

21.04 SETTLEMENT

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21.04-1 Activity Centre Planning

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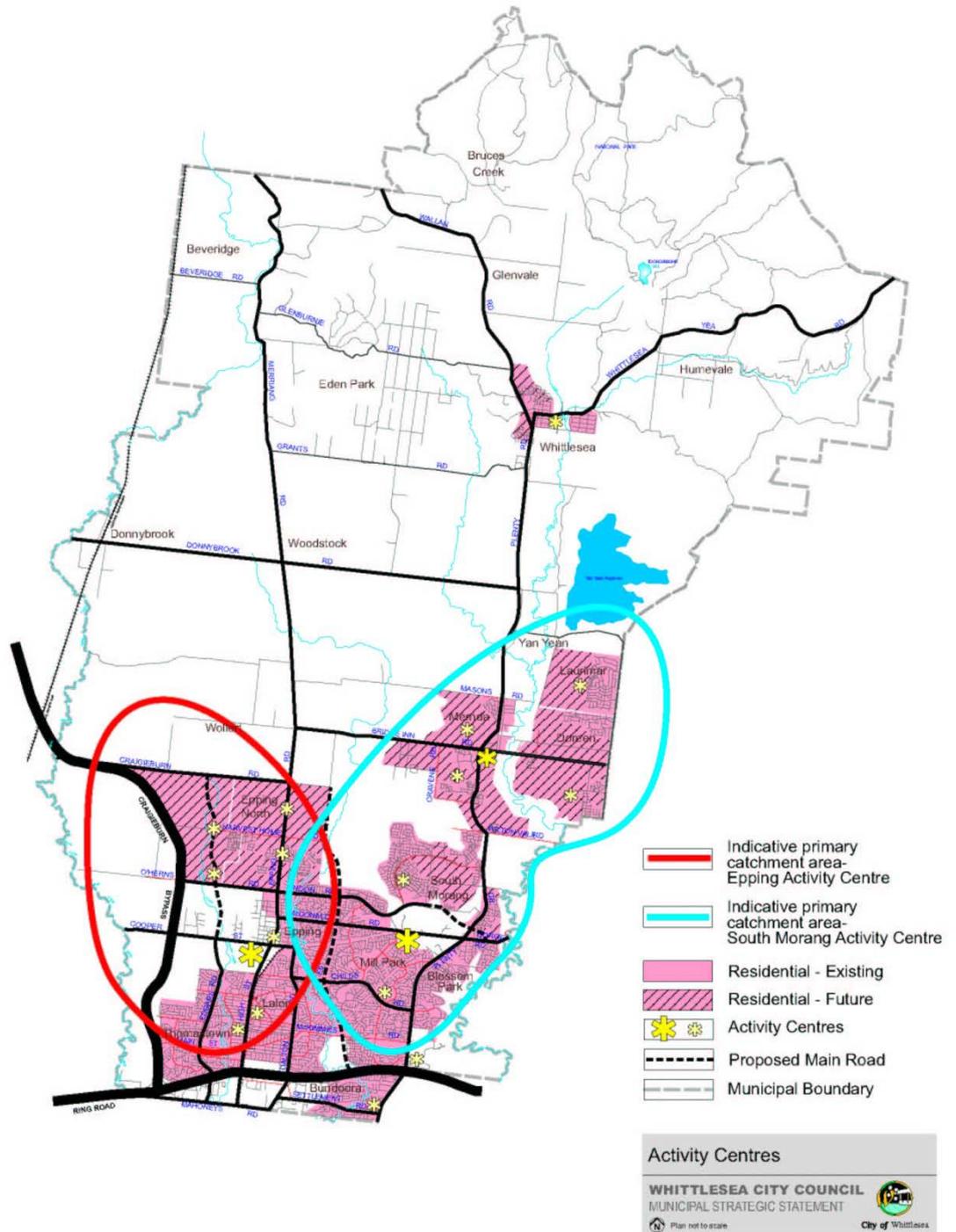
Defined activity centres which are the focus for a range of shopping, employment and entertainment activities reduce the potential for inappropriate incursion of commercial uses into residential areas and increase the potential for integrated public transport provision.

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 has achieved the establishment of two sub-regional centres, one at Epping and the other at South Morang. Local environmental features and the incorporation of public transport provision in conjunction with the development of adjoining employment areas distinguish the South Morang Activity Centre site from the Epping Plaza development. Careful delineation of the extent of commercial activity such as bulky goods retailing in association with the Epping Plaza and South Morang sites has been required. Consideration of any future expansion of the Epping Plaza development will be linked to residential development in the Epping North area.

Objective 1: To define the role and extent of a series of activity centres which establish a focus for the provision of accessible goods and services, employment generation, community meeting places and associated land uses.

- Strategy 1.1 Continue to pursue the establishment of an activity centre at the South Morang Activity Centre site to service existing and future population growth in the eastern half of the City.
- Strategy 1.2 Continue to reduce the amount of escape expenditure by incorporating a range of other employment and entertainment activities in higher order centres at South Morang and Epping.
- Strategy 1.3 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 1.4 Differentiate the South Morang Activity Centre by retaining existing vegetation, particularly River Red Gum native species trees, and progressively implementing measures to create a strong sense of local character.
- Strategy 1.5 Support the strategic allocation of employment nodes.
- Strategy 1.6 Limit the extent of commercial incursion into residential and industrial areas by allocating suitable amounts of industrial and commercial land in appropriate locations.
- Strategy 1.7 Support the continued viability of lower order centres.
- Strategy 1.8 Ensure the most effective practical range of transport and telecommunications services between activity centres and their trade areas.



21.04-2 Urban Growth

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Unlike other growth areas, the City of Whittlesea has abundant natural features which contribute to the definition, character and extent of land reserved to accommodate urban growth. Forward planning recognises 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 allocation of land uses are not compromised by incremental decision making.

In this regard it is critical that Council continues to appropriately manage development. The City pays particular attention to preserving 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 is of key importance.

Furthermore, housing development must continue to be appropriately planned in locations where infrastructure planning can be undertaken effectively and where any detrimental effects are minimised.

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 2: To effectively manage urban growth in a manner that maximises beneficial relationships between compatible land uses and which avoids inappropriate incursions into non-urban or environmentally sensitive areas.

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| Strategy 2.1 | Ensure there is an adequate available supply of zoned serviceable residential land to accommodate future growth within the municipality. |
| Strategy 2.2 | Increase the potential for long term manageable residential development by undertaking a strategic land use planning exercise for newly zoned urban land. |
| Strategy 2.3 | Define the extent of existing growth areas through the maintenance of non-urban breaks between South Morang, Mernda/Doreen and Whittlesea Township which focus on the Quarry and Whittlesea Hills. |
| Strategy 2.4 | Oppose incremental expansion into rural and environmentally sensitive areas. |
| Strategy 2.5 | Ensure comprehensive planning is undertaken for new growth areas by introducing and facilitating a strategic framework for the planning of future growth areas. |

21.04-3 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 a focus for a range of active and passive activities.

To redress this situation planning for open space networks which incorporate features of local environmental and cultural significance, such as River Red Gum trees and aboriginal artefacts for example, is undertaken as an integral component of the forward planning process. Land for a range of leisure and sporting purposes, to conserve sites of significance and create identity are set aside and used to shape the style of future urban areas. Generally, this requires open space to be provided in excess of the minimum entitlement. However, early development of these spaces and preservation of existing features such as vegetation contribute significantly to the marketing of new estates in fringe locations and ensure that the on-going leisure needs of residents are progressively met.

Despite possessing natural features of 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 has an underdeveloped tourism industry. There is capacity to further develop local tourism. Each proposal is assessed according to one principle criteria; the extent to which the proposal is compatible with or will enhance local environmental features, landscape qualities and the pattern of land use.

Objective 3: To plan for the comprehensive leisure and recreation needs of existing and future residents and to support the establishment of tourism enterprises that are compatible with the local environment and pattern of land uses.

- Strategy 3.1 Implement the objectives and actions of the City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy 1997.
- Strategy 3.2 Require open space and recreation needs assessments as part of the forward planning process.
- Strategy 3.3 Implement the open space objectives of the South Morang, Mernda/Doreen and Whittlesea Township Local Structure Plans.
- Strategy 3.4 Place greater recognition of the open space values of watercourses such as the Plenty River and Darebin and Merri Creeks.
- Strategy 3.5 Provide a regional open space network in South Morang by progressively developing the Quarry Hills as a regional open space area in association with the Plenty Gorge Parklands.
- Strategy 3.6 Provide for river parklands with Whittlesea Township by utilising open space cash contributions obtained from development within the Whittlesea Township to progressively purchase and develop land for a river park.

21.04-4 Green Wedge Areas

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While rural activities and productivity have generally declined in recent years, the City of Whittlesea rural areas are a tremendous resource by virtue of their visual qualities, natural resources and context they provide for the growth area framework.

These areas are under intense pressure to accommodate a range of activities including additional rural and rural residential style subdivision particularly around the Whittlesea Township.

Objective 3: To define the role and extent of rural areas and to establish a framework for the consideration of proposals for use and development.

- Strategy 3.1 Maintain the rural land resource to preserve the opportunity for alternative forms of agriculture to be established within the rural areas.
- Strategy 3.2 Limit rural residential subdivision to those precincts approved in association with the Whittlesea Township Local Structure Plan
- Strategy 3.3 Progressively review the performance, supply and demand for rural residential development in and around the Whittlesea Township.
- Strategy 3.4 Recognise that some employment generating land uses may require a larger rural land area.
- Strategy 3.5 Define the basic land character areas comprising the Plenty Valley, the Plenty Ranges and Western Plains.