

## 21.04 SETTLEMENT

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### 21.04-1 Activity Centre Planning

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Defined activity centres are the focus for a range of shopping, employment and entertainment activities.

The effectiveness of activity centres in retaining local expenditure, attracting associated services and increasing local employment is boosted by ensuring that they and their trade areas are linked by quality transport and communications infrastructure. The City is well-located with its access to the Metropolitan Ring Road which provides direct freeway links to airports, docks and central Melbourne.

The City's established Metropolitan Activity Centre is Epping Central. The centre has significant capacity to build on its existing commercial, service and infrastructure assets including Epping Station, the Northern Hospital, Melbourne Polytechnic and the Pacific Epping Shopping Centre. The development of Epping Central provides a significant opportunity to respond to the City of Whittlesea's housing, employment and service needs at a regional scale within an established urban context. A future Metropolitan Activity Centre is also planned in Lockerbie further north.

The Plenty Valley Town Centre is a growing sub-regional centre servicing the eastern half of the municipality. A key challenge will be to distinguish the role and function of Epping Central from the Plenty Valley Town Centre. Additional large centres are planned in the future at Mernda and Wollert.

Two State Significant Industrial Precincts include:

- the Northern Industrial Precinct (which also spans parts of the City of Hume (and includes the Melbourne Wholesale Markets) and
- the proposed Beveridge Interstate Freight Terminal.

Additionally University Hill (including RMIT University) is a significant specialist centre that is providing a source of office based development not typically seen in growth areas.

Given the strategic location of Lockerbie and its designation as a Metropolitan Activity Centre within the northern growth corridor, it will provide a range of services to the local and regional catchment, including: education, health, employment, aged care and civic service. It is intended that the Lockerbie Metropolitan Activity Centre:

- will support higher order government, community, civic, education and health services;
- will support regional facilities for leisure, recreation, sporting, art, cultural and tourism uses.

The Lockerbie Framework Plan for the future Metropolitan Activity Centre identifies two large sites as Future Investigation Area for uses such as regional health, education and employment uses.

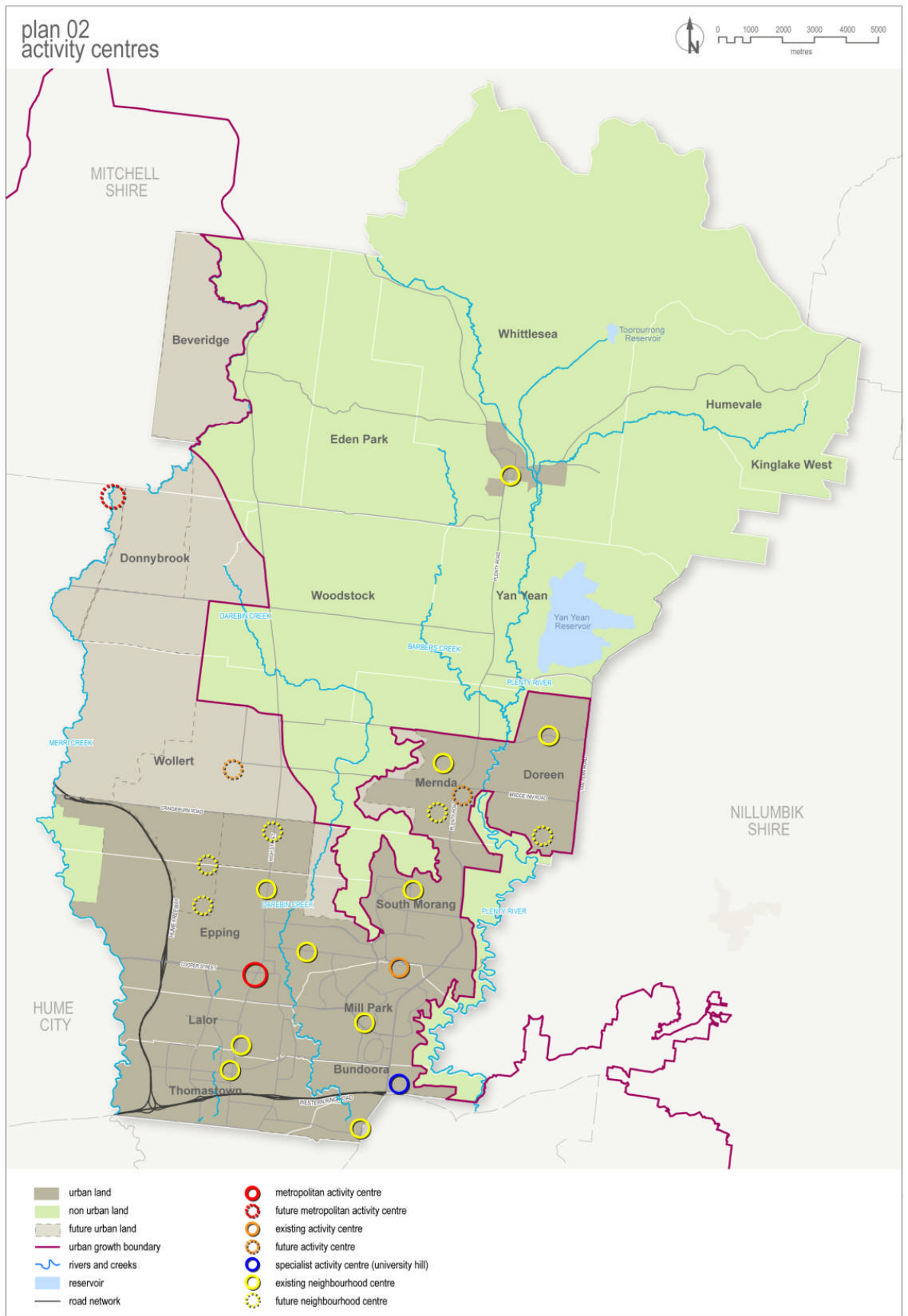
**Objective 1: To provide for a number of major and neighbourhood activity centres each with its own role and function.**

Strategy 1.1 Continue to reduce the amount of escape expenditure by incorporating a range of other employment and entertainment activities in higher order centres.

Strategy 1.2 Allocate unmet potential for the provision of retail floor space in locations which are accessible to existing and future population and which contribute to or promote opportunities for employment generation and provision of public transport.

Strategy 1.3 Support the strategic allocation of employment nodes.

- Strategy 1.4 Limit the extent of commercial incursion into residential and industrial areas by allocating suitable amounts of industrial and commercial land in appropriate locations.
- Strategy 1.5 Support the continued viability of lower order centres.
- Strategy 1.6 Facilitate transport and telecommunications services between activity centres and their trade areas.
- Strategy 1.7 Provide for activated street based environments which are pedestrian friendly, incorporating a mix of retail, commercial and community facilities with opportunities for residential or business uses on upper levels.
- Objective 2: To support the development of Epping Central as a Metropolitan Activity Centre.**
- Strategy 2.1 Implement the objectives of the *Epping Central Structure Plan* to achieve a more sustainable, higher-density, high-amenity urban form.
- Strategy 2.2 Build upon the presence of the Northern Hospital and Epping Specialist Medical Clinic by supporting hospital, ancillary health related services, education, and specialist industries.
- Strategy 2.3 Plan for the delivery of a Health and Wellbeing Hub within the Epping Metropolitan Activity Centre in a location that facilitates a relationship with the existing health services in Epping Central.
- Objective 3: To establish Plenty Valley Town Centre as a higher order centre servicing the existing and future population growth in the south-eastern half of the City.**
- Strategy 3.1 Create a focus for civic and community purposes in Plenty Valley.
- Strategy 3.2 Differentiate the Plenty Valley Town Centre by retaining existing vegetation, particularly River Red Gum native species trees, and measures to create a strong sense of local character.



**21.04-2**11/05/2017  
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The City of Whittlesea has abundant natural features which contribute to the definition, character and extent of land reserved to accommodate urban growth. A key element of forward planning exercises has been to recognise the value of these assets and advances the concept of designated growth areas interspersed with non-urban breaks. It is essential that these non-urban breaks are permanently preserved to maintain the character of the municipality and to contribute to the overall attractiveness of the City of Whittlesea.

Rapid urban growth requires continued careful management to ensure that:

- Environmental assets are not lost.
- Non-urban areas are not threatened by uncontrolled or ill-defined limits to urban expansion.
- Longer term strategic approaches to the allocation of land uses are not compromised by incremental decision making.

In this regard it is critical that development is appropriately managed. The City seeks to ensure opportunities for light and heavy rail extensions and other forms of public transport throughout the municipality. The construction of roads and the provision of mixed use employment generating centres are of key importance.

Furthermore, housing development must continue to be appropriately planned in locations where infrastructure planning can be undertaken effectively and where suitable measures are provided to minimise adverse amenity impacts from industry and future rail infrastructure.

Management of growth pressures in this manner avoids inappropriate incursions into non-urban areas which are under intense pressure for rural residential and other types of subdivision.

**Objective 1: To effectively manage urban growth**

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|--------------|---|
| Strategy 1.1 | Maximise beneficial relationships between compatible land uses.   |
| Strategy 1.2 | Avoid inappropriate incursions into non-urban or environmentally sensitive areas.   |
| Strategy 1.3 | Protect the non-urban breaks between South Morang, Mernda/Doreen and Whittlesea Township and between Wollert and Donnybrook/Woodstock with a focus on the Quarry and Whittlesea Hills and linking key watercourses. |
| Strategy 1.4 | Protect rural and environmentally sensitive areas, including habitat linkages from the incursion of urban development.  |
| Strategy 1.5 | To reinforce the Urban Growth Boundary.   |
| Strategy 1.6 | Provide for suitable separation of new residential areas from industry, to minimise the potential for adverse amenity impacts.  |
| Strategy 1.7 | Provide for suitable measures to protect the amenity of new residential areas in close proximity to future rail infrastructure, to minimise the potential for noise impacts.  |

**21.04-3**11/05/2017  
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The City of Whittlesea is experiencing significant housing growth and change and will continue to do so in the future. Although much of this growth is directed towards the City's new growth areas, there is increasing pressure to manage housing growth within the established urban areas of the municipality.

Increasing the availability of housing options within the established suburbs of the municipality will be important to address the changing demographic profile and the general decline in household size in the city.

To accommodate the changing demographic trends and housing needs of the community Council has developed a *Housing Diversity Strategy* that provides the strategic approach to planning for residential growth and change in the established suburbs of the municipality.

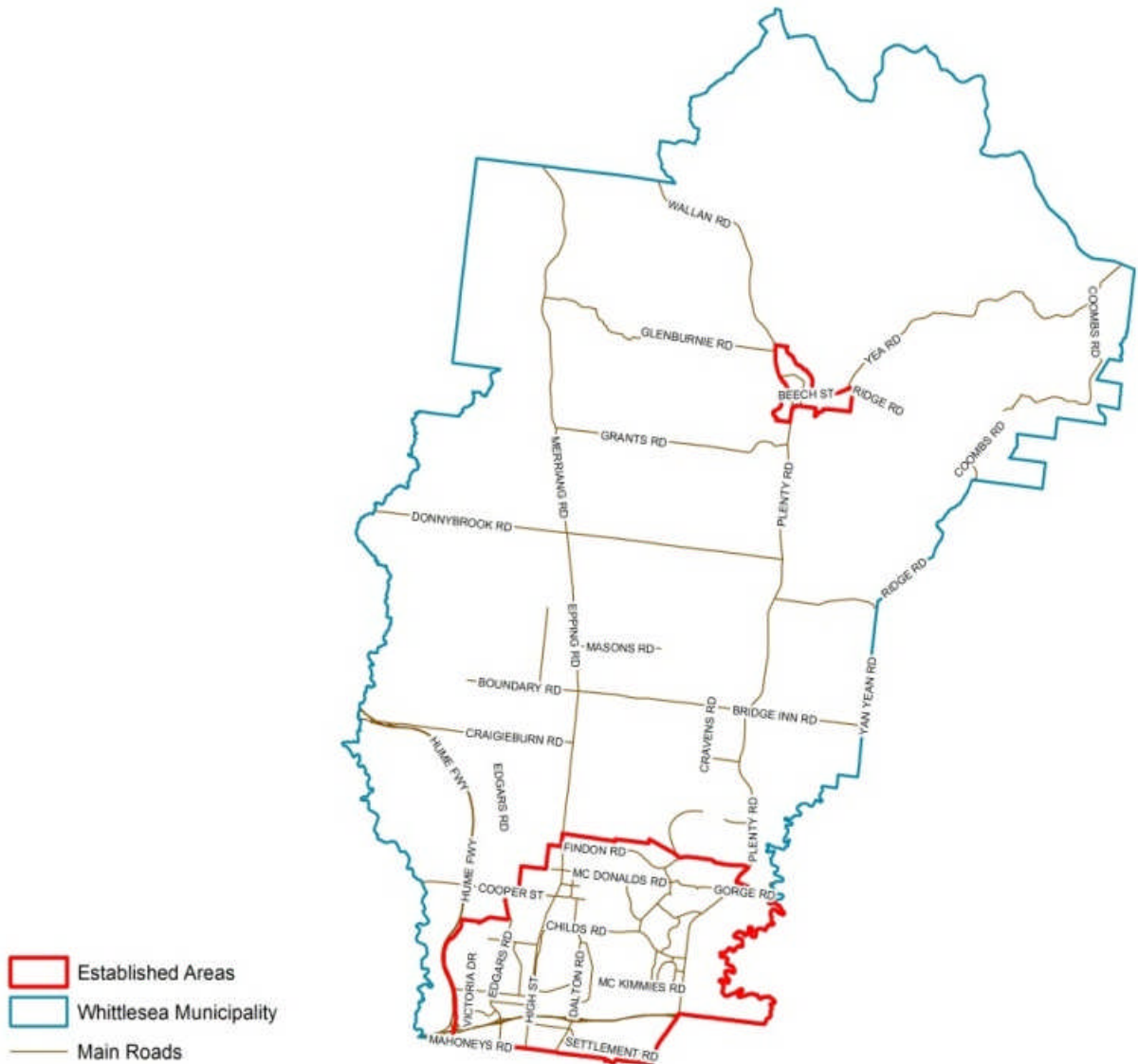
The established suburbs of the municipality include Lalor, Thomastown, Bundoora, Epping, Mill Park, part of South Morang and Whittlesea Township.

More diverse housing in terms of size, type, tenure, cost and style within the established suburbs, in particular well located medium and higher density housing, will ensure greater housing choice for residents as their housing needs change and will enable residents to 'age in place' close to established social networks, family support and services. A diverse range of housing can also help to encourage greater housing affordability within the municipality.

The Housing Diversity Strategy is detailed further in Clause 21.09

**Objective 1: To manage housing growth and change within the established suburbs of the municipality to ensure there is a diverse mix of housing that meets the needs of the local community and reflects demographic changes and trends.**

- Strategy 1.1 Implement the Housing Diversity Strategy.
- Strategy 1.2 Provide diverse housing size, type, tenure, cost and style.
- Strategy 1.3 Provide well located medium and higher density housing.
- Strategy 1.4 Encourage developments which support "ageing in place".
- Strategy 1.5 Support housing affordability by providing a range of housing types.



**21.04-4 Open Space Network**

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Open spaces within urban areas offer the opportunity to develop interest and identity and contribute significantly to the development of a sense of community through the provision of spaces which cater for a range of active and passive activities. Open spaces are valuable assets for recreation, conservation, visual amenity, health and well-being.

The City of Whittlesea contains a wide reaching open space network which includes Council owned formal and informal parks and reserves, sports grounds, playgrounds, conservation areas, waterway corridors, wetlands and water detention areas and linear links. The municipality is also home to several State significant parks which are managed by external agencies, such as the Kinglake National Park, the Plenty Gorge Parklands, Yan Yean Reservoir and Toorourang Reservoir.

Open space networks incorporate features of local environmental and cultural significance in order to protect and enhance them, and elevate them as key focal points throughout the municipality. Features of environmental and cultural significance include River Red Gums, Aboriginal and European cultural heritage, and natural features are taken into consideration when planning for future open space. In addition, unencumbered land also needs to be set aside for a range of leisure and sporting purposes. Generally, the extent of significant

natural features requires open space to be provided in excess of minimum entitlements. However, early development of these spaces and preservation of existing features such as vegetation contribute significantly to the image and quality of new estates in fringe locations and ensure that the on-going leisure needs of residents are progressively met.

Despite possessing natural features of State and metropolitan significance such as the Plenty Gorge, National Park areas, the Yan Yean Reservoir and open landscape qualities within easy reach of Melbourne, the City of Whittlesea has an underdeveloped tourism industry. There is capacity to further develop local tourism.

The Quarry Hills Regional Parkland is the key regional open space project for the Northern Growth Corridor. Broadly, the area is centrally located between the growth areas of South Morang, Mernda, Epping North and Wollert and provides a green break within these development areas.

Once fully assembled, the parkland will provide for up to 1100 hectares of contiguous regional parkland that has the opportunity to link directly into future large scale conservation reserves identified within the Victorian Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. These links also have the potential to create linear open space links and habitat corridors between the Plenty River, Darebin Creek and Merri Creek. The parkland will provide for a mix of passive and active open space, the protection of wildlife corridors, the protection of Aboriginal and European cultural heritage, and the protection of regionally significant biodiversity.





- Objective 1 To provide an appropriate range and proportion of open space types to reflect community expectations for nature conservation, informal recreation and sporting opportunities.**
- Strategy 1.1 Provide for east-west open space corridors in the region, specifically between the Darebin, Merri Creek and Plenty River for trail users and also for native fauna movement.
- Strategy 1.2 Support the establishment of tourism enterprises relating to open space that are compatible with the local environment.
- Strategy 1.3 Provide accessible open space and facilities to people with disabilities.
- Strategy 1.4 Establish links between open spaces as a network to encourage access and recreation on foot or by bicycle, and to provide for fauna movement, within and beyond the municipality.
- Strategy 1.5 Design and develop public open spaces to high standards of useability, sustainability, attractiveness, sensitivity to site and safety for users.
- Strategy 1.6 Secure and protect strategically important sites for recreation or nature conservation.
- Strategy 1.7 Provide growth areas with adequate, good quality open space as they develop.
- Strategy 1.8 Consider the opportunity to redesign and develop selected sportsgrounds and surrounds for informal recreation (while retaining the sporting facilities).
- Objective 2: To comprehensively plan for the leisure and recreation needs of existing and future residents.**
- Strategy 2.1 Advocate for open space and recreation needs assessments as part of the forward planning process.
- Strategy 2.2 Protect the open space values of watercourses such as the Plenty River, Darebin and Merri Creeks and their various tributaries.
- Strategy 2.3 Provide a regional open space network by progressively developing Quarry Hills as a regional open space area in association with the Plenty Gorge Parklands and Merri Creek Parklands.
- Strategy 2.4 Provide for river parklands within Whittlesea Township.
- Strategy 2.5 Provide a range of open space types and sizes.
- Strategy 2.6 Provide opportunities for shared public and school use of sports grounds.
- Strategy 2.7 Promote an increased range of outdoor recreation opportunities for the community.
- Strategy 2.8 Encourage design features that make open space attractive for use and cost effective to maintain.
- Strategy 2.9 Provide open space along waterways with activated frontages for amenity and safety.
- Strategy 2.10 Ensure that areas reserved for open space on encumbered and unencumbered land is fit for purpose.
- Strategy 2.11 Encourage the design of open spaces and Council facilities which meets the needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities (CALD).

## 21.04-5 Habitat Creation and Revegetation

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There are many creek valleys, aqueducts/pipe tracks, servicing easements, road reserves and disused railway reserves that traverse the City of Whittlesea. These offer opportunities for nature conservation and pedestrian, bicycle and habitat links between open spaces and other destinations. Habitats within protected conservation sites can be supplemented by habitat creation and revegetation.

**Objective 1: To create habitat areas and links which supplement significant conservation sites and provide for passive recreation in a natural or semi-natural environment.**

Strategy 1.1 Incorporate water management infrastructure into parkland design to retain and filter stormwater, and to maximise habitat values, where appropriate.

Strategy 1.2 Increase conservation bushland through the revegetation of waterway corridors, undeveloped open space and significant conservation sites.

Strategy 1.3 Provide off-road pedestrian, bicycle and habitat links between areas of open space and other destinations.

Strategy 1.4 Link the municipality's trail and green corridor links to the wider metropolitan trail and open space network.

Strategy 1.5 Protect and conserve places of nature conservation significance or cultural heritage value in open space areas.

Strategy 1.6 Revegetate the open space system with locally indigenous species and provide other forms of flora and fauna habitat where appropriate.

**Objective 2: To protect River Red Gums and integrate habitat areas**

Strategy 2.1 Set aside parts of parks and open space with River Red Gums as regeneration areas in each precinct, and re-establish understorey vegetation.

Strategy 2.2 Encourage subdivisions to be designed and constructed to protect existing River Red Gums where possible in open space or road verges.

Strategy 2.3 Use Plains Grassy Woodlands (Ecological Vegetation Class) species where River Red Gums are known to prosper as the dominant revegetation planting theme in public open space areas.

Strategy 2.4 Retain and restore natural landscape character where possible, with special emphasis on River Red Gum.

## 21.04-6 Green Wedge Areas

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The Green Wedge Area (refer to Plan 4 in this Clause) supports a diversity of land uses including:

- Farming activities;
- Rural living and small settlements;
- Recreation and tourism opportunities;
- Scenic landscapes;
- Aboriginal and European heritage places;
- Water storage catchment areas;
- Significant flora and fauna habitats; and
- Extractive industries.

The Green Wedge is characterised by its diversity of landforms, soil types and land uses. Almost half of the Green Wedge is public land used for closed water catchments, national parks and state forests.

The northern elevated section, the Plenty Ranges is characterised by strongly dissected slopes and valleys which surround cleared rural land and contain the forested areas of the Mt Disappointment State Park and the Kinglake National Park. This area has important habitat values and contributes to the Toorourrong and Yan Yean water catchment systems. It also comprises the south-western slopes of the Great Dividing Range.

The Plenty Valley, nested beneath the Plenty Ranges, extends to include the Whittlesea Township and Plenty Gorge. This valley is characterised by a relatively flat central area which has been extensively cleared for agricultural purposes and a steeply defined gorge in the south-eastern portion of the municipality.

**Objective 1: To conserve and enhance the rural and natural landscape character**

- Strategy 1.1 Ensure that new development has regard to the visual characteristics of the landscape and its ability to sustain change without compromising visual integrity.
- Strategy 1.2 Ensure new dwellings have regard to the landscape character and access ways are located below ridgelines and have regard to the contours of the land.
- Strategy 1.3 Maintain the rural land resource to preserve the opportunity for alternative forms of agriculture to be established within the rural areas.
- Strategy 1.4 Limit rural residential subdivision to those precincts approved in association with the *Whittlesea Township Local Structure Plan*.

**Objective 2: To ensure biodiversity and environmental values are identified, protected and enhanced on public and private land.**

- Strategy 2.1 Link remnant patches of vegetation to larger core areas of habitat in urban and urban fringe parklands.
- Strategy 2.2 Create habitat corridors including using native roadside vegetation, along creeks, drainage lines and disused railway corridors.
- Strategy 2.3 Protect habitat links and wildlife corridors.
- Strategy 2.4 Manage and eradicate weeds throughout the Green Wedge Areas.
- Strategy 2.5 Protect rocky knolls from soil dumping, soil removal and rock removal.
- Strategy 2.6 Ensure habitat corridors are planned at the early stages of development and land use proposals.
- Strategy 2.7 Encourage River Red Gum regeneration.
- Strategy 2.8 Minimise prescribed pest plants and animals.
- Strategy 2.9 Support and promote sustainable agriculture methods and resource utilisation in rural areas.

**Objective 3: To reduce land use conflict between the Green Wedge Areas and urban and rural communities.**

- Strategy 3.1 Provide for defined boundaries that preserve the integrity of both rural and urban areas.
- Strategy 3.2 Preserve the scenic landscape qualities derived from the natural and rural character of the Green Wedge.
- Strategy 3.3 Protect significant habitat areas adjoining any Urban Growth Boundary.

- Strategy 3.4 Support a natural landscape based boundary to urban growth, including the use of identified open space, such as Quarry Hills Regional Parkland Interest Area.
- Objective 4: To protect identified viewing corridors which offer important visual access to rural and natural areas.**
- Strategy 4.1 Protect the identified significant viewsheds and visually significant roadside corridors including:
- Epping/Merriang Road visual line;
  - Donnybrook Road, especially through the River Red Gum woodland onto Barkers Creek and She Oak Hill near the Growling Frog Golf Course;
  - Whittlesea/Wallan Road along the eastern gateway to the municipality;
  - Glenburnie Road;
  - Yan Yean Road between Whittlesea Township and Kinglake;
  - Arthurs Creek Road.
- Strategy 4.2 Protect critical visual quality areas including:
- The non-urban break between Masons Road and the Whittlesea Township along the Plenty Road corridor;
  - The views to the Plenty Ranges, the Great Dividing Range and Quarry Hills.
- Objective 5: To protect and improve the environmental health, social and economic values of waterways, wetlands and aquifers.**
- Strategy 5.1 Ensure that development does not adversely affect the water quality or quantity of the municipality's watercourse or groundwater.
- Strategy 5.2 Promote and encourage opportunities to restore, revegetate or utilise waterways for incidental recreation opportunities and active modes of transport.
- Strategy 5.3 Discourage unrestricted access to water resources via the sinking of bores, installation of farm dams or access by stock to waterways.
- Strategy 5.4 Encourage water sensitive urban design in new developments.
- Objective 6: To support natural, cultural and landscape values for tourism and recreation.**
- Strategy 6.1 Encourage tourism that maintains the integrity of the natural environment, provides social benefits for local communities and visitors and contributes to the local economy.
- Strategy 6.2 Support suitable tourism activities which do not have adverse impacts on existing or future agriculture within the Green Wedge areas.
- Strategy 6.3 Create linkages through the Green Wedge, such as bicycle, walking and equestrian trails within rural areas and between urban areas.
- Objective 7: To protect cultural heritage**
- Strategy 7.1 Facilitate opportunities for geotourism and 'whole of place' tourism that focus on local character, historic structures, living and traditional cultures, landscape, cuisine and arts, as well as local flora and fauna.
- Strategy 7.2 Create a network of multiuse trails, including opportunities for heritage interpretation.

**21.04-7**11/05/2017  
C197**Gaming**

The City has numerous electronic gaming machines (EGMs). While these are legitimate for recreation purposes, evidence has shown that they can lead to adverse consequences for users, their families and friends, and for the community as a whole. Many residents face vulnerabilities, including financial stress, social isolation, family violence and being time poor. This is accompanied by barriers to accessing services and support. Problem gambling may cause or exacerbate circumstances, resulting in significant personal and community harm.

Careful and considered planning is required to ensure that any proposed new gaming venues or increase in EGMs takes these issues into account and recognises the possible health, social and economic consequences for community wellbeing.

**Objective 1 To reduce the negative, social, economic and health impacts of gambling.**

Strategy 1.1 Consider the possible health, social and economic implications of gambling when considering applications for electronic gaming machines.

**21.04-8**11/05/2017  
C197**Implementation****Policy Guidelines**

When deciding on an application for use, development or subdivision the following matters will be considered, as appropriate:

- The objectives and actions of the City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy, 1997.
- The City of Whittlesea Housing Diversity Housing 2013-2033
- The open space objectives and actions in the following:
  - *Epping Central Structure Plan (2013)*
  - *Lockerbie Precinct Structure Plan (2012)*
  - *Lockerbie North Precinct Structure Plan (2012)*
  - *Green Wedge Management Plan 2011-2021 (2011)*
  - *Epping North East Local Structure Plan (2008)*
  - *Mernda Town Centre Comprehensive Development Plan (2006)*
  - *Aurora Comprehensive Development Plan (2007)*
  - *Mernda Strategy Plan (2004)*
  - *Epping North Local Structure Plan (2002)*
  - *Harvest Home Local Structure Plan (2002)*
  - *South Morang Local Structure Plan (1997)*
  - *Whittlesea Township Local Structure Plan (1995)*

**Reference Documents**

- *Epping North Strategic Plan 2002 and associated Local Structure Plans*
- *Epping Central Structure Plan 2013*
- *Epping North-East Development Plan*

- *Gambling Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2024*
- *Green Wedge Management Plan 2011-2021*
- *Open Space Strategy 1997*
- *Playspace Planning Framework and Policy 2013-2016*
- *South Morang Structure Plan Local Structure Plan 1997*
- *Mernda Local Structure Plan 1998*
- *Whittlesea Township Local Structure Plan 1994*
- *Housing Diversity Strategy 2013-2033*
- *Social and Affordable Housing Policy and Strategy 2012-2016*

#### **Further strategic work**

- Prepare design guidelines for developments in visually sensitive areas.
- Investigate ways to protect linear corridors of open space along all major waterways as urban development proceeds.
- Progressively review the performance, supply and demand for rural residential development in and around the Whittlesea Township.
- Investigate innovative options that support sustainable land use and management in the Green Wedge area, especially at the urban-rural interface.
- Investigate planning provisions to address environmental hazards and the protection of significant landscapes and vistas.
- Develop local policy to provide guidance and direction on native vegetation retention and net gain offsets.
- Strengthen planning provisions for the protection and improvement of the environmental health of waterways.
- Support options for strengthening local planning provisions to protect Melbourne Airport and manage the impacts on the community.
- Research and prepare a local gaming planning policy for the Whittlesea Planning Scheme that has regard to the Gambling Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2024 which guides the location and design of venues.
- Conduct an infrastructure needs analysis and develop design principles to ensure Council facilities and open spaces meet the needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities (CALD).