

21.03 SETTLEMENT AND HOUSING

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21.03-1 Key Issues and Influences

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

Population growth is also influenced by people choosing to live in rural areas and small towns particularly where they are serviced by the regional transport corridor. In particular, plans to sewer Gordon may enable development of the township, which has scenic qualities and is close to Ballarat, without unacceptable environmental impact on the Moorabool River water catchment.

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

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

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

21.03-2 Objective—Urban Growth Management

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- To promote an accelerated rate of population and local employment growth to support the provision of improved social and physical infrastructure in the Shire.
- To plan and manage sustainable urban growth that is concentrated in and around the Shire's major towns.

Strategies

- Ensure the supply of land zoned for industry, business, and residential purposes is sufficient to accommodate accelerated rates of growth.
- Facilitate and promote a range of residential and economic development options, including high quality 'master-planned' developments.
- Direct population and employment growth to Bacchus Marsh with supporting growth in Ballan.
- Consolidate established urban areas by promoting infill development of land zoned for urban purposes.
- Retain the non-urban break between Bacchus Marsh and the metropolitan area.
- Avoid urban development where it is likely to impact on highly productive agricultural land, environmental values and the long-term sustainability of natural resources.
- Ensure planning and management of urban growth in designated towns takes account of existing and proposed infrastructure capacity.
- Do not support residential and other development in settlements where reticulated sewerage systems are not available and onsite treatment of effluent cannot be provided.

- Ensure 10 – 15 years of appropriately zoned land is always available in Bacchus Marsh and Ballan to provide for a range of housing options.
- Manage urban growth through Precinct Structure Planning and the implementation of development contributions plans. Discourage subdivision other than in accordance with an approved growth area precinct structure plan or, for larger infill areas, a development plan.
- Ensure a clear separation between urban development and farming activities.

21.03-3 Objective—Residential Development

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To extend the range of housing types available to provide resident choice and meet changing housing needs.

To achieve high quality living environments which balance the provision of residential development opportunities with the protection of productive agricultural land and environmental assets.

Strategies

- Facilitate the creation of integrated, liveable, walkable neighbourhoods in towns.
- Plan for a diversity of housing types and densities, particularly near activity centres and community focal points in Bacchus Marsh and Ballan.
- Design housing to be adaptable for use by smaller households, the aged and people with disabilities.
- Provide for non residential uses, including convenience shops and medical centres, in locations that are consistent, and compatible, with the scale and character of the area, in particular adjacent properties. These uses should be located on lots fronting main or local arterial roads.

21.03-4 Objective—Landscape and Neighbourhood Character

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

Strategies

- Infill development should protect and enhance the existing character, built form and natural environment of the Shire’s towns and villages including the country town scale and rural atmosphere of each town.
- Development in growth areas should develop a strong sense of place that respects its landscape setting.
- New development should protect the visual, aesthetic, and environmental values of escarpments and ridgelines generally, and views from the Bacchus Marsh valley in particular.
- Community identity of townships should be strengthened through design of new development.
- Retain non-urban breaks between towns and settlements.
- Avoid residential development in the farming areas unless it is required for the agricultural use of the land.
- Protect and reinforce the Shire’s built and natural heritage as identified in heritage studies for the Shire.

- Ensure that new development is appropriately sited, designed and constructed to blend with the surrounding landscape and protect significant landscape values, native vegetation and rural settings.
- Discourage inappropriate development on scenic hilltops, ridge lines and areas of visual prominence.

21.03-5 Objective—Rural Lifestyle Opportunities

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To support development in small towns and rural lifestyle opportunities as an additional residential choice.

Strategies

- Prevent the fragmentation of farm land through inappropriate subdivisions.
- Limit residential development in areas without reticulated services where the development would compromise water quality (particularly in Special Water Supply Catchments), adversely affect agricultural production, or impact on native vegetation and habitat values.
- Only consider expansion of existing small towns after land already zoned for urban purposes has been substantially developed.
- Provide for planned rural living development in appropriate locations in recognition of the attractiveness of rural lifestyle options. Identify appropriate opportunities for planned rural residential/rural living development after the Moorabool rural strategy has been completed.
- Provide for limited residential development in areas zoned Rural Living. Preference will be given to subdivision where the following criteria can be met:
 - the overall density of residential development satisfies environmental and physical requirements, including appropriate on-site treatment of effluent and stormwater management;
 - development does not restrict agricultural and horticultural production;
 - sealed access roads service all lots;
 - reticulated water services are provided; and
 - the development leads to an overall enhancement in the condition of the environment.
- Focus rural living development in areas close to urban centres with good access to services and facilities where there is minimal impact on productive agriculture and horticulture or areas with environmental values.
- Require development in the Bences Road Local Area Structure area to be in accord with the Bences Road Local Area Structure Plan report.

21.03-6 Implementation

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Zones and Overlays

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

- Apply the General Residential Zone Schedule 2 to designated areas within the Bacchus Marsh Activity Centre, Bacchus Marsh Civic and Community Hub, Halletts Way and designated areas surrounding Darley Plaza;

- Apply the General Residential Zone Schedule 3 to designated areas near community and retail facilities in Bacchus Marsh and Darley;
- Apply the Neighbourhood Residential Zone Schedule 1 to Gordon to reflect the landscape character and minimum lot size requirements (infrastructure capacity constraints) within the Gordon Structure Plan;
- Apply Development Plan Overlays to provide for density patterns, road networks, open space networks, staging, and integration between new and existing development, supply of reticulated water and sewerage, drainage, fire prevention, and vegetation and landscape protection to planned residential areas requiring development;
- Review the Restructure Overlay to the old Crown townships of Blakeville, Old Wallace, Elaine North, and Rowsley and other measures necessary to support the implementation of restructure plans; and,
- Apply an Incorporated Plan Overlay to the Bences Road Local Area Structure Plan area that is in accord with the Bences Road Local Area Structure Plan Report.

Local policy and exercise of discretion

- Provide heavily vegetated buffers of at least 50 metres between industrial and residential land to protect the amenity of the residential areas, and where possible, provide opportunities for pedestrian and cycling links to Council's Tracks and Trails Master Plan.
- Where relevant require a report to accompany planning applications that explains how the siting and design of the proposal has responded to objectives and strategies of this MSS, the topography, environmental constraints, and the landscape significance and character of the area.
- One dwelling may be constructed on each lot created in accordance with an incorporated restructure plan subject to appropriate responses to environmental issues, siting, construction details and effluent disposal.
- Ensure that new buildings and works are sited, designed and constructed to:
 - minimise the removal and disturbance of native vegetation;
 - avoid protruding above ridgelines, hill tops and tree canopies;
 - avoid construction on slopes greater than 20%;
 - minimise soil disturbance and levels of excavation and fill;
 - avoid the use of reflective building materials such as zincalume; and
 - use external colours, materials and finishes of subdued tones that blend with the surrounding landscape and vegetation.
- Prevent the construction of buildings that create an appearance of bulk, scale and size in visually prominent and significant landscape areas.
- Encourage the planting of indigenous native vegetation to assist in screening new development.
- Require the design and construction of all weather access roads and driveways that traverse slopes and minimise visual intrusion and soil erosion.
- Require applications for buildings and works to be accompanied by a report that explains how the proposal has been sited and designed to respond to the topography, landscape significance and character of the surrounding area and achieve the objectives and performance criteria of this policy.

21.03-7 Further Strategic Work

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- Prepare structure plans for Gordon and Blackwood as a high priority in preparation for sewerage of the towns.
- Prepare structure plans for towns including Wallace, Dunnstown, Yendon, Myrning, and Mt Egerton.
- Undertake a study to identify strengths and development opportunities for Moorabool's small towns with a view to facilitating the better utilisation of existing infrastructure.
- With water authorities develop agreed municipality-specific provisions for the Shire's Special Water Supply Catchments to provide the basis for a revised schedule to ESO1 and review of associated policies.
- Develop protocols for involvement of water authorities in urban growth strategies and rezoning proposals.
- Develop a Local Policy or overlay(s) to manage development to address heritage, landscape, vegetation, and environmental values in Blackwood, Barry's Reef, and Simmons Reef.
- Review absorption and contamination risk of land in existing Rural Living Zones in Special Water Supply Catchments.
- Integrate the Wildfire Management Overlay and the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan.
- Develop a Social Impact Assessment Policy to ensure consideration of the social impacts of major developments proposals.

21.03-8 Other Actions

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- Advocate and continue support for capital works programs of infrastructure agencies to:
 - to address the issue of future water supply;
 - Sewer Gordon and Blackwood and advocate for sewerage of other townships in water catchment areas;
 - Improve and integrate public transport services, including reopening the Gordon railway station; and
 - Provide other utilities (including natural gas) to small towns.
- Develop a Shire-wide telecommunications strategy to identify current and future telecommunication/broadband needs and provision as part of new development and subdivision applications.
- Facilitate future transport infrastructure planning through local structure plans.
- Develop agreed municipality-specific provisions for the Shire's Special Water Supply Catchments to provide the basis for a revised schedule to ESO1 and review of associated policies.
- Develop protocols for involvement of water authorities in urban growth strategies and rezoning proposals.