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GC20**MEDIUM DENSITY HOUSING POLICY**

This policy applies to land in the Residential Growth Zone, General Residential Zone and Neighbourhood Residential Zone and more particularly to applications made under the provisions of Clauses 32.07-4, 32.08-4 and 32.09-5 (Construction and extension of two or more dwellings on a lot, dwellings on common property and residential buildings).

Policy Basis

The urban and township areas of the Shire are characterised by a tree canopy of predominantly indigenous species. Residential areas are generally of a lower density than for metropolitan Melbourne, providing for open spaces and retention of a bushland setting. The built environment does not dominate the natural environment.

The natural and built character of residential areas contributes to a high level of amenity and a strong sense of place for the community. Medium density housing development needs to take account of these qualities and not detract from the character of residential areas.

By the year 2021, it is forecast that Nillumbik Shire Council will need to accommodate an additional 4,800 households. The demonstrated trend of decreasing average household size in the Shire of Nillumbik provides the impetus to provide for some medium density housing as an alternative housing choice.

As well as providing for more efficient use of infrastructure, consolidation of development will assist to protect the surrounding natural environment, water catchments, rural landscapes and unique settlement pattern - elements of the Shire which are highly valued by the community.

The locations considered most suited to medium density development are those with appropriate infrastructure in close proximity to public transport scheduled stops, commercial areas, public open space and other community facilities.

The design and location of medium density housing should be managed to provide for a diversity of housing that contributes to the preferred character of the urban area.

Objectives

- To identify appropriate locations for the facilitation of medium density housing development.
- To ensure that medium density housing development is compatible with the existing character of the area.

Policy

It is policy that:

Design and Siting

- Medium density housing that detracts from the character of the area will be strongly discouraged.
- The siting and design of buildings and works should protect and enhance local amenity, areas of environmental significance and heritage places.
- New development should have regard to the building form and style of surrounding dwellings. Contemporary and innovative design that does not detract from the

preferred character of the area will be encouraged. The use of timber, stone, mud-brick or any combinations of these materials is generally encouraged.

- Medium density housing development that is designed and sited to appear of a single dwelling when viewed from the street will be encouraged.
- Continuous building lines and blank walls should be avoided, building lines and walls should be articulated, contain visual features or be otherwise varied.
- Siting and design should respond to the slope of the land to minimise the need for cut and fill. Split levels in dwelling floors should be used to reduce building bulk and mass.
- Siting of buildings and works should respond to existing vegetation (including drip-lines of trees) and minimise the need for the removal of existing trees. Sufficient space should be provided for adequate planting of appropriate vegetation. Open space should be sited around significant vegetation.
- If tree removal is approved as a result of a development proposal, a minimum planting of twice the number of trees that existed on the site prior to the development will be encouraged.
- Canopy trees (preferably indigenous to the area) should be provided within a site frontage of a new medium density housing development and in strategic locations elsewhere within the site.
- Private open space areas should be practical and useable having consideration for shape of open space, continuity or fragmentation of open space, slope of land and any other relevant factor. Sufficient space should be designated to provide for adequate planting of appropriate vegetation.
- Medium density housing should not need to rely on road reserves or other public land to facilitate a proposed development (including works and screen vegetation planting).
- Energy efficient housing will be promoted. New dwellings will be encouraged to achieve a home energy rating of 4 or 5 stars.
- Site design should consider ease of access by car and pedestrians to, and within, the site. Driveway, footpath and other access ways should follow contours of the land and respond to other environmental characteristics. 'Gunbarrel driveways' will be strongly discouraged.
- Additional visitor car spaces (above the standard requirements in Clause 55) will be encouraged for developments along main roads, where sites are adjacent to or near main intersections and where narrow roads make on-street parking difficult or dangerous.

Location

- Medium density housing should be located close to Eltham Town Centre, Hurstbridge Shopping Centre, or Diamond Creek Shopping Centre and in proximity to the Eltham, Hurstbridge and Diamond Creek railway stations respectively, because sites considered suited to medium density development are those with appropriate infrastructure in localities within walking distance (approximately 400 metres) of all of the following:-
 - a public transport scheduled stop;
 - public open space;
 - community facilities; and,
 - commercial centres.

The Eltham Town Centre, Hurstbridge Shopping Centre and Diamond Creek Shopping Centres provide such facilities.

- Medium density housing opportunities are considered at the planning stage of proposed residential estates rather than following the planning approval of new estates.

Policy References

- Relevant town structure plans, strategies, housing/residential character studies and design guidelines (including Eltham Town Centre Strategy, Diamond Creek and Hurstbridge Township Strategies, Shire-wide Housing Strategy, Urban Residential Character Study, Residential Design Guidelines for urban areas).