

Mernda Strategy Plan

Incorporated Document

PATHWAYS TO MORE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



**City of
Whittlesea**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The *Plenty Valley Strategic Plan (PVSP)* was approved by the Victorian State Government in 1990. The plan was the culmination of a rigorous planning process that considered the entire Plenty Valley growth corridor. This process confirmed the future of Mernda as an urban growth corridor and initiated amendments to the Whittlesea and then Diamond Creek Planning Schemes to facilitate this process.

The *Plenty Valley Strategic Plan* recognised that more specific, localised plans would need to be prepared for each component of the Plenty corridor – South Morang, Mernda/Doreen and Whittlesea Township. This requirement was formalised through a provision in the former

Urban Development Zone, which required that a *Local Structure Plan (LSP)* be prepared and incorporated into the Whittlesea Planning Scheme before subdivision and development could proceed.

Local Structure Plans were subsequently approved for South Morang, Whittlesea Township and the north-east portion of Mernda/Doreen (Laurimar Estate). The *Mernda Strategy Plan* will constitute the *LSP* (now described as an *Incorporated Plan* under the VPPs) for the balance of the designated urban growth area in Mernda and Doreen.

The status of the *Mernda Strategy Plan* in the plan hierarchy is explained in *Figure 1.1*

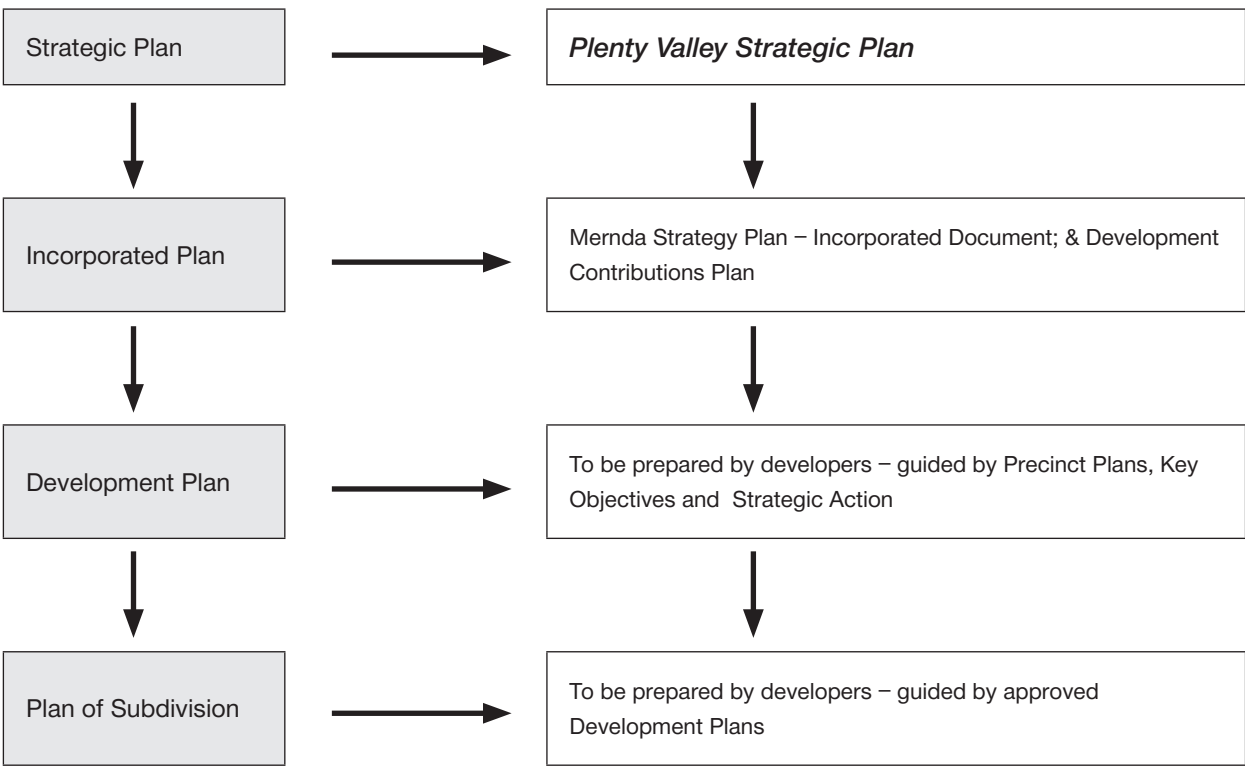
The *Mernda Strategy Plan* builds on the foundations of the *PVSP* and introduces many new principles associated with sustainable development. It articulates a vision for a series of new communities that will be much more than new residential estates on Melbourne's northern fringe. As well as meeting future housing needs, development in Mernda will foster economic development, environmental preservation and social progress.

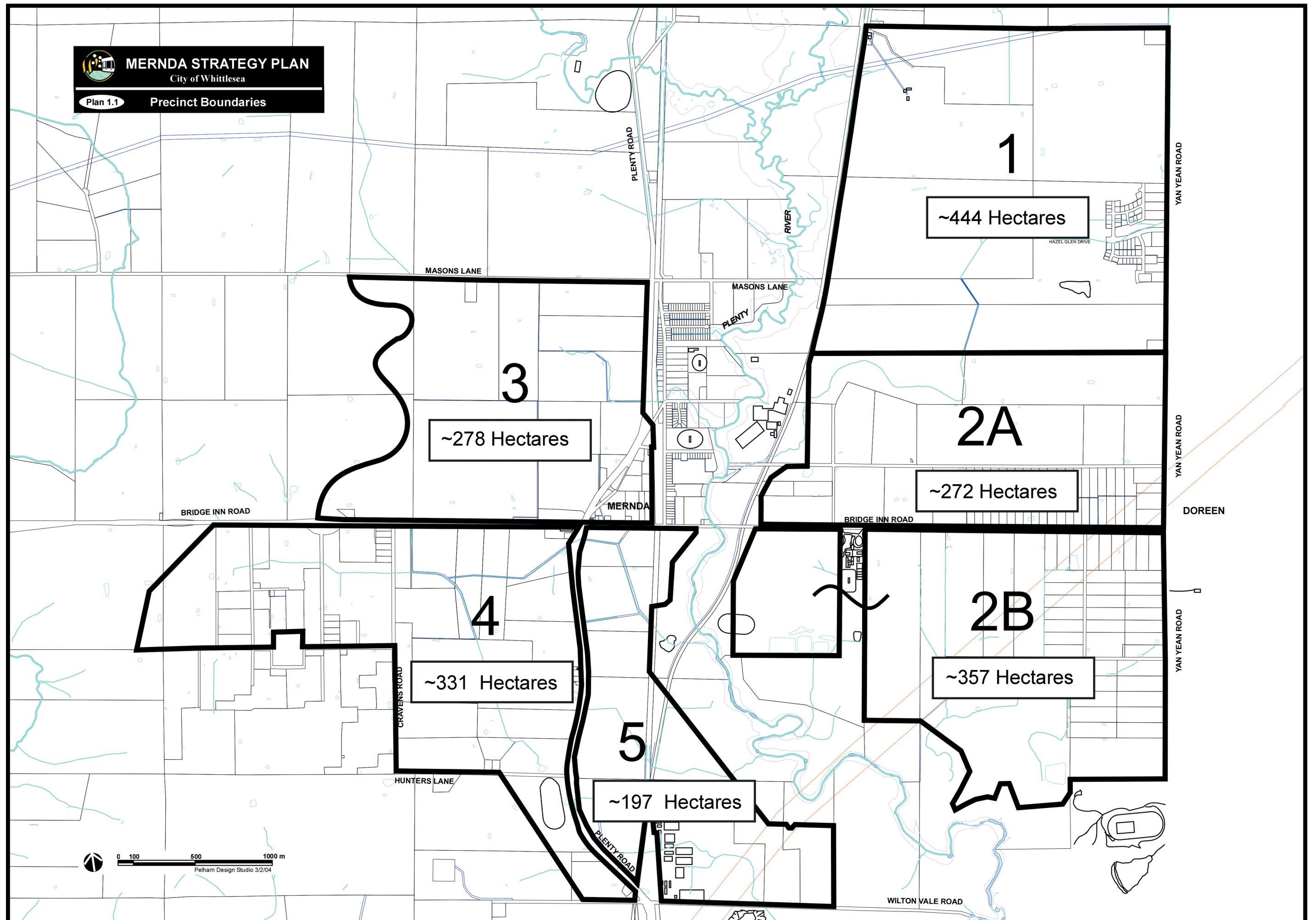
Realisation of the Mernda vision, as expressed in the *Key Objectives* that follow will require Council and developers to embrace new design and development paradigms. These include: neighbourhood planning; water sensitive urban design; transit orientated design; quality public realms, and the celebration and natural and cultural heritage.

The *Mernda Strategy Plan – Incorporated Document* is the primary policy document to guide and inform the preparation of *Development Plans* and subsequent *Subdivision Plans* for the Mernda growth area. It is complemented by the *Mernda Strategy Plan - Development Contributions Plan* and the *Mernda Strategy Plan - Reference Document*.

Plan 1.1 shows the area in Mernda and Doreen that is affected by the *Mernda Strategy Plan*.

Figure 1.1 Hierarchy of plans applicable to Mernda growth area





2.0 UNDERSTANDING AND USING THE MERNDA STRATEGY PLAN - INCORPORATED DOCUMENT

a) The status and role of the overall Mernda Strategy Plan and the individual Precinct Plans

The *MSP – Incorporated Document* provides broad-level guidance to the development of land in the Mernda/Doreen component of the Plenty Valley growth corridor. It sets out the *Key Objectives* and *Strategic Actions* that will be applied in all stages of the planning process. Moreover, the *MSP* will ensure that the growth area develops in an integrated and holistic fashion in order to meet social, economic and environmental imperatives.

The *Mernda Strategy Plan* is consistent with the City of Whittlesea’s *Local Planning Policy Framework*, which requires a four-tiered approach to the planning of growth areas (refer to *Figure 1.1*).

This document represents the *Incorporated Plan* for the entire growth area (save the area affected by the *Mernda Local Structure Plan – Part 1*). Before development can occur, a *Development Plan* and *Subdivision Plan(s)* must be approved by Council. Individual *Development Plans* will be required to cover the areas nominated on *Plan 2.1*.

The individual *Precinct Plans* are derived from the overall *Mernda Strategy Plan* but provide more detailed and site-specific guidance on land-use and design requirements.

All *Development Plans* must be generally in accordance with the relevant *Precinct Plan*. The *Precinct Plans* should be read in conjunction with the *Key Objectives* and *Strategic Actions* presented in Section 3 of this document.

Where *Development Plans* propose minor departures from the *Precinct Plan* it must be demonstrated that any modified design remains consistent with the *Key Objectives* and *Strategic Actions*.

Council will not alter the *MSP - Development Contributions Plan (DCP)* to take account of minor refinements to the open space network that may result from the *Development Plan* and *Subdivision Plan* processes.

b) The Status and Role of Key Objectives and Strategic Actions

The *Key Objectives* and *Strategic Actions* presented in Section 3 of this document draw on the principles of sustainable development and provide a planning and design framework to guide lower-order plans.

There is a *Key Objective* and a set of *Strategic Actions* for each of the following subjects:

- Planning and Design
- The Transportation System
- Environmental Conservation
- Activity Centres
- Social Infrastructure & Community Development
- Housing
- The Open Space Network
- Heritage and Culture
- Servicing and Drainage

The *Key Objectives* articulate Council’s overall vision for the new communities in Mernda. The *Strategic Actions* give practical guidance on how the *Key Objectives* can be realised. These should be read in conjunction with the plans and figures presented in Section 3.

c) What is “generally in accordance with”?

The schedule to the *Development Plan Overlay* states that all *Development Plans* and *Subdivision Plans* must be generally in accordance with the *MSP - Incorporated Document*.

Council will deem a *Development Plan* or *Subdivision Plan* to be generally in accordance with the *MSP - Incorporated Document* when it can be demonstrated that the proposal broadly conforms with the land-use and design features expressed in the overall *MSP (Plan 3.1)* and the relevant *Precinct Plan (Plans 3.2 – 3.7)*. *Development Plans* must also be consistent with the *Key Objectives* and the *Strategic Actions*. When considering *Development Plans* that propose minor departures from the overall *MSP* and *Precinct Plans*, Council will need to

be convinced that the proposal remains consistent with the *Key Objectives* and *Strategic Actions*.

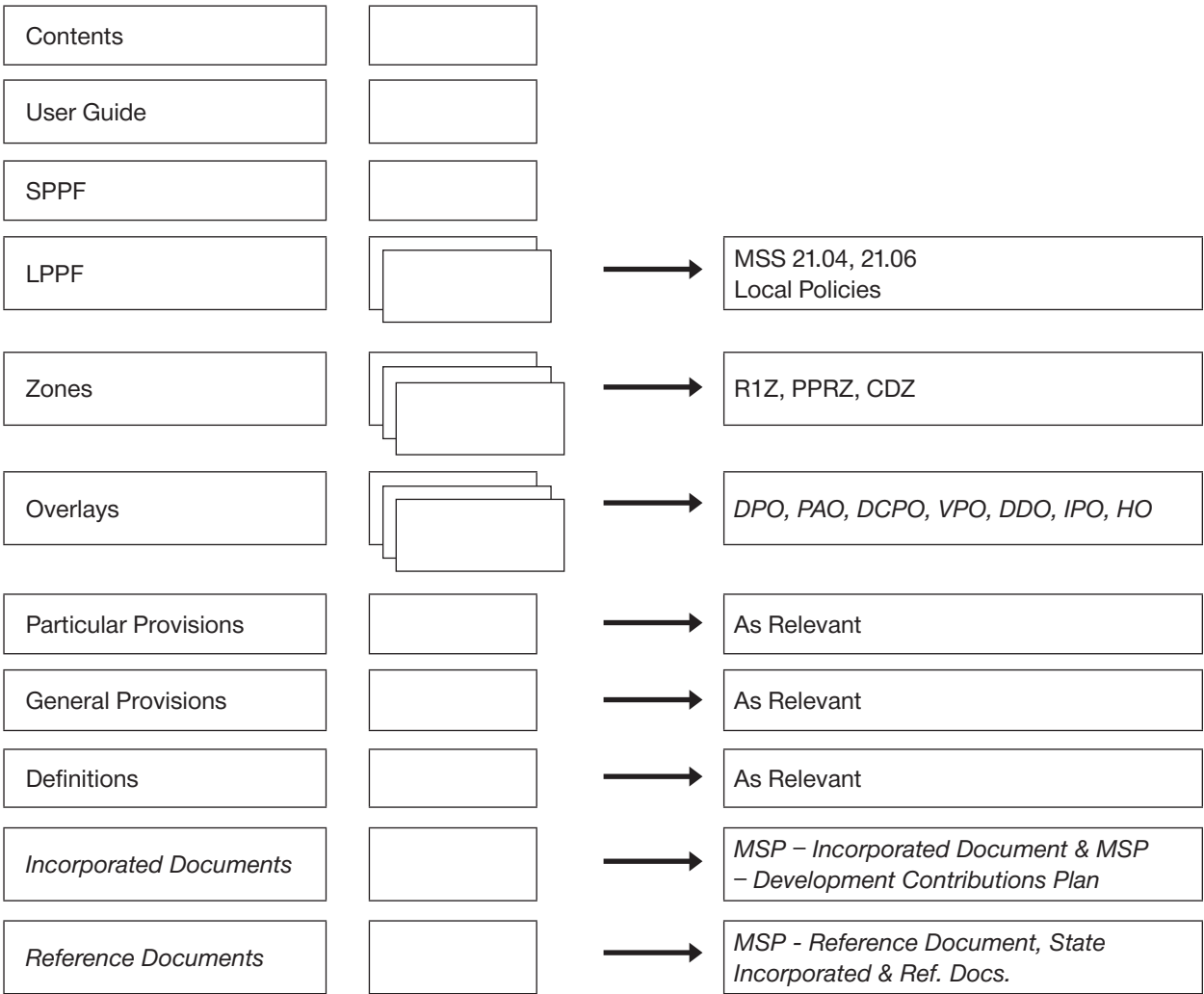
d) Relationship between the MSP - Incorporated Document and other Planning Scheme control mechanisms

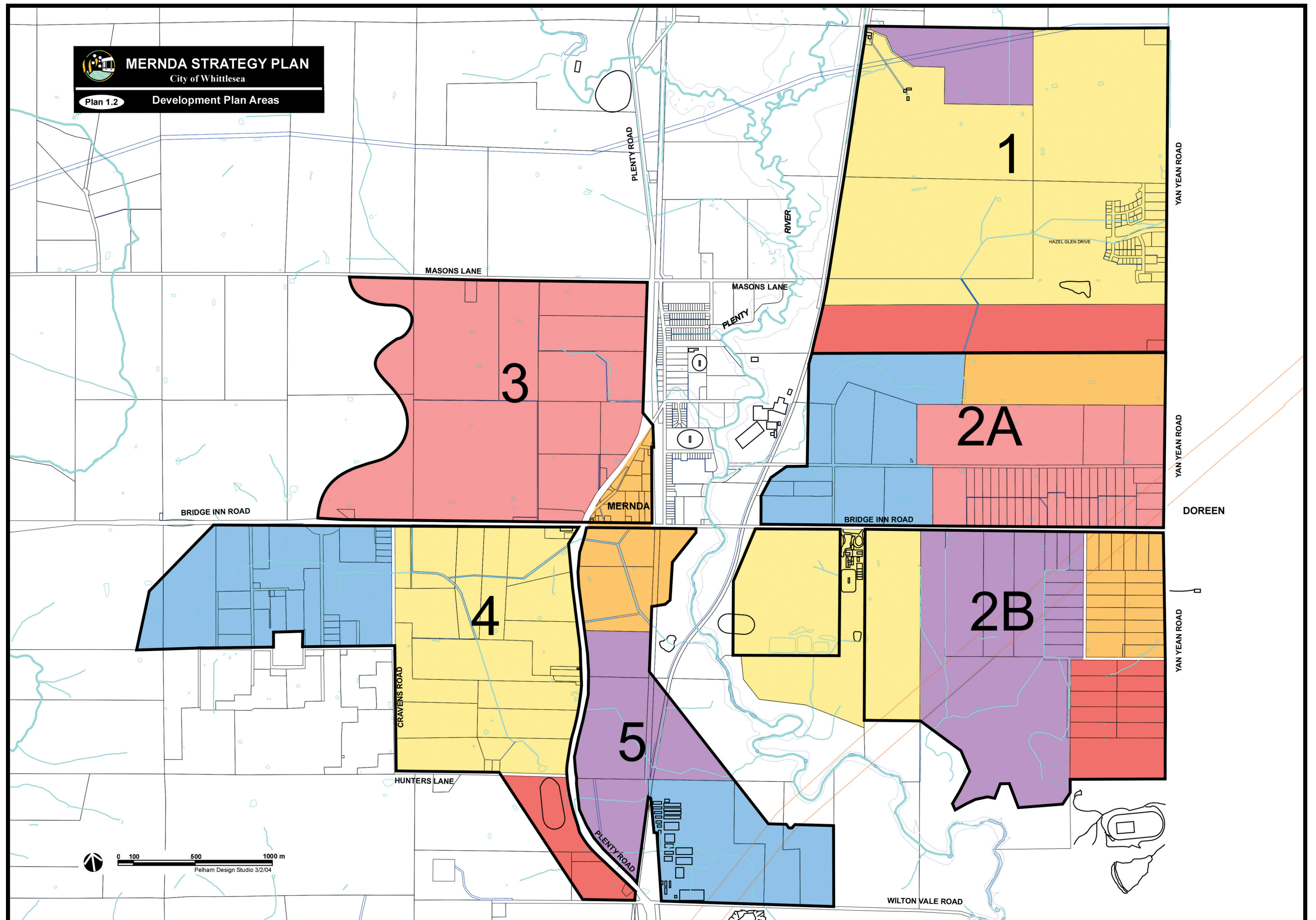
Implementation of the *MSP* will be enabled by a range Planning Scheme instruments. *Figure 2.1* shows the structure of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme and identifies the components that are of most relevance.

e) Relationship between the Mernda Strategy Plan Incorporated Document and planning other documents

The planning and development of the Mernda growth area is controlled primarily by three documents. Two of these, the *MSP - Incorporated Plan* and the *MSP - Development Contributions Plan* are incorporated within the Whittlesea Planning Scheme. The third document, the *MSP - Reference Document*, is not incorporated within the Planning Scheme but is nonetheless an important resource that provides essential background information to assist with *Development Plan* preparation.

Figure 2.1 Whittlesea Planning Scheme components relevant to Mernda





3.0 KEY OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIC ACTIONS

3.1 Planning & Design

Key Objective:

To create an interconnected set of neighbourhoods that each has a distinctive character. They should enable community participation, economic development and adaptation to change over time.

Strategic Actions:

3.1.1 Precinct-based Planning

- The Mernda growth area covers around 1,700 hectares and is projected to support around 14,000 dwellings and associated community infrastructure. Over 50 hectares of land has been designated to support retail and other commercial development. *Plan 3.1 – Mernda Strategy Plan* shows five distinct precincts arranged around a sub-regional activity centre and transport hub – the Mernda Town Centre.
- Each precinct should have a distinctive local character and a degree of self-containment. Precincts should be interconnected through the open space and transport systems.
- The individual *Precinct Plans* (Plans 3.2 – 3.7) provide more detailed information on proposed land-use patterns and design requirements. The *Precinct Plans* also identify sites requiring sensitive design to protect landscape, heritage and ecological values.

3.1.2 Residential Design and Density

- In accordance with Council's *Municipal Strategic Statement*, an average gross residential density of approximately 8 lots per hectare has been applied. Densities will however vary significantly across the MSP area with higher density development being concentrated around activity centres and transport nodes.

Table 3.1 provides a land budget for each precinct. The MSP provides guidance on the residential lot sizes that should be targeted across different parts of the plan area – ranging from >700m² on the periphery to <200m² in the Mernda Town Centre.

- Residential development will generally follow a density gradient that decreases with distance from activity centres. Transitions in lot size should occur mid-block, rather than mid-street, to achieve streetscape consistency. Refer to Figure 3.1.
- On sites near the Mernda Town Centre, the dimensions of residential lots and the siting of buildings should enable future intensification – which may be appropriate following the introduction of rail-based public transport services. Figure 3.2 shows design treatments that will facilitate this.
- Innovative medium density housing forms are encouraged around activity centres and open space. Figure 3.3 gives an example of town houses overlooking a small park. The remnant vegetation and landform features in Mernda will present opportunities for varied design treatments, adding diversity and interest to residential areas.
- Lower density residential development is recommended for areas with significant landscape or environmental values. It is also appropriate as a buffer treatment to non-urban land on the edge of the MSP area. Figure 3.4 illustrates the design treatment that will be applied to low density development along Yan Yean Road. Figure 3.5 shows how a boulevard

Figure 3.1 Transition between residential densities should occur mid-block to ensure streetscape consistency

Source: DTSBI Qld Govt. (1996)

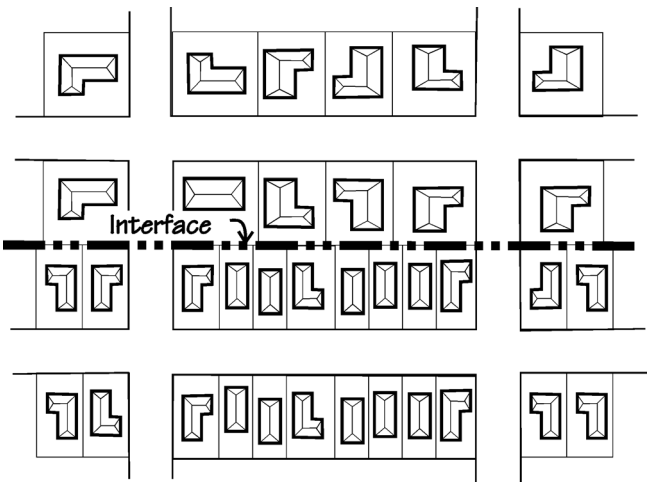


Figure 3.3 Medium density housing overlooking a small park. This design technique can be applied to protect Red Gums without an associated reduction in lot yield

(Source: W.A. Planning Commission, 1997)

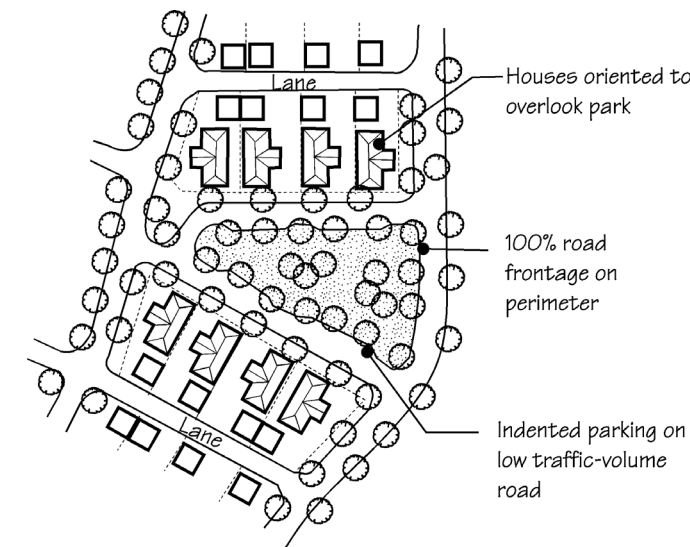


Figure 3.2 Versatile residential design to facilitate future intensification when Mernda Town Centre is established and public transport services are operational

Source: W.A. Planning Commission (1997)

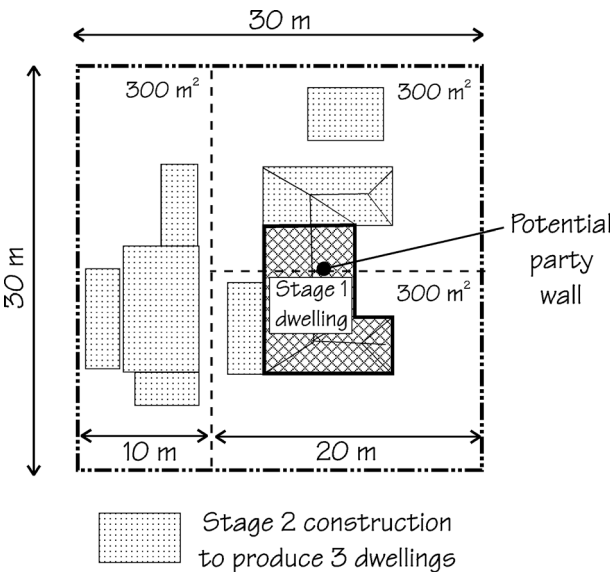


Figure 3.4 Low density residential development with internal access and buffer planting to road. This treatment will be applied along Yan Yean Road.

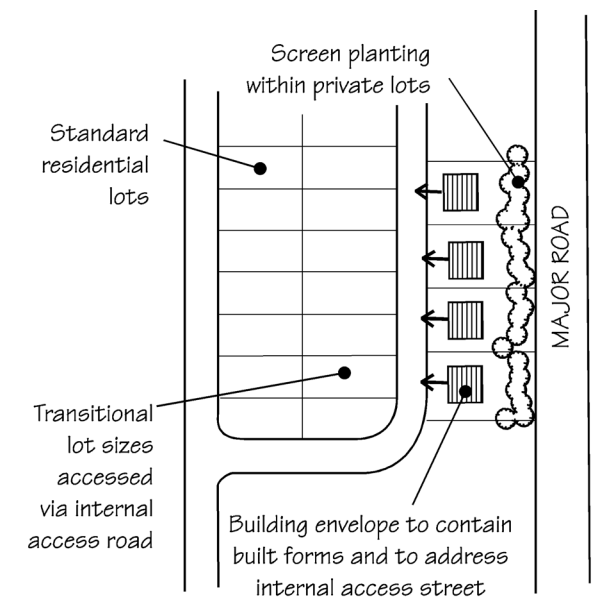


Figure 3.5 Low density residential development with frontage to parkland. This treatment is appropriate where there are low density buffers to the Plenty Gorge Parklands.

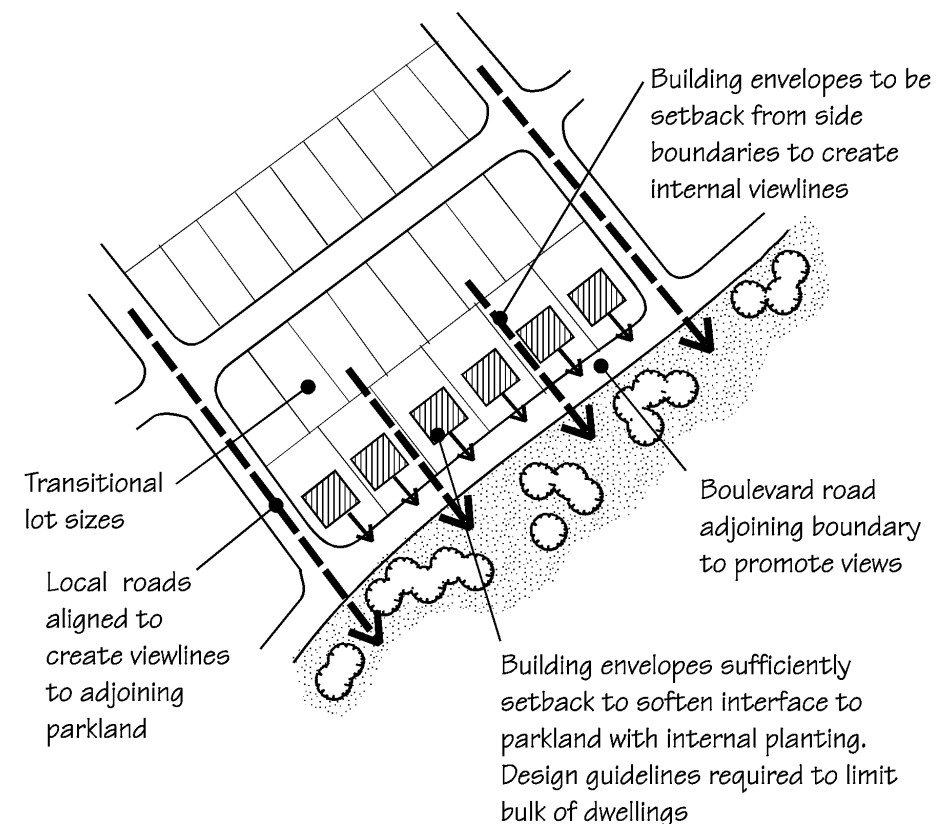
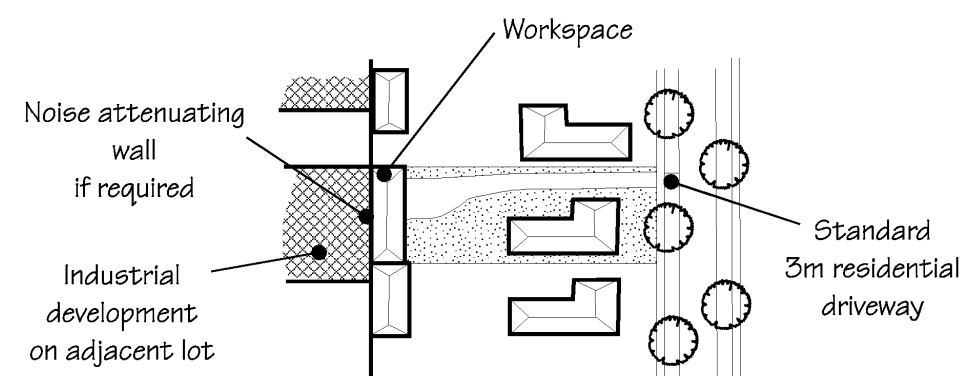


Figure 3.6 Home businesses can be incorporated into mixed-use areas around the Mernda Town Centre.
Source: DTSBI Qld Govt. (1996)



road can enable residential frontage to the Plenty Gorge Parklands.

3.1.3 Employment

- A substantial tract of land in the Mernda Town Centre has been designated as an “employment park”. The *Comprehensive Development Zone* will be applied to this land to enable a range of employment-generating land-uses that are compatible with nearby residential and commercial development. Additional local employment will be created in the precinct activity centres. Home business opportunities should be promoted through versatile housing design as shown in Figure 3.6.

3.1.4 Visually Sensitive Design Areas

- The visually sensitive design areas identified on the *Precinct Plans (Plans 3.2 – 3.7)* require specific design treatments to protect landscape values, appropriate siting of buildings, suitable landscaping and screening, and the use of

colours and materials that are reflective of the natural surrounds. Views from surrounding rural properties should also be protected. It is particularly important that red gums are retained in these locations. These issues should be addressed in the Housing Design Guidelines that are prepared as a requirement of the *Design & Development Overlay* planning scheme controls.

- Large buildings and structures in exposed areas should feature modulated and articulated façade treatments to reduce overall bulk and mass. Architecture should reflect rural themes and a horizontal scale should be emphasised. Figure 3.7 shows design treatments that can minimise the impact of development in visually sensitive locations.

3.1.5 Water Sensitive Urban Design

- Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) should be incorporated into the design of all new developments. Residential lots can be integrated with the environment in a way

Figure 3.7 The visual intrusiveness of built structure on prominent hill-tops can be mitigated through attention to design.

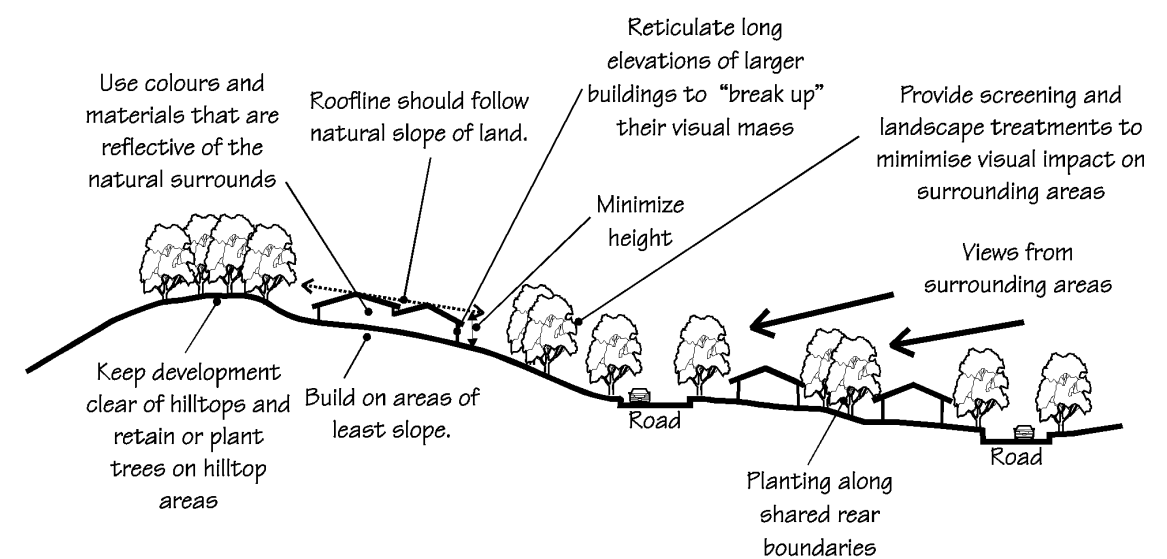


Table 3.1 – Precinct Land Budgets

Land Budget - Precinct 1	
Total Precinct Area	444.4
· Encumbered Land – Transmission Line Easement	0
· Encumbered Land – MW Drainage Reserve & Retarding Basin	20.7
Gross Developable Area (GDA)	423.7
· Residential	363.5
· Precinct Activity Centre (retail / commercial)	4.6
· School Sites	3.5
· Unencumbered Open Space	51.8
· YVW Flow Control Facilities	0.3 (additional buffer area may be required)
Approximate Residential Lot Yield @ 8 lots per Ha of GDA	3390
Unencumbered Open Space as a % of Gross Developable Area	12.2%
+/- weighted share of open space for 10.8Ha regional recreation reserve in Precinct 3 based on % GDA	+2.63
+/- weighted share of 6Ha non-specific active open space in Precinct 2A based on % GDA	+1.46
Adjusted Unencumbered Open Space	55.9
Adjusted Unencumbered Open Space as a % of Gross Developable Area (to be used for Open Space Equalisation Scheme in DCP)	13.2%

Land Budget - Precinct 2A	
Total Precinct Area	271.9
· Encumbered Land – Transmission Line Easement	6.5
· Encumbered Land – MW Drainage Reserve & Retarding Basin	14.4
Gross Developable Area (GDA)	251.0
· Residential	215.1
· School Sites	11.9
· Unencumbered Open Space	24.0
Approximate Residential Lot Yield @ 8 lots per Ha of GDA	2008
Unencumbered Open Space as a % of Gross Developable Area	9.5%
+/- weighted share of 10.8Ha open space for regional recreation reserve based on GDA	-5.14
+/- weighted share of non-specific active open space in Precinct 2A based on % GDA	+1.55
Adjusted Unencumbered Open Space	20.41
Adjusted Unencumbered Open Space as a % of Gross Developable Area (to be used for Open Space Equalisation Scheme)	8.1%

Land Budget - Precinct 2B	
Total Precinct Area	356.7
· Encumbered Land – Transmission Line Easement	32.1
· Encumbered Land – MW Drainage Reserve & Retarding Basin	10.0
Gross Developable Area (GDA)	314.6
· Residential	282.4
· Precinct Activity Centre (retail / commercial)	2.0
· School Sites	3.5
· Unencumbered Open Space	26.0
· YVW Flow Control Facilities	0.7
Approximate Residential Lot Yield @ 8 lots per Ha of GDA	2517
Unencumbered Open Space as a % of Gross Developable Area	8.3%
+/- weighted share of 10.8Ha open space for regional recreation reserve based on GDA	+1.95
+/- weighted share of 6 Ha non-specific active open space in Precinct 2A based on % GDA	+1.07
Adjusted Unencumbered Open Space	29.0
Adjusted Unencumbered Open Space as a % of Gross Developable Area (to be used for Open Space Equalisation Scheme)	9.2%

Land Budget - Precinct 3	
Total Precinct Area	278.1
· Encumbered Land – Transmission Line Easement	0
· Encumbered Land – MW Drainage Reserve & Retarding Basin	9.7
Gross Developable Area (GDA)	268.4
· Residential	217.2
· Precinct Activity Centre (retail / commercial)	2.0
· Mernda Town Centre (retail / commercial)	10.0
· School Sites	3.5
· Unencumbered Open Space	35.7
Approximate Residential Lot Yield @ 8 lots per Ha of GDA	2417
Unencumbered Open Space as a % of Gross Developable Area	13.3%
+/- weighted share of 10.8Ha open space for regional recreation reserve based on GDA	-9.14
+/- weighted share of 6Ha non-specific active open space in Precinct 2A based on % GDA	+0.92
Adjusted Unencumbered Open Space	27.48
Adjusted Unencumbered Open Space as a % of Gross Developable Area (to be used for Open Space Equalisation Scheme)	10.2%

Land Budget - Precinct 4	
Total Precinct Area	330.6
· Encumbered Land – Transmission Line Easement	0
· Encumbered Land – MW Drainage Reserve & Retarding Basin	18.9
Gross Developable Area (GDA)	311.7
· Residential	259.8
· Precinct Activity Centre (retail / commercial)	2.0
· Mernda Town Centre (retail / commercial)	6.9
· School Sites	11.9
· Unencumbered Open Space	31.1
Approximate Residential Lot Yield @ 8 lots per Ha of GDA	2494
Unencumbered Open Space as a % of Gross Developable Area	10.0%
+/- weighted share of 10.8Ha open space for regional recreation reserve based on GDA	+1.93
+/- weighted share of 6Ha non-specific active open space in Precinct 2A based on % GDA	+1.07
Adjusted Unencumbered Open Space	34.1
Adjusted Unencumbered Open Space as a % of Gross Developable Area (to be used for Open Space Equalisation Scheme)	10.9%

Land Budget - Precinct 5	
Total Precinct Area	197.3
· Encumbered Land – Transmission Line Easement	10.1
· Encumbered Land – MW Drainage Reserve & Retarding Basin	12.7
· Pipe-track Reservation	1.4
· Rail Reservation	4.1
Gross Developable Area (GDA)	169
· Residential	132.8
· Mernda Town Centre (retail / commercial)	9.6
· Employment Park (commercial)	7.2
· School Sites	3.5
· Unencumbered Open Space	14.7
· YVW Flow Control Facilities	1.2
Approximate Residential Lot Yield @ 8 lots per Ha of GDA	1352
Unencumbered Open Space as a % of Gross Developable Area	8.7%
+/- weighted share of 10.8Ha open space for regional recreation reserve based on GDA	+1.05
+/- weighted share of 6Ha non-specific active open space in Precinct 2A based on % GDA	+0.58
Adjusted Unencumbered Open Space	16.3
Adjusted Unencumbered Open Space as a % of Gross Developable Area (to be used for Open Space Equalisation Scheme)	9.6%

MERNDA STRATEGY PLAN
City of Whittlesea

Plan 3.1 Mernda Strategy Plan

- PRECINCT BOUNDARIES
- MERNDA TOWN CENTRE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT ZONE
- RETAIL/MIXED USE
- PRECINCT ACTIVITY CENTRE
- LOCAL CONVENIENCE CENTRE
- RAIL STATION / MODAL INTERCHANGE
- SCHOOLS: GOVERNMENT PRIMARY (P), SECONDARY (S) OR P-12
- POSSIBLE DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOL SITE
- EMPLOYMENT PARK
- OPEN SPACE (INCLUDES TRANSMISSION LINE EASEMENTS & MELBOURNE WATER DRAINAGE RESERVES)
- RETARDING BASIN / WETLAND (APPROX AREAS ONLY - DETAILS TO BE CONFIRMED WITH MELBOURNE WATER)
- SEWERAGE FLOW CONTROL FACILITIES
- RESIDENTIAL:**
 - LOW DENSITY
 - STANDARD DENSITY (LOT SIZE: 450-700 SQ.M)
 - MEDIUM DENSITY (LOT SIZE: 200-450 SQ.M.)
- RAIL RESERVE
- ROADS:**
 - PRIMARY ARTERIAL
 - SECONDARY ARTERIAL
 - SUB-ARTERIAL
 - COLLECTOR

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Pelham Design Studio 22/1/08

