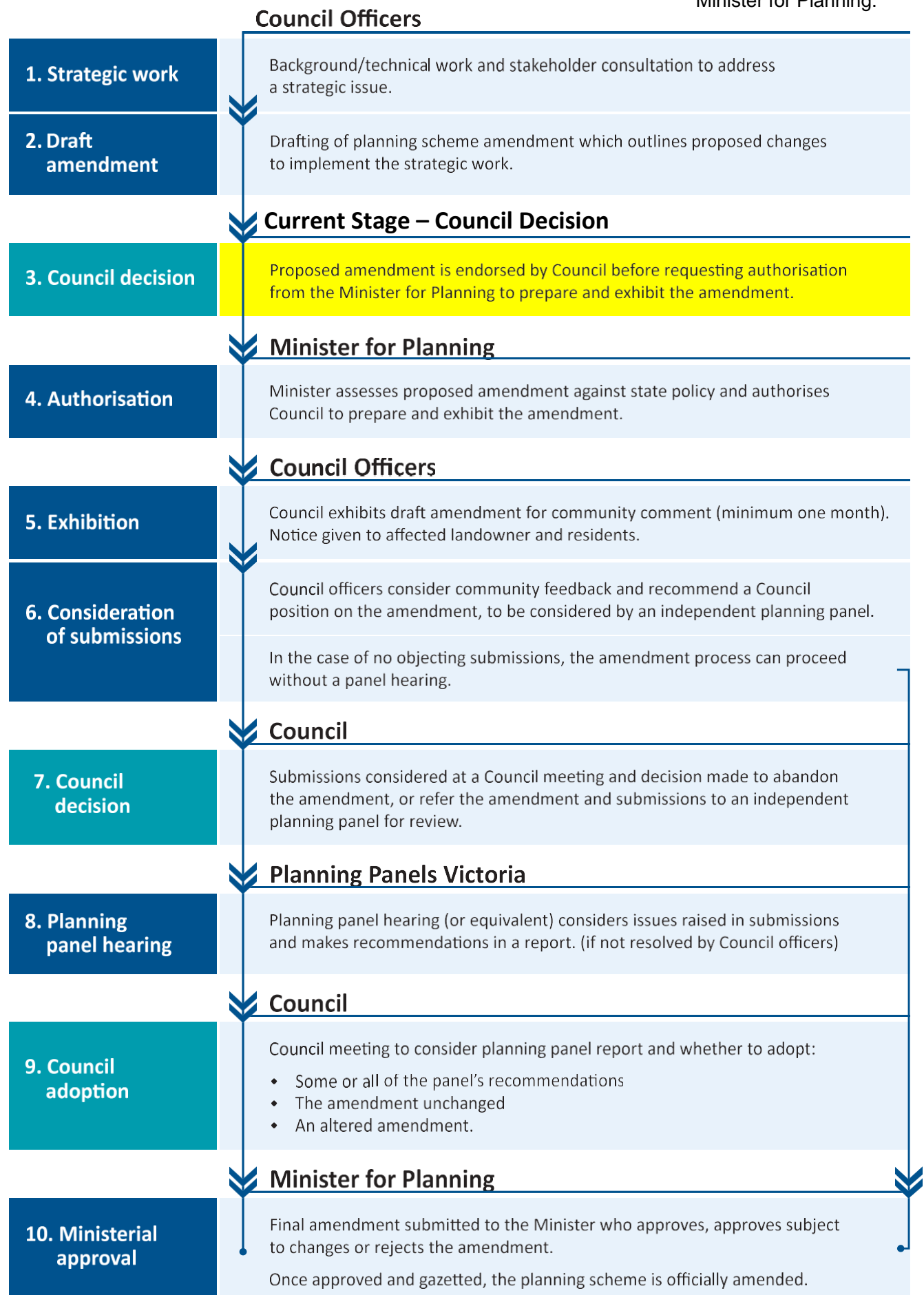
Attachment 5 - Bodycoats Road Precinct, Wollert PSP



NOTE: 20(4) Ministerial Amendments are not subject to this process. These Amendments can proceed straight to step 10 if supported by Minister for Planning.

Planning Scheme Amendment statutory process

Council-led amendments



Planning and Environment Act 1987

Whittlesea Planning Scheme

Amendment C290

Explanatory Report

Overview

The Wollert Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) area is experiencing out-of-sequence development in several locations, including the Andrews Road Precinct. This report recommends applying Public Acquisition Overlay 15 (PAO15) to land required for the construction of the Boundary Road and Andrew Road intersection, as a key step in addressing one such out-of-sequence development.

Applying PAO15 is essential to enable the future compulsory acquisition of the land. This acquisition will facilitate the delivery of the full Development Contributions Plan (DCP) interim, allowing Council to meet its infrastructure obligations through works-in-kind. Securing the intersection will, in turn, unlock development opportunities within the Andrew Road Precinct, enabling the orderly development of this out-of-sequence area of the Wollert PSP.

Where you may inspect this amendment

The amendment can be inspected free of charge at the engage Whittlesea website at [Engage City of Whittlesea](#)

And/or

The amendment is available for public inspection, free of charge, during office hours at the following places:

- During office hours at Whittlesea City Council, Civic Centre, 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang, VIC 3752.
- The amendment can also be inspected free of charge at the Department of Transport and Planning website at <http://www.planning.vic.gov.au/public-inspection> or by contacting the office on 1800 789 386 to arrange a time to view the amendment documentation.

Details of the amendment

Who is the planning authority?

This amendment has been prepared by Whittlesea City Council, who is the planning authority for this amendment.

Land affected by the amendment

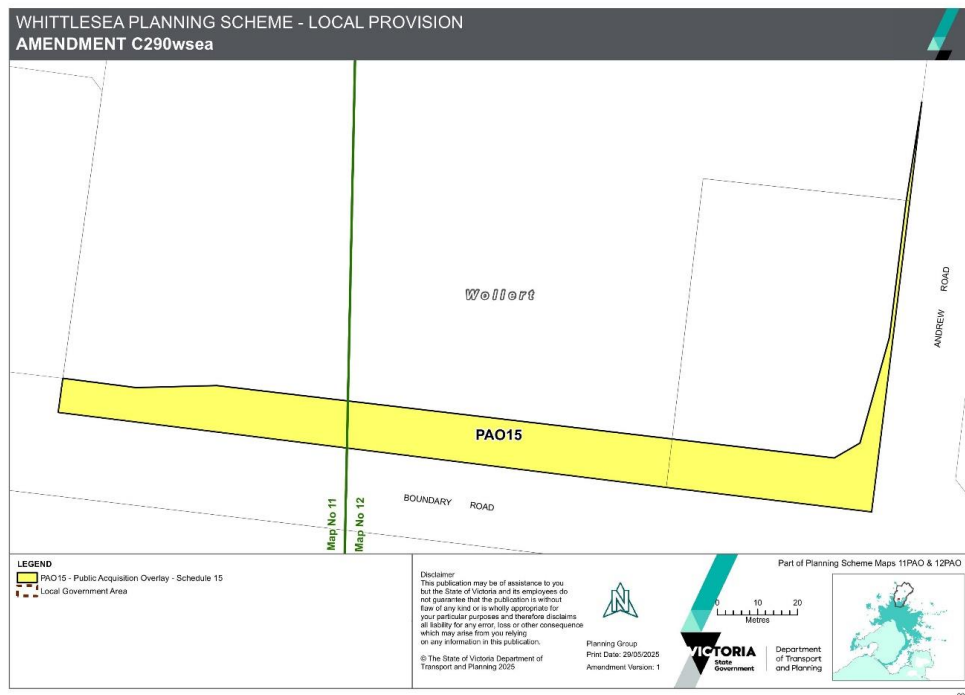
The amendment applies to parts of 70 and 80 Boundary Road Wollert, in accordance with the map below.



A mapping reference table is attached at Attachment 1 to this Explanatory Report.

What the amendment does

The amendment proposes to apply the Public Acquisition Overlay 15 (PAO15) to parts of 70 and 80 Boundary Road Wollert, as depicted by the map below. The land take will comprise of 779.27 m² at 70 Boundary Road and 1779.58 m² at 80 Boundary Road.



The amendment will only require changes to the PAO map at map 11 and map 12.
No other changes to the scheme will be required to facilitate this amendment.

Strategic assessment of the amendment

The amendment complies with Ministerial Direction No. 11 (Strategic Assessment of Amendments) under section 12 of the *Planning and Environment Act, 1987*. The amendment is consistent with this direction which ensures a comprehensive strategic evaluation of a planning scheme amendment and the outcomes it produces. This will be outlined further below.

Why is the amendment required?

Why is Council Seeking to Apply the PAO15?

The Public Acquisition Overlay 15 (PAO15) is required as Council has been unable to secure the land needed for the Boundary Road and Andrew Road intersection through voluntary negotiations. Without the PAO, Council cannot access the subject land to deliver the necessary intersection works. Applying the PAO will formally reserve the land for road purposes and enable Council to acquire it under the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* through a subsequent, separate process.

Council considers the reservation of this land to be in the broader public interest. Failure to deliver this infrastructure at this time will likely result in the need to pursue

alternative projects that are not required and would provide fewer benefits to the wider precinct. Additionally, it would not resolve existing sequencing issues, as the current intersection configuration prevents further development to the north.

How does the amendment implement the objectives of planning in Victoria?

The amendment supports the objectives of planning in Victoria, particularly those outlined in Sections 4 and 12 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, by:

- Providing for the fair, orderly, economic, and sustainable use and development of land (s4(1)(a));
- Protecting public utilities and other assets, and enabling the orderly provision and coordination of public infrastructure for community benefit (s4(1)(e));
- Facilitating development in line with these objectives (s4(1)(f));
- Balancing the present and future interests of all Victorians (s4(1)(g)).

The subject land has long been identified for an intersection within the Wollert PSP. This amendment does not alter that designation but seeks to facilitate its delivery. Reserving the land for a public purpose through this amendment reflects fair and orderly planning, supports the delivery of essential public infrastructure, and balances the needs of current and future residents.

Accordingly, the amendment clearly aligns with and implements the objectives of Sections 4 and 12 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

How does the amendment address any environmental, social and economic effects?

The amendment addresses any environmental, social and economic effects (sections 12(2)(b) and (c) of the Act). This has been outlined further below.

- **Environmental**
The land required for the intersection has been consistently identified for this purpose in multiple strategic planning documents, most notably the Wollert PSP. Comprehensive environmental assessments were undertaken as part of the PSP's preparation, with the intersection's impacts assessed and approved through that process. As such, no additional environmental impacts are anticipated from this amendment.
- **Social impacts**
The proposed amendment is not expected to result in any adverse social consequences. On the contrary, by facilitating the future development of employment land, the amendment will support positive social outcomes for the surrounding community through increased local employment opportunities and improved infrastructure.
- **Economic impacts**
This amendment represents the first step towards compulsory acquisition of

the subject land. The primary economic benefits will arise from the delivery of the Boundary Road and Andrew Road intersection, which will be pursued through separate and subsequent processes. Importantly, securing this intersection will unlock employment land to the north, supporting the City of Whittlesea's broader objective of generating additional employment opportunities within the municipality and enhancing local economic activity.

Does the amendment address relevant bushfire risk?

The proposed amendment will have no impact upon Bushfire Management. As noted, the intersection is already planned to be constructed. The reserving of this land, for a purpose that has already been approved will have negligible impact upon bushfire policy in Clause 13.02 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.

Does the amendment comply with the requirements of any other Minister's Direction applicable to the amendment?

Council has had regard to relevant Planning Practice Notes and Ministerial Directions under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 when preparing this amendment. The amendment responds to Practice Notes 30 and 46 and complies with the Ministerial Direction on Form and Content (VC281). It also addresses Ministerial Directions 1, 9, and 15.

How does the amendment support or implement the Planning Policy Framework and any adopted State policy?

Plan Melbourne

Plan Melbourne is the metropolitan planning strategy guiding the future shape of the city and state over 35 years. The amendment aligns with key directions of Plan Melbourne, particularly:

- Direction 1.2: Improving access to jobs closer to where people live;
- Direction 2.4: Facilitating decision-making processes for housing in the right locations; and
- Direction 3.2: Improving transport infrastructure in Melbourne's outer suburbs.

The proposed PAO facilitates the timely provision of essential infrastructure in a designated growth area, consistent with these strategic objectives.

The amendment implements the objectives of several key clauses of the Planning Policy Framework (PPF):

- Clause 11 – Settlement: Supporting logical, coordinated urban development linked to transport infrastructure.
- Clause 11.02-1S – Supply of Urban Land: Ensuring that sufficient land and infrastructure are available to meet forecast demand.
- Clause 11.02-2S – Structure Planning and Clause 11.02-3S – Sequencing of

Development: Supporting the need to coordinate development sequencing with infrastructure provision.

- Clause 18 – Transport: Facilitating an integrated and sustainable transport system, protecting future transport infrastructure, and ensuring access to jobs and services.
- Clause 18.01-1S – Land Use and Transport Integration: Planning land use to protect and facilitate major transport infrastructure delivery.
- Clause 19 – Infrastructure: Ensuring timely, efficient, and cost-effective provision of development infrastructure, including the use of development contributions to support infrastructure delivery.

These provisions support reserving and acquiring land now to enable the delivery of critical transport infrastructure, aligning land use planning with transport planning and servicing needs.

Development and Infrastructure Contributions

Although the amendment itself does not involve construction or subdivision, it will enable future projects that undertake both. It is consistent with Clauses 19.03-1S and 19.03-1L, which promote the fair apportionment of infrastructure costs and prioritisation of essential services in growth areas. The PAO15 mechanism will support the subsequent subdivision and development processes required for the compulsory acquisition of land.

Council's approach ensures that infrastructure delivery is aligned with out-of-sequence development pressures and ensuring critical infrastructure is provided in a timely manner.

How does the amendment support or implement the Municipal Planning Strategy?

The amendment is consistent with the Whittlesea Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS), which recognises the municipality's rapid growth and prioritises the early delivery of transport and infrastructure to service new communities, via the following clauses:

- Clause 02.02 – Vision and strategic directions promoting accessibility, connectivity, and community infrastructure;
- Clause 02.03-8 – Transport, which seeks to reserve land early to secure future road and transport corridors;
- Clause 02.03-9 – Infrastructure, emphasising the need for timely, efficient, and equitable infrastructure delivery through development contributions.

The application of the PAO15 implements these parts of the MPS.

Does the amendment make proper use of the Victoria Planning

Provisions?

The subject sites are affected by the Urban Growth Zone – Schedule 5 (UGZ5) and the Development Contributions Plan Overlay – Schedule 16 (DCPO16).

The Urban Growth Zone Schedule 5 attaches the Wollert Precinct Structure Plan to both subject sites. The Wollert PSP provides the underlying structure for development within the precinct and is incorporated into the Whittlesea Planning Scheme. The subject land is reserved for road purposes in the PSP and the IN-26 Functional Layout Plan. The proposed PAO directly supports the delivery of this planned infrastructure, enabling orderly and staged development consistent with the PSP objectives.

The DCPO16 incorporates the Wollert Development Contributions Plan (DCP), which strategically identifies land required for the delivery of key infrastructure, including the Boundary Road and Andrew Road intersection.

The DCP designates the intersection works as an essential infrastructure project necessary to support the orderly and logical development of the Wollert PSP area. Council is nominated as the delivery agency responsible for the acquisition of land and the delivery of the intersection. Further analysis of Council's obligations and the strategic importance of the infrastructure is provided in the Strategic Assessment section of this report.

The application of PAO15 is the appropriate and necessary mechanism to formally reserve the land for a road to be constructed by Whittlesea City Council. No other planning tool within the Whittlesea Planning Scheme enables the reservation of land for this purpose. The PAO15 is an existing overlay tool within the Scheme, requiring only updates to Maps 11 and 12 rather than the introduction of new mapping layers. Accordingly, the amendment makes proper use of the Victorian Planning Provisions.

How does the amendment address the views of any relevant agency?

The amendment is minor in nature. Any feedback will be incorporated into the amendment, in due course.

Does the amendment address relevant requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010?

The proposed amendment will not have a significant impact on the Transport Integration Act, 2010. This is due to the Andrew Road and Boundary Road intersection being included within the Wollert PSP. This is an incorporated document that was developed with after a full strategic planning assessment.

How does the amendment have regard to the principles set out in the *Yarra River Protection (Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn) Act 2017* in

relation to Yarra River land and other land, the use or development of which may affect Yarra River land?

Not applicable.

Resource and administrative costs

What impact will the new planning provisions have on the resource and administrative costs of the responsible authority?

The costs of the amendment have been accounted for in Council's budget.

Attachment 1 – Mapping reference table

| Location | Land /Area Affected | Mapping Reference | Address | Proposed Zone changes | Proposed Overlay changes | Proposed deletion changes |
|----------|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Wollert | 779.27 m ² | 12 | 70 Boundary Road, Wollert | N/A | Application of the PAO15 | N/A |
| Wollert | 1779.58 m ² | 11 and 12 | 80 Boundary Road, Wollert | N/A | Application of the PAO15 | N/A |

5.4 Mill Park Place Framework

Director/Executive Manager: Director Infrastructure & Environment

Report Author: Unit Manager Urban Design & Placemaking

In Attendance: Manager Urban Design & Transport
Unit Manager Urban Design & Placemaking
Urban Designer

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the final Mill Park Place Framework at Attachment 1 for Council approval.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Approve the Mill Park Place Framework at Attachment 1.
2. Write to the Mill Park Place Framework Community Reference Group members to thank them for their involvement and feedback throughout the report's development.
3. Update Council's website and Engage page to reflect the final version of the Mill Park Place Framework.

Background / Key Information

What is a Place Framework?

The City of Whittlesea's first Place Framework was located in Thomastown and Lalor. It was endorsed by Council in 2023 and was received positively by the community, Council and other stakeholders. Place Frameworks were developed to help identify strategic directions for areas that do not currently have any existing policies or related strategic plans endorsed by Council or in the Planning Scheme (i.e., Structure Plans, Development Plans, Urban Design Frameworks, etc.). Place Frameworks are developed by the Council with the community. They help guide how our unique local areas develop over time, prioritise infrastructure investment and assist in advocacy to other authorities and stakeholders. Thomastown and Lalor Place Framework 2023 has been referred to numerous times by external authorities and stakeholders in a positive manner. It has helped in securing grants and advocating for improvements in the local area such as Nick Ascenzo Reserve Masterplan, The Boulevard Town Centre Revitalisation and Edgars Creek Masterplan.

Place Frameworks are developed by internal Council staff, who utilise Urban Design expertise to undertake research, collaborate across the organisation and with community throughout all stages of the project to identify key initiatives and projects.

- Stage 1 of each Place Framework is to identify key challenges and opportunities of the study area.
- Stage 2 identifies key principles, initiatives and actions to address the challenges and opportunities.

Place Frameworks are undertaken at a suburb level as the City of Whittlesea is a large and complex municipality with diverse communities, environments and development patterns. To truly appreciate and understand this diversity, the suburb scale has proven to be appropriate for community engagement purposes, research, and timely and effective processes.

Background of the Mill Park Place Framework

Mill Park was identified as the next Place Framework to be undertaken through research and weighting of all suburbs in the municipality that have no strategic planning documents endorsed. Mill Park was identified as a priority, predominantly due to its lack of strategic policy, aging infrastructure, diverse community and unique development pattern. In undertaking this research, Bundoora was also highlighted as a high priority and is identified as the next Place Framework to be undertaken after Mill Park.

The Mill Park Place Framework is a Community Action Plan 2024-25 item: *"Develop the Mill Park Place Framework to enhance our investment planning and prioritise city shaping opportunities"*.

A Council Briefing memo was provided on 28 November 2023. It identified Mill Park as the next Place Framework to be developed and that a community reference group was to be established to help develop the draft Framework.

The Draft Mill Park Place Framework was endorsed for community engagement at the 16 July 2024 Council Meeting and went out publicly for community consultation between 22 July and 25 August 2024.

Mill Park Place Framework overview

The Mill Park Place Framework (the Framework) provides insight into the suburb through research and community engagement. It outlines key challenges and opportunities, aims to guide and support future priority projects, investment, activities and advocacy for the suburb.

The key drivers for the Framework are to:

- Translate the Whittlesea 2040 vision and goals to Mill Park;
- Establish a local, place responsive vision that connects to community aspirations;
- Fill the gap in strategic direction for the established area and aging infrastructure and articulate a clear Council direction for priority initiatives; and
- Ensure Council planning and delivery considers the unique qualities of Mill Park and enhances this over time.

Place initiatives

There are ten key place initiatives within the Framework for various Council departments, teams and units to collaborate and deliver the final vision of the document. These initiatives aim to address the challenges and opportunities identified by the community in the Framework.

Place initiatives are divided into two groups:

1. “Council-led place initiatives” are items that Council can lead, manage and invest in.
2. “Advocacy initiatives” are advocacy items that require input, funding or leadership from other stakeholders or authorities to deliver.

Council-led place initiatives include:

1. Improvement to the amenity and safety of open spaces.
2. Re-imagining green corridors and easements.
3. Increasing walkability:
 - This initiative will be investigated further by Council’s Strategic Property and Portfolio Development, Traffic and Transport and Urban Design and Placemaking teams in the 2025-26 financial year.

4. Safer streets for all:
 - This initiative has received funding and has a related project being undertaken by Traffic and Transport in the 2025-26 financial year.
5. Creating thriving community hubs:
 - The Miller Community Centre and surrounding precinct had a concept design undertaken by consultants in the 2023-24 financial year and is planned for Detailed Design in the 2026-27 financial year. This project is a part of the Town Centre Revitalisation Program.
6. Revitalising key destinations:
 - This initiative has a related project being undertaken by Greening Whittlesea in the 2025-26 financial year.

Advocacy initiatives:

1. Childs Road improvements;
2. Plenty Road upgrades;
3. Darebin Creek and Plenty River corridor; and
4. Better support for town centres.

It is worth noting that final outcomes may vary due to other factors, such as existing projects, availability for funding, investigations required and budgets.

Overview of the Framework's development process



The above timeline provides a snapshot of the process undertaken to deliver the Final Place Framework.

Stage 1 and 2

Council officer research identified Mill Park as a priority suburb for a Place Framework. A community reference group made up of ten community members who either live or work in Mill Park was established to provide community insights and direction to the project. This group met three times at key stages of the project's development.

Stage 3

Challenges and opportunities were identified by the community reference group, subject matter experts and Council officers who work in the area. A live digital map and survey was utilised which had over 400 contributions.

Stage 4

Community engagement was undertaken from 22 July – 25 August 2024 on the Draft Mill Park Place Framework. Key stakeholders were engaged, and meetings undertaken with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Youth Council. Input received informed the final document, its direction and main initiatives.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

Liveable Neighbourhoods

Our City is well-planned and beautiful, and our neighbourhoods and town centres are convenient and vibrant places to live, work and play. The Framework references and builds on this theme.

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040

The Framework aligns to the Whittlesea 2040 Goals which are translated to Mill Park through four key themes:

- Sustainable Environment – Greener spaces
- Liveable Neighbourhoods – Connected places
- Connected Community – Thriving community hubs
- Strong Local Economy – Land use and built form and
- Liveable Neighbourhoods – Land use and built form

Each theme identifies key goals and opportunities that have been derived from analysis and stakeholder feedback. The Framework illustrates areas and corridors that have clear opportunities for improvement. It provides place specific guidelines to improve Mill Park and incrementally deliver the local vision over time.

The Framework incorporates a high-level implementation plan which identifies key partners, community priorities and broad timeframes for opportunities to be undertaken by Council.

Alignment to Community Plan 2024-2025

The Mill Park Place Framework sits under Key Direction 2.2:

- Develop the Mill Park Place Framework to enhance our investment planning and prioritise city shaping opportunities

Alignment to the Integrated Planning Framework and Place Based Approach

The Framework is situated within Level Three of the Integrated Planning Framework (IPF) under Long Term Plans and aligns with the Place Based Approach at a Precinct level.

Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

Financial Management

The Framework identifies 'Place initiatives' to deliver the vision for the area. The Council-led initiatives are intended to inform IPF Strategy Action Plans and budget processes which may have financial implications for Council in the future. The implementation of the Framework initiatives will be subject to further detailed design, funding availability, and consultation with stakeholders and community.

Advocacy Initiatives are the responsibility of other agencies to deliver and may require more advocacy work from Council.

Community Consultation and Engagement

The Framework has been developed in consultation with Council internal stakeholders, external stakeholders, and the general community, including a Community Reference Group.

The project team undertook workshops with the Community Reference Group twice, with an optional third meeting. The reference group was made up of 10 community stakeholders of different backgrounds that either work or live in Mill Park.

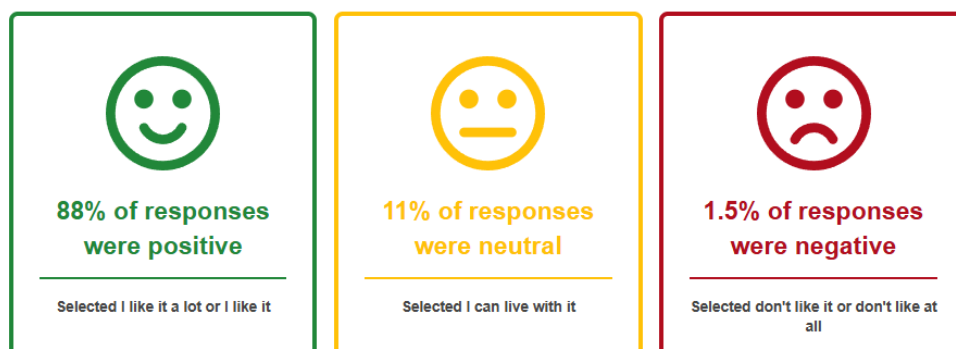
A project page on Council's Engage Whittlesea site has been active since early December 2023.

Following the Council Meeting on 16 July 2024, the draft Framework was exhibited and presented to the community for feedback from 22 July - 25 August 2024. There was high participation from community members during the engagement activities.

Community Engagement Summary:

- The draft Mill Park Place Framework received an overwhelming positive response from the community members. See below snapshot from the project engage page:

How do you feel about the draft Mill Park Place Framework?



- There were over 213 contributions of which 118 were in-person and 95 members participated through the online platform.
- 'Safer streets for all' was identified the most important initiative to the community.
- In order, community priorities were Safer streets for all (first), Upgrading parks and interfaces (second), Create thriving community hubs (third), Revitalise key destinations (fourth), Improve walkability (fifth), Reimagine green corridors and easements (sixth).
- Key stakeholders including Department of Transport and Planning, Youth Council and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation provided feedback, generally supporting the Place Framework and highlighting opportunities to collaborate.

Some of the key changes from the Draft to Final report were the following:

- Simplifying initiatives naming to make them more concise and easier to understand.
- General editing and reformatting of the document to improve its visual appearance and legibility.
- Initiative title "Safer streets to walk or ride to school" was made more inclusive to be worded as "Safer streets for all" to include all demographics as elderly people felt excluded by this wording. It also now encompasses more destinations such as shops, parks and community centres, not just schools.
- Added "youth friendly places" into Revitalise Key Destinations based on feedback from community and the Youth Council.
- To consider lighting on shared paths as this was considered important from internal subject matter experts and to respond to "lack of safety" as a key issue identified by community.
- Additional points on Aboriginal history and culture based on feedback from Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.
- Additional references to cost-of-living crisis and benefits of initiatives based on subject matter expert feedback.

Community engagement on the Draft Place Framework was undertaken through the following methods:

- Engage Whittlesea page including surveys and interactive elements.
- Direct emails.
- Presentations to stakeholders such as the Youth Council and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.
- Five community-based pop-ups in the Mill Park area. This enabled deeper discussion to add additional suggestions. The pop-ups were held in the following locations:
 - Stables Shopping Centre;
 - Miller Community Centre;
 - Mill Park Library;
 - Mill Park Leisure Centre; and
 - Plenty Valley Westfield.

Other Principles for Consideration

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
- (c) The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted.
- (d) The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.
- (e) Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.
- (f) Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought.
- (g) The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured.
- (h) Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making.
- (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

Public Transparency Principles

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.
- (c) Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community.

Council Policy Considerations

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

The Framework highlights priorities for Mill Park to incorporate increased tree canopy cover, consider climate change impacts and re-establish biodiversity.

Social, Cultural and Health

The Framework identifies Place initiatives to improve social, cultural and health outcomes in Mill Park.

Economic

The Framework identifies Place initiatives to improve economic outcomes in Mill Park.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

Service Delivery - Inability to plan for and provide critical community services and infrastructure impacting on community wellbeing.

The Framework identifies Place initiatives to prioritise infrastructure projects that will have a positive impact on community wellbeing. The Framework will also better inform a wide variety of service and infrastructure planning to consider the local place qualities of Mill Park.

Life Cycle Asset Management - Failure to effectively plan for the construction, on-going maintenance and renewal of Council's assets.

The Framework provides a coordinated approach to asset management by providing an overarching strategic direction and vision for the area. The Framework identifies key assets that should be prioritised for renewal or delivery to maximise community use such as access to path networks, open spaces and community facilities.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement - Ineffective stakeholder engagement resulting in compromised community outcomes and/or non-achievement of Council's strategic direction.

The Framework provides the community an opportunity to help shape the vision and priorities for their local area. Through this the community will have an improved understanding of Council's strategic direction and how it applies to Mill Park.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

If the Framework is endorsed by Council, the document will be released on the Council website, and community and stakeholders involved will be informed of its release. The Framework will help guide Council's future actions, budgets, and priorities.

Critical Dates

The Framework is a Community Plan Initiative stated to be finalised and approved by Council by end of July 2025.

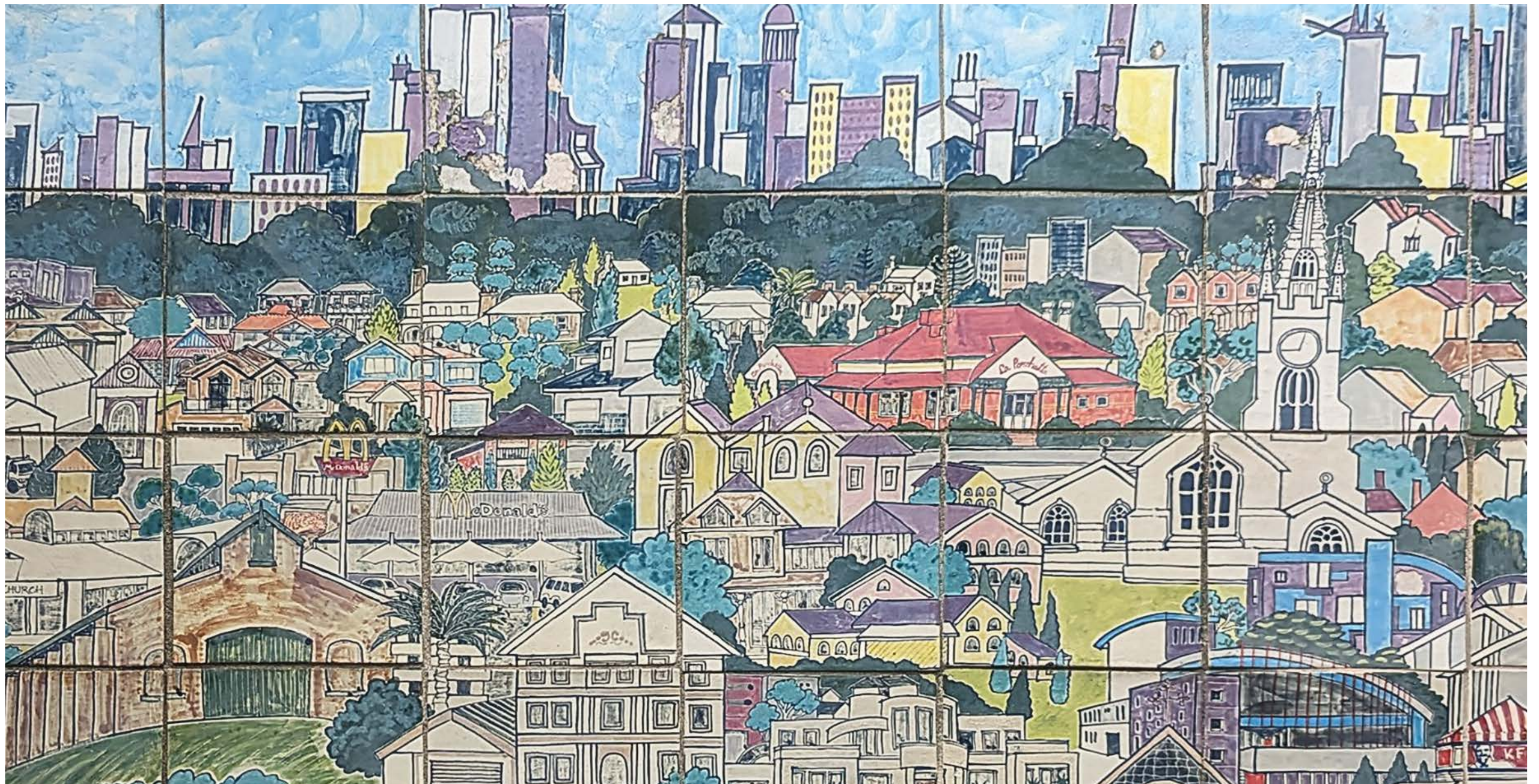
Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Attachments

1. Mill Park Place Framework [5.4.1 - 34 pages]



Mill Park Place Framework



Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

We recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

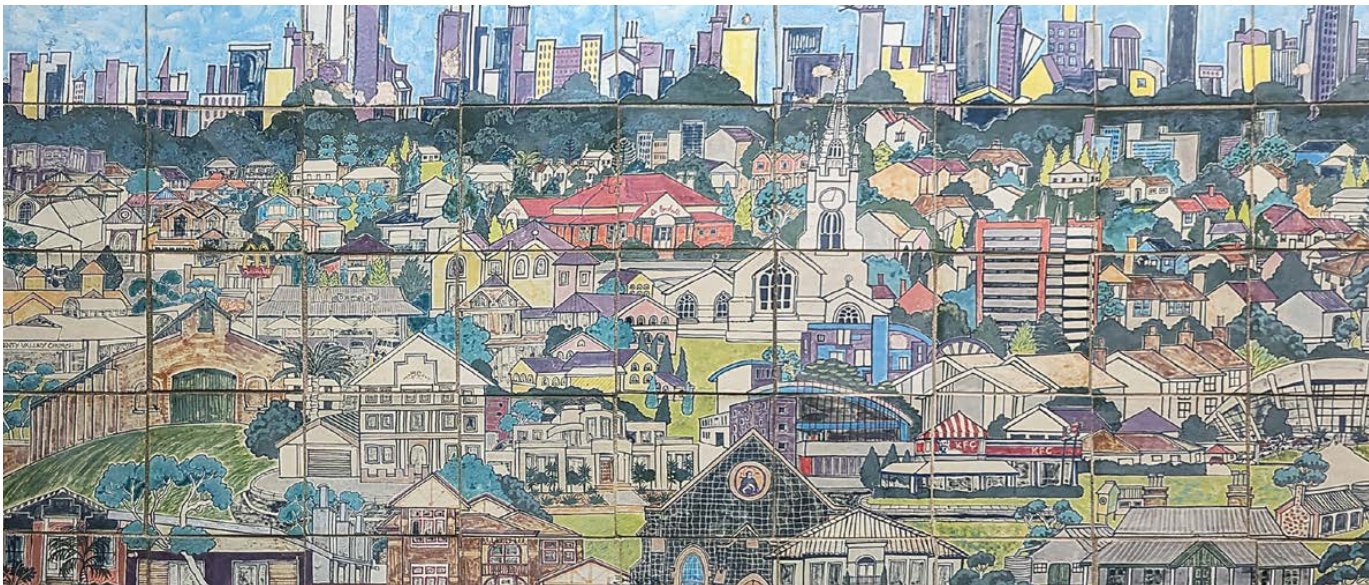
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July 2025

Disclaimer

This report is provided for information and it does not purport to be complete. While care has been taken to ensure the content in the report is accurate, we cannot guarantee it is without flaw of any kind. There may be errors and omissions or it may not be wholly appropriate for your particular purposes. In addition, the publication is a snapshot in time based on historic information which is liable to change. The City of Whittlesea accepts no responsibility and disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information contained in this report.



Cover photo and image (right)
Swarbrick, Barbara (2009). River Red Gums - the great survivors [Mural]. Miller Community Centre, Mill Park.

Executive summary

The Mill Park Place Framework outlines a comprehensive vision for the future development of Mill Park. It acts as a guide for stakeholders to work together in improving Mill Park. These stakeholders include government bodies, developers, community groups, and residents.

Neighbourhood vision for Mill Park

- 01** A network of open spaces and streets that helps minimise the negative impacts of climate change.
- 02** Mill Park is easier to navigate and promotes movement through a range of transport options.
- 03** An equitable and thriving community with places to gather and socialise.
- 04** Vibrant and attractive destinations with a distinct and diverse built environment.



Figure 1 Vision for Mill Park

A Safer Streets Story

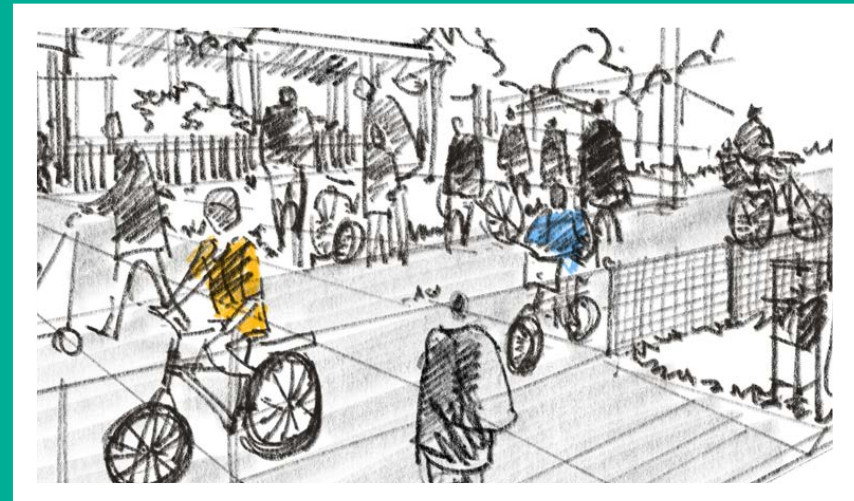


The following story highlights how the proposed initiatives and projects within the Mill Park Place Framework aim to improve the every day lives of the local community.



"Riding to school is so much fun!"

Aleks meets up with his friend Deepa on the new bike paths.



Aleks and Deepa arrive safely at school full of energy, along with other children who have ridden and walked to school. Which has reduced traffic congestion around the school.



"This new playground and community hub is awesome!"

After school, Aleks and Deepa stop by the local shops and community centre.



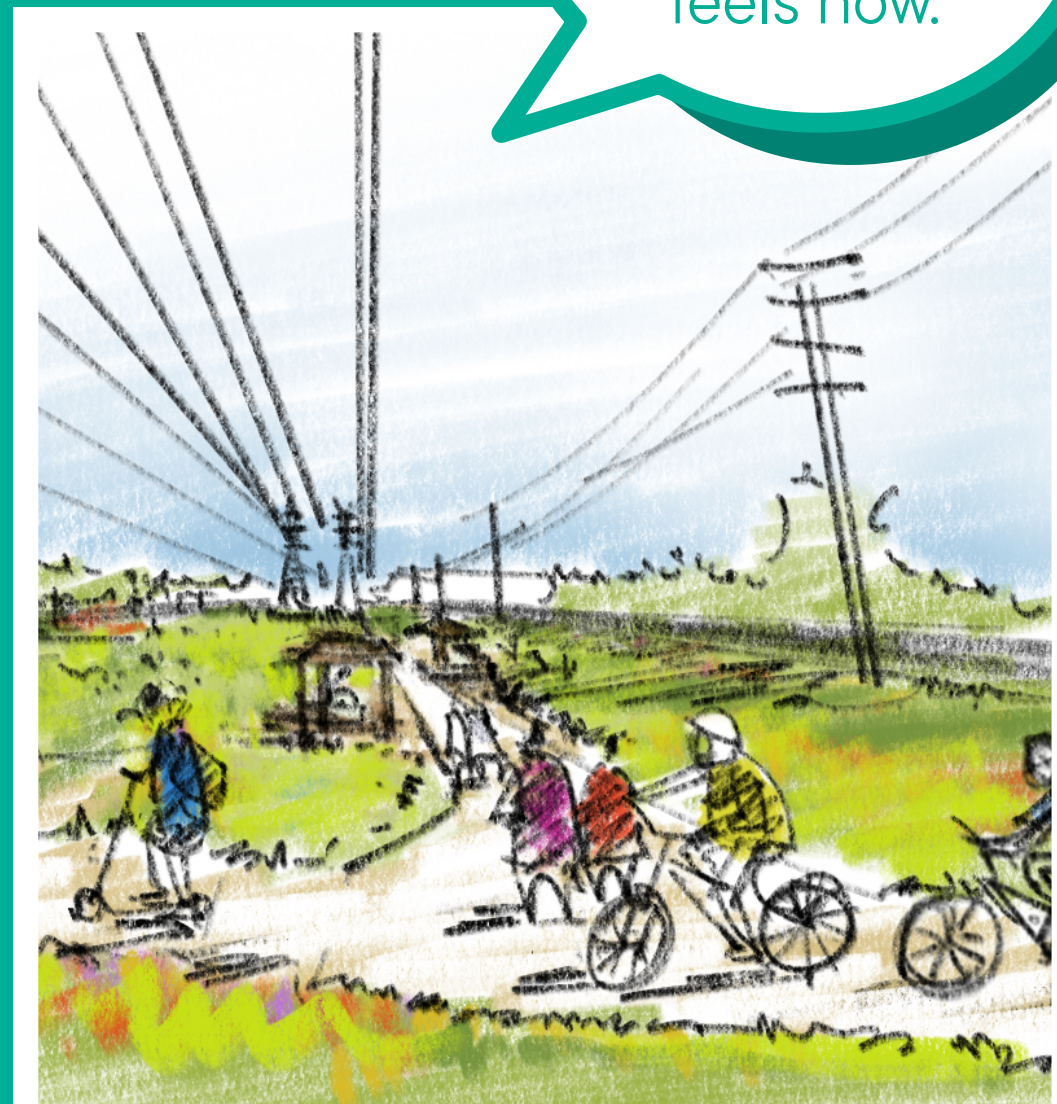
"It's so good
you can cross
Childs Road
safely now!"

They meet Deepa's grandmother by the new climbing sculpture at the Stables which was designed by a local artist.



"Don't forget to
check out the
arts and craft
market!"

At the local park, Aleks's big brother hosts a basketball tournament, funded by a City of Whittlesea community grant.



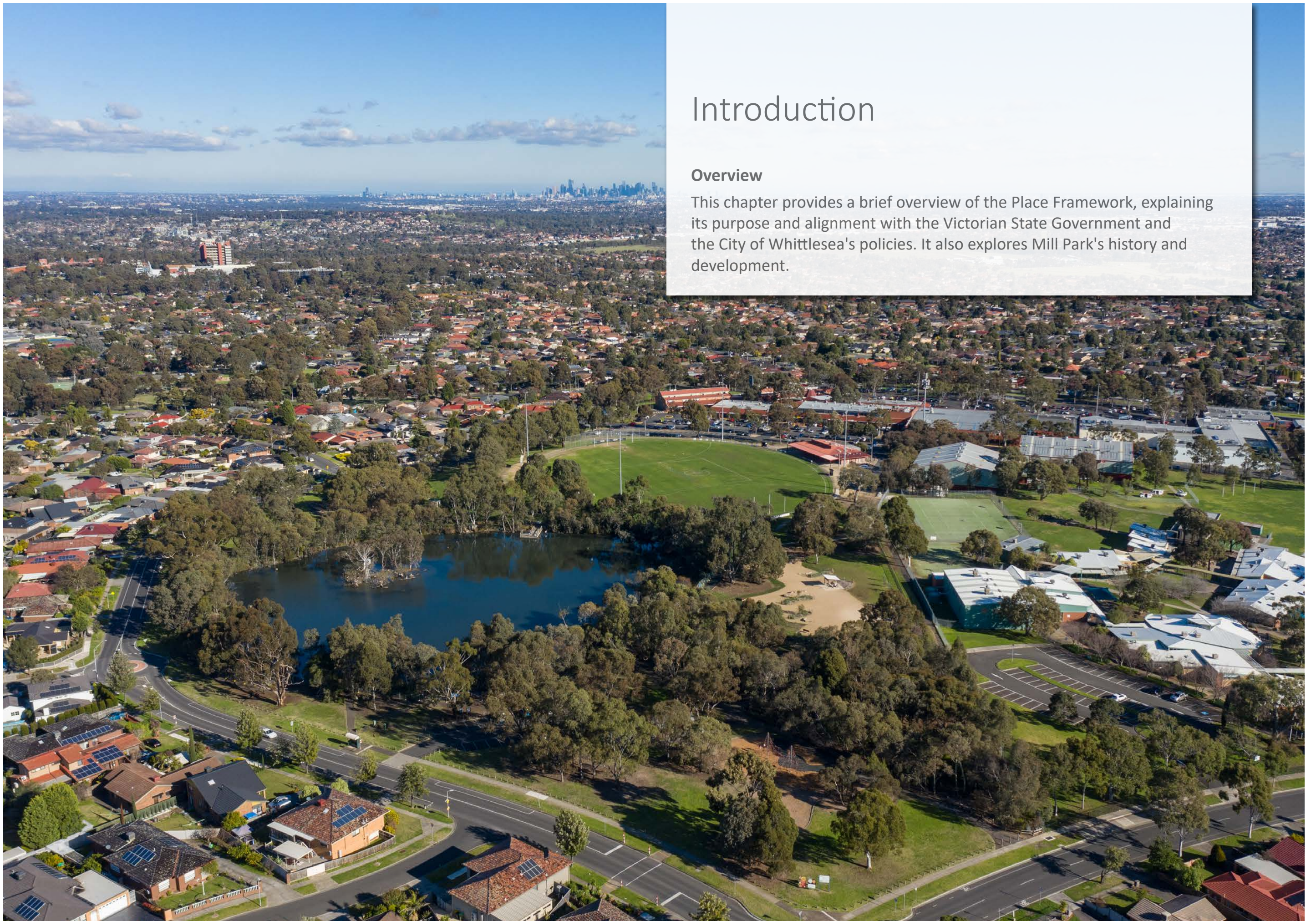
"I love how safe
and connected
everything
feels now."

As the sun sets, Aleks and Deepa ride home on the upgraded transmission easements, which now have new native planting and shared paths.

Introduction

Overview

This chapter provides a brief overview of the Place Framework, explaining its purpose and alignment with the Victorian State Government and the City of Whittlesea's policies. It also explores Mill Park's history and development.



The Place Framework

What is a Place Framework?

The Mill Park Place Framework represents a shared vision between the community and the Council to guide Mill Park's future. It focuses on key opportunities identified by the community to shape and improve local spaces, with changes to be introduced gradually over time.

The project is an ongoing collaborative approach to improve streets, public spaces, parks and open spaces, community precincts, infrastructure and built form over time.

The implementation of the framework will be subject to further detailed design, availability of funding, consultation with stakeholders and the community.

Objectives

- Develop a clear shared vision for Mill Park, supported by the community
- Identify opportunities, key action areas and important relationships
- Guide future decision making
- Develop planning and design tools that are responsive to local needs
- Translate the vision for Mill Park's future into objectives and actions to guide the development of the area in the short, medium and long term
- Visualise key design concepts
- Recommend improvements to infrastructure
- Prepare a detailed implementation plan.

Key concepts

Activation

Activation of space means bringing a place to life by adding activities, events, or features such as shared paths, seating, lighting and landscape elements that attract people and make the area more fun, useful, and welcoming.

Temporary activation is when a place is used for a short time for fun or useful activities, like pop-up markets, art displays, or events, to make the area more lively and interesting.

Built form

The combination of features of a building, including its style, façade treatments, height and site coverage.

Green corridors

Green corridors are long connected areas of open space such as parks, creeks, easements. They generally link different parts of a neighbourhood and help people and animals move safely.

Interface

An interface is the boundary or edge between two different types of spaces. Such as someone's private home and a public park or street. This type of interface is typically made up of fencing, landscaping, walls, windows or balconies.

Passive surveillance

Passive surveillance is when people watch and look over their local area in a passive or natural way. Such as, when people look out their window to the street, walk to the shops, play at the park, or sit out the front of a cafe.

Passive surveillance speaks to the urban design concept of "eyes on the street", which makes people feel safer and seen by other community members. This can help minimise criminal or negative behaviour.

Traffic calming measures

Traffic calming measures are ways to slow down cars and make streets safer for everyone, especially people walking or riding bikes.

Simple examples include:

- Speed bumps
- Stop signs or roundabouts
- Narrower roads or planted areas
- Raised crossings
- Street trees

Walkability

Walkability means how easy and safe it is for people to walk around a place, like a neighbourhood or town.

A walkable area has:

- Safe sidewalks and paths
- Pedestrian crossings and traffic lights
- Places nearby like shops, parks, or schools
- Shade, trees, and places to rest
- Less traffic and slower cars

Walkable catchments refer to distances that people can walk from one point to another on footpaths and trails.



Policy alignment

Plan for Victoria

The Plan for Victoria sets out a comprehensive vision for the state's future growth, focusing on creating thriving and well-connected communities.

This framework builds on key pillars, including *Pillar 2: Great Places, Suburbs, and Towns*, which aims to foster vibrant, resilient and inclusive neighbourhoods that enhance the quality of life for all residents.

Additionally, *Pillar 3: Accessible Jobs and Services* highlights the importance of connecting people to employment, education, healthcare and essential services. As part of this pillar, the plan also encourages active transport by promoting walking and cycling paths to improve accessibility.

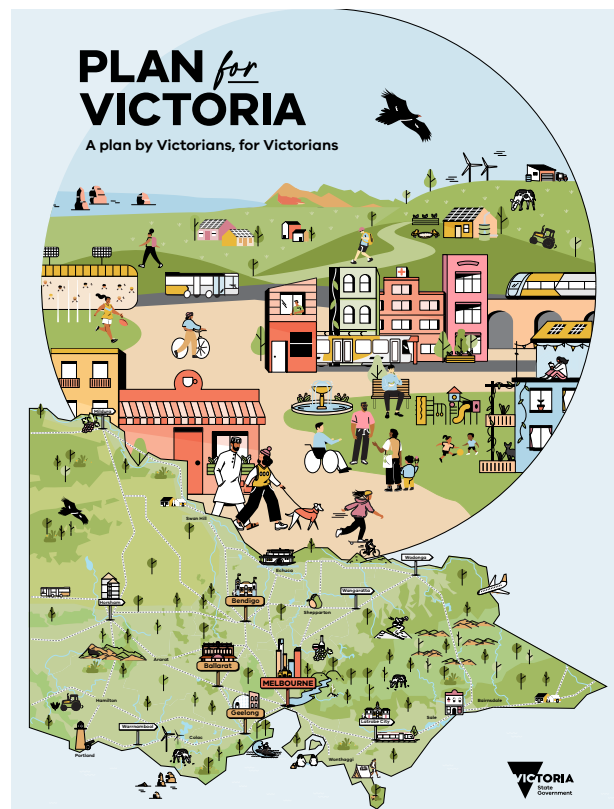


Figure 2 Plan for Victoria. Source Victorian Government 2025

Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All

The Place Framework translates Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All, considering the key goals, pictured below, to deliver local outcomes. Liveable Neighbourhoods is the key goal that aligns with this document.

These have influenced the themes of Mill Park Place Framework:

- Greener spaces
- Connected places
- Thriving community and culture
- Land use and built form.



Figure 3 City Of Whittlesea 2040 Goals. Source City Of Whittlesea.

Whittlesea Planning Scheme

The Victorian Government and City of Whittlesea's policies and strategies call for good quality urban environments. Good urban design is essential to:

- Create urban environments that are safe, healthy, functional and enjoyable and that contribute to a sense of place and cultural identity (Clause 15.01-1S Urban Design's objective, Whittlesea Planning Scheme)
- Create a distinctive and liveable city with quality design and amenity (Clause 15.01-1R Urban Design's objective, Whittlesea Planning Scheme)

Plenty Valley Structure Plan

The Plenty Valley Structure Plan, amended in 2021, is a comprehensive document that guides development and investment in the Plenty Valley Town Centre over the next two decades. It specifically focuses on the northern area, outlining strategies and actions to achieve an appealing, accessible and lively Town Centre.

This Place Framework will be informed by previous work to ensure consistency across projects.



Figure 4 Plenty Valley Structure Plan. Source City of Whittlesea

Urban context

Situated 18 kilometres northeast of Melbourne's central business district, Mill Park has experienced significant transformation from farmland in the 1980s into the established suburb we see today.

Housing in Mill Park has evolved from predominantly Mission Brown single-storey detached homes with minimal front fencing in the 1970s to more architecturally diverse styles in the 1980s, especially in the western and central areas.

In recent years, the suburb has seen increased density through multi-unit developments and a few apartment dwellings, particularly near the Plenty Valley Town Centre.

Mill Park has several bus routes that run across the suburb. To the north, there is South Morang train station and, to the south, Tram 86 ends at University Hill. The Metropolitan Ring Road, accessible via Plenty Road, links Mill Park to the wider city.

Within Mill Park, the Plenty Valley Major Activity Centre is a key hub in the north. Other local centres include the historic Mill Park Stables on Childs Road and Rivergum Village on Plenty Road and Development Boulevard.

The boundaries of Mill Park are based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and postcode boundaries.

Why now?

Mill Park's ageing infrastructure and lack of clear strategy need urgent attention. With potential housing demand from Victoria's Housing Statement 2023, proposed tram extensions and the E6 corridors, a comprehensive plan is essential.

More recently, changes to the Victorian Planning Provisions intend to enhance density in residential zones. We want to ensure that this density is well considered and provides other strategic benefits for our local community.

There are several projects currently underway in Mill Park.

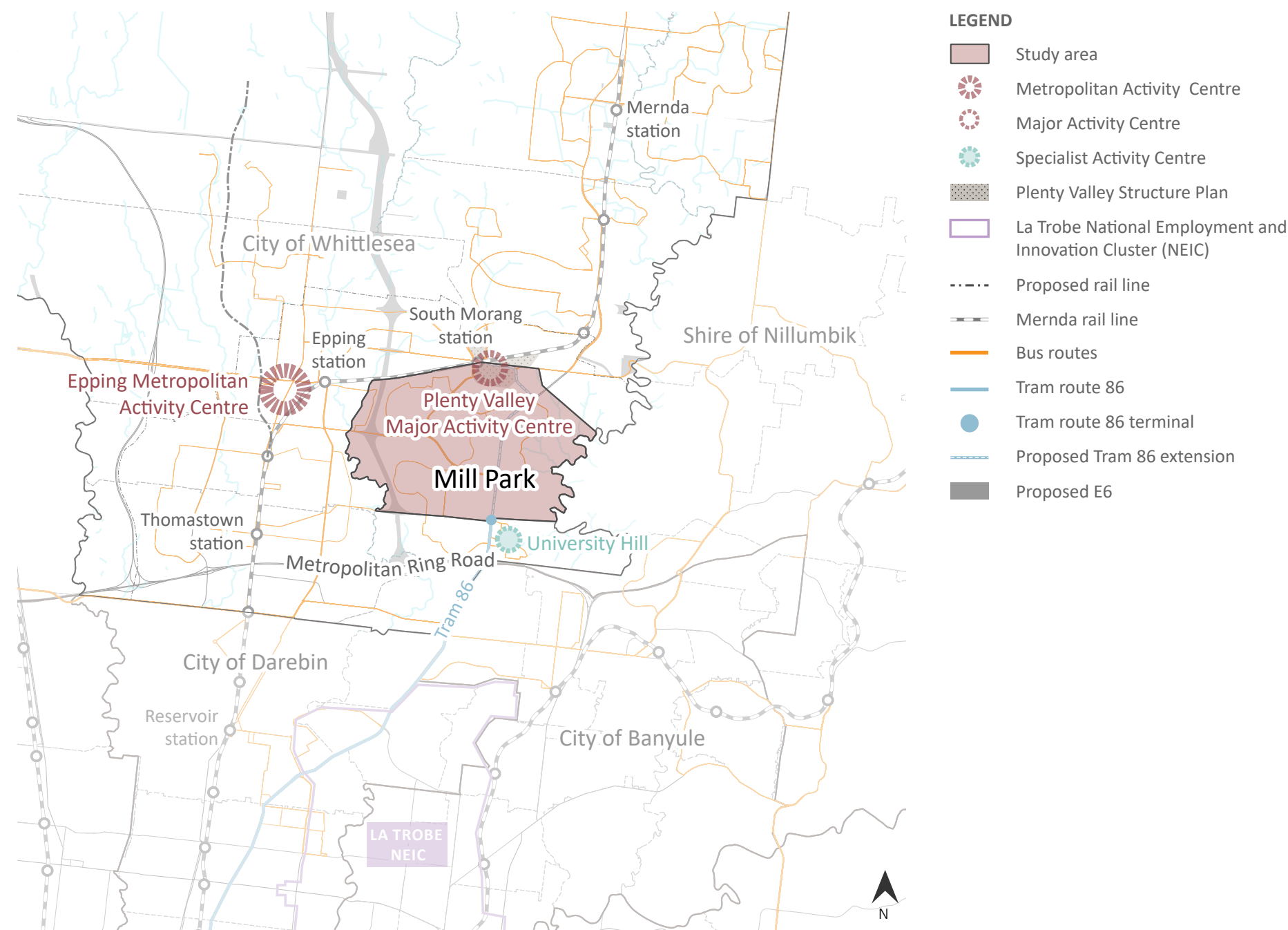


Figure 5 Strategic context map of Mill Park.

Study area

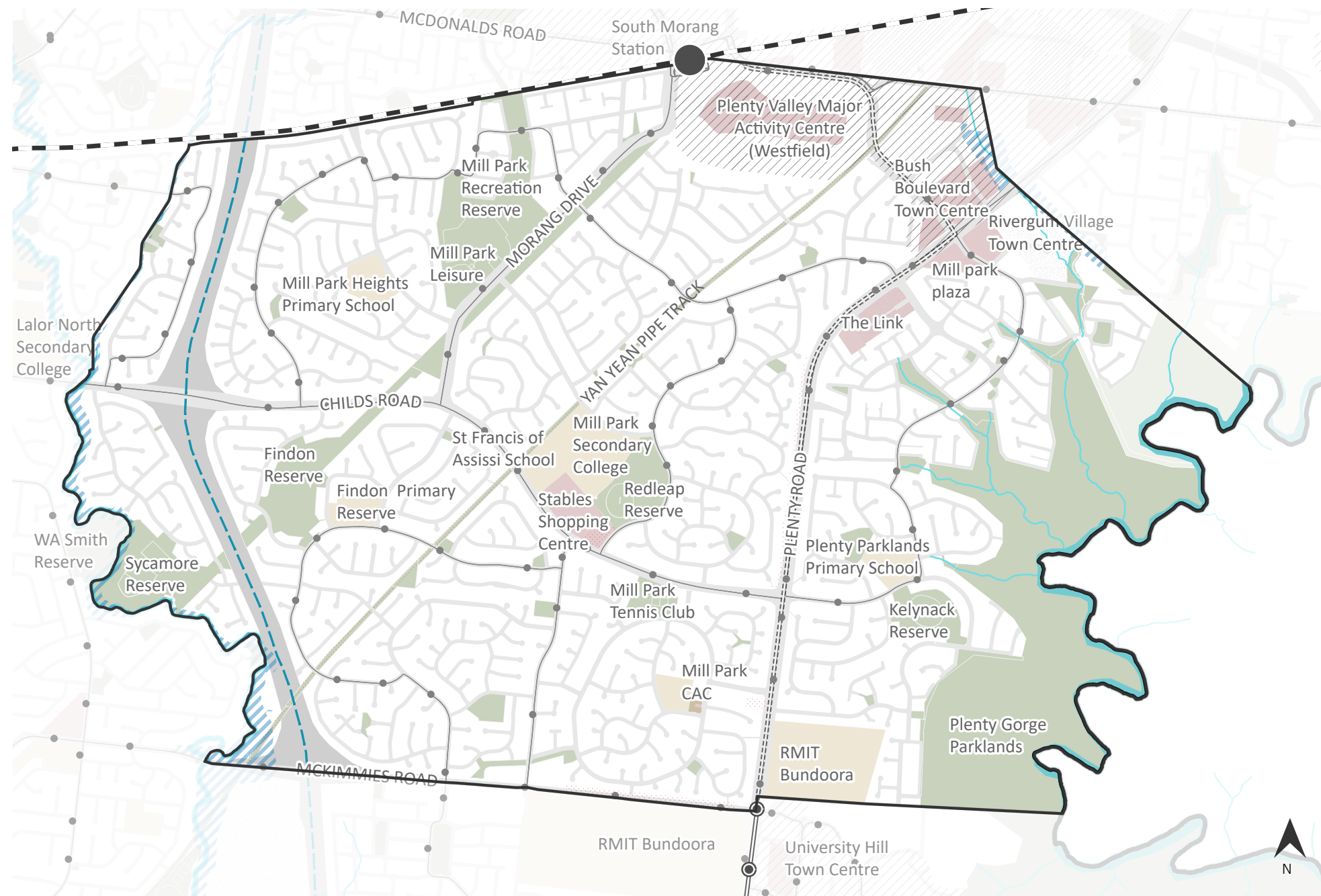


Figure 6 Study area - Mill Park suburb.

Key statistics

38% residents over the age of 50

33.9% of employed people live and work locally

10TH rank in Neighbourhood Safety among City of Whittlesea's suburbs as per the Household Satisfaction Survey

Average Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) performance for municipality

LEGEND

- Study area
- Activity centres
- Educational facilities
- Mernda train line
- Train station
- Bus routes
- Bus stops
- Proposed tram line
- Tram line
- Tram stops
- Proposed E6 corridor
- Melbourne Industriail and Commercial Land Use Plan (MICLUP)
- Land Subject to Inundation Overlay
- Heritage Overlay
- Plenty Valley Structure Plan

Brief history of Mill Park



Figure 7 Mill on Plenty River



Figure 8 Mill Park Stables (1947)



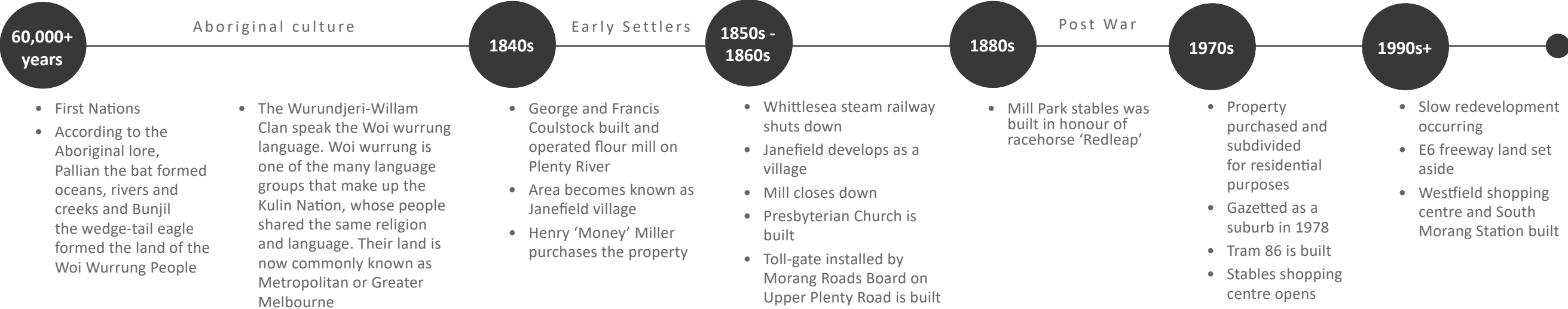
Figure 9 Mill Park Stables (2023)



Figure 10 Mill Park Drive (1947)



Figure 11 Mill Park Drive (2023)



Opportunities and challenges

Overview

The following chapter outlines the methodology for this Place Framework, the opportunities and challenges based on the four themes and incorporating feedback received through internal and external stakeholder workshops.

These opportunities, challenges and key directions can be used by Council and the community into the future to help with decision-making or supporting new ideas to improve Mill Park.

Methodology

The below flowchart highlights the process undertaken to develop the Place Framework.

December 2023

Site selection

A benchmarking exercise was conducted to compare the performance of suburbs under various criteria to identify the suburbs in most need for place-based direction.

Themes

Four themes derived from Whittlesea 2040 and Thomastown Lalor Place Framework

- Greener spaces
- Connected places
- Thriving community and culture
- Land use and built form

Analysis

Data mapping and research

Datasets were gathered from Council and other government authorities and organisations for the suburb of Mill Park. Historical data for Mill Park was derived from the Whittlesea Heritage Study. 1990, City of Whittlesea.

February 2024

Stakeholder feedback

Workshop with Council staff

Internal consultation with Council officers who work in the area.

Community reference group

External consultation with a Community Reference Group, comprising of diverse community members that work, live or visit Mill Park.



July 2024

Opportunities and challenges

Opportunities and challenges have been identified through analysis of data and community insights.

Key focus areas

Focus areas have been derived from the opportunities and challenges for each theme, based on their recurrence and urgency, identified through community engagement, internal meetings and workshops.

Place initiatives

Place initiatives are larger projects that have a number of smaller sub-actions within them to deliver on the initiative.

Implementation

- Identifies individual projects and their programs.

August 2024

Community engagement

Council invited the community to have their say on the draft Mill Park Place Framework between August and September 2024.

The community helped prioritise the Council initiatives and in general supported the Framework.

Refer to community engagement summary report for more information.

Youth Council

The framework was presented to the Youth Council on 05 August 2024 and they were supportive of the initiatives.

Meeting with Wurundjeri

On 26 August 2024, the document was presented to the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation who expressed their support.



July 2025

Council endorsement

This Framework is expected to Council for endorsement in the 22 July 2025 Council Meeting.

Greener spaces

Council's Sustainable Environment Strategy ensures we are creating a liveable and sustainable environment for our residents for generations to come.

Our role

City of Whittlesea plays a pivotal role in providing the community with recreational spaces that offer a variety of activities including exercise, sports, play areas and spaces to socialise, relax and unwind.

It is also tasked with the protection of unique ecological values, such as remnant River Red Gums, native grasslands and waterways.

Additionally, Council is responsible for protecting and promoting the cultural heritage and contemporary cultural values of the community.

Key policies and documents

- Key policies and documents that relate to the theme of Greener spaces are identified below:
- Sustainable Environment Strategy 2022-2032, City of Whittlesea
 - Draft Open Space Plan 2025-2035, City of Whittlesea
 - Greening Whittlesea City Forest Strategy 2020-2040, City of Whittlesea
 - Biodiversity Strategy 2019-2029, City of Whittlesea
 - Climate Change Plan 2022-2032, City of Whittlesea
 - Trees for cooler and greener streetscapes 2019, Victorian Government

Context

Mill Park is home to recreational areas like Mill Park Recreation Reserve, Findon Reserve and Redleap Reserve, offering a diversity of activities for residents.

Plenty River lies to the east and Darebin Creek lies along the western boundary offering parklands and recreational trails for the community to enjoy.

Yan Yean Pipe Track and Transmission easement cut across the suburb, offering opportunities for active transport.

Facilities like the Mill Park All Abilities Play Space and Mill Park Leisure Centre provide additional recreational facilities.

Mill Park has more tree canopy cover, which means there is a larger number of large, mature trees as compared to other suburbs. However, there are gaps in this canopy cover which can be improve to provide shade. It is also vulnerable to effects of heat, flood risks and a lacks accessible paths to open spaces. Signage to Plenty River needs improvement and smaller parks aren't fully utilised.

“Greenery and feeling of country attracted us to the area.”

Resident

"Trees, greenery of suburban streets. Sense of community."

Resident



Figure 12 Kelynock Recreation Reserve.



Figure 13 The Plenty River is a beautiful and bio-diverse trail, which could be celebrated more.



Figure 14 Sensitive treatment to waterways that connect people to nature.



Figure 15 The All Abilities Playground is heavily utilised and loved by the community.

Opportunities

- 1 Create green corridors and increase canopy cover. (E.g. Yan Yean Pipe Track, transmission easement)
- 2 Improve connections and signage to Plenty Gorge Parklands and Darebin Creek
- 3 Preserve and enhance biodiversity corridors
- 4 Programming and minor improvements to smaller parks to increase their use by the community
- 5 Promote and support active lifestyles within the community
- 6 Address open space gaps through new connections or new parks.

Challenges

- 7 Limited access to parks and green spaces, especially in the west
- 8 Lack of dedicated, protected paths through trails
- 9 Spaces like parks that are hard to get to or don't feel inviting
- 10 Ensure ongoing maintenance around trees
- 11 People tend to drive places than walk.

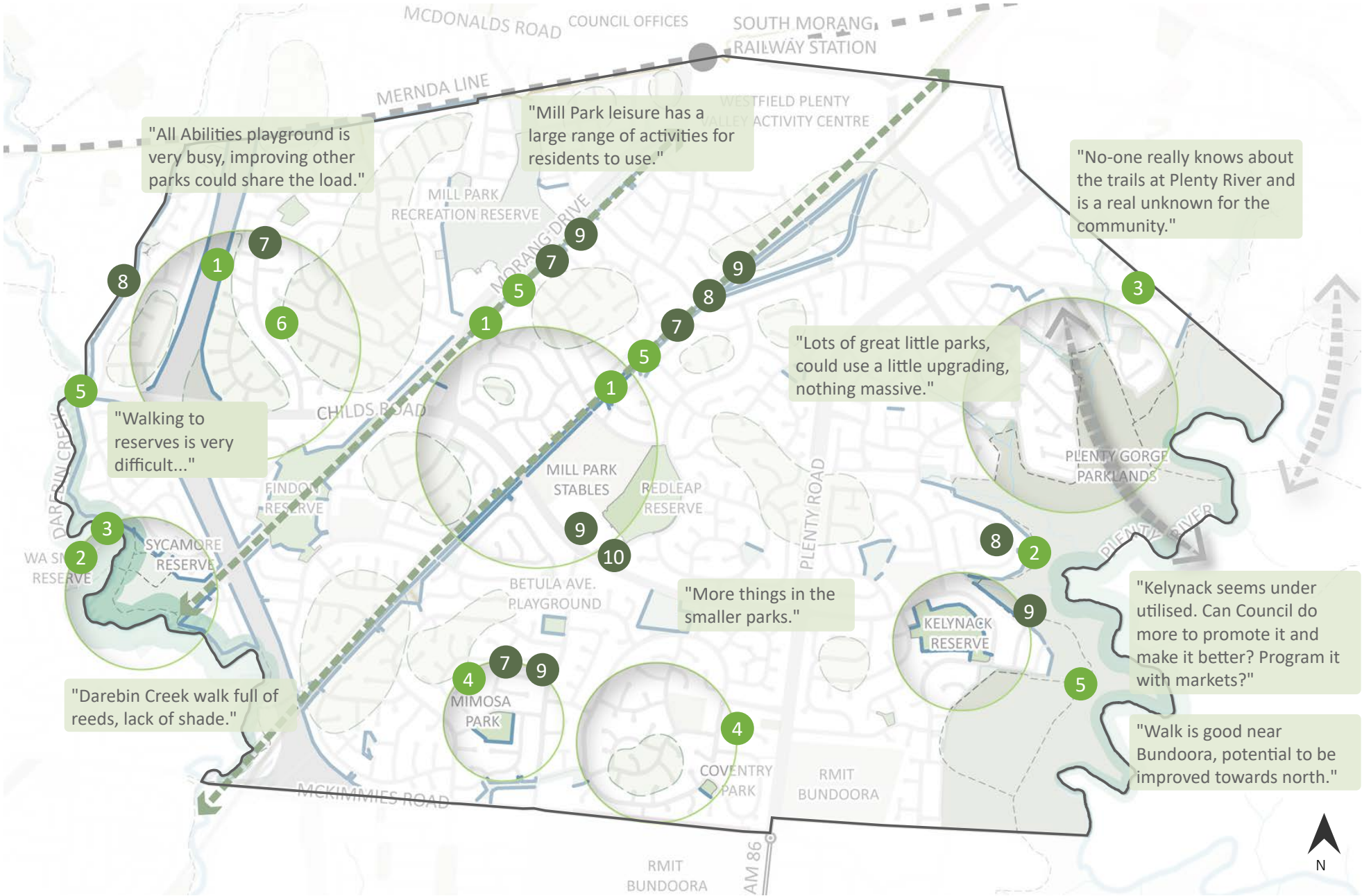
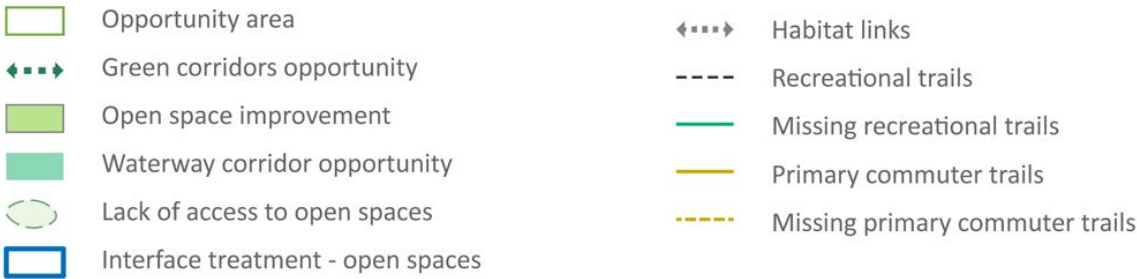


Figure 16 Greener spaces summary map.



Connected places

Our Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy 2023-2033 highlights the importance of people being able to get where they need to go by a range of well-connected transport options. This is key to liveability, sustainability, health and well-being.

Our role

City of Whittlesea aims to ensure equitable access for all the community members by developing and maintaining a comprehensive movement network that includes public transport, roads, walking paths and bike paths.

Additionally, Council advocates to the State Government for the development of transport infrastructure and services. This advocacy aims to connect localities with essential services, infrastructure, local activities, places of employment and broader metropolitan Melbourne.

Also, Council works to enhance sustainable transport options in established areas and champions community transport services to address local transport needs.

Key policies and documents

Key policies and documents that relate to the theme of Connected Places are identified below:

- Northern Regional Trails Strategy 2022, City of Whittlesea and other northern Councils
- Walking and Cycling Plan 2022-2027, City of Whittlesea
- Place and Movement Plan 2023, City of Whittlesea
- Movement and Place Framework 2019, Victorian Government

Context

Mill Park has a curved and court bowl dominated road network. This results in quiet residential streets, but poses a challenge to walkability.

Public transport includes Tram 86, buses and South Morang Station. However, there are concerns about safety, reliability, connectivity and access.

Plenty Road provides north-south connectivity and Childs Road connects Mill Park to the east.

There is ongoing advocacy for Tram 86 extension to South Morang Station and future E6 freeway.

There are recreational trails along Darebin Creek and there are proposed trails along Plenty Gorge Parklands.

The State Government's Movement and Place Framework redefines road design based on adjacent land use. It aims to make streets and public spaces more accessible and safe.

"A lot more people are cycling now."

Resident

"Tram needs to happen! Why hasn't it already?"

Resident



Figure 17 Illustrative example from Global Street Guide of a transport corridor balancing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and cars.

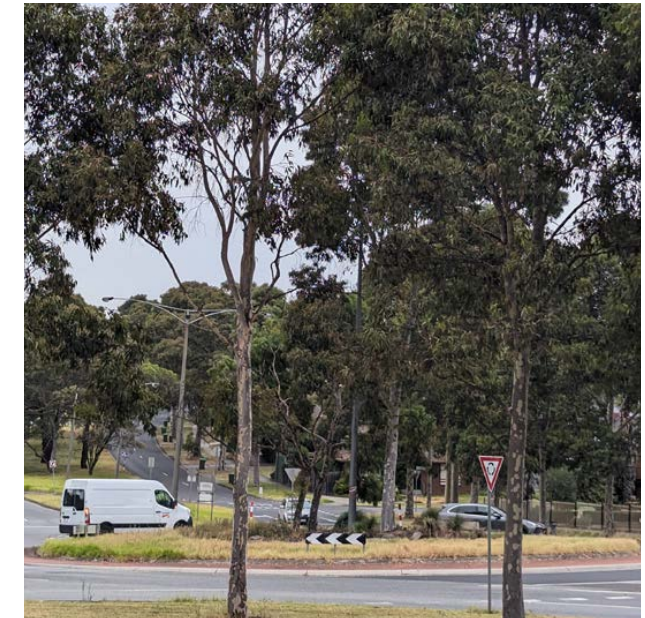


Figure 18 Unsafe crossings along Child's Road



Figure 19 Linear park playground under elevated rail corridor between Bell and Preston station.



Figure 20 Traffic conflicts at Mill Park Stables during peak hours and school drop-off.

Opportunities

- 1 Improve walking and cycling paths and connections
- 2 Improving way-finding and signage to important destinations
- 3 Advocate to the State Government on road safety issues on Childs Road and Plenty Road
- 4 Advocacy for Tram 86 to be extended to South Morang Station
- 5 Upgrade streetscapes in town centre environments
- 6 Improve permeability and short-term activation across the proposed E6 corridor.

Challenges

- 7 Poor bus connectivity (east-west), timing and reliability issues
- 8 Lack of options for public transport
- 9 Safety concerns on roads, including unsafe crossings and traffic issues
- 10 Poor passive surveillance in public realm, lack of people walking around
- 11 Cul-de-sacs and winding roads make navigation and walking to destinations difficult.

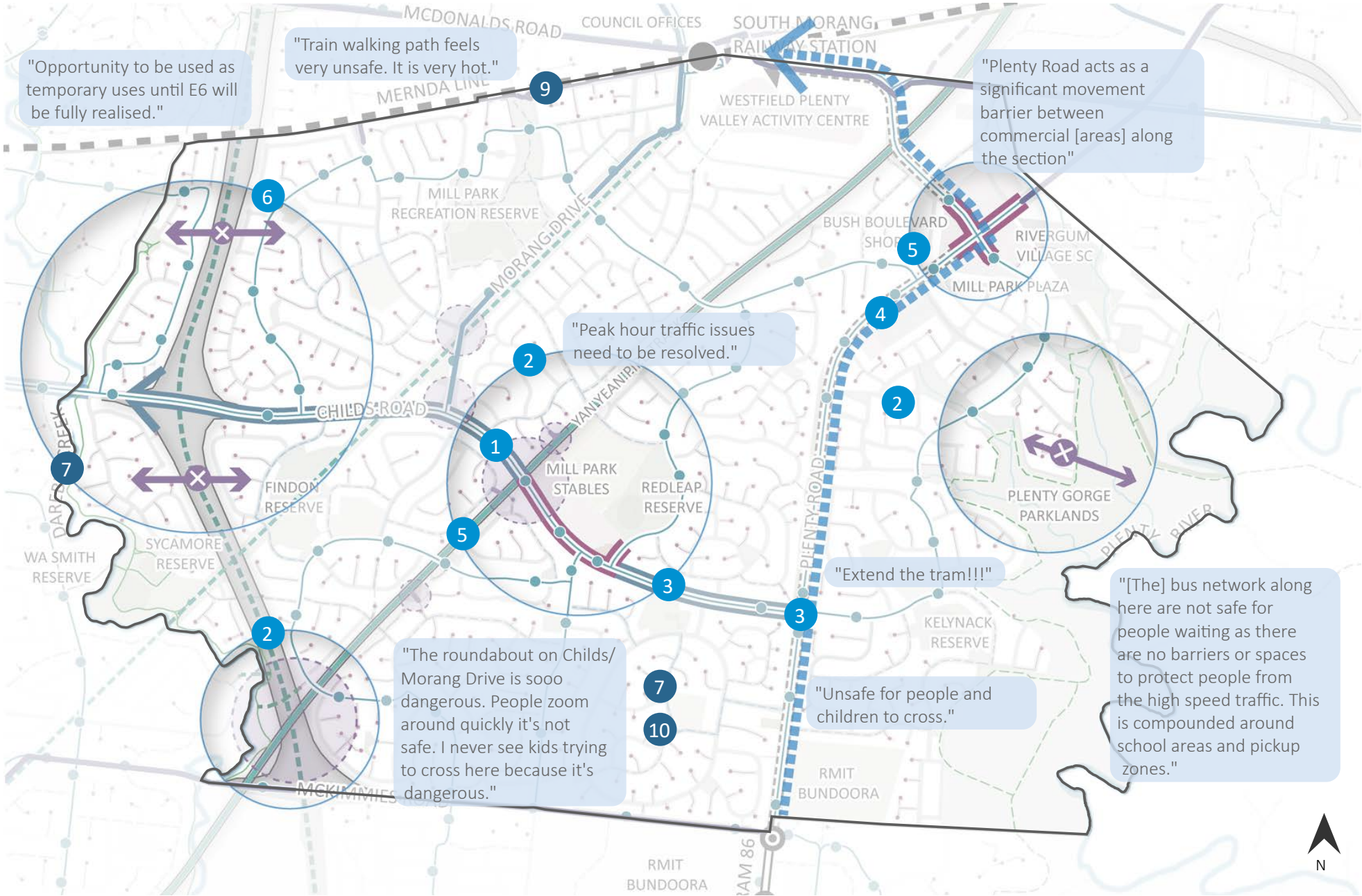
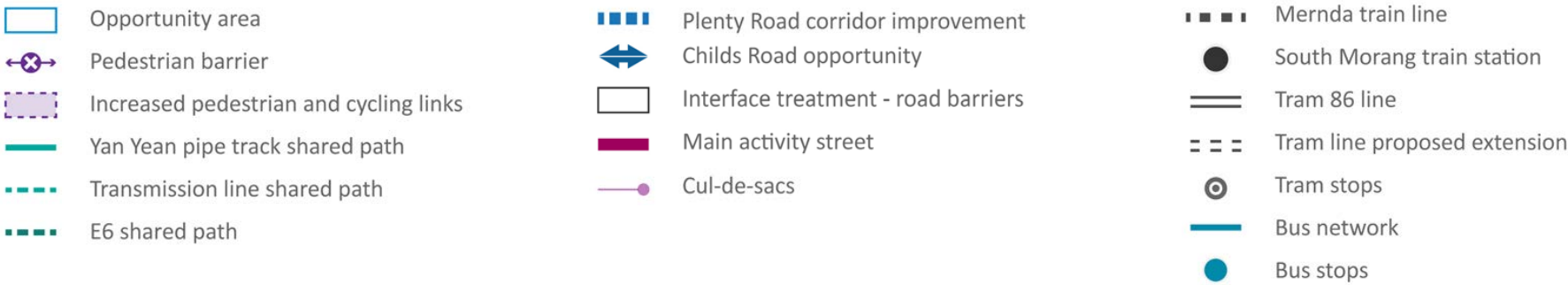


Figure 21 Connected places summary map.



Thriving community and culture

Our Whittlesea: 2040 Connected Community Strategy aims to facilitate equal opportunities for community members to participate and engage within their local areas, fostering strong social connections and building resilience within our communities.

Our role

The City of Whittlesea is mandated under the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 to plan for the community's health and well-being by looking at social, physical, economic, and environmental needs.

Through places, spaces, and events, council facilitates socialisation and access to services. These are instrumental in building a sense of community, safety, inclusion and fostering an appreciation for our diverse community.

Community hubs, parks and recreational facilities are central to council's strategy to enhance well-being of the community. These spaces offer venues for gatherings, events and celebrations.

Key policies and documents

Key policies and documents that relate to the theme of Thriving Community and Culture are identified below:

- Community Plan, City of Whittlesea
- Connected Community Strategy 2023-2033, City of Whittlesea

Context

The Stables, located centrally, offers various facilities and services for the community, but its popularity has declined, impacting the once vibrant market scene.

The Miller Centre on Mill Park Drive is frequently visited by members of the community but lacks pedestrian and public transport access and is difficult for people to locate.

The Mill Park Leisure Centre also provides a range of services. The All Abilities Play Space, located adjacent to the centre, attracts many people to the centre.

The Mill Park Library is popular but primarily accessible by car. Public transport access to the library is very poor when travelling from the eastern suburbs.

Older areas lack access to community facilities, and many services are not conveniently located together.

It is important to recognise that there is a cost of living crisis that is currently impacting our communities.

“Mill Park Library uses green spaces well, has a variety of activities, creates a safe and productive environment.”

Resident



Figure 22 Improving awareness, way-finding and signage for community centres.



Figure 23 Mill Park Library is a great place with diverse programs.



Figure 24 Mill Park Stables courtyard used to hold events, markets and live music.

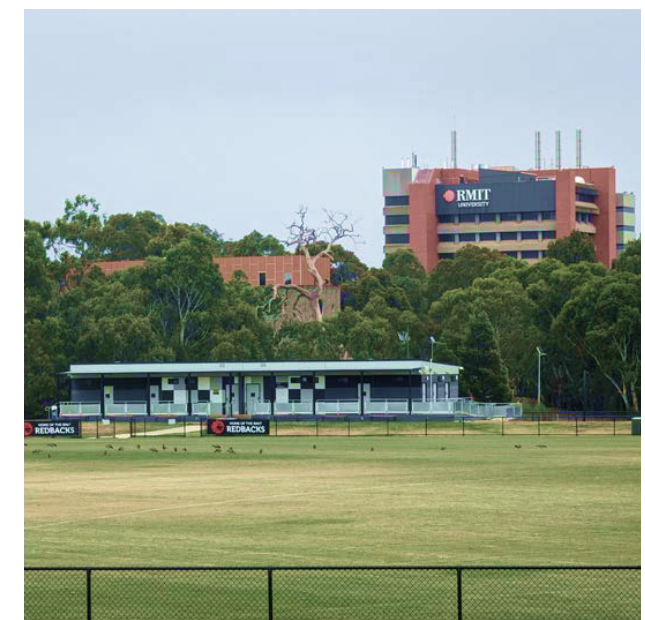


Figure 25 Opportunity to explore partnerships with universities to improve services for the community.

Opportunities

- 1 Exploring opportunities to upgrade Stables shopping centre by collaborating with the owners
- 2 Mill Park Library as a focal point for the community
- 3 Potential to improve ageing infrastructure and facilities and co-locate services such as childcare, maternal and child health (MCH) centres, etc.
- 4 Tapping into the potential of young people and RMIT
- 5 Encourage programming of spaces with events, markets or support social enterprise to draw people and re-activate these hubs.

Challenges

- 6 Lack of walkability, parking spaces and management of traffic conflict around schools and community areas
- 7 Lack of spaces for young people
- 8 Insufficient Wi-Fi access at key community locations
- 9 Lack of gathering spaces for functions
- 10 Limited public transport and pedestrian access to services
- 11 Gaps in services and amenities south of Childs Road.

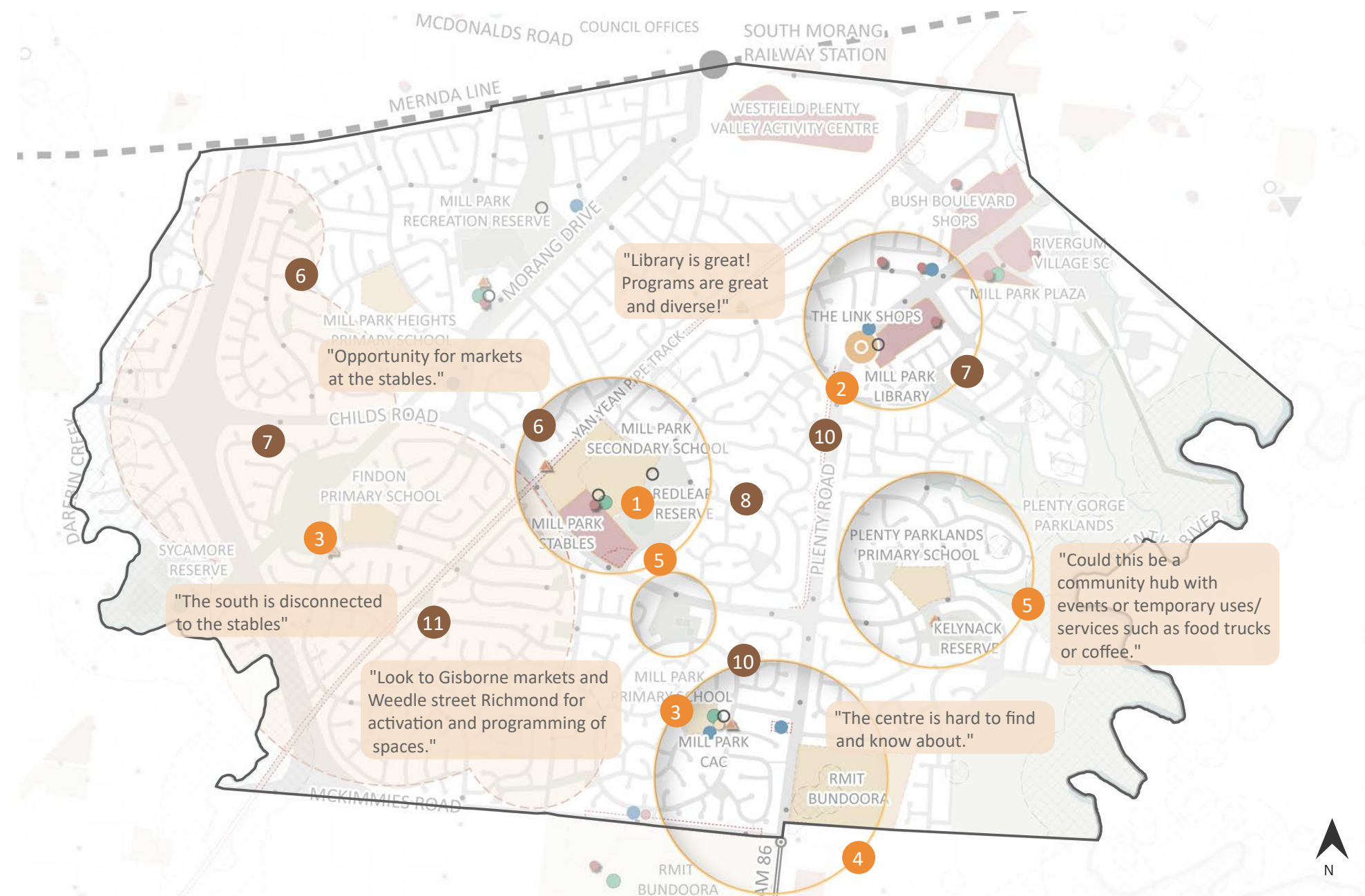
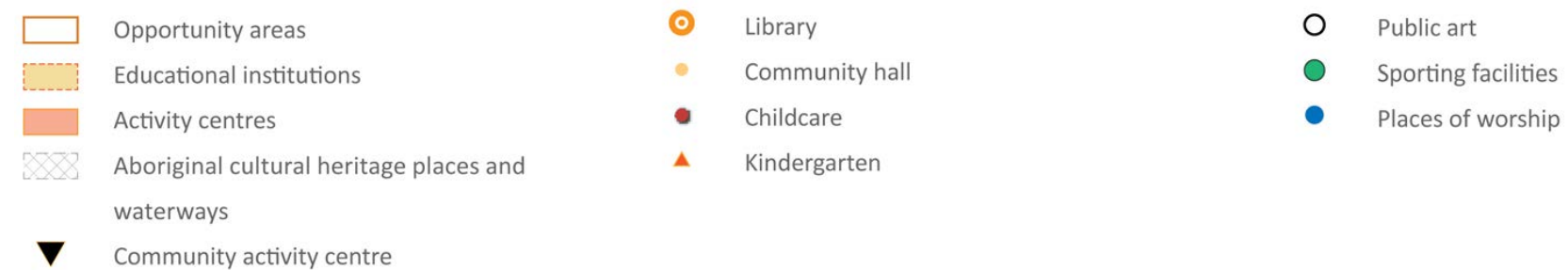


Figure 26 Thriving community and culture summary map.



Land use and built form

Our Housing Diversity Strategy states that change should be managed carefully to ensure the diverse needs of our residents are met, while our suburbs continue to be vibrant, attractive places to live.

Our role

Local governments have many roles and legislated responsibilities that influence the provision of affordable and well-located housing through land-use planning, social and physical infrastructure planning, economic planning and development, community engagement and advocacy.

Council also undertakes streetscape upgrades and maintenance for retail centres.

In the case of Stables shopping centre, a collaborative approach is necessary, involving landowners, schools, and public transport authorities to holistically redevelop the area. This collaboration should aim to draw economic investment to improve the centre and to tackle safety issues. Additionally, it should focus on improving safety measures, building layouts, access routes and pickup areas.

Key policies and documents

Key policies and documents that relate to the theme of Land use and built form are identified below:

- Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy 2023-2033, City of Whittlesea
- Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026, City of Whittlesea
- Housing Diversity Strategy 2013-2033, City of Whittlesea
- Designing Better Medium Density Housing in Victoria, Victorian Government 2025

Context

Mill Park has a mix of old and new buildings, with many areas undergoing ad-hoc renewal. There is opportunity to strategically increase appropriate density along Plenty Road and around town centres.

The Stables and Plenty Valley are the key town centres, but the Stables has been experiencing fewer visitors and vacant shops. Other town centres like Bush Boulevard and Rivergum also need improvements to their street interfaces.

Overall, the ongoing transformation of Mill Park underscores the importance of balancing affordability, appropriate development, and revitalisation efforts to create a vibrant and inclusive urban environment.

“...affordability and diversity is really important, but it needs to stay green and natural.”

Resident



Figure 27 Example of typical single residential dwellings in Mill Park with deep front setbacks.



Figure 28 Gentle density that supports affordable housing, enhances greenery and considers history.



Figure 29 Greening the Greyfields concept by Maroondah Council and Swinburne University



Figure 30 Safety issues due to reduced passive surveillance to open spaces.

Opportunities

- 1 Investigate planning controls to improve appropriate density and mixed uses along the Plenty Road corridor and near town centres
- 2 Investigate gentle density or 'Greening the Greyfields' approach around key cul-de-sacs to improve walkability
- 3 Place activation measures (e.g. mobile libraries) around community facilities to make them more inviting
- 4 Need for strategic direction for Mill Park Stables, to reduce traffic conflicts, public transport access and draw investment
- 5 Celebration of Aboriginal and local culture through in public spaces
- 6 Plenty Valley is one of only areas to go to at night time, this could be an opportunity for other centres too.

Challenges

- 7 Cul-de-sacs are the dominant pattern in established areas, with limited subdivision opportunities
- 8 Lack of perceived identity and appeal for non-residents visiting Mill Park
- 9 Resistance to upgrade, hindering building, investment and community development
- 10 Addressing the issue of disconnected spaces and safety in Mill Park, a lot of back fences facing roads and reserves
- 11 Aging façades and streetscapes within town centres.

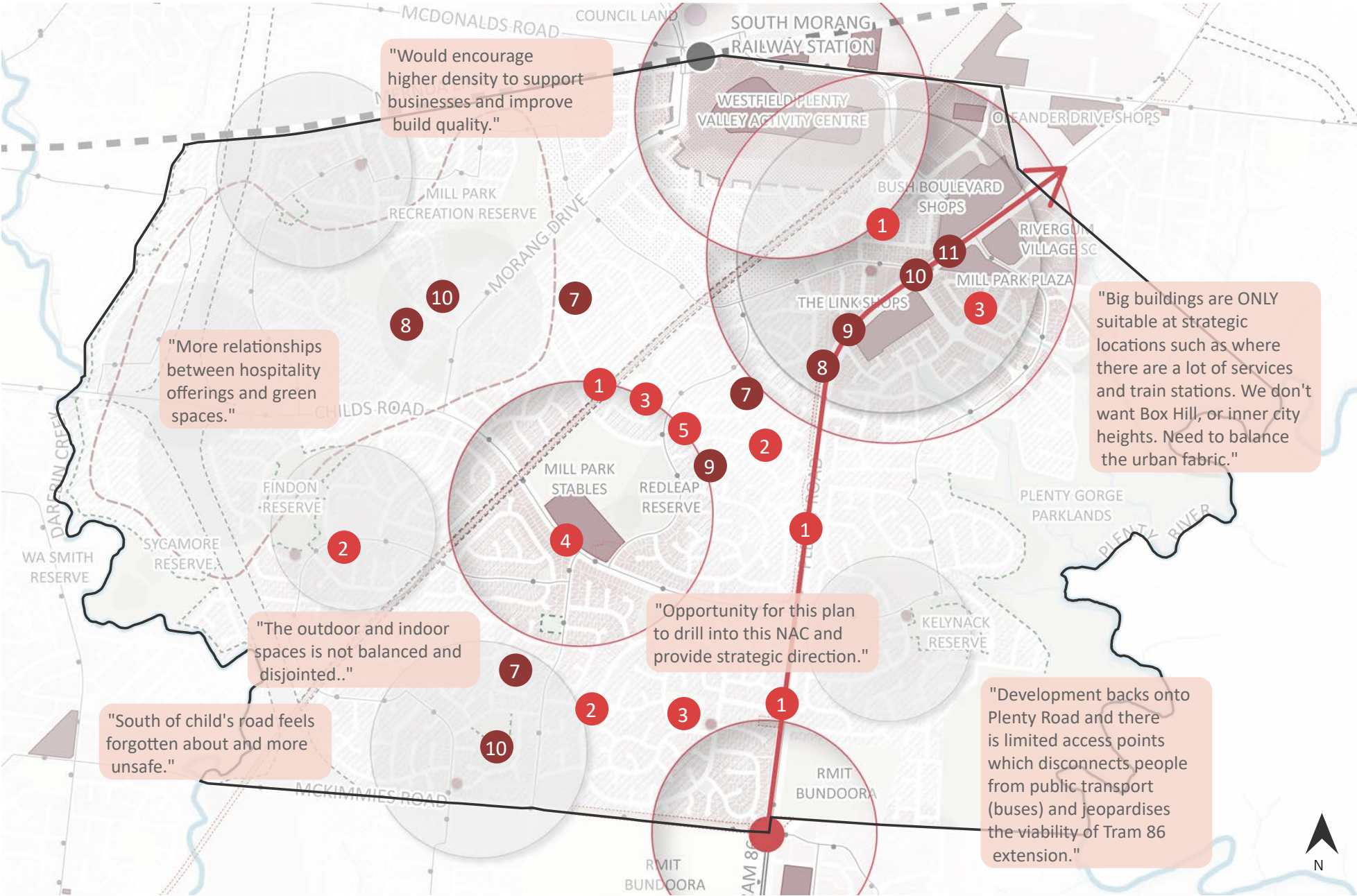
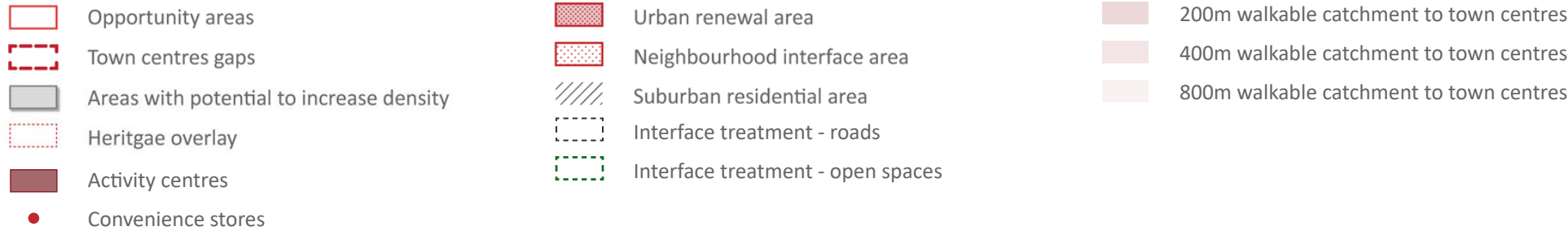


Figure 31 Land use and built form summary map.



Key insights

The opportunities and challenges chapter has gathered insights from community, Council subject matter experts and desktop analysis. Key opportunities have emerged and will be developed further in the next chapter.

Key areas include:

- 1 **Corridor improvements** which may cover various themes and address multiple issues. Plenty River, Plenty Road, Yan Yean Pipe Track, Childs Road, E6, Transmission easement, etc.
- 2 **Town centres and their walkable catchment** review their performance and initiatives especially around Mill Park Stables.
- 3 **Centralising and co-locating services** Enhancement to support community access and convenience.
- 4 **Placemaking** initiatives to draw people and investment to Mill Park and support the community needs
- 5 **Improving walkability and navigation**
- 6 **Identify Council's strategic direction** for complicated sites and general advocacy



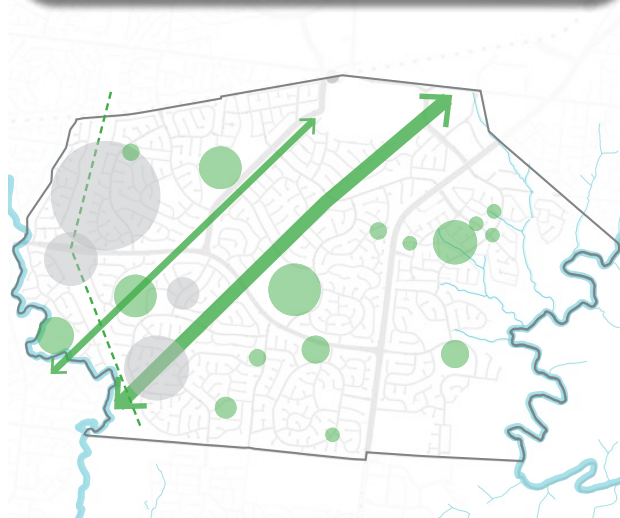
Figure 32 Mill Park opportunities map

Key directions

The key directions have been derived from the opportunities and challenges for each theme, based on their recurrence and urgency, identified through community engagements and internal meetings.

Greener spaces

1. Maximise tree planting and vegetation
2. Develop and improve recreational spaces for community use
3. Promote biodiversity and habitat preservation in green corridors and local reserves
4. Reduce adverse impacts on climate change and urban heat on vulnerable communities
5. Promote and support active lifestyles within the community



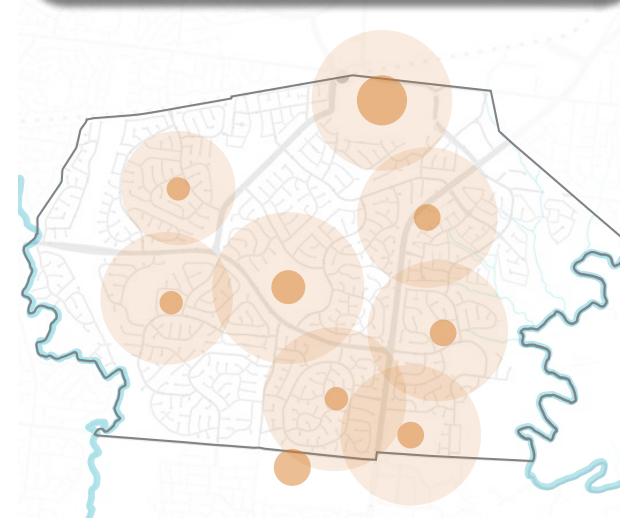
Connected places

1. Provide bike paths and trails to increase participation in active modes of transport
2. Enhance east west connections
3. Increase walkability in cul-de-sac areas
4. Create convenient and accessible public transport networks
5. Help people find their way around the area by improving signage and way-finding



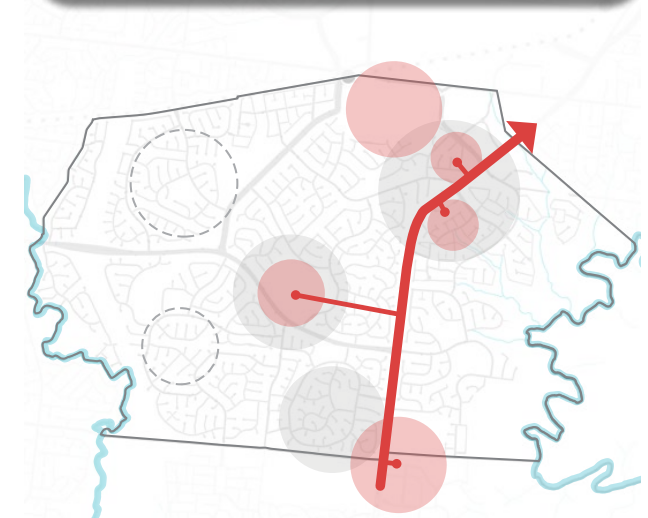
Thriving community and culture

1. Create gathering spaces around community facilities and improve access to existing ones
2. Identify ways to reflect and enhance Aboriginal history and culture in collaboration with the Aboriginal community
3. Encourage participation of young people in community development initiatives
4. Foster sense of community through events, libraries and community programs
5. Investigate improvements to existing community buildings



Land use and built form

1. Explore opportunities, including planning tools, for improving the urban structure
2. Encourage appropriate density around town centres and major transport corridors
3. Upgrade commercial areas to enhance appeal
4. Encourage diverse businesses and land uses for a vibrant community
5. Develop measures to help establish a unique community identity



Place initiatives and implementation

Overview

The following chapter summarises the key initiatives and project ideas that have been identified through the development of this Place Framework.

Place initiatives are larger projects that have a number of smaller sub-actions within them to deliver upon the overall objective. These are initiatives that Council can take a lead role in developing, facilitating, delivering or advocating for. Place initiatives are categorised into:

Council initiatives - projects and initiatives that Council plays a key role to act on in the next 5-10 years.

Advocacy initiatives - projects and initiatives that Council can advocate for or requires partnerships with authorities or other sectors to deliver and may take longer than 5-10 years.

As noted in the beginning of this report, identified initiatives and projects are not all going to happen quickly or at once. They are still dependent on future budget, resourcing and Council.

Next steps

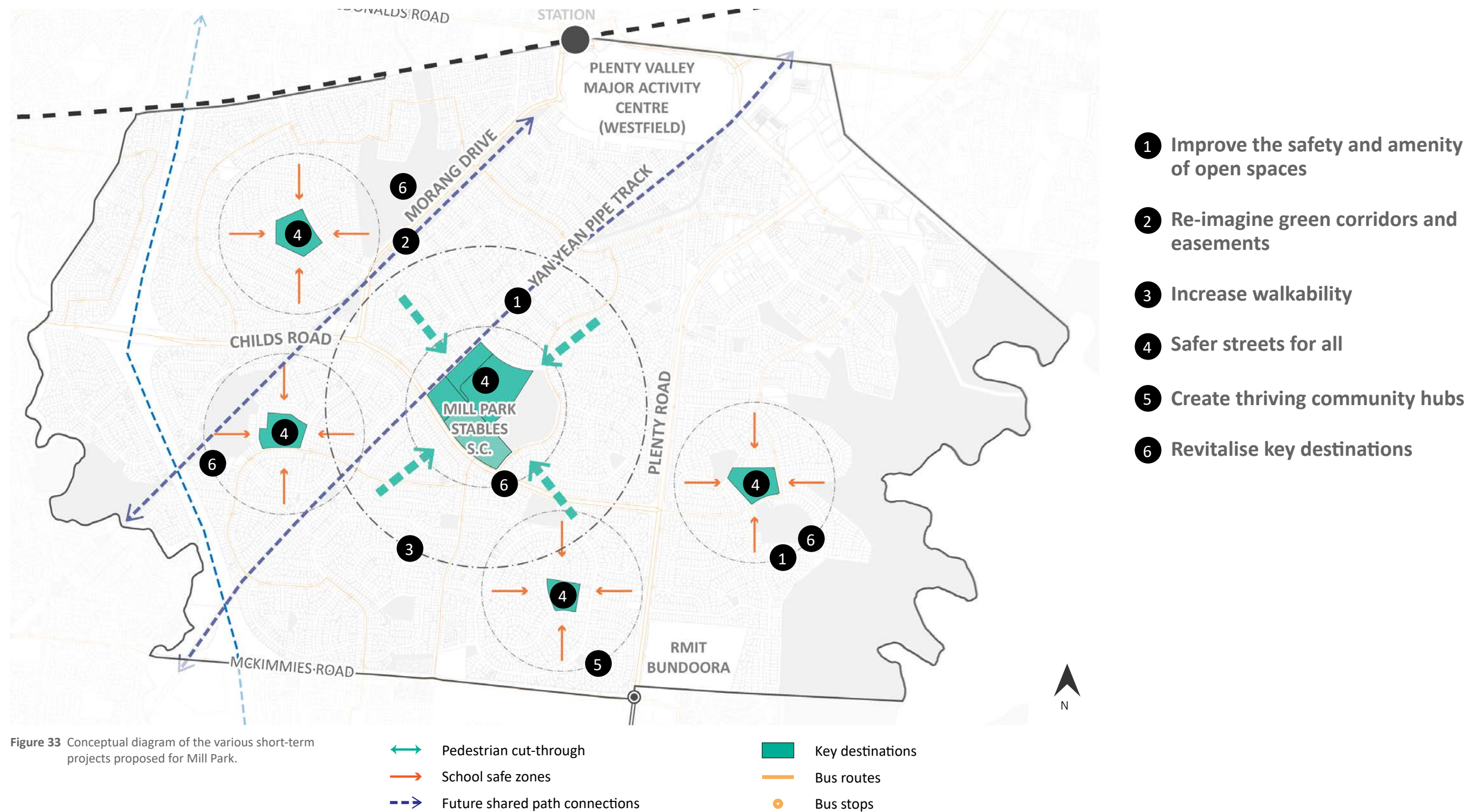
Following the endorsement of this Place Framework, Council aims to identify the initiatives and projects that can be undertaken in the short term. This will all be subject to future budgets, continual community feedback and opportunities as they arise.

Summary of place initiatives

| Place project ideas | | Opportunities | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Themes | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|---------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|---|--|--|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| | | Greener spaces | | | | | Connected spaces | | | | | Thriving community and culture | | | | | Land use and built form | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Maximise tree planting and vegetation | Develop and improve recreational spaces for community use | Promote biodiversity and habitat preservation in green corridors and local reserves | Reducing adverse impacts on climate change and urban heat on vulnerable communities | Promote and support active lifestyles within the community | Providing bike paths and trails to increase participation in active modes of transport | Enhancing east west connections | Increasing walkability in cul-de-sac areas | Creating convenient and accessible public transport networks | Improve signage and way-finding | Create gathering spaces and improve access to existing ones | Enhance understanding of Aboriginal history and culture in collaboration with the Aboriginal community | Tap into the potential of the youth population for community development | Foster sense of community through events and community programs | Investigate improvements to existing community buildings | Explore planning tools, for improving urban structure and development | Encourage appropriate density around town centres and major transport corridors | Upgrade commercial areas to enhance appeal | Encourage diverse businesses and land uses for a vibrant community | Develop measures to help establish a unique community identity | | | | | |
| 1 | Improve the safety and amenity of open spaces | | ● | ● | | | ● | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 2 | Re-imagine green corridors and easements | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● | | | | | | | | ● | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 3 | Increase walkability | | | | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | ● | ● | | | | | ● | ● | | ● | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| 4 | Safer streets to walk or ride to school | | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | | | | | | ● | | | | | | ● | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| 5 | Create thriving community hubs | | ● | | | | | | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | | ● | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| 6 | Revitalise key destinations | | ● | | ● | | | | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | | ● | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| 7 | Advocate for Child’s Road improvements | | | | ● | ● | | ● | | ● | | ● | | | | | ● | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| 8 | Advocate for Plenty Road upgrades | | | | ● | ● | | | | ● | ● | ● | | | | | | ● | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| 9 | Improve Darebin Creek and Plenty River corridors | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● | | | ● | | ● | | | | | | | ● | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| 10 | Better support for town centres | | | | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● | | | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |

- Themes
- 1 Greener spaces
 - 2 Connected places
 - 3 Thriving community and culture
 - 4 Land use and built form

Council-led place initiatives



1. Improve the safety and amenity of open spaces

Open spaces such as parks, reserves and corridors have lots backing onto them with tall rear or side fences. This provides very limited opportunities for people to watch over these spaces (passive surveillance) and makes these spaces feel unsafe to use. For women in particular, this was a key concern. Some smaller parks and open spaces are in need of upgrades. Quality open space is important basic infrastructure for all people and demographics to have cost-free recreational opportunities in their local area.

Key projects, ideas and actions for this initiative are highlighted below:

- Increase open space pockets in western and southern areas of Mill Park
- Work with stakeholders, adjacent landowners, and authorities that back or side onto open space to improve passive surveillance and feeling of safety
- Develop guidelines for built form interfaces to ensure passive surveillance and access to Yan Yean Pipe Track, transmission line easements and open spaces for long-term activation
- Increase the provision of seating, lighting and planting along open spaces and corridors. Appropriate lighting improvements would highlight these spaces and improve safety
- Increase tree canopy cover and maximise planting opportunities to enhance greening
- Encourage newer developments to provide through pedestrian access to open space where suitable
- Improve ease of movement by prioritising pedestrian crossings along creek corridors
- Identify key crossing points along corridors to promote pedestrian and cycling connectivity within and outside the suburb
- Explore opportunities for temporary activation of the E6 corridor with additional paths, planting and events
- Support the Yan Yean Pipe Track shared path and Plenty River improvements.

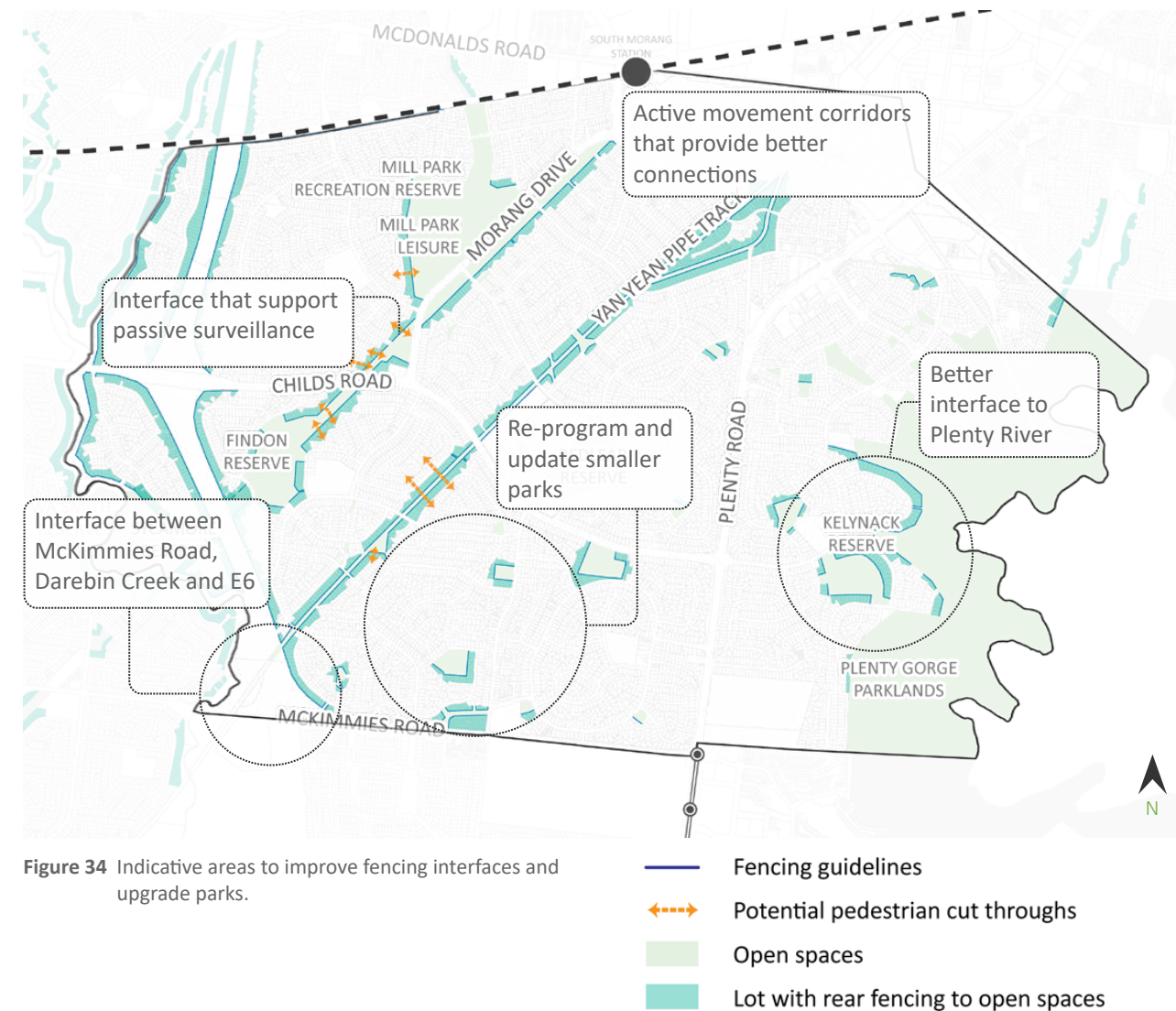


Figure 34 Indicative areas to improve fencing interfaces and upgrade parks.

Community Priority #2

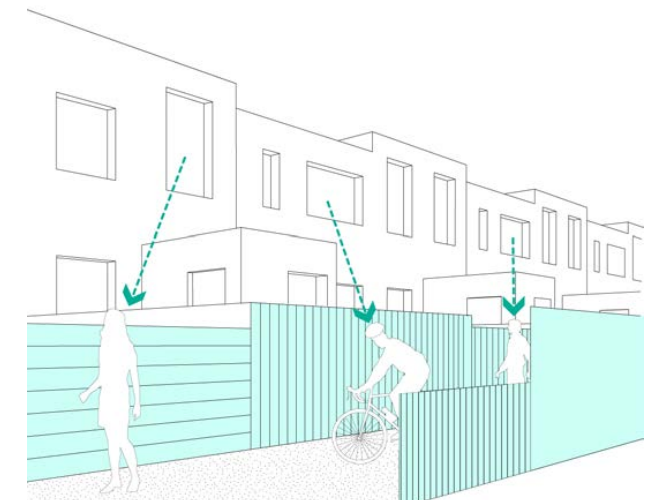


Figure 35 Providing low fencing or designing buildings to overlook onto public spaces improves passive surveillance and feeling safe.
Image source - Urban Design Guidelines for Victoria



Figure 36 Image of easements passing through Mill Park with 1.8m rear or side fencing

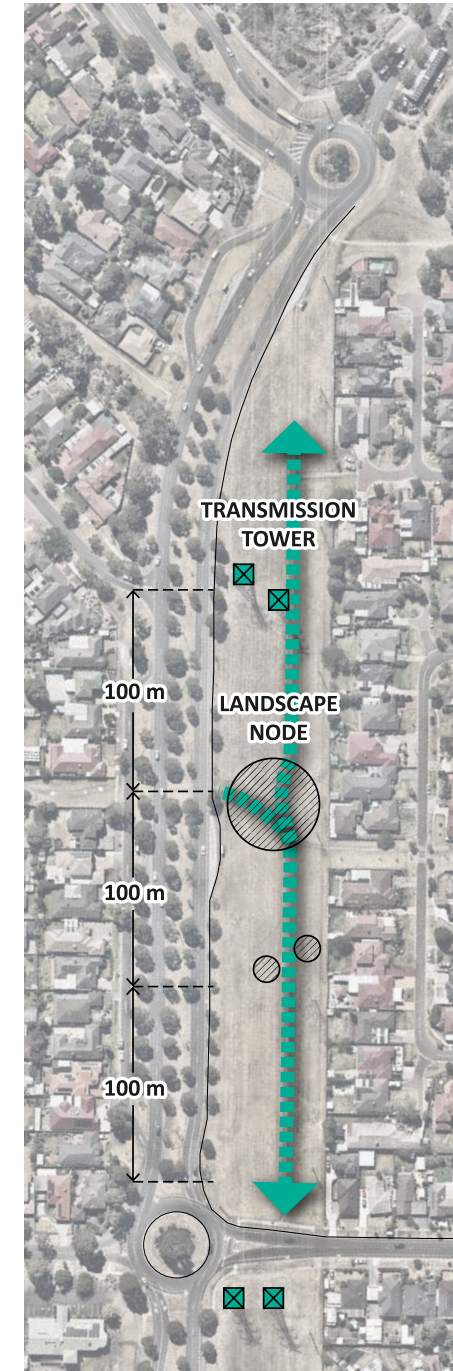
2. Re-imagine green corridors and easements

Mill Park's corridors and easements, currently lack visual appeal, can be re-imagined as attractive, community-friendly spaces and movement corridors for cyclists and pedestrians. Transmission easements and green corridors such as Yan Yean Pipe Track, E6 corridor, Darebin Creek and Plenty River have the potential to be upgraded. Council has identified the following initiatives to consider to improve these spaces:

- Explore pilot projects and partnership opportunities with educational institutions, community groups, not-for-profits and other groups to develop initiatives to activate easements
- Involve Aboriginal communities and groups to integrate cultural practices in designing, activating and maintaining the land
- Promote appropriate uses along corridors and easements
 - Consider planting such as the Woody Meadow planting initiative
 - Provide paths with seating and lighting along the corridors
 - Introduce activities such as park runs, sculpture trails or other activations
 - Identify appropriate ways to support urban agriculture or other sustainability initiatives that activate and make these corridors feel safer
 - Consider leasing arrangements which can support both for-profit and non-profit initiatives.



Figure 38 Re-imagining transmission line easement as a bio-diversity corridor.



Community Priority #6



Figure 37 Diamond Creek Park Run

Case studies

1. Park run

Park run is a free, community event where you can walk, jog, run, volunteer or spectate. Park run is 5km and takes place every Saturday morning. Junior park run is 2km, dedicated to 4-14 year olds and their families, every Sunday morning.

2. Woody Meadow Planting

Woody Meadows are diverse shrub plantings maintained by coppicing (hard pruning to 10-20 cm) to promote flowering and create dense canopies to exclude weeds.



Got an idea for your neighbourhood?

We offer grants and support to help bring local projects to life.

Do you have an idea for a program, event or other initiative in Mill Park?

Learn more about our grants at whittlesea.vic.gov.au/grants

3. Increase walkability

Two of the biggest issues raised by the community and internal staff alike was the poor walkability of Mill Park and traffic congestion. Mill Park's layout which is dominated by winding roads and cul-de-sacs can be difficult to navigate and makes walking inconvenient. The positives of this structure is that it reduces through-traffic and makes people feel safer. It also reduces car dependency for short trips, reducing fuel expenses for the community.

The idea of adding more pedestrian cut-throughs in strategic locations (i.e. to local shops, schools, parks or public transport) was identified as it can make walking more convenient than driving across the neighbourhood. This can be further investigated with community, developers and experts to identify equitable and appropriate ways to achieve better pedestrian connections.

The City of Maroondah Council has developed a Greening The Greyfields approach which may offer some ideas not just for Mill Park, but other established suburbs as well.



Figure 39 Existing examples of pedestrian pathway connections in more recently developed areas of Mill Park

Some key ideas on this approach are listed below.

Increasing housing diversity

- Ensure development applications meet the needs of the existing community and the vision for the area. Generally, in areas with potential for urban renewal.
- Identify types of housing that deliver the appropriate density for Mill Park's residential areas and existing planning zones.

Tools for improving the urban structure

- Investigate appropriate planning controls, mechanisms and guidelines
- Investigate ways to support and encourage alternative housing development models that focus on improving community, environmental and precinct outcomes such as co-housing or cooperative approaches

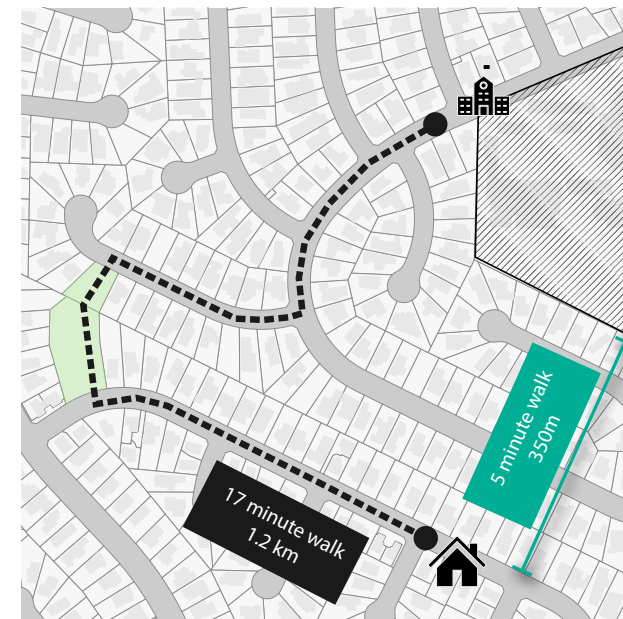


Figure 40 Comparison of walking distance to school versus distance as the crow flies.

Strengthening the movement network

- Enhance visual and physical links between green corridors, pedestrian paths and destinations
- Improve walking, cycling and micro-mobility infrastructure to help reduce traffic and congestion. This has social and environmental benefits and improves safety by having more people around.
- Continue the roll out of Council's Missing Links Program
- Improve the bus network to key destinations
- Improve coordination and integration of bus, tram and train timetables.

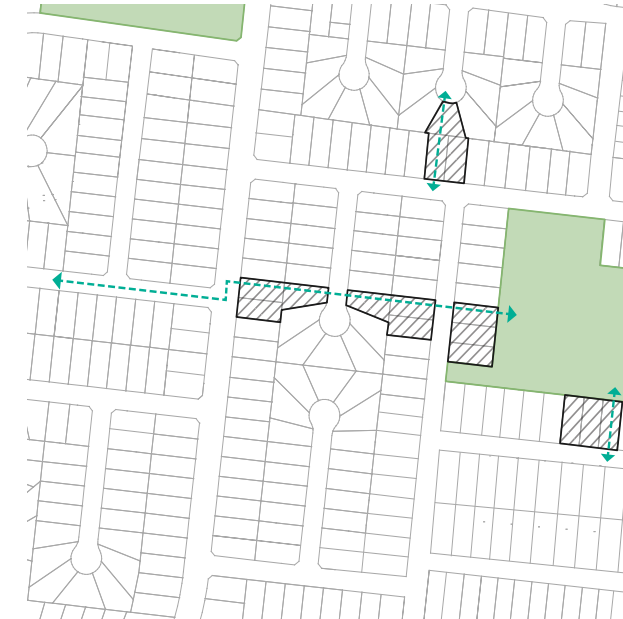


Figure 41 Example of additional connections to improve permeability.

Community Priority #5

Pedestrian cut-throughs

- Improve the layout of the neighbourhood by providing more pedestrian access to key destinations including schools, shops, parks, public transport
- Improve the interfaces of existing cut-throughs to feel safer and more open through future development,

Signage and way-finding

- Improve mapping, signage and way-finding to key destinations and pedestrian cut-throughs

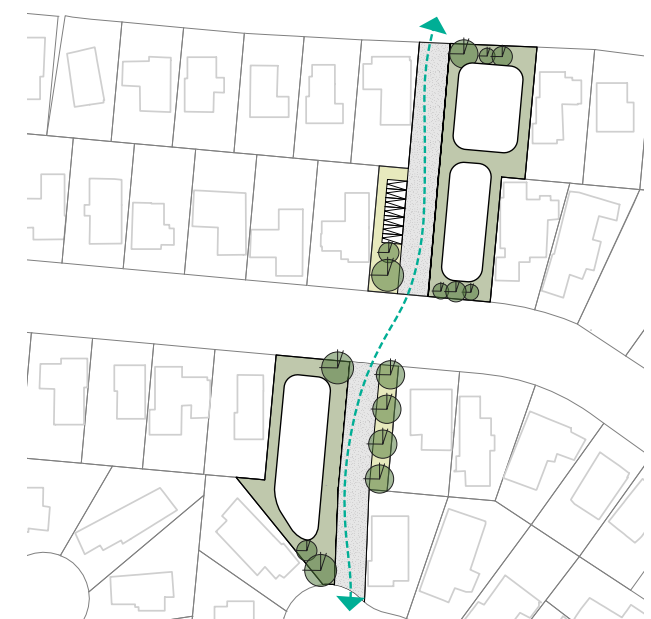


Figure 42 Example of how new pedestrian connections can be implemented through new developments.

4. Safer streets for all

This initiative aims to make walking and cycling more convenient, accessible and safe to key destinations in Mill Park. Destinations include schools, parks, shops and community facilities. Walking and cycling has health benefits for all. It also helps in reducing traffic congestion by minimising the number of car trips made and saves community in fuel costs.

Safer active streets

- Plan active streets around schools by identifying commonly used routes and creating safe, accessible pathways for children to walk and ride
- Identify challenges and potential hazards that may hinder walking and cycling to schools and amenities
- Pinpoint areas of additional supervision, temporary road closures, or other safety measures
- Explore the concept of “play streets” around schools to encourage safe, active play and travel.
- Enhance the integration of bus transit with walking routes to schools and amenities, making the overall journey faster and more convenient.
- Improve management of parking and drop-off locations around schools to reduce conflicts.

Bus advocacy

- Advocate for increased bus frequency and the introduction of more direct routes to key destinations in Mill Park
- Ensure that bus stops are accessible via pedestrian crossings and provide safe, comfortable waiting areas for passengers
- Support the implementation of real-time service indicators at bus stops, along with clear information on bus connections and stop locations
- Advocate for enhanced east-west bus services across the suburb to improve connectivity and reduce travel times.

Improve McKimmies Road and McDonalds Road

- Improve safety with anti-speeding measures and reworked roundabouts
- Improve walking, cycling and lighting and passive surveillance along the road.

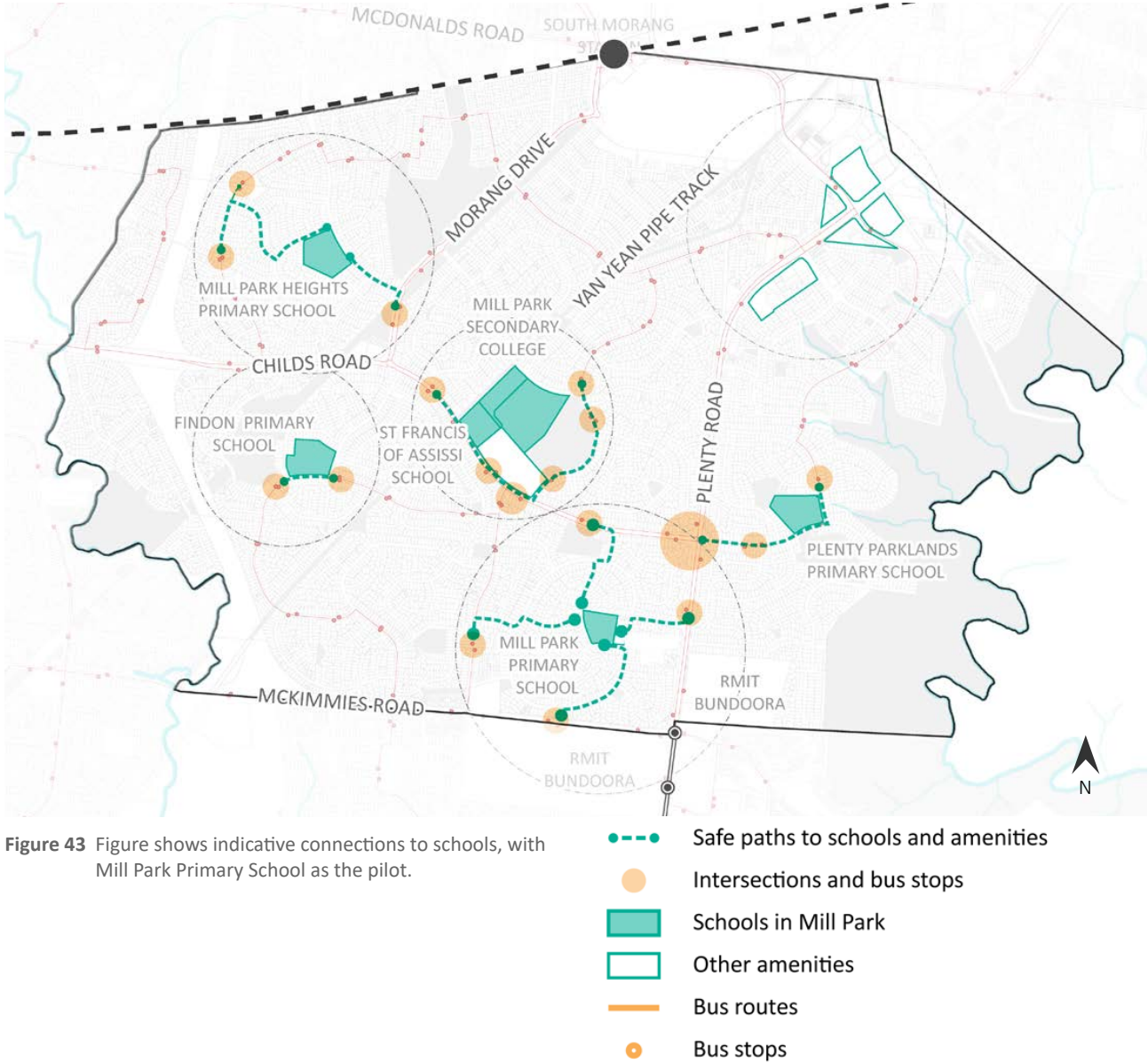


Figure 43 Figure shows indicative connections to schools, with Mill Park Primary School as the pilot.

Community Priority #1



Figure 44 1000 Play Streets by the Australian Sports Commission

Case study

1. Active Paths Program

The Maribyrnong Council, in collaboration with local primary schools and the Department of Transport and Planning (formerly VicRoads), has launched the Active Paths Program.

This initiative is designed to support parents of primary school students who wish to encourage their children to walk, ride, scoot or skate to school.

Similar initiatives with some variations were introduced in Seddon and Yarraville, traffic studies have shown 60 per cent fewer crashes where people have been injured. This means all road users are safer, whether they walk, cycle or drive.

2. Play Streets

Play street is a quiet residential street where neighbours of all ages connect and play, typically lasting for 2-3 hours. It is a small scale gathering for neighbours, ideally co-ordinated by residents themselves.

5. Create thriving community hubs

Mill Park's community centres are important spaces, but sometimes unknown or poorly accessible. Below are some ideas for Council to consider developing further.

- Ensure community hubs have the facilities and services to provide a range of social infrastructure to meet the unique needs of the local community
 - Provide community support by encouraging and recognising emerging community leaders
 - Increase outreach to the community
 - Improve community hubs to draw people in with street appeal and increase community participation
 - Improve the resilience of precincts by undertaking 'Place Plans' that analyse and plan for places in a holistic manner
- Upgrade streets, public spaces and buildings to support adaptability, accessibility, mixed use and multi-functionality into the future
- Enhance the sense of arrival to key destinations with landscaping, signage and street furniture.
- Ensure community hubs provide youth-friendly spaces for young people to hang out
- Create a formal program to include youth representatives in project working groups for Council projects. This will ensure that young people's voices are heard and considered.
- Continue working with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation on ways to incorporate Aboriginal history and knowledge into Mill Park.

Community building programs

- Community-led temporary road closures for short-term activation of streets for events such as street parties, play streets and other community events
- Continue supporting outdoor dining on private and public land
- Investigate opportunity for Council to lease out vacant shops in town centres to increase spaces for community to gather.

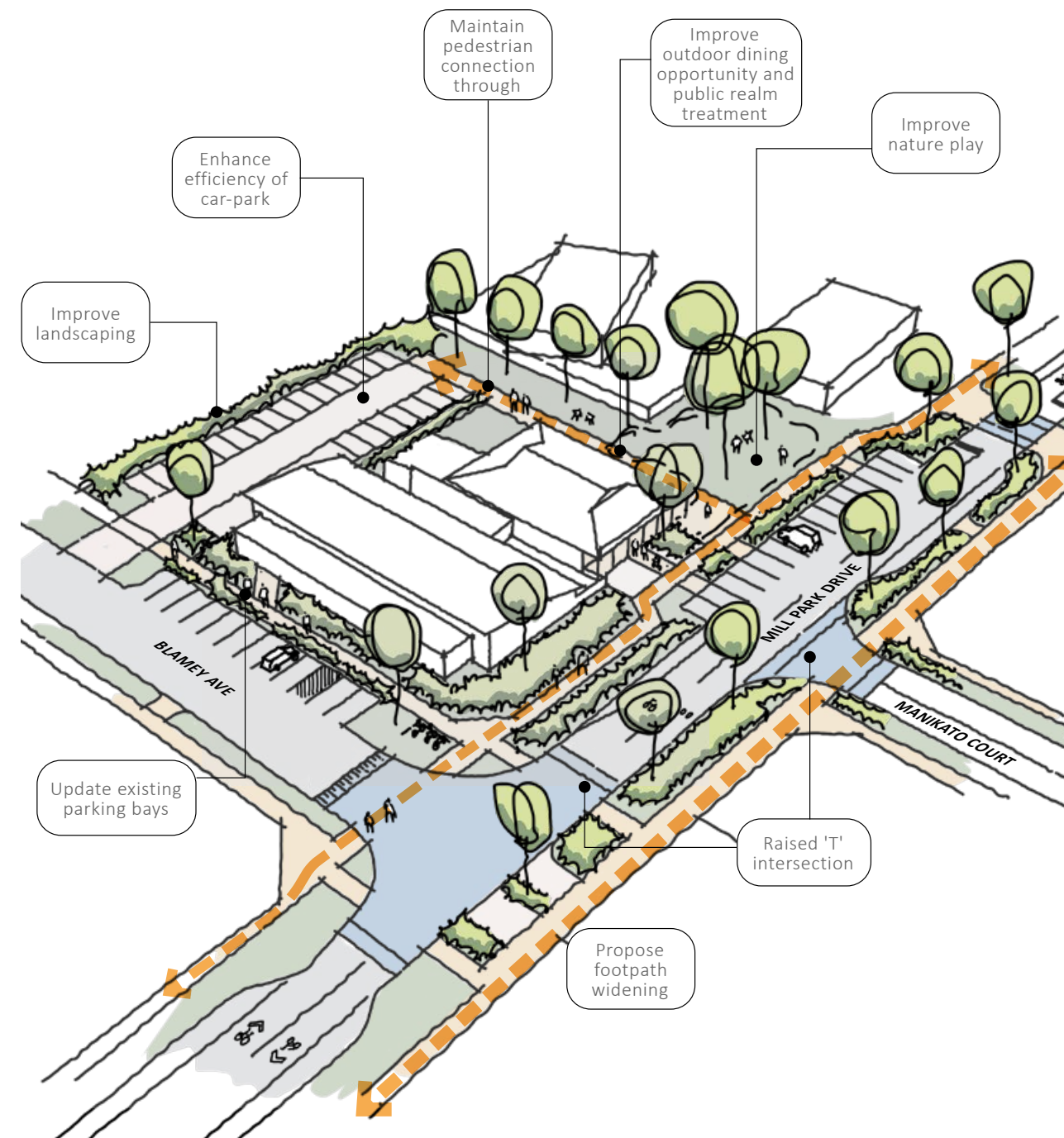


Figure 45 Miller Community Centre as hub for the community to gather and socialise.

Community Priority #3

Mill Park Drive Place Plan

A Place Plan and concept designs can be created to improve the Mill Park Drive area and plan for the future improvements of council buildings.

Mill Park Drive hosts the Miller Community Centre, Maternal and Child Health centre, Mill Park Pre-school and two shops. It sits adjacent to Mill Park Primary School.

The area has the potential to be upgraded with traffic calming measures, landscaping treatments and a nature play space. This additional amenity would create a pedestrian and child-friendly community space that is welcoming and engaging.

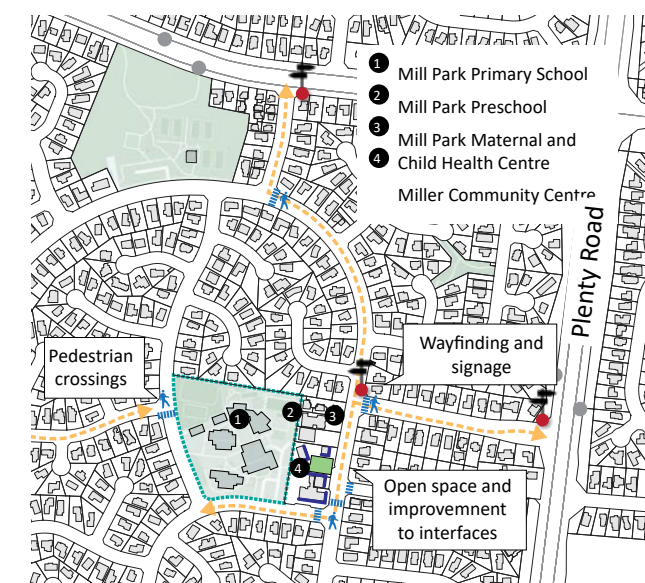


Figure 46 Concept ideas to upgrade Mill Park Drive precinct.

6. Revitalise key destinations

Key destinations include shops, parks, community or leisure centres and schools. Events, activities, public art and better planning came up as consistent themes during community consultation. Community enjoyed events being held in and around Stables shopping centre, however, majority of these have now moved to South Morang's Civic Precinct. Events hosted by Council are already nearing capacity. However, there is opportunity to identify more event locations and support activities that local shops, community and other groups can host themselves. Providing the Mill Park community with low-cost local activities.

Short term activation ideas

- Identify sites across Mill Park that can be utilised for events, activations and festivals
- Encourage outdoor dining, trading, busking and street activations
- Create new public art and events based on local culture, community and history at key locations
- Identify ways to encourage and support walking and cycling to events and key destinations
- Improve way-finding to shops and services
- Identify best practice guidelines for town centres to consider when redeveloping or upgrading.

Long term planning improvements

- Identify key improvements required to planning and infrastructure around key destinations
- Investigate holistic redevelopment of existing town centres as vibrant mixed-use centres
- Work with key stakeholders to overcome barriers to securing quality tenants, events and activities.



Figure 47 Artist impression of temporary activation events held in Redleap Reserve car park.

Community Priority #4

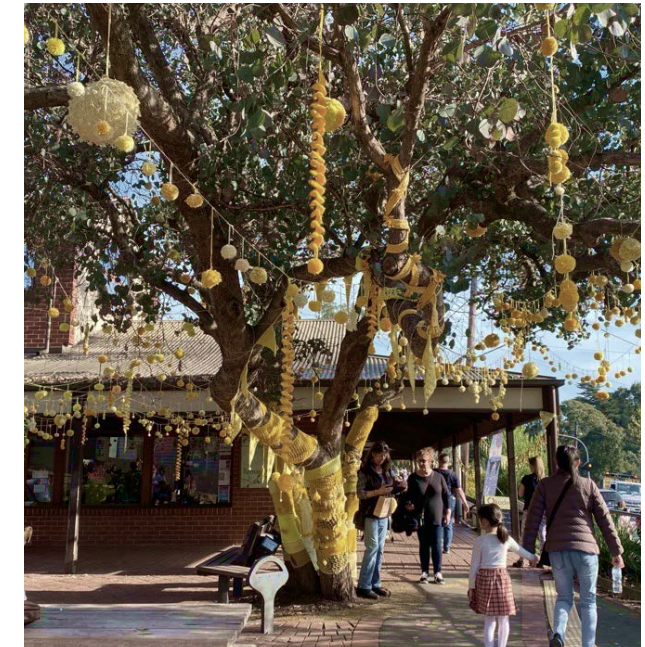


Figure 48 Image from the Hurstbridge Wattle Festival.

Case study

1. Hurstbridge Wattle Festival

The Hurstbridge Wattle Festival celebrates Melbourne's Green Wedge in the Diamond Valley. This annual event began in 2004 and has grown year on year.

In 2022, the festival returned to the streets of Hurstbridge with record breaking numbers of over 15,000 people.



Want to run a local event in your community?

You can plan an activity or event, right in your neighbourhood.

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Advocacy initiatives

1 Advocate for Child's Road improvements

- Advocate for off-road shared path or cycling
- Advocate for redesign of Child's Road and Morang Drive roundabout
- Advocate for peak hour traffic solution around the Stables
- Advocate for quality design, maximising greening and walking and cycling safety

2 Advocate for Plenty Road upgrades

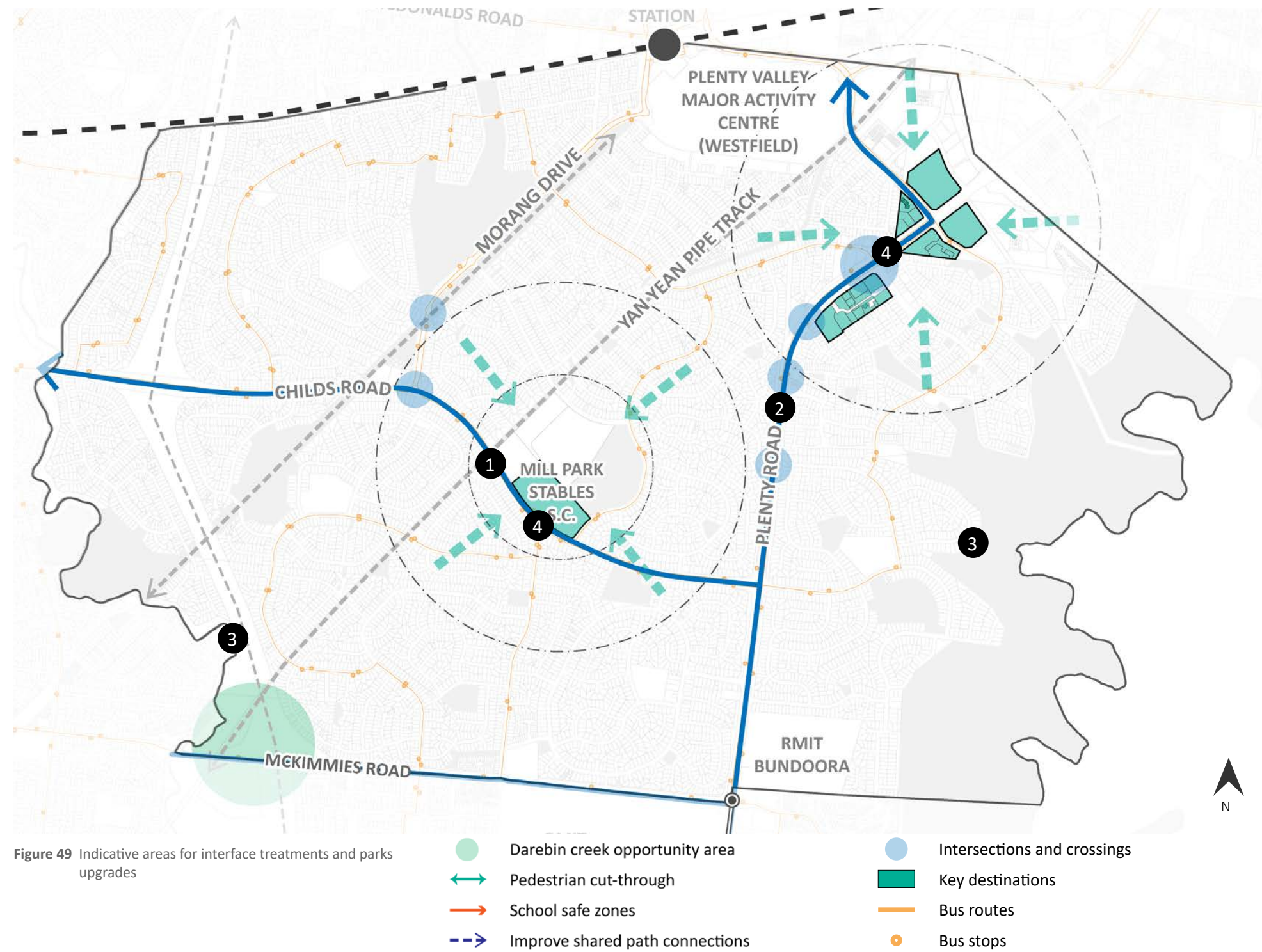
- Coordinate with local and state agencies for Tram 86 advocacy
- Advocate for off-road shared paths with lighting, seating, and shade
- Council to investigate potential growth with new Tram stops

3 Darebin Creek and Plenty River corridor

- Support delivery of missing trail sections
- Identify additional east-west connections along and connecting to waterway trails
- Enhance and preserve biodiversity while making corridors enjoyable for users.

4 Better support for town centres

- Encourage local employment opportunities.
- Increase accessibility to shops within an 800m radius
- Improve way-finding to key destinations
- Work with landowners and businesses to improve façades and future planning
- Develop design guidelines for town centres as part of Council's Neighbourhood Design Manual
- Identify areas that can accommodate appropriate densities to support local economy.





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5.5 Lauries Field Master Plan Draft

Director/Executive Manager: Director Infrastructure & Environment

Report Author: Coordinator Open Space Planning

In Attendance: Manager Urban Design & Transport
Unit Manager Landscape & Open Space Planning
Coordinator Open Space Planning

Executive Summary

Lauries Field Park is a 5.4-hectare informal recreation park located in Doreen, a growing residential suburb. Developed in the 2000's and inherited by Council through the Laurimar estate, the park features open grass areas, wetland, conservation areas, play space and a connected path network. Despite its size and community value, Lauries Field was not included in the 2016 Open Space Strategy due to Doreen's status as a growth area at the time.

Classified as a municipal-level open space, Lauries Field is the local park for over 3,000 residents within an 800m walkable catchment and is primarily used for informal recreation and environmental interaction. In addition to this, the park plays an important role in biodiversity, water quality and flood mitigation. The park faces several challenges, including deteriorating infrastructure, poor water quality in the wetland and vandalism to the conservation areas.

To address these issues and guide future improvements, Council initiated a Master Plan process led by the Open Space Planning team, with input from specialists in conservation, water management and park operations.

The draft Master Plan was informed by initial community engagement, engaging 144 community members through in-person pop-ups and an online platform, gathering feedback on how the park is used and what improvements are needed. The most common uses were walking around the wetland and exercising dogs. Community priorities included upgrading the play space, adding public toilets and amenities, improving the walking track, and addressing wetland health. Key concerns included outdated equipment, safety, lack of maintenance and insufficient recreational facilities.

The vision for Lauries Field Park is to transform it into an accessible, inclusive park that supports community well-being through social connection, active lifestyles, and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

The Master Plan focuses on three strategic themes:

- enhancing movement and access through improved paths, entrances and safety
- expanding informal recreation with upgraded play spaces, fitness equipment, and social amenities and
- strengthening environmental stewardship by improving wetland health, increasing tree canopy, and protecting conservation areas with appropriate planting, fencing, and educational signage

The draft plan is to be exhibited for additional community and stakeholder engagement, to ensure the recommendations and actions are aligned with community expectations.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

- 1. Note the prepared draft Lauries Field Master Plan at Attachment 1.**
- 2. Endorse the public exhibition of the draft Lauries Field Master Plan for community and stakeholder consultation and engagement between the period of 25 July to 22 August 2025.**
- 3. Note a subsequent report seeking approval of the Lauries Field Master Plan will come back to Council for formal adoption following the public exhibition and consultation period.**

Background / Key Information

Lauries Field is one of the larger municipal parks in Doreen, a relatively new residential area of the Municipality. It was developed in the 2000's and is an informal recreation reserve, located on Lakeland Drive and Brookwood Avenue in Doreen. It has an extensive connected path system, open grassed areas, wetland, and play facilities, occupying an area of 5.4 hectares.

Lauries Field, like most parks in residential areas developed over the last two decades, is not guided by the adopted Open Space Strategy 2016 for renewal or upgrades. Doreen was considered a growth suburb at the time of preparing the Open Space Strategy and not included in the strategy.

The Open Space Strategy and the draft Public Open Space Plan categorises Lauries Field as a municipal level open space with an 800m walkable catchment or 15 mins travel time, providing the 3,000 immediate residents with a place for outdoor recreation. The primary use of the open space is for informal active recreation, and secondary use is for conservation and environment protection. The provision of facilities is targeted to the broader community with no specific formal type of use identified, and no formal use agreement in place.

The park was developed in the 2000s as part of efforts to enhance local green spaces and provide areas for outdoor recreation in response to urban growth, it was also identified in the development plan endorsed by Planning Victoria. The park was constructed by the developer and handed over to Council through the development of the Laurimar estate. Of note is the wetland, a converted farm dam that currently experiences functional and water quality issues resulting in azolla blooms and fish death events. The conservation areas to the south of the wetlands, have experienced damage through the construction of unauthorised dirt jumps. The park has two separate barbeque areas, a play space, and a circuit walking path.

The purpose of the master plan is to coordinate and guide the future development, improvement, and management of Lauries Field, capturing the needs of a growing community.

Master Plan Development

Prioritisation

Master planning prioritisation is based on data demonstrating an increased need for planning and improvement. Each Municipal park and reserve have collated data to determine:

- Community impact (Census and Australian Urban Observatory);
- Environmental impact (Nearmap Canopy dataset);
- Baseline facility provision (Internal Asset dataset); and
- Management and maintenance impact (Internal Asset dataset, work order and customer requests).

These data sets produce a priority ranking, which is then reviewed by officers to account for site-specific issues that big data cannot capture, such as water projects, surveillance concerns, management challenges and asset renewal plans.

Lauries Field was assessed for master planning in 2024/25 based on:

- the seventh highest priority based on the prioritisation matrix;
- the water quality issues and required improvements;
- unsanctioned dirt jumps constructed in conservation areas;
- renewal requirements of the play space;
- need for more accessibility (DDA and lighting); and
- increased community need for informal active recreation in the area.

Development Process

The Master Plan has been developed by Council's Open Space Planning team assisted with cross team collaboration for subject matter expertise in conservation, integrated water management, arboricultural management, strategic transport, and parks operations and management.

The development of the plan has followed the documented master plan development process, grounding the draft with quantified evidence and data collected through desktop reviews, on-site analysis, specialist subject matter review and collaboration and conversations with the community.



Phase 1 Consultation and Engagement

The purpose of phase 1 consultation and engagement was to assist Council in identifying the key issues, challenges and opportunities of the site and discover the key ideas for the park improvement.

Activities

A range of methods and tools were used to engage with the community and key stakeholders including:

- two community-based pop ups;
- online Engage webpage with digital survey and social pinpoint map; and
- internal workshops and collaboration.

Participation

- 144 community members participated:
 - 77 in person at scheduled pop-ups.
 - 67 online via the engage webpage.
- online posts reached 9,200 people, with 447 interactions (likes, comments or shares);
- 524 views of the project engage webpage; and
- 12 page follows to receive project updates.

Outcomes

Overall, we heard that the top two reasons visitors use the site are to ‘walk and sit around the wetland’ (59%) and exercise their dogs (46%). Others enjoy taking their young ones to the park, using it to walk/run, or catching up with family and friends.

The top five community priorities for improvement are as follows:

1. Play space upgrade

The community raised concerns about the deteriorating playground and the lack of equipment for older children and teenagers. The Master Plan proposes the renewal and upgrade of the play space to meet new standards in design and play experience. This item is captured in the Informal Recreation and Park Infrastructure theme.

2. Public toilet provision

While the lack of on-site toilets was raised, the Master Plan does not propose a new toilet facility, as the reserve’s classification does not recommend one. However, the site is located within 250m of the Brookwood Community Centre which has public toilets, wayfinding signage is proposed to assist park visitors.

3. Additional amenities (ie. shelters, seats, lights)

Community feedback highlighted the need for more seating, lighting, and general park amenities. The Master Plan responds to this with the inclusion of new shelters, seating, lighting, and signage under the Informal Recreation and Park Infrastructure theme.

4. Walking track/circuit path around the wetland

The lack of accessible paths and poor maintenance were raised as concerns. The Master Plan proposes an upgrade to the existing path network to improve accessibility and durability, addressed under the Movement and Access theme.

5. Lake and wetland upgrade

The unhealthy condition of the lake and safety concerns were frequently mentioned. The Master Plan proposes lake refurbishment to enhance water quality and improve public interaction, including upgraded decking and interpretive signage. This is captured in the Environment and Landscape theme.

Our community engagement highlighted the key issues as follows:

- lack of play equipment for older children and teenagers;
- deteriorating playground;
- safety concerns;
- unhealthy wetland;
- lack of regular maintenance;
- lack of informal recreational facilities; and
- lack of off lead dog area and dog bins.

Master Plan Development

Vision

Lauries Field is a renewed park that blends nature with accessibility, care for the environment and community well-being. With restored wetlands, protected areas and inclusive facilities, it is a welcoming place for everyone to enjoy nature, play and relax.

Main Objectives/Themes

Movement and Access

This theme recommends increasing accessibility throughout the park and neighbourhood interfaces. The theme addresses the identified community priority of creating a walking track/circuit path around the wetland, as well as the identified safety concerns throughout the park. Design outcomes include:

- widening pathways to a 2m wide DDA compliant path whilst considering environmental constraints;
- Realigning the path and improving surface material to increase durability and DDA compliance;
- upgrading stairs and viewing areas to improve accessibility to the water's edge
- improving park entrances with better connections and wayfinding to the existing neighbourhood footpaths; and
- improving safety of park users and prioritising active transport by proposing traffic calming crossings.

Informal Recreation and Park Infrastructure

This theme recommends increasing park infrastructure to support informal and passive recreation, and social connection through new social spaces and informal active recreation facilities. This theme addresses two of the community high priority items, play space upgrade and additional amenities, in addition, it resolves four community issues around play spaces and lack of informal active recreation facilities. Design outcomes include:

- new multi-purpose sports court, hit up wall, and outdoor fitness equipment;
- improved play space increasing the design age range of play experiences and including nature play elements;
- increased support infrastructure such as seating, shelters, and drinking fountains throughout the park; and

- improved wayfinding and signage throughout the park, including signage to public toilets at Brookwood Community Centre.

Environment and Landscape

This theme recommends increasing environmental stewardship through planned intervention to improve existing environmental assets. This theme addresses the community priority of wetland upgrade, and the related environmental issues identified. Design outcomes include:

- increasing canopy cover through new tree plantings and replacing trees that are entering higher risk categories due to age;
- removing overgrown understorey planting to improve visibility through the site and replace with more suitable planting considerate of conservation areas;
- improving conservation protection and education through limiting access with new fencing and providing information signage; and
- improving the water quality of the wetlands and wetland through technological intervention and reformatting of the wetlands system, potentially reducing the size of the ephemeral wetland.

Next Steps

- Commence Phase 2 community consultation and engagement:
 - 25 July to 22 August 2025;
 - two in person pop-ups (Laurimar Town Centre, and Lauries Field); and
 - online survey and social pinpoint map.
- Revise draft Lauries Field Master Plan with consideration of community consultation and engagement outcomes.
- Develop business case for implementation of plan.
- Present revised plan and business case to Enterprise Project Board for inclusion in long term financial plan.
- Present revised plan and business case to Council for endorsement.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

Connected Communities

We work to foster an inclusive, healthy, safe, and welcoming community where all ways of life are celebrated and supported.

The plan proposes improving accessibility and safety in and around the park, physically connecting the community and creating an inclusive park for more social connection opportunities.

Liveable Neighbourhoods

Our City is well-planned and beautiful, and our neighbourhoods and town centres are convenient and vibrant places to live, work and play.

The plan contributes to a well-planned city with accessible and considered open space, creating a vibrant place to live, work and play.

Sustainable Environment

We prioritise our environment and take action to reduce waste, park local biodiversity, protect waterways and green space and address climate change.

The plan prioritises environmental improvements through the enhancement and protection of existing environmental assets including wetlands and a conservation area.

Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles**Financial Management**

The estimated budget required to implement the Master Plan is subject to further design development. The initial high-level construction cost estimate of the Master Plan implementation is \$1.6m. The inclusion of CPI adjustments over the life of delivery estimates overall implementation to be approximately \$2.2m.

The Fair Market Value of renewing existing assets is valued at \$1.34m.

Renewal of existing assets will be considered for inclusion in existing Council Capital Works programs including the Playground Renewal Program and Greening Whittlesea tree planting programs. Items requiring additional funding will be referred to Council's annual budget process and external grant opportunities.

The operational and maintenance estimate to maintain the fully implemented Master plan, including the existing assets being retained is \$19,600 p/a.

Community Consultation and Engagement

The Master Plan has undergone the first round of open community engagement between 18 June 2024 and 16 July 2024.

Phase 1 consultation and engagement aimed to help Council identify the key issues, challenges, and opportunities for improving the park, as well as gather key community ideas for future enhancements. A combination of engagement methods was used, including two community pop-up sessions, an interactive online survey and mapping tool via Council's Engage webpage, and internal collaboration workshops. In total, 144 community members participated — 77 at in-person events and 67 online. Online engagement extended further, reaching 9,200 people, generating 447 interactions, and drawing 524 webpage views and 12 new followers for project updates.

Other Principles for Consideration

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- (d) The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.

Public Transparency Principles

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.

Council Policy Considerations

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

The plan proposes actions supporting and enhancing environmental sustainability, including the increased protection of the existing conservation areas, and improved water quality in the refurbishment of the wetlands using an innovative approach. The plan allows for increased advocacy for better environmental outcomes across individual project implementation.

Social, Cultural and Health

The plan supports social, cultural and health through the proposal of social spaces, additional infrastructure for active communities, and allows for connection to culture and heritage through education embedded in the landscape.

Economic

The plan supports economic growth through improvements that would attract visitors to the locality, increasing patronage of local shops, and lifting the value of property in the vicinity.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

The plan reduces legal, resourcing, and strategic risk by providing a framework for cohesive improvement across different areas addressing multiple level 2 strategies and identifying issues needing further investigation and resolution.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

Communications plan is to complement the scheduled consultation and engagement activities and is outlined in the consultation and engagement plan.

Critical Dates

Phase 2 consultation and engagement activities are scheduled to commence after Council endorsement to publicly exhibit the draft from 25 July 2025.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Attachments

1. Lauries Field Master Plan Draft [5.5.1 - 40 pages]



Lauries Field

DRAFT MASTER PLAN REPORT

A photograph showing a person's hand holding a bundle of green grass and leaves over a fire. The fire is burning in a metal container, and smoke is rising from it. The background is blurred, showing other people's legs and feet. The text "Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners" is overlaid on the image.

Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

We recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

1.2 Doreen statistics

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2.0 Council strategies and plans

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3.1 Site conditions

3.2 Site analysis

4.0 Consultation summary

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5.0 Master plan

5.1 Vision and objectives

5.2 Recommendations

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| Version | Date | Issue |
|---------|------------|---|
| V1 | 14/05/2025 | Draft master plan report for elt briefing |
| V2 | 10/06/2025 | Draft master plan report for council briefing |
| V3 | xx/xx/xxxx | Final master plan report for council meeting |

Introduction.

Lauries Field is a municipal reserve in Doreen, a relatively new suburb developed from farm and grazing land. It was developed in the 2000s and is an informal and passive recreation park, located on the south west corner of Lake land Drive and Brookwood Avenue in Doreen. It has an extensive connected path system, open grassed areas, conservation areas, wetland and play facilities occupying an area of 5.4 hectares.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Lauries Field Park is situated in Doreen which extends from Plenty River in the west to Yan Yean Road in the east (within the City of Whittlesea). Doreen borders Mernda to the west and South Morang and Yan Yean to the south and north respectively. Yan Yean Road and Bridge Inn Road, present barriers to safe walking access to open space within the suburb.

The forecast residential population change in Doreen is a 3 percent increase of approximately 860 people by 2041 (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics census data (ABS) 2021).

Doreen is a fast-growing suburb in Melbourne's northern growth corridor, with a predominantly young, family-oriented population. The area has a higher proportion of children and fewer older adults compared to Greater Melbourne, suggesting a strong demand for family-friendly open space and recreational facilities. Most households are couples with children, while a smaller proportion are older couples without children. Doreen is also culturally diverse, with many residents speaking a language other than English at home and a significant number born overseas, including recent arrivals. These demographic characteristics highlight the need for inclusive, accessible, and multi-functional open spaces that meet the needs of a diverse and growing community.

1.2 Doreen statistics



POPULATION

28,604 residents in 2023

1,979 population density persons per square km

11.6 % of population are 60+ years of age

38.7% of population are less than 25 years of age

(The Australian Bureau of Statistics census data (ABS))



CULTURAL DIVERSITY

20% were born overseas

18.7 % speak a language other than English at home

(The Australian Bureau of Statistics census data (ABS))



URBAN HEAT

10-15°C hotter above the non-urban baseline

(Cooling and greening Melbourne, Urban Heat Data 2018)



FAMILIES

48% of households are couples with children

20.4% of households are couples without children

13.5% are one parent family

(The Australian Bureau of Statistics census data (ABS))



OPEN SPACE AND TREES

43 square meters provision of usable (unencumbered) open space per resident

Recommended minimum open space provision is 20-25 sqm per resident

12.8 % canopy cover

| | |
|--|---|
| <div><h3>LAURIES FIELD</h3><p>Lauries Field Park is a 5.4ha informal municipal park in Doreen. Developed in the 2000s and located on the south west corner of Lakeland Drive and Brookwood Avenue in Doreen. The park has an extensive connected path system, open grass areas, wetland conservation area and play facilities.</p><p>As a newly developed suburb Lauries Field was not included in the Open Space Strategy 2016. The Open Space Framework is used to plan new open space, identifying Lauries Field as a municipal level park providing the community with open space facilities within 800m walking distance.</p><p>The results of the 2013 City of Whittlesea Household Survey identified that Mernda and Doreen have the highest levels of visitation to local open space and sports grounds.</p><h3>HISTORY OF LAURIES FIELD</h3><p>Lauries Field was developed in the 2000s as part of efforts to enhance local green spaces and provide areas for outdoor recreation in response to urban growth.</p><p>The waterbody in Lauries Filed is “a heritage waterbody which was converted from an old piggery farm dam to a semi-functional waterbody in the mid-2000’s. The park was inherited by council through the development of the Laurimar estate. The lake currently experiences seasonally recurring azolla blooms and also had a major fish death event in 2021” (Lauries Field Sediment Surveys Summary Report, 2024).</p></div> | <div><h3>1.3 Purpose of master plan</h3><p>According to the Open Space Strategy, master plans are recommended to be prepared when major works are required for state, regional and neighbourhood open spaces which have a broader catchment of users and frequently a range of community stakeholder groups such as community organisations and sporting clubs.</p><p>The purpose of this Landscape master plan is to guide the future development and management of Lauries Field and to deliver upon the vision of Lauries Field being "a nature integrated park, that champions accessibility, environmental care, and community well-being". This vision will see a rejuvenated community park featuring a redesigned healthy wetland that is a key ecological feature of the park.</p><p>The master plan endeavours to:</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Create a safe and inclusive, highly accessible reserve that supports and encourages use by people of all ages and abilities;▶ Promote environmental sustainability through ecological conservation and improvement, increased tree canopy cover, water body enhancement, and water-sensitive urban design;▶ Enhance community safety by designing a functional and thoughtful layout, applying Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, and considering gender-sensitive approaches.▶ Inform future capital works, as stand-alone projects, or staged with a logically cumulative sequencing;▶ Recommend necessary improvements to the site to achieve a high-quality landscape setting while protecting and enhancing its existing character.</div> |
|--|---|

The Australian Urban Observatory (AUO), 2021 provided information on the liveability criteria as follows:



LIVEABILITY 96

The liveability index is a composite indicator that was calculated based on 13 domains: community centres, culture and leisure, early years, education, health and social services, sport and recreation, food, convenience, walkability, public transport, public open space, housing affordability, and local employment.

(100 is average)



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY STRESS 39.3

The liveability index is a composite indicator was calculated percentage of households in the bottom 40% of incomes spending more than 30% of income on housing costs.

(%)



REGULAR PUBLIC ACCESS 40.6

Percentage of dwellings within 400m of public transport with regular 30 minute weekday service (7am-7pm).

(%)



SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE 4

Social infrastructure refers to community and individual support services and resources such as health, education, early childhood, community support, community development, culture, sport and recreation, parks and emergency services.

(/15)



LARGE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE WITHIN 400M 41.1

Percentage of dwellings within 400m of public open space larger than 1.5 hectares.

(%)



WALKABILITY -1

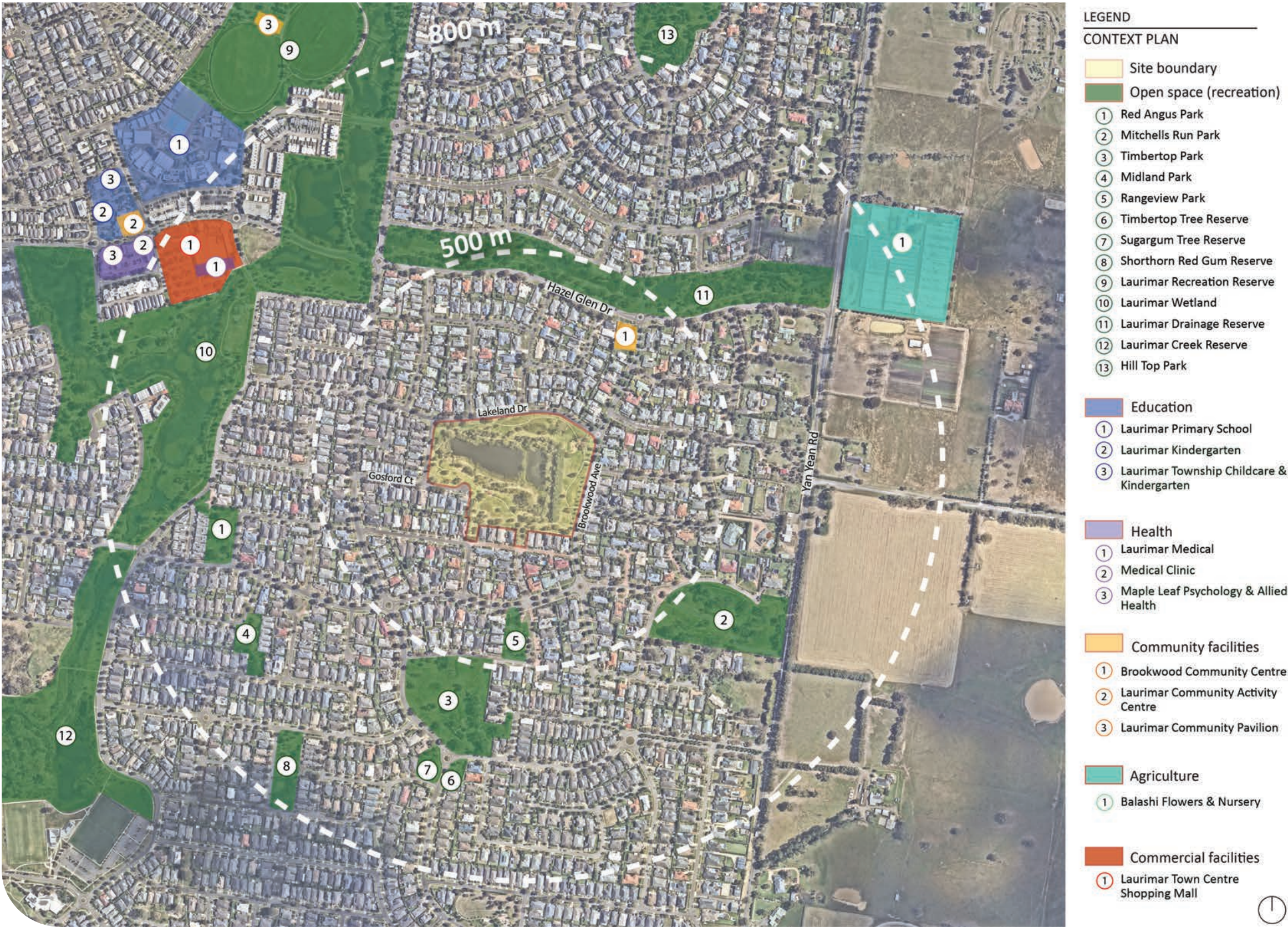
Walkability for transport is calculated based on three factors: land use mix and services of daily living (something to walk to); street connectivity (a way to get there); and dwelling density (higher population densities are associated with increased populations needed to supply services and different land uses).

(0 is average)



Source: The Australian Urban observatory (AUO), 2021

01. Site location



02. Context plan



03. Open space hierarchy



1.4 Project method

The development of the master plan has involved a comprehensive review of background documents as well as extensive engagement with the community and consultation with external and internal stakeholders. Informed by consultation and site understanding, recommendations were developed for the overall site.

In preparing this report, our team initially conducted background research and reviews of existing documents, as summarised below, as well as analysis of the study area, to build our understanding of the context. Our analysis focused on the study area’s existing conditions, current issues and challenges and opportunities to improve the site.

Our background analysis and site understanding were expanded by a visit to the study area. The project process then focused on the stakeholder/community engagement process, which sought inputs from nearby residents, general users of the site and internal stakeholders.

The purpose of these engagement activities was to gain greater knowledge about the issues, opportunities and priorities for Lauries Field. To form a more detailed project brief for the planning work and to develop the Vision for Lauries Field. The Stakeholder Engagement Findings Report can be found in Appendix 2.

In the next stage, the project process focuses on the development of the concept plan for the park which is followed by a second phase of community engagement on the draft master plan.



1.5 Planning controls

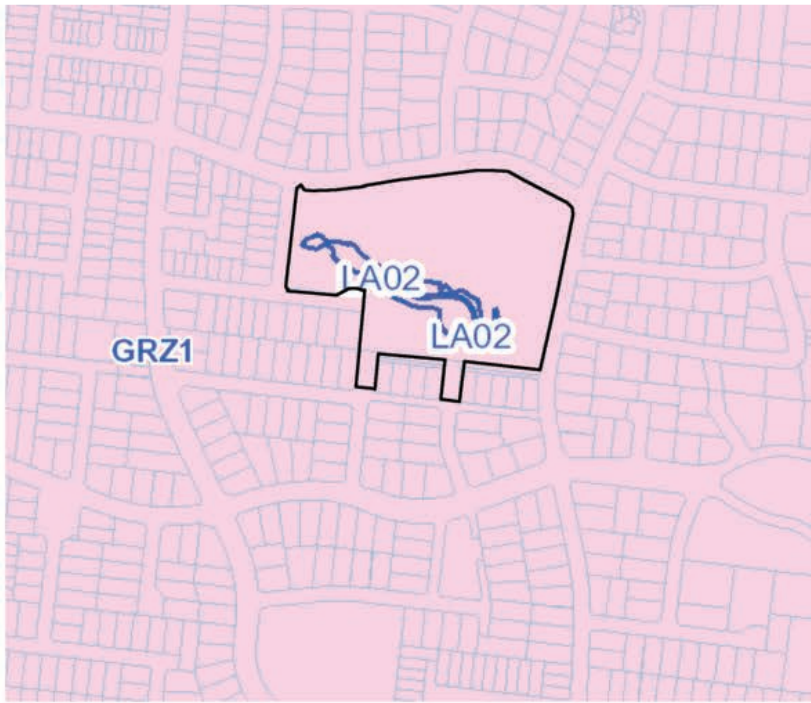
Lauries Field consists of four parcels Figure 04, and the master plan explores combining these parcels to establish a unified allotment. The parcels are as follows:

| Property address | Property type | Planning zone | Propoerty owner |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 1W Gosford Ct Doreen | WRS Reserve | GRZ1 | Whittlesea City Council |
| 14W Aquitane Walk Doreen | WRS Reserve | GRZ1 | Whittlesea City Council |
| 7W Lake Front Mews Doreen | WPK Car Park | GRZ1 | Whittlesea City Council |
| 7W Brookwood Avenue Doreen | WRS Reserve | GRZ1 | Whittlesea City Council |



04. Property address details

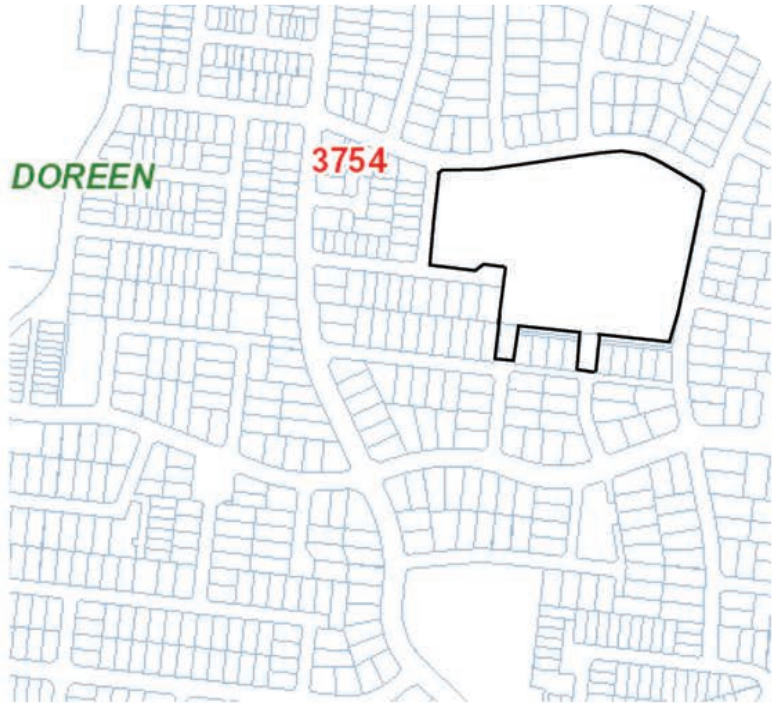
Lauries Field is located within the General Residential Zone Schedule 1 (GRZ1), Figure 05. The site includes a conservation offset area featuring river red gums (shown in blue). Refer to Offset Plan Laurimar Park and The Maples, Doreen, 2008 in Appendix 1 for further detail. According to the flood modelling, this area is not within a floodplain zone, Figure 06. As indicated in Figure 07, an easement passes through 1W Cosford Ct, Doreen, from the north, east, and west sides. Additionally, the drainage passes through 7W Lake Front Mews, Doreen, dividing the parcel into two sections. Council-owned lands are illustrated in Figure 08. Regarding the planning overlay, the site includes the vegetation protection overlay (VPO).



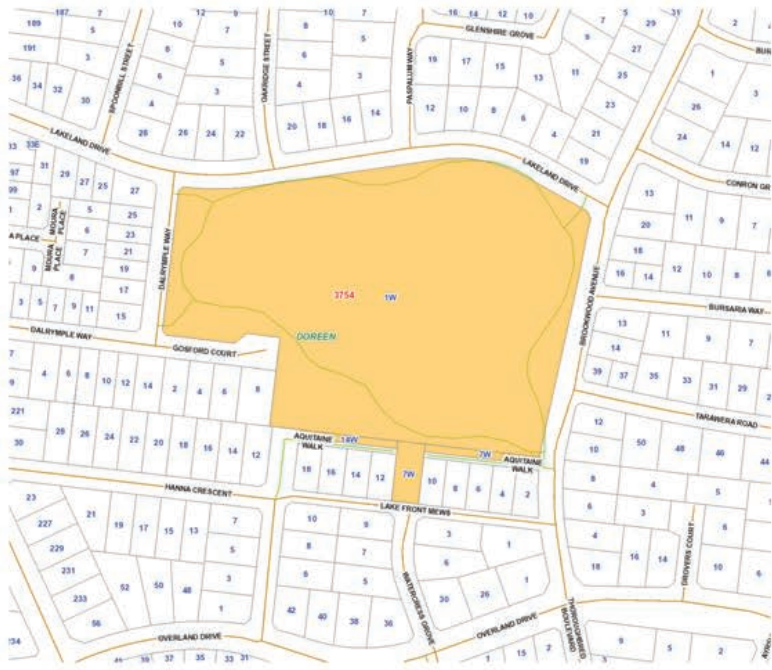
05. Planning zone



07. Drainage and easement



06. Flood modelling



08. Landownership

Background.

Whittlesea 2040 - A Place For All

To be ready for the challenges and opportunities that the future will bring, ensuring that the City of Whittlesea is a great place to live now and in the future.

Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy

More than ever, our public spaces and infrastructure need to perform even more roles to meet the needs of all of our community. For example, our local parks need to cater to all ages and abilities.

Connected Community Strategy

Improve safety and perceptions of safety for our community through activating public spaces and places, supporting community vibrancy, and helping people to feel safe and supported.

2.0 Council strategies and plans

Existing strategic planning documents, policies and strategies have influenced the Lauries Field Master Plan. A review and summary of each including directions relevant to the study site is included in Appendix 1 for further information.

The documents reviewed are as follows:

- ▶ Whittlesea 2040 – A place for all
- ▶ Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy 2023-2033
- ▶ Connected Community Strategy 2023-2033
- ▶ Whittlesea Open Space Strategy 2016
- ▶ Integrated Transport Plan 2024-2034
- ▶ Doreen Place Snapshot
- ▶ Place and Movement Plan for Whittlesea 2023
- ▶ Laurimar Master plan 2007
- ▶ Offset Plan Laurimar Park and The Maples, 2008
- ▶ Lauries Field Sediment Surveys Summary Report, 2024
- ▶ Dog Off-Leash Area Policy and Management Plan 2016–2026
- ▶ Walking and Cycling Plan 2022-2027
- ▶ Active Whittlesea Strategy 2019-2028
- ▶ Community Plan 2021-2025
- ▶ Sport and Leisure Infrastructure Plan 2021-2041 (Draft)
- ▶ Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan
- ▶ Multiple Sports Strategy 2017-2026
- ▶ Play Space Planning Framework and Policy 2013-16
- ▶ Thriving Children, Young People and Families Strategy
- ▶ Spaces 8 to 12+: Creating Engaging Places for Young People 2013-2018
- ▶ Greening Whittlesea
- ▶ Equal and Safe Strategy 2019
- ▶ Your Ground Project 2021
- ▶ Signage Management Plan
- ▶ Disability Action Plan 2017-2021
- ▶ Natural and Built Shade Policy 2016
- ▶ Park Lighting Strategy 2006
- ▶ Lighting for Shared User paths (SUPs) Guiding Principles, City of Whittlesea - Arup 2022



Site Analysis.

3.0 Site existing conditions and analysis

3.1 Site conditions

This section of the plan provides a summarised of existing conditions categorised into the following themes:

- Movement and access
- Recreation and park infrastructure
- Environment and landscape

Lauries Field according to its size, is a municipal reserve with a 800m walking catchment in Doreen, however, this catchment is limited by Hazel Glen Drive and Overland Drive as collector streets on the north and south side of the site. Refer to Figure 09.

The site has an area of approx. 5.37 hectares which is generally characterised by an open grassed area and a water body surrounded by garden beds and mature trees offset from the site boundaries.

The site exhibits varied topography, particularly noticeable on the eastern and northern sides, with an approximate elevation difference of 1.75-2 meters between the existing circuit footpath and the path on the north side of the water body.



LEGEND

Walking Catchment

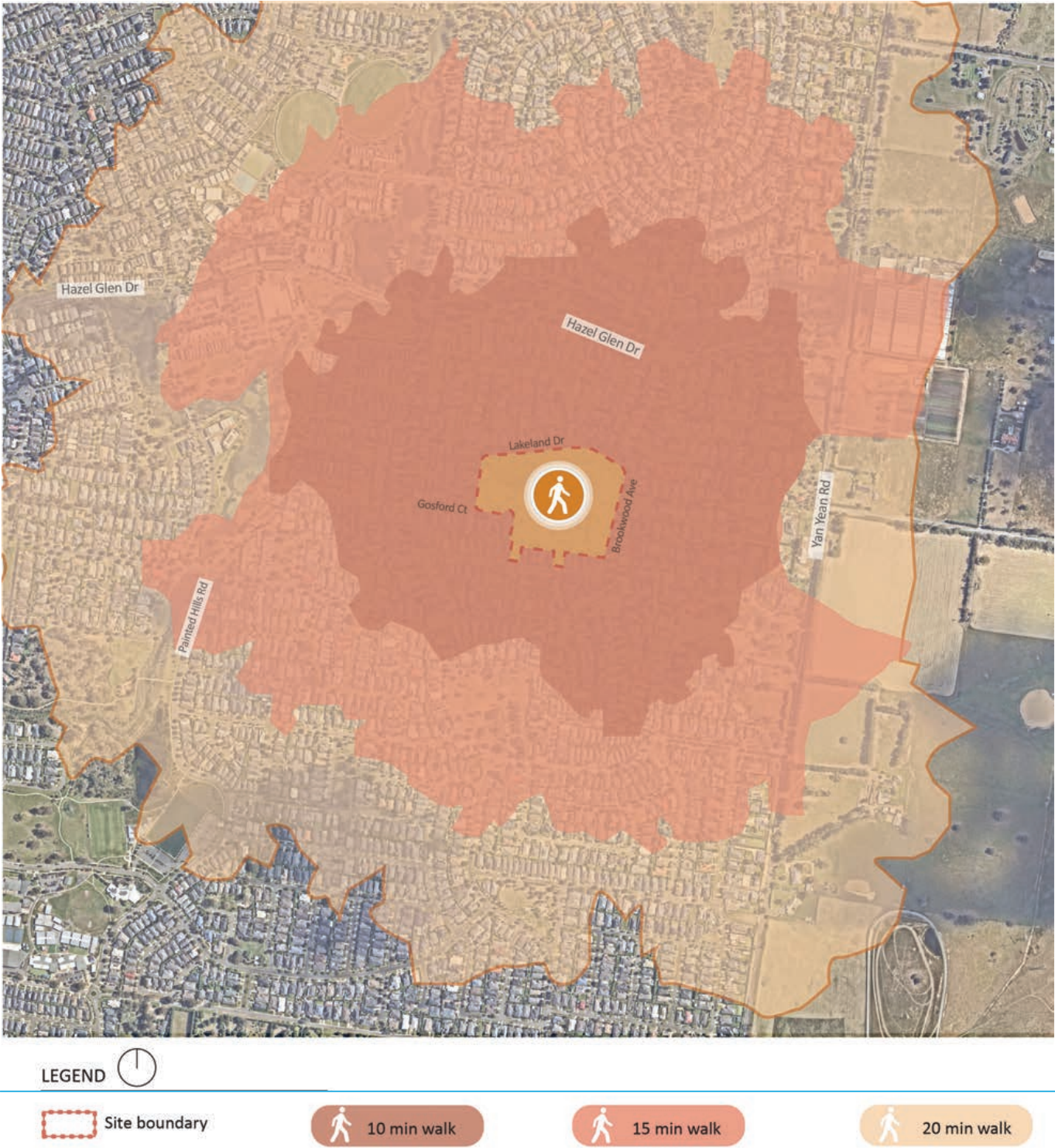
Project Boundary

Walking Catchment

381 Bus Route and Bus Stops

388 Bus Route and Bus Stops

09. Walking catchment



10. Ease of access and walkability

3.1.1 Movement and access

The study site is easily accessible, offering the community a variety of convenient transport options. Public transport plays a key role, with two bus stops located on Brookwood Avenue providing regular and well-connected services. Mernda Train Station, which runs along the Mernda rail line, is approximately a 20-minute bike ride from the reserve, supporting both public and active travel options.

For those walking or cycling, there are shared paths along Painted Hills Road and Hazel Glen Drive. These connect to the reserve via footpaths on Lakeland Drive, Brookwood Avenue, and Dalrymple Way, making it easier for the community to access the site without using a car. Vehicle access to the car park is available from Lake Front Mews. There are 13 properties facing Lake Front Mews, each with direct garage access from the street.

PATH NETWORK

The study area offers generally good walking conditions, with footpaths along the surrounding streets. Within the reserve, there is a mix of formal and informal footpaths that together provide a mostly continuous walking loop around the waterbody. However, several gaps in pedestrian connectivity have been identified. In particular, there are no clear or safe footpath links between the entrance and the nearby bus stop on Brookwood Avenue, or between the existing playspace and the loop path around the waterbody. These missing connections reflect common pedestrian desire lines and highlight opportunities to improve

walkability across the site.

BIKE LANES

There are shared paths on Painted Hills Road and Hazel Glen Drive. A bike lane is also proposed on Yan Yean Road, according to the Walking and Cycling Plan 2022–2027.

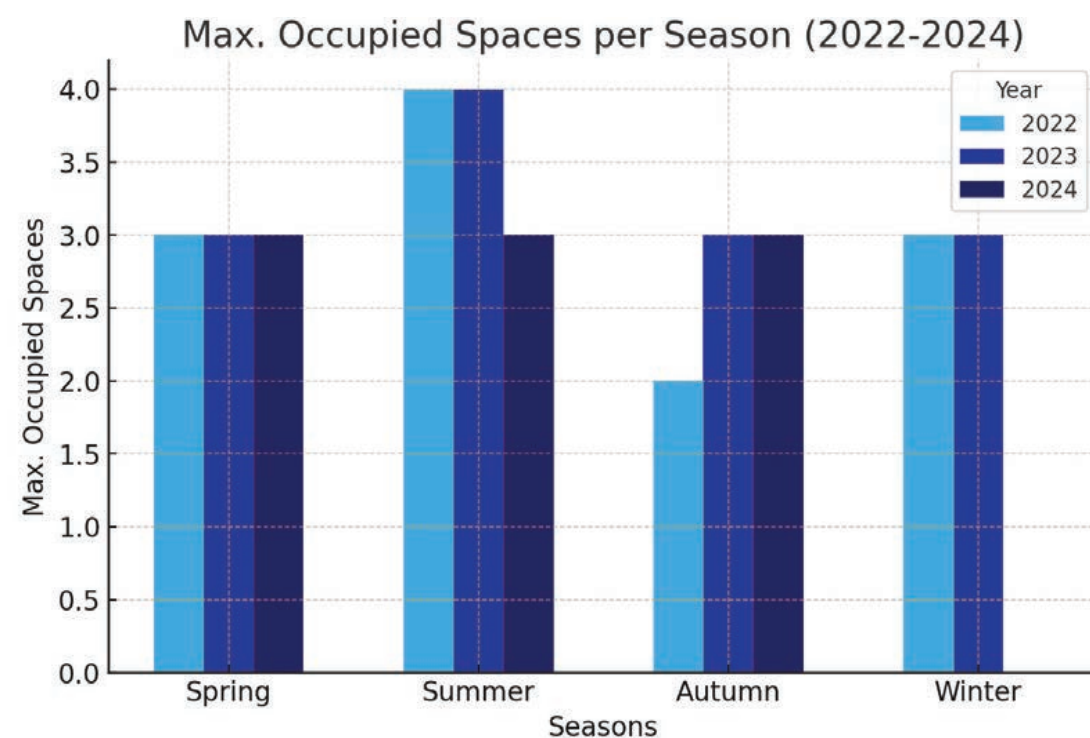
CAR PARKING

There is no dedicated off-street car parking for Lauries Field. Car parking is permitted on all the streets surround the site, and in the surrounding streets. In addition, twelve indented and unrestricted parking bays are provided along the north side of Lakeland Drive, and there are no parking restrictions on the south side of Lakeland Drive, along Brookwood Avenue, Dalrymple Way, and Gosford Crescent.

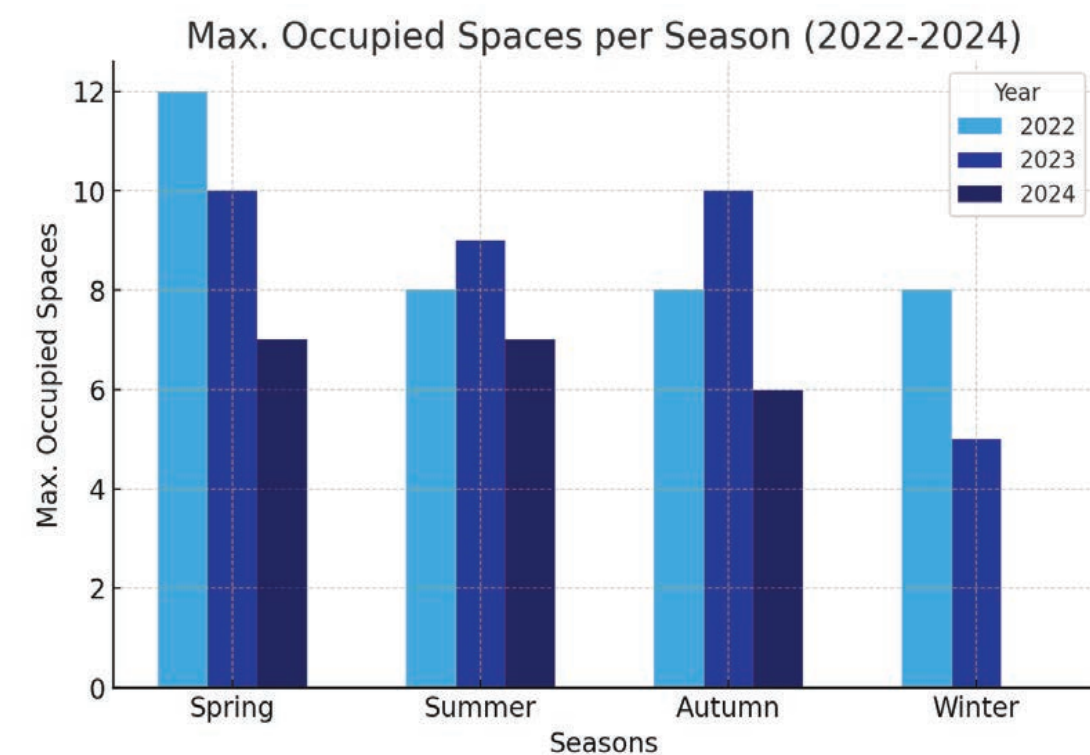
There is an off-street car park located south of Lauries Field at 7W Lake Front Mews. It was originally intended to serve medium-density townhouses that were never built. The car park has 18 bays, but since 2016, only 6 have been available due to Council installed bollards blocking access to the remaining 12.



11. Car parking



12. Off-street car park - 7w lake front mews doreen



13. On-street car park – lakeland drive

Nearmap aerial images captured between 2022 and 2024. The same vehicles were observed using the parking bays over the two-year period, sampled across 20 different days: a boat for 20 days, a trailer for 15 days, and a small tipper truck for 9 days.

Based on the investigations the maximum car park occupancy in Lake Front Mews off-street parking is 4 (66% occupied) and it is mainly occupied by caravans and boats of adjacent residents.

Based on the above-mentioned analysis, two options for the off-street car park were investigated through the master plan and in consultation with the urban design, traffic and transport, and strategic planning teams:

► **Option one:**

Retain the six car park bays and convert the remaining area into open space, complemented by a new footpath passing through the car park. This will enhance connectivity between Lake Front Mews and Lauries Field.

► **Option two:**

Provide a footpath and allocate the rest of the parcel for a residential lot (330 m² (approx. 9.7m wide), with the opportunity to sell the parcel and use the proceeds for park improvements. The lot includes Aquitaine Walk, (a paper walk, noting on planning overlays only) which would require subdivision to avoid bisecting it

Option 2 was found not to be in accordance with the Development Plan for the area, making the subdivision of the lot unfeasible.

LIGHTING

There is currently no formal lighting within the park. Existing lighting is predominately provided through spillover lighting from surrounding streets.

Additional lighting is required throughout the park, particularly along primary access and thoroughfare paths, to improve safety and useability.

PARK ENTRANCES

The site has six interfaces due to its shape. Three sides are bordered by streets, one side adjoins residential properties with side fences facing the reserve, and another side borders a paper road. There are ten pedestrian entrances, including five entrances from the streets surrounding the site and two minor entrances from the car park and the council-owned land from the south side of the site.



3.1.2 Informal recreation and park infrastructure

The site currently contains the following facilities:

- ▶ Playground
- ▶ Picnic facilities with two BBQ sets
- ▶ Two shelters
- ▶ Master plan including a sediment pond, wetland and irrigation dam
- ▶ Walking tracks
- ▶ Two boardwalk platforms

Lauries Field currently includes a range of community infrastructure and social amenities that are generally well used. However, these facilities would benefit from rationalisation and upgrades where appropriate. In terms of park furniture, there is a need for additional social seating and drinking fountains with dog bowls.

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The park is the main open space serving the neighbourhood. Designated for conservation and informal recreation use, it includes a waterbody and two boardwalk platforms, with seating provided on the western platform. The playspace includes a slide, climbing ropes, a swing, and spring riders. The playground equipment was upgraded in 2010 and is currently scheduled for another upgrade in the 2030/31 financial year.

PUBLIC TOILET

There is no public toilet within the study with the closest public toilet at Brookwood Community Centre, approximately a 235m walk from the playground. Additional public toilets are available at Laurimar Town Centre and Hill Top Park.

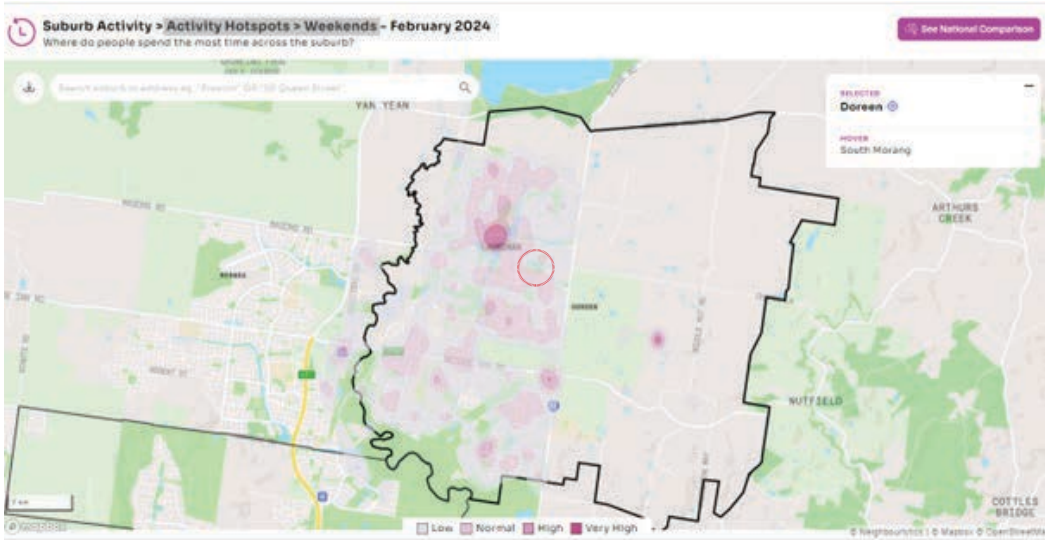
3.1.3 Environment and landscape

The park is generally characterised by a waterbody, conservation and open grass areas surrounded by garden beds and mature trees.

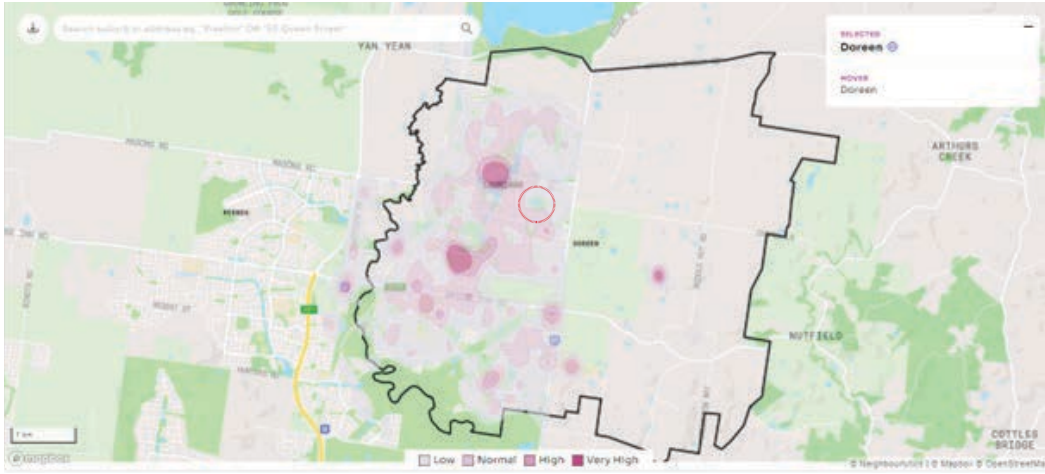
Lauries Field falls under Vegetation Protection Overlay – Schedule 1 (VPO1). The subject site is greater than 4,000 m², therefore vegetation removal is subject to assessment against Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation (Preliminary Tree Assessment Report, 2024). There are over 337 individual trees within Lauries Field and two remnant patches of uniform Eucalyptus camaldulensis (River Red Gums) located in the conservation area on the southern side of the site.

The tree composition includes 1 planted Australian tree, 172 Victorian, 117 indigenous and 47 exotic trees. Among these, seventy (70) River Red Gums and seven (7) trees at the end of their useful life expectancy were observed (Preliminary Tree Assessment Report, 2024).

The canopy cover of trees with more than 3m height at Lauries Field is 15,754 sqm which is approx 28% canopy cover of the study area .



14. Activity hotspots > weekends
(source: neighbourlytics, 2024)



15. Activity hotspots > weekdays
(source: neighbourlytics, 2024)



LEGEND

Canopy cover

- Site Boundary
- Canopy cover (>3m height)

16. Canopy cover



17. Laurimar park offset plan, recruitment offsets



18. Conservation area

CONSERVATION AREA

The Laurimar Park and The Maples, Doreen, Offset Plan 2008 identifies offset associated with the removal of trees for the development of the Laurimar Park residential.

It is proposed that the offset for natural regeneration take the form of understory plantings beneath and around the retained and regenerated River Red Gums, in a designated offset zone adjacent to the wetland. This is intended to replace the indigenous understory vegetation that was removed due to past grazing on the site.

At least 402 shrubs and understorey plants characteristic of Plain Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) to be planted in the Lauries Field site to assist the natural recruitment of River Red Gums from seed at this location, brought about by the lowering of the pre-existing water levels associated with a constructed dam.

The plan also outlines the ongoing protection of these plantings, and natural regeneration will be encouraged by managing pedestrian access through low, unobtrusive fencing and 'barrier' planting. The area of Plains Grassy Woodland revegetation and natural regeneration will be demarcated with low, unobtrusive log fencing and signed appropriately to emphasise that the area is designated for conservation, not recreational purposes.

The subject site features one of the largest hollow-bearing River Red Gums in the municipality, providing significant habitat for local fauna. Council proposes to incorporate protection measures and education around the environmental values through the site including exclusion fencing and interpretive signage.

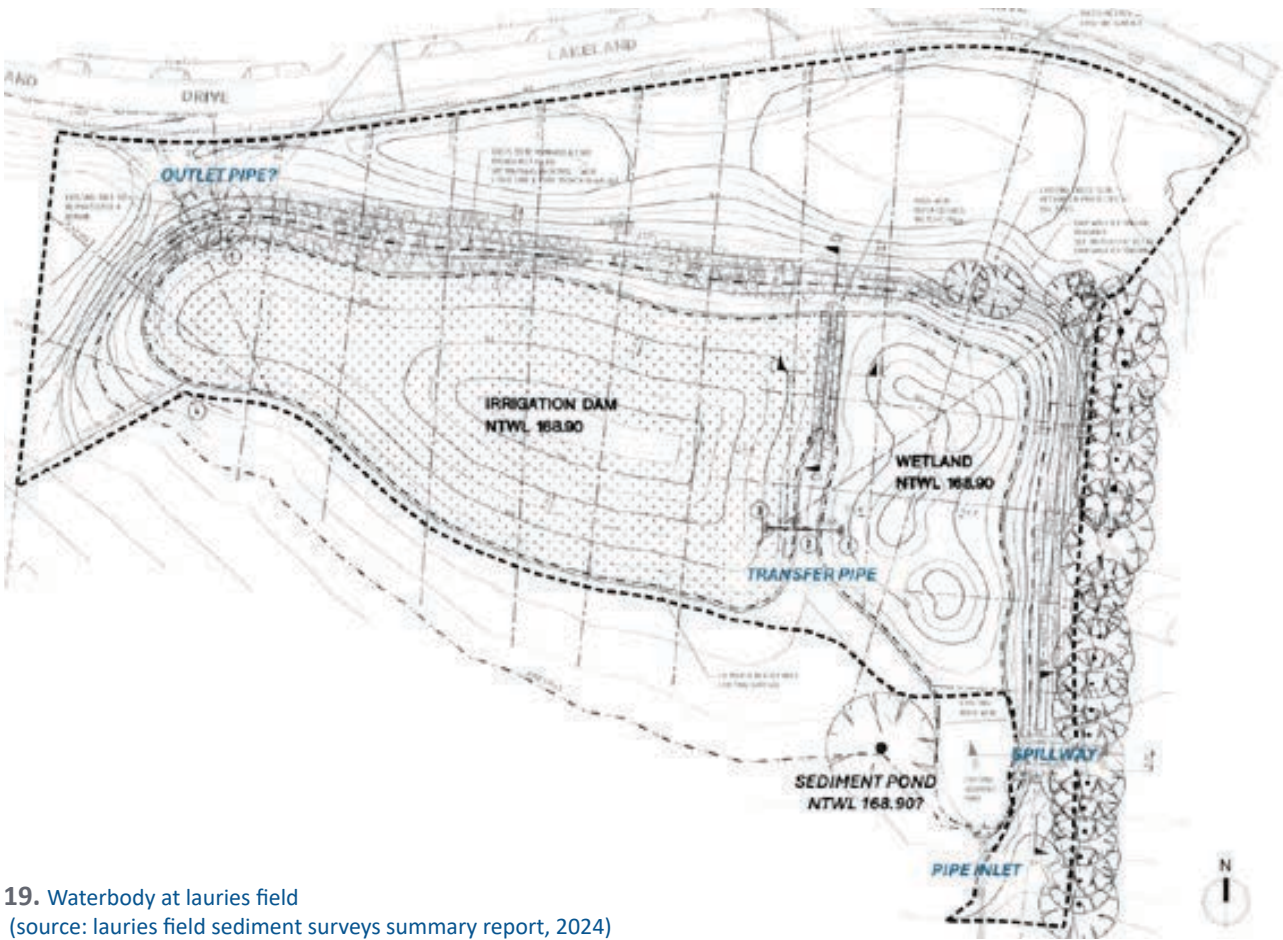
WATERBODY

The waterbody at Lauries Field, comprises (Lauries Field Sediment Surveys Summary Report, 2024):

- ▶ A small sediment pond in the southeast corner of the site, which flows into
- ▶ A constructed wetland, which ultimately discharging into
- ▶ A storage dam

Sediment Recent sediment clean-out works have been carried out in the small sediment pond located in the southeast corner of the site. According to the Lauries Field Sediment Survey Report (2024), sediment levels in the main waterbody are low. This suggests that recent Azolla blooms are unlikely to be caused by nutrient-leaching sediments and are more likely linked to the quality of incoming stormwater. There is an opportunity to improve the performance of the wetland cell by increasing vegetation cover to help absorb excess nutrients. As highlighted in the recent audit, significant weed removal is also recommended.

Lauries Field has experienced recent fish deaths due to low oxygen levels in the water. These events are linked to high nutrient levels in stormwater, which promote the rapid growth of Azolla. When the Azolla dies and decays, it consumes oxygen from the water, leading to poor aquatic conditions. Through the development of the Lauries Field Master Plan, the Open Space Planning Team has worked in close collaboration with Council’s Stormwater Management Specialists to explore options for improving wetland health. The master plan includes specific recommendations to support this goal.



19. Waterbody at lauries field
(source: lauries field sediment surveys summary report, 2024)



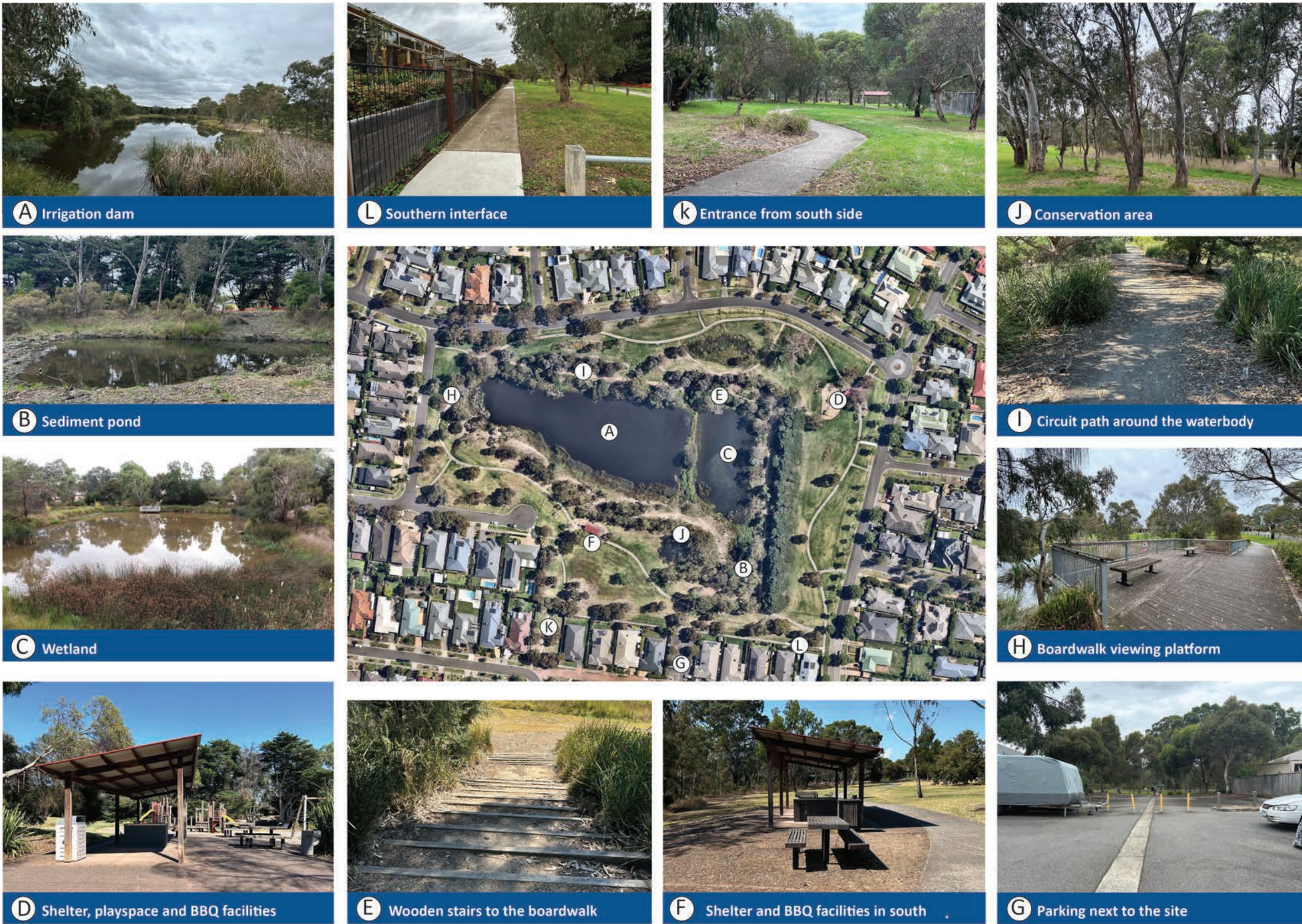
20. Constructed wetland



21. Storage dam



22. Site feature



23. Existing facilities

3.2 Site analysis

This section of the plan provides a summarised analysis of existing conditions. The purpose of the analysis is to provide commentary on issues and deficiencies identified by the project team ensuring recommendations to mitigate the issues can be constructed logically.

The analysis covers findings categorised into the following themes:

- Movement and access
- Recreation and park infrastructure
- Environment and landscape

3.2.1 Movement and access

ISSUES

PATH

- Poor circuit path with varying widths around the water body. These informal footpaths meet minimum Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements, however, can be increasingly expensive to maintain and do not meet the needs of people with limited mobility
- No DDA access path to the wetland from the play space and picnic area on the north side of the waterbody
- Lack of suitable connection between the concrete path and the gravel path around the waterbody
- The existing timber and gravel stairs accessing the viewing platform do not have handrails and require regular refurbishment.

CAR PARKING

- No designated parking is available near the playground, on-street parking is available on the streets surrounding the site and off-street parking is accessible from Lake Front Mews
- No DDA compliant car parking for park users

ENTRANCE

- Poor pedestrian entry and access from Lake Front Mews and the off-street car park to the site
- Poor entrance from Hanna Cres to the site from the council-owned parcel
- Lack of wayfinding and entrance signage at site entrances
- Lack of pedestrian safe crossing facilities from streets surrounding Lauries Field creates safety concerns for pedestrians and residents

OPPORTUNITIES

- Investigate realigning and upgrading the existing circuit path while maintaining its natural character, to provide inclusive access and minimise maintenance costs
- Investigate providing a DDA-compliant path to ensure accessible access to the wetland area for people with disabilities
- Investigate establishing a footpath connecting the playspace and main entrance on Lakeland Drive to the waterbody, to enhance connectivity and accessibility across the site

- Investigate improving connections between the outer circuit path and the path around the waterbody
- Upgrade the stairs accessing the boardwalk and repair or replace the boardwalk itself to ensure safety and usability.
- Investigate alternative path connecting the premier path to the waterbody
- Investigate traffic calming initiatives at surrounding intersections, particularly those closest to the playground and picnic area
- Investigate options for disused off-street car parking at 7W Lake Front Mews, Doreen, including:
 - Reconfiguring the car park to incorporate a footpath connecting Lake Front Mews to the site, with the remaining area converted back to open space
 - Exploring the alternative use of land parcel
- Investigate providing a more welcoming entrances
- Investigate DDA compliant car park on street or in 7w Lake Front Mews
- Investigate amalgamation of lots to create one address; 4 parcels as follows:
 - 1W Gosford Ct Doreen
 - 14W Aquitaine Walk Doreen
 - 7W Lake Front Mews Doreen
 - 7W Brookwood Ave Doreen
- Establish wayfinding signage to support pedestrian navigation across the site

ISSUES



LEGEND

- No DDA compliant & high maintenance gravel path
- Poor entrances
- No DDA compliant and poor access to the wetland
- Lack of way finding signage
- Lack of footpath
- 381 bus route and bus stops
- Narrow circuit path with a few connection to the premier path
- Lack of pedestrian crossing facilities

24. Issues – movement and access



A Poor circuit path with varying widths around the waterbody



B Poor pedestrian entry and access from Lake Front Mews and the off-street car park to the site



C The stairs and viewing platform are in poor condition and need improvement



D Lack of pedestrian crossing facilities



E Unauthorised activities such as mountain bike jumps in the conservation area



3.2.2 Informal recreation and park infrastructure

ISSUES

PLAYSPACE

- ▶ Lack of play facilities for older kids and teenagers
- ▶ Lack of nature play area
- ▶ Aged playspace
- ▶ Lack of shade along pathways and within the play space, limiting longer stays during sunny days

INFORMAL RECREATION FACILITIES

- ▶ There is no public toilets within the site; however, facilities are available at Brookwood Community Centre, located within 250m from Lauries Field
- ▶ No designated/flexible spaces for events such as regular markets, multicultural events and structured events during school holidays
- ▶ No dog off-lead area within Lauries Field, however, two off-lead parks are available nearby in Doreen — Katandra Rise Dog Park on Downey Drive (4-minute drive) and Fitzwilliam Drive Dog Park on Fitzwilliam Drive (5-minute drive) from Lauries Field. Additionally, a new dog off-lead area is proposed at Blackwood Park on Flaxen Hills Drive, approximately a 20-minute walk from Lauries Field (Council Dog Off-Lead Area Policy and Management Plan, 2016).
- ▶ Lack of informal sport and exercise equipment

PARK SUPPORT FACILITIES

- ▶ Lack of suitable seating with back and arm rests to assist those requiring more support including, those who have a disability, are aging and pregnant or nursing mothers.
- ▶ Drinking fountains lack dog bowls
- ▶ Lack of grouped seating arrangements which foster face to face interaction and gathering
- ▶ Inadequate seating available along the path around the waterbody
- ▶ Lack of educational signage regarding the waterbody and conservation area

OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Examine the accessibility of public toilets within walking distance of the site and evaluate the need for a public toilet facility on-site with the municipal wide public toilet and amenity plan
- ▶ Install signs next to the main facilities in the reserve to direct people to the toilet at Brookwood Community Centre
- ▶ Investigate development of flexible spaces for community events, workshops, and performances to encourage social interactions, foster a sense of belonging, and strengthen community ties
- ▶ Investigate providing an outdoor exercise equipment
- ▶ Investigate the potential for informal sports activities, such as a basketball/netball court, skate features, table tennis, bouldering wall and game tables to address lack of facilities for older kids and to activate this area
- ▶ Consider diversity in play comprising nature play elements and play equipment for different age groups
- ▶ Investigate providing additional playspace next to the second picnic area on the southwest of the site
- ▶ Renew the outdated playspace to meet current safety standards and better cater to the needs and preferences of children and families, as per Council playground renewal program
- ▶ Increase canopy cover around the play space and walking track where possible
- ▶ Install benches with backrests and armrests across the park
- ▶ Add dog bowls to drinking fountains for pet-friendly water access
- ▶ Provide outdoor gathering opportunities and install grouped seating arrangements
- ▶ Install educational signage around the waterbody

ISSUES



LEGEND

- No designated/flexible spaces for events
- Lack of shade within the playspace, along paths and benches
- Lack of grouped seating arrangements
- Lack of seating next to the path along the waterbody
- Drinking fountains lack dog bowls
- Lack of public toilet
- Lack of educational signage regarding the waterbody and conservation area
- Aged playspace
- Lack of informal sport and exercise equipment



A Lack of play facilities for older kids/teenagers



B Lack of shade along pathways and within the play space, limiting longer stays during sunny days



C Drinking fountains lack dog bowls



D No designated/flexible spaces for events such as regular markets and multicultural events



E Lack of educational signage regarding the waterbody and conservation area

25. Issues- informal recreation and park infrastructure



Environment and landscape

ISSUES

LANDSCAPE AND VEGETATION

- ▶ Seven trees at the end of their useful life expectancy (ULE)
- ▶ Bushy area near the boardwalk stairs needs maintenance
- ▶ Some sections of the site along Lakeland Drive and pathways lack any planting
- ▶ Poorly defined maintenance areas resulting in some areas of overgrown grass.

CONSERVATION AREA

- ▶ Unauthorised use of conservation areas for mountain bike etc. Threatening ecological integrity and biodiversity
- ▶ Intentional damage and vandalism to one of the large significant red gums

WATERBODY

- ▶ Poor functioning waterbody resulting in low oxygen levels and major fish deaths.
- ▶ Need for weed removal in wetland cell
- ▶ Presence of blackberry plants along the lake shore as an invasive plants

LOOK AND FEEL

- ▶ Hidden areas and visual barriers are formed around the waterbody
- ▶ No pathway lighting in the reserve, including along the paper road to the southern edge. Evening activity is reliant on streetlight spill.

OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Remove trees at the end of their useful life expectancy
- ▶ Clear fallen branches throughout the site to improve cleanliness and accessibility
- ▶ Potential additional planting along the existing paths and next to the play space
- ▶ Trim overgrown vegetation near the boardwalk stairs for a neater appearance and clear passage
- ▶ Engage with local biking and dirt jump bike community promote awareness of natural habitat preservation and encourage responsible riding practices
- ▶ Investigate the use of fencing and barrier planting to protect the conservation area, in accordance with the Laurimar Conservation Management Plan
- ▶ Conduct a thorough assessment of the waterbody to identify the causes of its poor health and determine best options to restore health.
- ▶ Investigate the best option for addressing the insufficient turnover rate of the lake by implementing water circulation systems, clarifier or adjusting the lake’s size
- ▶ Investigate the use of the lake’s water by pumping it from the ‘irrigation dam’ to the north to support stormwater harvesting at Laurimar Recreation Reserve
- ▶ Improve visibility to the waterbody by thinning out overgrown understory planting or replacing with more suitable vegetation
- ▶ Develop more defined areas and conduct regular maintenance to increase visibility along circuit path.
- ▶ Investigate additional lighting in the reserve along thoroughfare main access paths

ISSUES



LEGEND



- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Hidden areas and visual barriers | Insufficient lighting | Presence of blackberry plants along the waterbody |
| Lack of shade trees | Tree vandalism | Low retention tree |
| Ecological threat to conservation area due to mountain bike jumps | Unhealthy waterbody | Topography and steepness |



A Hidden areas and visual barriers are formed around the waterbody path by shrubs and bushes



B Unhealthy waterbody due to insufficient turnover rate of the lake



C Mountain bike jumps in the conservation area threatening ecological integrity and biodiversity



D Topography and steepness



E Lack of shade trees along the paths

Consultation Summary.



Quotes from our community



Playground needs a serious update; the playground and infrastructure need attention and renewal.



Improve the clean-up of the water coming into the lake off the street. Reinvigorate the irrigation



The path around the lake is not clean and safe to use

4.0 Consultation summary

This section provides a summary of consultation activities.

The purpose of the community consultation was to gain an understanding of how the community use the reserve and how they would like to use the reserve in the future. Two phases of consultation were undertaken with the results from both phases used to directly inform the key directions of the Master Plan.

METHODOLOGY

The community were consulted on the Lauries Field Master Plan in two phases:

Phase 1 Capturing challenges and opportunities of the site, June and July 2024

A range of methods and tools were used to engage with the community and stakeholders. These included the following:

- ▶ Meeting with council internal stakeholders
- ▶ Meeting with external stakeholders
- ▶ Onsite interviews with the community
- ▶ Direct mail-outs
- ▶ Surveys
- ▶ On-site pop-up sessions

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Several stakeholder meetings were held with council staff from a range of departments and with various subject matter expertise.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Meetings were held with representatives from various external stakeholders including the following:

- ▶ Visitors to Lauries Field
- ▶ Residents within 400meters of the reserve
- ▶ Doreen senior group
- ▶ Schools

4.1 Consultation phase 1

The purpose of this engagement was to assist council to identify issues, challenges and opportunities of the site and discover the ideas for the park improvement. Refer to Appendix 1 for the full report.

OUTCOME

Feedback was received from 144 participants including visitors to Lauries Field, Doreen senior group, and residents of the surrounding neighbourhoods. Overall, we heard that the top two reasons visitors use the site are to ‘walk and sit around the lake’ (59%) and exercise their dogs (46%). Others enjoy taking their young ones to the park, using it to walk/run or catching up with family and friends.

According to the total responses, the top five priorities for improvement are as follows:

- ▶ Playspace upgrade
- ▶ Public toilet provision
- ▶ Additional amenities
- ▶ Walking track/circuit path around the lake
- ▶ Lake upgrade

Our community engagement highlighted the main issues as follows:

- ▶ Lack of play equipment for older children and teenagers
- ▶ Deteriorating playground
- ▶ Safety concerns
- ▶ Unhealthy lake
- ▶ Lack of regular maintenance
- ▶ Lack of informal recreational facilities
- ▶ Lack of off lead dog area and dog bins

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the feedback received from the stakeholders and the community, the following recommendations are made for inclusion in the Draft Master Plan:

- ▶ Investigate options for off-street car parking at 7W Lake Front Mews, Doreen
- ▶ Establish way-finding signage to support pedestrian navigation across the reserve
- ▶ Investigate traffic calming initiatives at surrounding intersections, particularly those closest to the playground and picnic area

- ▶ Examine the accessibility of public toilets within walking distance of the site and evaluate the need for a public toilet facility on-site
- ▶ Investigate the development of flexible spaces for community events, workshops, and performances to encourage social interactions, foster a sense of belonging, and strengthen community ties
- ▶ Investigate providing a outdoor exercise equipment
- ▶ Investigate the potential for informal sports activities, such as a basketball/netball court, skate features, table tennis, bouldering wall and game tables
- ▶ Consider diversity in play comprising nature play elements and play equipment for different age groups
- ▶ Investigate providing additional lighting in the reserve along main access and thoroughfare paths
- ▶ Conduct a thorough assessment of the waterbody to identify the causes of its poor health
- ▶ Improve visibility to the waterbody by thinning out overgrown understory planting or replacing with more suitable greenery
- ▶ Conduct regular maintenance to clear hidden areas along the circuit path, ensuring safety and visibility for use

Master Plan.

5.0 Master plan

The site analysis and consultation work undertaken has resulted in a vision that will redesign and revitalise the park and wetland to create an ecologically healthy, accessible and inviting park for the community.

5.1 Vision and objectives

VISION

Lauries Field is a revitalised, nature-integrated park that champions accessibility, environmental care, and community well-being.

Featuring restored wetlands, protected vegetation, and inclusive facilities, it offers a safe and welcoming destination for people of all ages to connect, play, and relax in nature. With accessible pathways, a viewing platform, diverse play spaces, and areas for informal sport and exercise, Lauries Field invites both residents and visitors to enjoy the landscape and engage with the local environment.

OBJECTIVES:

- ▶ Improve accessibility and connectivity
- ▶ Upgrade recreational facilities
- ▶ Enhancement of play experience
- ▶ Enhance environmental stewardship:
 - Restore the health of the lake
 - Protect the conservation area

OBJECTIVES



Upgrade recreational facilities



Enhance environmental stewardship



Improve accessibility and connectivity



Enhancement of play experience



Restore the health of the lake



5.2 Recommendations

The Lauries Field master plan sets out recommendations which are articulated through the themes of movement and access, informal recreation and park infrastructure, and environment and landscape.

| | |
|--|--|
| MOVEMENT AND ACCESS | |
| PATH | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Expand the existing path wherever feasible, taking into account environmental considerations▶ Proposed 1.5-2m wide DDA-compliant path to the wetland▶ Realign the path and update the surface material to ensure DDA compliance▶ Proposed viewing area▶ Upgrade the stairs accessing the boardwalk, and expand and enhance the boardwalk itself to create a better viewing platform overlooking the open water | |
| CAR PARKING | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Reconfigure the car park with a 2-2.5m footpath connecting Lake Front Mews to the site, turning the rest into open space | |
| ENTRANCE | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Improve entry nodes with way finding signage and feature landscaping▶ Proposed raised crossings at Terrawera Road and Brookwood Avenue and pedestrian-safe crossings at the Lakeland Drive roundabout to enhance safety and accessibility | |
| INFORMAL RECREATION AND PARK INFRASTRUCTURE | |
| INFORMAL RECREATION FACILITIES | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Proposed wayfinding signage includes directions to the Brookwood Community Centre’s toilet block▶ Proposed fitness and exercise station with equipment arranged in groups to allow for socialising▶ Proposed sports court including a half basketball court, hopscotch, game tables, and a hit-up wall▶ Proposed hit-up walls featuring areas for throwing, a basketball hoop, and climbing activities | |
| PLAYSPACE | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Upgrade and expand the playspace including range of play experiences▶ Proposed nature play area▶ Proposed sand play | |

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Establish regulatory signage including ‘No Smoking’ and ‘No Dogs Allowed’ around the playground area as per Council’s Signage Management Plan▶ Proposed shelter with a drinking fountain and seats next to the expanded playspace and proposed sport court | |
| PARK SUPPORT FACILITIES | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Proposed additional park furniture including drinking fountains, bins and benches▶ Proposed social seating and gathering area adjacent to the sports court and bus stop, featuring picnic tables integrated with game tables▶ Upgrade the picnic area to include durable picnic tables and a drinking fountain equipped with a dog bowl | |
| ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE | |
| LANDSCAPE AND VEGETATION | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Plant additional trees along Lakeland Drive within the park, matching the species with those on the north side, such as Eucalyptus scoparia and Eucalyptus sideroxylon, to enhance visual impact.▶ Plant threatened species and indigenous wild-flowers in the fenced-off protected Conservation Area and the surrounding landscaped areas to support biodiversity.▶ Remove understory planting and overgrown vegetation to open sight-line | |
| LOOK AND FEEL | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Thin and selectively remove the existing thick vegetation to improve sight-lines and passive surveillance throughout the reserve▶ Replace the existing pine trees with more appropriate species in the long term to improve the ecosystem, enhance aesthetic value, and open pedestrian sight-lines▶ Proposed lighting along sections of the circuit path used as thoroughfares, as well as bollard lighting along Aquitaine Walk | |
| CONSERVATION AREA AND WATERBODY | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Enclose the conservation area with a 1.2m-high tree protection standard fence▶ Proposed a 2.5m wide granitic sand path and gate from Gosford Ct for maintenance vehicle access to facilities associated with the waterbody upgrade such as the clarifier | |

| | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Proposed maintenance vehicle access path to the sedimentation pond▶ Convert the large western portion of the lake to an ephemeral wetland, and retain the smaller eastern portion as a smaller lake. Reduce the size of newly converted ephemeral wetland to create more useable open space.▶ Upgrade the waterbody by installing an underground pipe and a clarifier to improve water circulation, transferring clean water to the wetland to enhance its function as a habitat▶ Specify appropriate plant species for revegetation around the waterbody as part of the lake upgrade plan▶ Investigate the feasibility and functionality of the existing irrigation system to use excess water from the waterbody for irrigating the conservation area and trees▶ Educational signage to provide information about the waterbody and conservation area, promoting awareness and engagement | |
|--|--|

5.3 Draft master plan

the Lauries Field draft master plan guides and provides direction for future upgrades and improvements to Lauries Field. The master plan responds to the need for improved connectivity and accessibility, community spaces, and recreational opportunities. It also addresses environmental concerns, including the health of the waterbody and the conservation of significant vegetation. Refer to Figure 27.

- 1

Expand the existing path wherever feasible, considering environmental considerations
- 2

Proposed DDA-compliant path to the wetland and viewing platform
- 3

Proposed viewing area
- 4

Upgrade the stairs accessing the boardwalk, expand and enhance the boardwalk itself to create a better viewing platform overlooking the open water
- 5

Improve water quality of lake and wetlands using innovative technologies.
- 6

Realign the path and update the surface material to improve all weather access.
- 7

Upgrade and expand the play space including range of play experiences
- 8

Proposed nature play area
- 9

Proposed sand play
- 10

Upgrade the picnic area
- 11

Proposed social seating and gathering area adjacent to the sports court and bus stop, featuring picnic tables integrated with game tables
- 12

Proposed wayfinding signage includes direction to the Brookwood Community Centre and Public Toilet
- 13

Proposed sports court including a half basketball court, hopscotch, game tables, and a hit-up wall
- 14

Proposed hit-up wall featuring areas for ball games, public art, and climbing or bouldering
- 15

Proposed shelter with a picnic setting
- 16

Improve park entrances with way finding signage and feature landscaping
- 17

Establish regulatory signage including 'No Smoking' and 'No Dogs Allowed' around the playground area as per council's Signage Management Plan
- 18

Increase shade through more canopy trees around the play space and paths where possible
- 19

Proposed raised pedestrian crossing
- 20

Remove understory planting and overgrown vegetation to open sightline
- 21

Proposed fitness and exercise station
- 22

Proposed maintenance vehicle access path and gate
- 23

Proposed clarifier for water quality improvement
- 24

Reconfigure the car park to a small quiet contemplation garden, retaining 6 parking bays for park visitors.
- 25

Proposed information and interpretation signage around the waterbody and conservation area
- 26

Enclose the conservation area with a 1.2m high tree protection standard fence
- 27

Specify appropriate plant species for re-vegetation around the waterbody as part of the lake water quality improvement
- 28

Proposed lighting around sections of the circuit path used as thoroughfares, as well as bollard lighting along Aquitaine Walk
- 29

Plant additional trees along Lakeland Drive within the park, matching the species with those on the north side
- 30

Support ongoing revegetation and conservation area improvements
- 31

Replace the existing pine trees with more appropriate species in the long term to improve the ecosystem, enhance aesthetic value, and open pedestrian sightlines
- 32

Proposed maintenance vehicle access path to the sedimentation pond
- 33

Drinking fountain with tap and dog bowl

LEGEND

Concrete path (1.5- 2m wide)

Granitic sand path

Proposed pavement (1.5m wide)

Proposed entrance and way finding signage

Proposed bin

Proposed drinking fountain

Proposed lighting

Proposed bollard lights

Existing trees/plants

Proposed trees

Proposed fence

Proposed maintenance gate

Site boundary

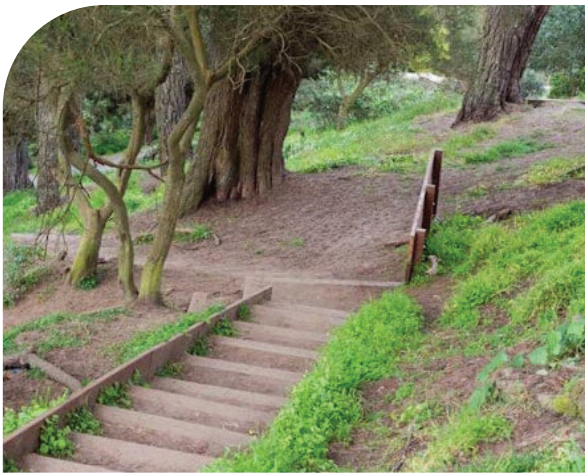
Proposed seating area

34 | LAURIES FIELD | CITY OF WHITTLESEA OPEN SPACE PLANNING

232 | 257



27. Master plan



ACCESS AND CIRCULATION



CONCRETE PATH



DDA COMPLIANT PATH



GRAVEL PATH



RAISED PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS



RECREATION



MULTI-AGE PLAY EQUIPMENT



PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT



NATURE PLAY



SAND PLAY



FACILITIES



SHELTER AND SEATING



SOLAR AND ELECTRIC PEDESTRIAN LIGHT



BIKE HOOPS AND VEHICLE EXCLUSION FENCE



PARK FURNITURE



The s illustrated are only examples and the recommendations provided may vary in their actual result.

SPORT COURT



HALF BASKETBALL COURT



HOPSCOTCH



TABLE TENNIS



BOULDERING WALL



VEGETATION AND SIGNAGE



INDIGENOUS WILDFLOWER



WETLAND



WAYFINDING SIGNAGE



EDUCATIONAL SUGNAGE



FITNESS AND SOCIAL SPACE



SOCIAL SEATING



PICNIC AREA



FITNESS AND EXERCISE STATION



FITNESS AND EXERCISE STATION



The images illustrated are only examples and the recommendations provided may vary in their actual result.

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Connect with us in your
preferred language:

5.6 Governance Report

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

Report Author: Unit Manager Council Governance

Executive Summary

In accordance with best practice, good governance principles, transparent and accountable reporting, officers deem it appropriate to consolidate governance and administrative reports into one standing report to provide a single reporting mechanism for a range of statutory compliance, transparency and governance matters. This also ensures compliance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council's Governance Rules and related regulations.

The purpose of this report is to provide information and endorsement for the following governance related matters:

- Summary of Informal Meetings of Council
- Total cost to Council for Municipal Monitors
- Interstate Conferences:
 - Attendance at the National Growth Areas Alliance (NGAA) National Congress 2025
 - Attendance at the Northern Councils Alliance (NCA) visit to Canberra
- Nomination to the National Growth Areas Alliance (NGAA) Strategic Advisory Committee
- City of Whittlesea Community Awards Terms of Reference
- Australian Local Government Association Conference (ALGA) update.

Further information on the above listed matters is located within the body of this report.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. **Note the Governance Report for July 2025.**
2. **Note the summary of Informal Meetings of Council for the period 14 May to 16 July 2025 at Attachment 1.**
3. **Note the total cost to Council during the term of the Municipal Monitors, appointed by the Local Government Minister, was \$66,196.52.**
4. **Note Council at its May 2025 meeting approved Cr Taylor and Cr Cox to attend the National Growth Areas Alliance National Congress, in Perth, between 30 to 31 July 2025 and note Cr Cox will now be attending the National Congress from 29 July 2025.**
5. **Authorise the Mayor, Cr Taylor to attend the Northern Councils Alliance visit in Canberra between the period 26 to 28 August 2025 at an approximate cost of \$2,300.**

6. Authorise Councillor _____ as Councils representative on the National Growth Areas Alliance Strategic Advisory Committee for a period of two years.
7. Adopt the Community Awards Terms of Reference at Attachment 2 and note they will be published on Council's website.
8. Note the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly update from Cr Cox at Attachment 3.

Background / Key Information

Informal Meetings of Council

Chapter 5 of the Council Governance Rules requires a summary of the matters discussed at a meeting of Councillors that:

- is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors.
- is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
- is not a Council meeting or Delegated Committee meeting.

The summary of matters discussed at the meeting must be:

- tabled quarterly at Council meetings; and
- recorded in the minutes of that Council meeting.

The record of Informal Meetings of Council at Attachment 1 is reported to Council in accordance with this requirement.

Municipal Monitors

On 4 November 2024, the former Minister for Local Government appointed Municipal Monitors Jude Munro and Peita Duncan in accordance with section 179 of the *Local Government Act 2020* to support Council transition from Administrators to elected Councillors, and to perform the functions as outlined in the Terms of Reference set by the Minister for Local Government.

Jude Munro was appointed from 6 November 2024 and Peita Duncan from 20 November 2024. Both Monitors completed their appointment on 20 May 2025, being the date the Minister for Local Government announced a Commission of Inquiry into the City of Whittlesea.

For transparency, the total cost to Council during the Monitors appointment was \$66,192.52.

Interstate Conferences

In accordance with the Councillor Support and Expense Policy, Council approval is required for Councillors proposing to attend interstate conferences.

National Growth Areas Alliance National Congress

At the 20 May 2025 Scheduled Council Meeting, Council authorised the Mayor, Cr Taylor and Cr Cox to attend the National Growth Areas Alliance National Congress in Perth between the period 30 to 31 July. Cr Cox will now be travelling to Perth on 29 July to enable him to attend the welcome event.

Northern Councils Alliance (NCA) Visit to Canberra

The NCA is planning to visit Canberra from 26 to 28 August 2025 to meet with different Ministers and advocate for matters relevant to the NCA. As Council's nominated representative on the NCA, the Mayor, Cr Taylor is seeking Council approval to attend.

National Growth Areas Alliance (NGAA) Strategic Advisory Committee

The NGAA is a peak body for local governments in Australia's fast-growing outer metropolitan cities and suburbs. They advocate to State and Federal governments for improved policies and funding for growth area Councils, to create communities that are resilient, liveable and thriving places.

The Strategic Advisory Committee is called upon to set NGAA's high-level strategic direction and guide national advocacy priorities.

The appointment to this Committee is for a period of two years.

Community Awards Terms of Reference

The updated Terms of Reference deliver enhanced governance practices including the addition of a transparency section, strengthening reporting requirements and providing clarity on:

- Tenure of membership.
- The process for appointing new members.
- Eligibility of committee members.

Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) Conference Update

The ALGA Conference was held in Canberra from 24-27 June 2025, and was attended by the Mayor, Cr Taylor, Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni, Cr Cox and Cr Gunn.

An update of proceedings from the conference has been provided by Cr Cox at Attachment 3.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

High Performing Organisation

We engage effectively with the community, to deliver efficient and effective services and initiatives, and to make decisions in the best interest of our community and deliver value to our community.

Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

Financial Management

The cost is included in the current budget.

Community Consultation and Engagement

There is no community consultation or engagement required for this report.

Other Principles for Consideration

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (e) Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.
- (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

Public Transparency Principles

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.
- (b) Council information must be publicly available unless—
 - (i) the information is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act; or
 - (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.
- (c) Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community.

Council Policy Considerations

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

No implications.

Social, Cultural and Health

No implications.

Economic

There are no economic implications with Council's approval of the proposed delegations and sub-delegations.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

To minimise any legal or risk implications, it is imperative Council staff are acting under current delegated or sub-delegated powers.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

NGAA will be advised of Councillor appointed following the meeting.

Critical Dates

There are no other critical dates associated with the report.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Attachments

1. Informal Meetings of Council July 2025 [5.6.1 - 6 pages]
2. City of Whittlesea Community Awards Committee Terms of Reference [5.6.2 - 5 pages]
3. ALGA 2025 Report [5.6.3 - 3 pages]

Informal Meetings of Council



| | |
|---|------------------|
| Date of Meeting | 27 May 2025 |
| Type of Meeting | Council Briefing |
| Discussions | |
| 1. Councillor & CEO time | |
| Matters considered | |
| 1. Children & Families Briefing 2. Youth Development & Youth Hub 3. Crime and Perceptions of Safety in the Community 4. 2018:132 Supply of Road Drainage & Associated Street Lighting Works 5. 2019:78: Supply of Asphalt Works & Materials 6. Construction of Stables Kindergarten – Contract 20125-16 7. CONFIDENTIAL – Library Services Strategic Workshop | |
| Councillors Present | |
| Mayor, Cr Taylor Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni Cr Brooks Cr Colwell Cr Cox Cr Gunn Cr Lappin Cr Lenberg Cr Stow | |
| Staff in attendance | |
| Chief Executive Officer Director Planning & Development Director Community Wellbeing Director Customer & Corporate Services Acting Director Infrastructure & Environment Executive Manager Public Affairs Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO Manager Active Places & Communities Manager Capital Delivery Manager Children & Families Manager Community Strengthening Unit Manager Early Years Services & Inclusion Unit Manager Engineering Design & Construction Unit Manager Youth Development | |

Informal Meetings of Council


Others present

Nil

Conflict of Interest

Nil

Date of Meeting

3 June 2025

Type of Meeting

Council Briefing

Discussions

1. Councillor & Commissioner time
2. Councillor & CEO time

Matters considered

1. State Government Planning System Reform – Submissions
2. Asset Plan 2025-2035
3. 2025-38 Fuel Contract
4. Q3 Community Grants Update
5. Community Vision
6. Budget 2025-26 and Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2034-35
7. Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

Councillors Present

Mayor, Cr Taylor

Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni

Cr Brooks

Cr Colwell

Cr Cox

Cr Gunn

Cr Lappin

Cr Lenberg

Cr Stow

Staff in attendance

Chief Executive Officer

Director Planning & Development (*left the meeting at 6:30pm*)

Director Community Wellbeing (*left the meeting at 6:30pm*)

Acting Director Infrastructure & Environment

Acting Director Customer & Corporate Services

Executive Manager Public Affairs

Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

Manager Assets & Facilities

Informal Meetings of Council



| | |
|---|-----|
| Manager Building & Planning Manager ePMO & Change Manager Maintenance & Operations Acting Manager Strategic Futures Unit Manager Financial Strategy & Performance Unit Manager Strategic Research & Analytics Coordinator Capital Programming & Reporting Grants Coordinator Senior Research Officer Strategic Planner | |
| Others present Commissioners | |
| Conflict of Interest | Nil |

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Date of Meeting | 24 June 2025 |
| Type of Meeting | Council Briefing |
| Discussions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Councillor & CEO time 2. Rob Mitchell MP | |
| Matters considered <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lauries Field Master Plan Draft | |
| Councillors Present Mayor, Cr Taylor Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni Cr Brooks Cr Colwell Cr Gunn Cr Lenberg Cr Stow | |
| Staff in attendance Chief Executive Officer Director Planning & Development Director Community Wellbeing Director Infrastructure & Environment Acting Director Customer & Corporate Services Executive Manager Public Affairs Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO | |

Informal Meetings of Council



| | |
|---|-----|
| Manager Urban Design & Transport Unit Manager Landscape & Open Space Planning Coordinator Open Space Planning Open Space Planner | |
| Others present Rob Mitchell MP | |
| Conflict of Interest | Nil |

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Date of Meeting | 1 July 2025 |
| Type of Meeting | Council Briefing |
| Discussions 1. Councillor & CEO time | |
| Matters considered 1. Mill Park Place Framework 2. Planning Scheme Amendment C290 – Public Acquisition Overlay – 70 and 80 Boundary Road, Wollert 3. Draft Community Plan 2025-29 and Community Action Plan 2025-26 4. 2021-89: Property Maintenance Contract Variation 5. Introduction to Kindergarten Reform | |
| Councillors Present Mayor, Cr Taylor Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni Cr Brooks (<i>joined the meeting at 6pm</i>) Cr Colwell Cr Cox Cr Gunn Cr Lappin Cr Lenberg Cr Stow | |
| Staff in attendance Chief Executive Officer Director Planning & Development Director Community Wellbeing Director Infrastructure & Environment Acting Director Customer & Corporate Services Executive Manager Public Affairs Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO Manager Ageing Well | |

Informal Meetings of Council



| | |
|---|-----|
| Manager Children & Families Manager ePMO & Change Manager Strategic Futures Manager Urban Design & Transport Unit Manager Corporate Planning Unit Manager Service Planning & Infrastructure Unit Manager Urban Design & Placemaking Urban Designer | |
| Others present Nil | |
| Conflict of Interest | Nil |

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Date of Meeting | 15 July 2025 |
| Type of Meeting | Council Briefing |
| Discussions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mayor & Councillor time 2. Councillor & CEO time 3. Mandatory Training Discussion | |
| Matters considered <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Awards – Terms of Reference 2. Lowalde Recreation Reserve Master Plan 3. Contract 2019-2: Conservation Management Services – Contract Extension 4. Epping and Thomastown Suburb Boundary Realignment 5. Social Inclusion Action Group | |
| Councillors Present Mayor, Cr Taylor Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni Cr Brooks Cr Colwell Cr Cox Cr Gunn Cr Lappin (<i>online via Microsoft Teams</i>) Cr Lenberg Cr Stow (<i>left the meeting at 6:41pm and returned at 6:58pm</i>) | |
| Staff in attendance Chief Executive Officer Director Community Wellbeing | |

Informal Meetings of Council



| | |
|--|--|
| Director Customer & Corporate Services Director Infrastructure & Environment Acting Director Planning & Development Executive Manager Public Affairs Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO Manager Building & Planning Manager Sustainable Environment Manager Urban Design & Transport Acting Manager Communications & Engagement Unit Manager Subdivisions Coordinator Open Space Planning Conservation Contract Coordinator Social Inclusion Action Group Coordinator | |
| Others present Nil | |
| Conflict of Interest | <i>Cr Stow declared a conflict of interest in relation to Lowalde Recreation Reserve Master Plan and left the meeting during discussion of the item.</i> |



TERMS OF REFERENCE

City of Whittlesea Community Awards Committee

Purpose

To evaluate and assess nominations for the annual City of Whittlesea Community Awards program and provide a recommendation to Council for the winner/s of each category. The Committee may make recommendations to Council on any variation to the Award categories or criteria or any proposal for new or additional Award categories.

Delegation

The Committee has no formal delegation.

Membership and Tenure

The Committee shall comprise of:

- one City of Whittlesea Councillor;
- one member of the City of Whittlesea Executive Leadership Team (non-voting);
- a minimum of three and maximum of six community representatives; and
- award recipients from the previous year.

The representative Councillor will be appointed for a 12-month term by Council resolution on a day that is as close to the end of the 12-month term as reasonably practicable.

Community representatives will be appointed to the Committee for the four-year term of Council through a public expression of interest process.

Previous award recipients will be invited to join the Committee for one year following receipt of their award.

All Councillor Committee appointments will be made by Council resolution.

Other persons (non-Committee) may be invited to attend the meetings at the request of the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee to provide advice and assistance where necessary. They have no voting rights and may be requested to leave the meeting at any time by the Chairperson.

Code of Conduct

All members are expected to:

- Operate with integrity, objectivity, accountability, honesty and openness.
- Declare any general or material conflict of interest as defined under the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- Dedicate appropriate time and effort to the functions of the Committee.
- Prepare for and actively participate in meetings.

| Date of Adoption | Next Review Date | Directorate Responsible | Department Responsible |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 22 July 2025 | 22 July 2029 | Executive Services | Public Affairs |



- Exercise independent judgment.
- Maintain effective working relationships with each other.
- All members are also bound by Council's Code of Conduct.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Chairperson shall be elected from the Community representatives for a period of 12 months.

The responsibilities of the Chairperson include:

- Setting meetings.
- Guiding the meeting according to the agenda and time available.
- Ensuring all discussion items end with a decision, action or definite outcome.
- Review and approve the draft minutes before distribution.

The Chairperson shall be supported by an officer from the Office of Council and the CEO. The officer will be responsible for scheduling meetings, corresponding with Committee members as directed by the Chairperson, and taking meeting minutes.

Decisions will be made by consensus. Where the Committee is unable to reach consensus, a vote shall be conducted, and a simple majority will be sufficient. In the event of a tie in votes the Chairperson has a second and casting vote.

Ordinary Meetings

A schedule of two meetings shall be set by the Chairperson each year to assess nominations and provide recommendations for a winner for each category of the awards program. Meetings shall last no more than 90 minutes.

The role of the minute taker will be to:

- Prepare agendas and issue notices for meetings, and ensure all necessary documents requiring discussion or comment are attached to the agenda.
- Distribute the Agenda at least one week prior to the meeting.
- Take notes of proceedings and prepare minutes of meeting.
- Distribute the minutes (as approved by the Chairperson) to all Committee members within 10 days.

The minutes shall include any declarations of conflicts of interests and shall be checked by the Chairperson and accepted by Committee members as a true and accurate record at the commencement of the next meeting.

| Date of Adoption | Next Review Date | Directorate Responsible | Department Responsible |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
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Quorum

A quorum of members must be present before a meeting can proceed. A quorum is more than half of the current number of members of the Committee. Where a quorum is not achieved the members present may, at the discretion of the Chairperson, continue the meeting, but any decisions made at the meeting must be ratified at the next Committee meeting.

Notice and Attendance of Meetings

- All members are required to attend a minimum of one meeting per award cycle.
- Notice of any additional Committee meeting will be provided two weeks in advance.
- If the Chairperson is not present at a meeting, the Committee members will appoint a Chairperson for that meeting.

Transparency

In order to maintain transparency of the operations and in alignment with Council's Governance Rules the following information is to be published on Council's website:

- the Terms of Reference;
- the names of all Committee members;
- endorsed minutes of meetings; and
- reports of activities (as reported biannually to Council) as prepared by Council Officers.

Speaking Times

The Chair is to ensure:

- that one item is discussed at a time;
- that everyone has an opportunity to participate and speak on agenda items; and
- that input is respected and congruent with the code of conduct even when there is a disagreement.

Recruitment Process Council officers will operate an expression of interest process each Council term to facilitate the recruitment of Committee members. Award winners each year will be invited to join the committee for the following year.

Applications to join the Committee will be via an Expression of Interest form responding to selection criteria.

The review of applications and appointment of Committee members will be undertaken by the Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO and Executive Manager Public Affairs prior to seeking endorsement from the Council.

If through resignation the Committee falls below the minimum number of members, Council officers will undertake an additional expression of interest process.

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Voting Committee members must:

- Live, work or study in the City of Whittlesea for the duration of the Community Awards Committee appointment.
- Must not be a current employee of the City of Whittlesea or an ex-employee or former Councillor who has left the City of Whittlesea within a two-year period.

Resignation or Expulsion

Committee members will cease to be a member if they:

- Resign from the Committee.
- Fail to attend two consecutive meetings without providing prior apologies to the Chairperson.
- Reach the end of the term of their appointment.
- Breach confidentiality.

Membership may be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- The member's no longer lives, works or studies within the City of Whittlesea.
- Failure to attend two consecutive meetings without prior notice.
- The member does not declare a conflict of interest, breaches confidentiality or Code of Conduct such as exhibiting behaviour unbecoming as a member of the Committee.
- The member publicly expresses views on behalf of the Committee or Council.

Conflicts of Interest

The City of Whittlesea is committed to ensuring that its decision-making has integrity, is fair and is in the best interests of the community and that in making decisions conflicts of interest (COI) are avoided and managed as they arise.

Declaring COI is applicable to all members of this committee.

General Conflict - You have a General Conflict if an impartial fair-minded person would consider that your private interests could result in you acting in a way that is contrary to your Public Interest Duty.

Material Conflict - You have a Material Conflict if you or a Family Member or Close Friend could gain a benefit or suffer a loss (directly or indirectly) depending on the outcome.

For more information on COI's please refer to the [Conflict of Interest Policy Guidelines 2023](#).

Disclosed COIs are to be noted in the minutes of the applicable meeting.

| Date of Adoption | Next Review Date | Directorate Responsible | Department Responsible |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
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Reporting Requirements

- Meeting minute records and reports are to be sent to Council for inclusion on the public record.
- Disclosed COIs are to be noted in the minutes of the applicable meeting and record whether the person who disclosed a conflict of interest was excused from meeting for the relevant discussion.
- Written reports of the Committee must include any disclosures of conflicts of interest and the outcome.

Public Statements

Members of the Committee are not permitted to act as spokespersons and cannot make public statements on behalf of Council.

Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every four years, at the beginning of each new Council term, or as otherwise directed by Council.

| Date of Adoption | Next Review Date | Directorate Responsible | Department Responsible |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 22 July 2025 | 22 July 2029 | Executive Services | Public Affairs |

Report from ALGA Conference 24–27 June 2025



Held at the Canberra Convention Centre – 1300 registrations from 537 Local Government areas nationally.

The first day was a regional council forum which we did not attend. A networking function was held at the Conference late afternoon and the MAV put on a Victorian networking function that night. This enabled delegates to catch up or introduce themselves before the actual conference.

Wednesday commenced with a Welcome to Country from a local elder explaining the connection as a meeting place.

The President of ALGA Cr Matt Burnett gave his first presentation to the Annual Conference since becoming President. It outlined the actions and achievements of ALGA. He introduced the full Board.

Next the Federal Minister Kristy McBain gave a speech on changes since the election and her background as a former Mayor/Councillor plus a delegate to this conference over many years. There was a comment during the speech that some forward funding had been bought into this financial year's payments to enable those affected councils to better record their financial year position. Further, that her portfolio also includes emergency service planning and disaster recovery this was due to the closeness and role that Local Government plays in this area.

The next speaker was the Shadow Minister Anne Webster who spoke about improving communication and the challenges we face at the local level. Unfortunately, that was all lost when the commentary turned to attack upon the delays caused by indigenous communities. Her personal objections that foreign tourists were being stopped from climbing in the Grampians and further examples.

The reaction was speedy and direct with over half of the ALGA Board immediately walking out followed by very many delegates. To ALGA's credit they immediately distanced themselves from the Shadow's comments and had the Mayor of Palm Island (Qld) give a response on behalf of the many delegates offended.

The next speech was from the Governor-General Sam Mostyn who was about to celebrate one year in office. The speech was was certainly a solid reflection on the role and the necessity to improve the public understanding of all civic roles and a quite specific reflection on misinformation deliberate or otherwise.

Report from ALGA Conference 24–27 June 2025



The presentations on the first day related to the geoeconomic landscape presented by KPMG partner Merriden Varrall and Mark Bouris. Whilst informative it perhaps is the type of presentation, I am used to at a fiduciary investment conference. A lot of the information would unlikely be used in a LGA budget process.

The second presentation was about seeing the big picture in future planning and applying local actions to achieve the desired outcomes.

The conference then moved onto the agenda items.

The conference processed those items as consistent with existing ALGA policy and without opposition from the floor en-bloc. Items 1-69 were passed.

The rest of the agenda were called up and most carried without opposition. A couple of specific debates surrounded applying a single set of curfew hours for every major airport in the country. Based around the new Western Sydney airport and soundly defeated. Attempts to improve the distribution of tax revenue more equitably to local government, the debate was around: is it achievable, was there inclusion of stamp duty and GST. Speed limits on local roads to be reduced to 40 km/h across Australia (soundly defeated).

There was much debate on the cost shifting pressures from Federal/State to Local.

The agenda didn't complete due to time and lack of a quorum at the end of the second day. Items from around Agenda 159 were referred to the Board for future action.

The second day presentations were a panel discussion on climate change impact with specific program examples discussed.

The impact and use of AI were presented by Stephen Scheeler former Australian CEO for Facebook the second panel was CEO of MyLot a digital AI services in planning.

The afternoon provided breakout sessions for four themes:

- Emergency Management – Capability and Capacity;
- Housing and Community Infrastructure;
- Local Government Jobs and Skills; and
- Safer Roads.

The General Assembly dinner and Local Government awards were held at Parliament House.

Report from ALGA Conference 24–27 June 2025



The last sessions were Ministerial engagement chaired by David Speers (ABC).

The first panel from Government Minister Kristy McBain, Local Government and Emergency Management, Julian Hill, Immigration and Citizenship and Josh Wilson, Minister for Climate Change and Energy.

The second from the opposition Kevin Hogan, Shadow Trade and Darren Chester, Shadow Veteran Affairs.

Last session Katy Gallagher, Finance Minister and the ALGA President.

The Conference provided opportunities for networking not only our neighbouring Councils, Victorian Councils and Australian Councils. The attendees had many opportunities for learnings and discussion on actions or issues that may be similar to us.

Thank you for the opportunity to attend and be involved.

Cr Lawrie Cox
Ganbu Gulinj Ward

6 Notices of Motion

6.1 General Maintenance - Vic Roads

Cr Colwell has given notice that it is their intention to move the following Motion at the Scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 22 July at 6pm.

Motion

THAT Council:

- 1. Resolve to receive a report, via the CEO, at a Council briefing in August 2025 covering the following:**
 - a. Inactions taken by VicRoads in relation to the required general maintenance (ie. mowing, weed control, rubbish removal, fallen tree limbs, graffiti removal and replacement of damaged traffic barriers etc) on their land and fixing their managed assets;**
 - b. What action officers have taken to date in trying to resolve any inactions of VicRoads and/or the State Government in maintaining their assets within the Whittlesea municipality; and**
 - c. Suggested officer recommendations that Council could consider in addressing any concerns raised by officers in their report ie. advocacy, writing to relevant Minister etc.**

PREAMBLE

The purpose of seeking an officer report is to allow Councillors to address continued community concerns raised in relation to VicRoads inadequacy in maintaining their lawns, verges, median strips, trees, rubbish removal, graffiti removal and replacement of damaged traffic barriers, and the community perception that Council is not addressing these concerns.

Notice Received: 7 July 2025

7 Urgent Business

8 Reports from Councillors and CEO Update

9 Tabled Reports

No reports

10 Confidential Business

No confidential business

11 Closure