

**21.02**

19/01/2006  
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**A SNAPSHOT OF THE CITY OF WHITTLESEA**

**21.02-1**

19/01/2006  
VC37

**The City of Whittlesea – Its Location**

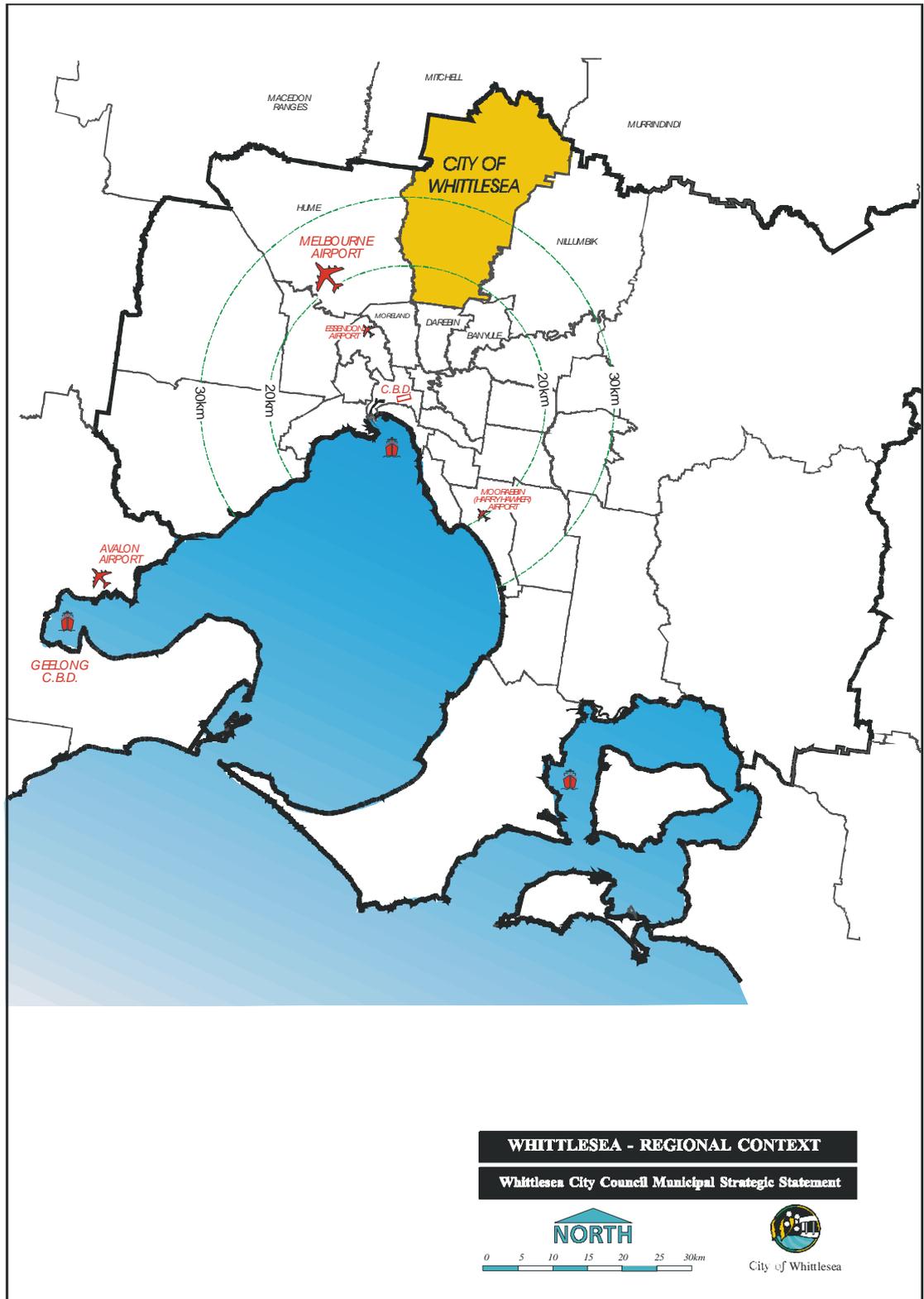
The City of Whittlesea is located on the metropolitan fringe approximately 20 kilometers to the north of Melbourne. Covering an area of approximately 487 square kilometers, the City is physically one of the largest municipalities in Metropolitan Melbourne.

Plenty Road and High Street form the major north-south transport routes through the City and a series of routes such as Mahoneys Road, Settlement Road, McDonalds Road, Findon Road, Cooper Street and Donnybrook Road cut cross the City in an east west direction. These routes link the City of Whittlesea to the adjoining municipalities and the remainder of the metropolitan area. The Western Ring Road which traverses the southern section of the City provides an important passenger vehicle and freight link to the Hume Highway, Melbourne Airport and the Port of Melbourne.

The City of Whittlesea adjoins the Shire of Nillumbik to the east, the City of Hume to the west, the Cities of Banyule and Darebin to the south and the Shires of Murrundindi, and Mitchell to the north (refer Regional Context plan)

**Important Issues**

Convenient access to the remainder of metropolitan Melbourne will enhance the long-term attractiveness of the City of Whittlesea as a housing, employment and recreation destination. The City is strategically well placed within the region to gain access to labour markets and employment centres. The natural characteristics and landscape qualities of the City will play an increasingly vital role in distinguishing the City from adjoining municipalities and in creating a strong sense of local character.



## 21.02-2 The City of Whittlesea – Its Land Uses

19/01/2006  
VC37

The City of Whittlesea has been traditionally characterised by its rapidly expanding residential areas and its continuing focus as a residential growth area. Although the City will continue to be a residential growth area in the future it also needs to manage a variety of other land uses.

Located on the urban rural fringe, the City of Whittlesea is fortunate to have the full spectrum of urban and rural land uses. The diversity in land use, including significant employment areas and activity centres, residential communities, farming activities, township communities and educational and other community uses is matched only by the diversity in landscape character and qualities.

Residents visitors to the City of Whittlesea enjoy a rare opportunity of being able to move from well serviced urban areas in the south of the municipality to non-urban areas. These non-urban areas include intact examples of the rural landscapes and sites of conservation significance. The non-urban areas are also home to a number of historic township communities such as South Morang, Mernda, Yan Yean and the Whittlesea Township.

The presence of these rural townships is reflective of the City's rich history of European Settlement. Fertile land in the Plenty Valley and the rural enterprises further north beyond the City, serviced via the now defunct Epping to Whittlesea Railway Line, meant that the City was a popular choice for settlers dating back to the mid 1800's. Evidence of other forms of early European settlement can also be found amongst the urban areas in the west of the City such as the German Town Settlement in Thomastown. Aboriginal heritage is also prevalent. There are a number of known sites of aboriginal significance with the most notable in proximity to the numerous watercourses which run throughout the City such as the Plenty River and Merri Creek.

The Yan Yean and Tourourrong reservoirs and water supply catchment areas occupy a substantial portion of the northern part of the City. These areas, apart from supplying much of Melbourne with water, incorporate sites of flora and fauna significance. In conjunction with the Kinglake National Park and Plenty Gorge Parklands they provide significant tourism resources where controlled visitor access is possible. There is also a substantial amount of industrial and commercial development in the south due to the City's convenient access to central Melbourne and other employment centres and major transportation corridors such as the Western Ring Road and Hume Highway.

With planned growth of metropolitan significance there are tremendous opportunities to live and/or conduct a business within the City of Whittlesea. The existing Epping Plaza development and recently approved first stage of development on the South Morang Activity Centre site will provide the municipality with a future employment focus. A range of sites for commercial, industrial and residential development and a strong labour force are all available to be administered within a framework which will ensure that the unique characteristics and qualities of the City of Whittlesea are preserved and enhanced.

### **Important Issues**

Existing diversity in land use categories and the potential for new development is a strength of the City of Whittlesea. The allocation of growth areas and the relationship between areas reserved for other purposes will require careful management to ensure there is an overall level of compatibility. Incorporation of elements of the natural environment within growth area planning is of vital importance to enable the City to enhance its image in all land use categories.

21.02-3  
19/01/2006  
VC37

## The City of Whittlesea – Its People and Communities

### Number and distribution of Population

The City of Whittlesea is currently estimated to house approximately 110,000 persons. The greatest density of existing population can be found in the southern parts of the City in the established suburbs of Thomastown, Lalor, Epping, Bundoora and Mill Park (refer Figure 1).

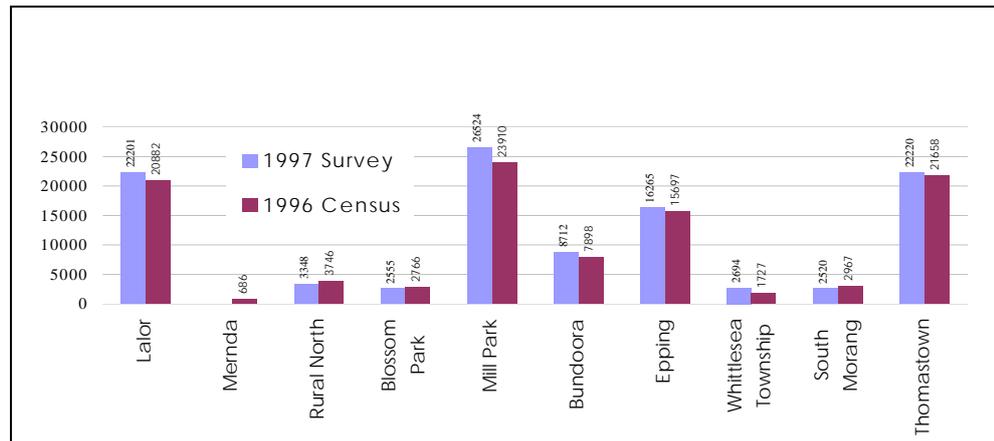


Figure 1 City of Whittlesea 1996 Enumerated – 1997 Resident Population

Rural or township communities currently account for a small proportion of the municipal population but add diversity and character to the City. The largest township community is located at Whittlesea, which currently houses a population of approximately 1,500 persons but also services an extensive rural hinterland.

Substantial differences can be found in the structural and demographic characteristics of the eastern and western halves of the existing urban areas. Development in the urban areas has followed in the pattern of outward growth of Melbourne along major ‘corridors’.

Outward movement has been concentrated along the High Street corridor in the west and the Plenty Road corridor in the east. The Darebin Creek generally defines the border between the ‘east-west divide’. There are a number of noticeable differences evident in the landscape and built form elements between the east and west including housing styles and periods of construction.

### Age Structure

The City of Whittlesea displays an age structure which is similar to that of other fringe municipalities. Strong representation in all age cohorts is reflective of the existence of older established suburbs with what can generally be described as an aging population and newly developing areas which predominantly attract new young families. (Refer Figure 2)

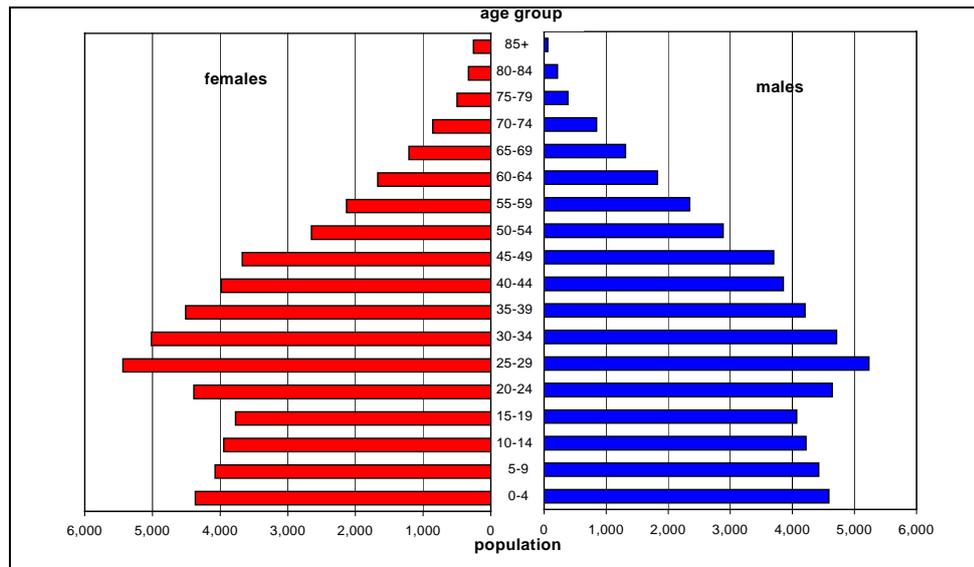


Figure 2 City of Whittlesea Age Structure 1996

It is expected that by the year 2016 the City will house an increasingly aging population as large numbers of people move up the age structure during the projection period (refer Figure3)

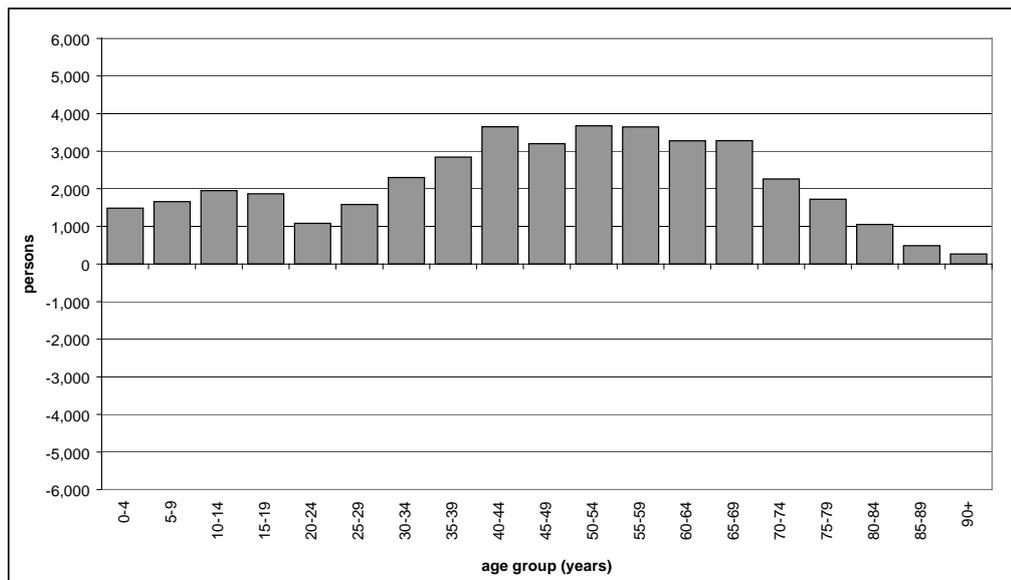


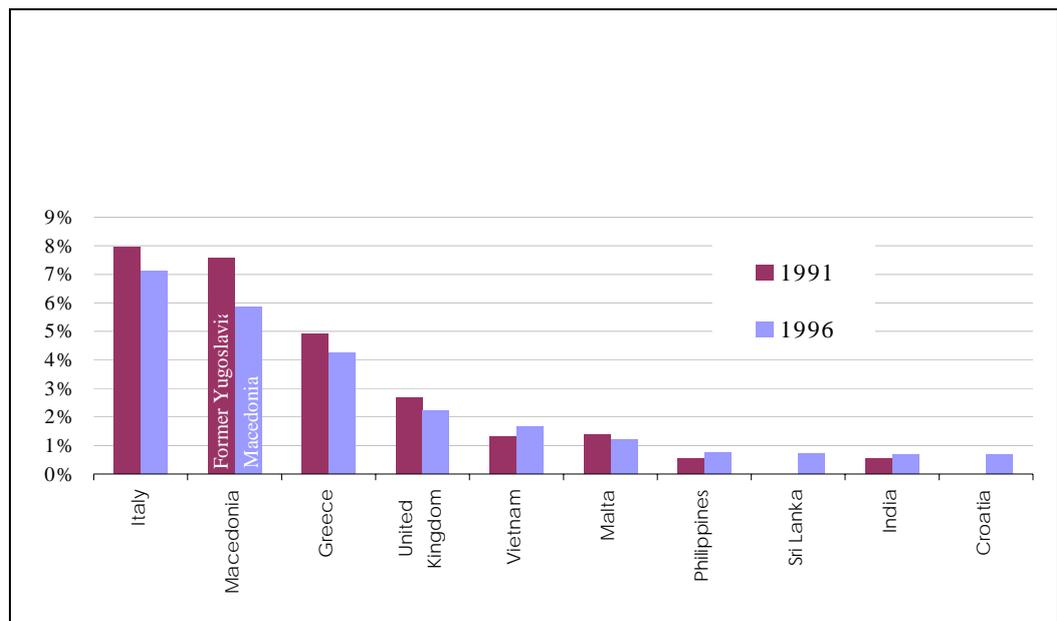
Figure 3 City of Whittlesea Net Change in Age Structure 1996-2016

While this picture represents an overall aging of the population for the municipality as a whole, it must also be recognised that there is also significant variation in age/sex characteristics at the local or precinct level.

## Cultural Diversity

Residents of the City of Whittlesea come from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds. While Australia continues to dominate as the main country of birth, at 62.35 per cent in 1996, this result is significantly below the metropolitan average of 67 per cent.

The City of Whittlesea continues to have very high percentages of persons born in Italy, former Yugoslavia (predominantly Macedonia) and Greece. In addition to the three major countries, other countries of birth are beginning to establish a greater influence such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and India (refer Figure 4).



*Figure 4 City of Whittlesea Top Ten Countries of Birth (excluding Australia) 1991-1996*

At the local level the influences of a diverse cultural heritage are more evident in the urban areas in Thomastown, Lalor and Epping. These suburbs contain a greater proportion of non English speaking backgrounds than other parts of the City. These residents bring with them many aspects of their own cultures which contributes to the character and identity of the City of Whittlesea (refer Figure 5).

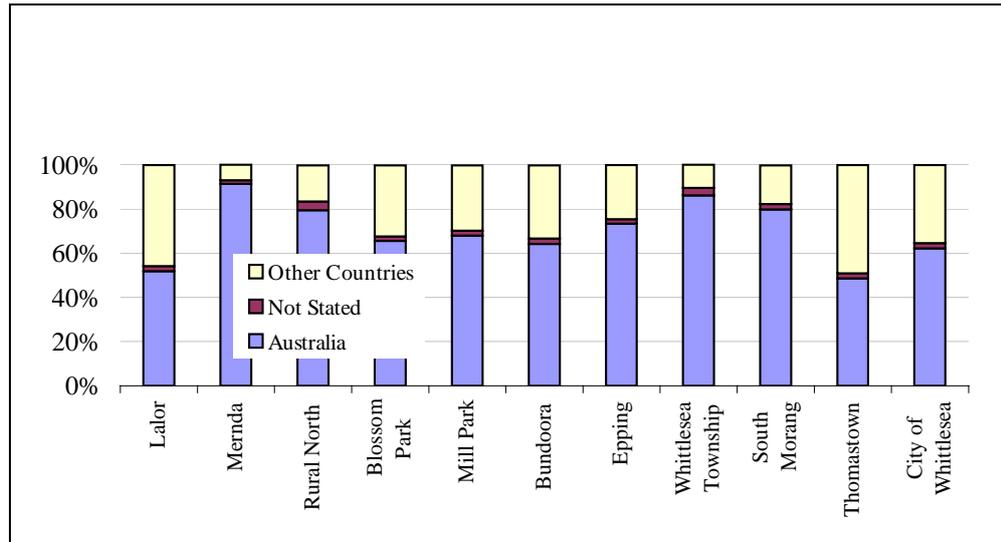


Figure 5 City of Whittlesea Country of Birth by Precinct 1996

**Income**

Weekly gross individual income statistics (refer figure 6) reveal noticeably higher percentages of individuals in the average income brackets of three to six hundred dollars per week when compared to Melbourne. Percentages of individuals earning less than three hundred dollars per week are comparable to the metropolitan average, however weekly income in the higher brackets above seven hundred dollars per week is noticeably lower in Whittlesea.

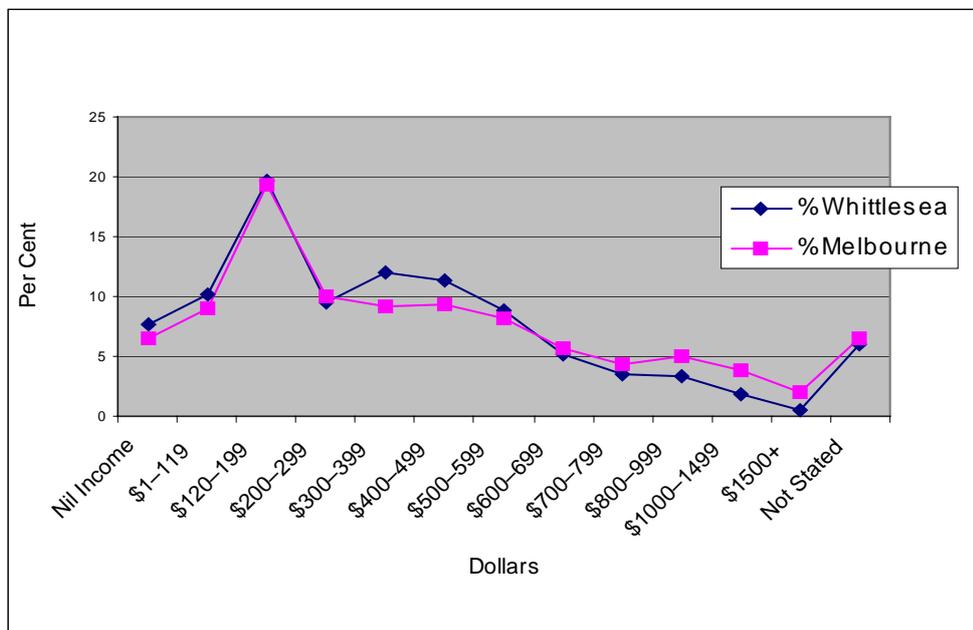


Figure 6 City of Whittlesea Weekly Gross Individual Income 1996

Relatively low representation and growth in ‘professional’ sectors is reflective of the City’s over reliance on declining sectors of the economy such as manufacturing (refer figure 7).

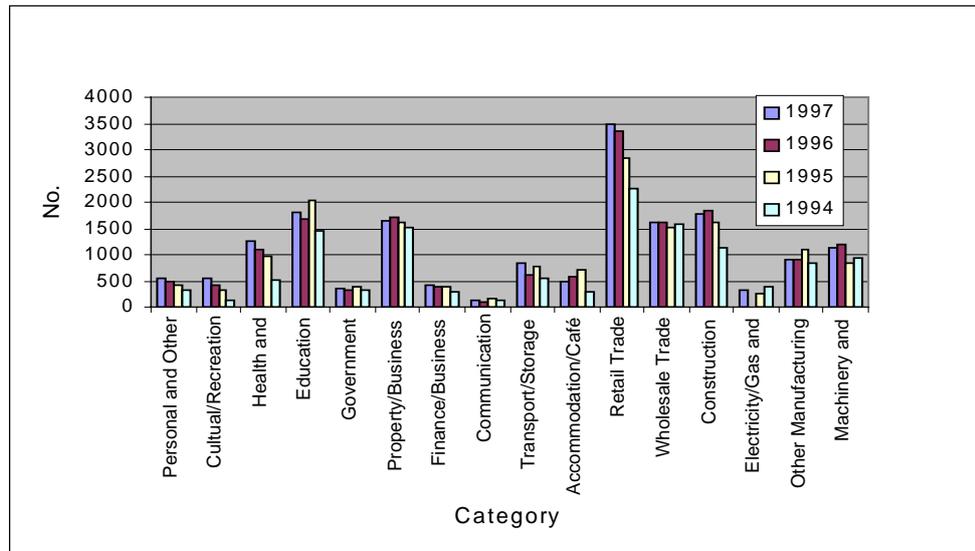


Figure 7 City of Whittlesea Employment by Industry 1994-1997

### Important Issues

An increasingly aging population, a relatively narrow economic base, strong cultural diversity at the local level and the prospect of continued urban growth all highlight the need to carefully monitor and plan to meet the needs of a diverse, changing population.

The historical movement of people along the High Street and Plenty Road corridors and the structural differences between the eastern and western halves of the urban area will also require specific recognition in planning to accommodate growth within the City.

Narrow labour force characteristics and low representation in the higher income brackets highlight a need to progressively diversify the demographic composition of the City of Whittlesea to ensure the municipality is resilient to changes in the local and global economy.

#### 21.02-4

19/01/2006  
VC37

### The City of Whittlesea – Its Housing

Over 94% of housing stock within the City of Whittlesea is comprised of separate dwellings. Despite this there is considerable variation in built form, size of housing and character at the local level (i.e. within or between local areas).

Housing character and variation in built form is closely linked to the period of development and cultural background of residents. There are a variety of building styles ranging from the timber and brick homes characteristic of the 1950's and 60's through to the larger mission brown houses characteristic of the 1970's to early 80's. More recent housing development is a mix of more contemporary design with a high proportion of period reproduction homes.

Landscape character influences are more evident in the eastern half of the urban areas where there is more mature and regular street planting and a stronger 'native' planting and landscape theme. Housing provision in newer estates is increasingly becoming more varied to meet the needs of a diverse and changing population. Alternative forms of housing such as row houses or terraces, multi unit development and houses with a range of number of bedrooms can be found throughout the older suburbs where redevelopment opportunities are available. Newer estates also present opportunities where diversity is increasingly being incorporated in subdivision design. These alternative forms of housing add interest and vitality to existing and new urban areas and reflect a 'maturity' of the Whittlesea housing market.

Results of a recent survey of residents regarding housing choice and location (*City of Whittlesea Housing Strategy Issues Paper 1988*) identified the following factors as having the highest level of satisfaction:

- Type and size of home
- Privacy
- Distance to family and friends
- Safety
- Size of yard.

Conversely the following factors received the lowest levels of satisfaction:

- Ability to work from home
- Flexibility to alter or add
- Alterations required
- Suitability for frail/disabled people.

Period of residence statistics indicate that the majority of residents have lived in their current residence for more than 10 years. Important factors influencing suburb choice include price, proximity to friends and family, and proximity to schools and shops. Of those intending to move, half of the respondents indicated a preference to move to another location within the City. Preferred housing choice of those likely to move indicates that the dominant preference is for detached housing but that preferences for alternative forms of housing rated significantly (refer figure 8).

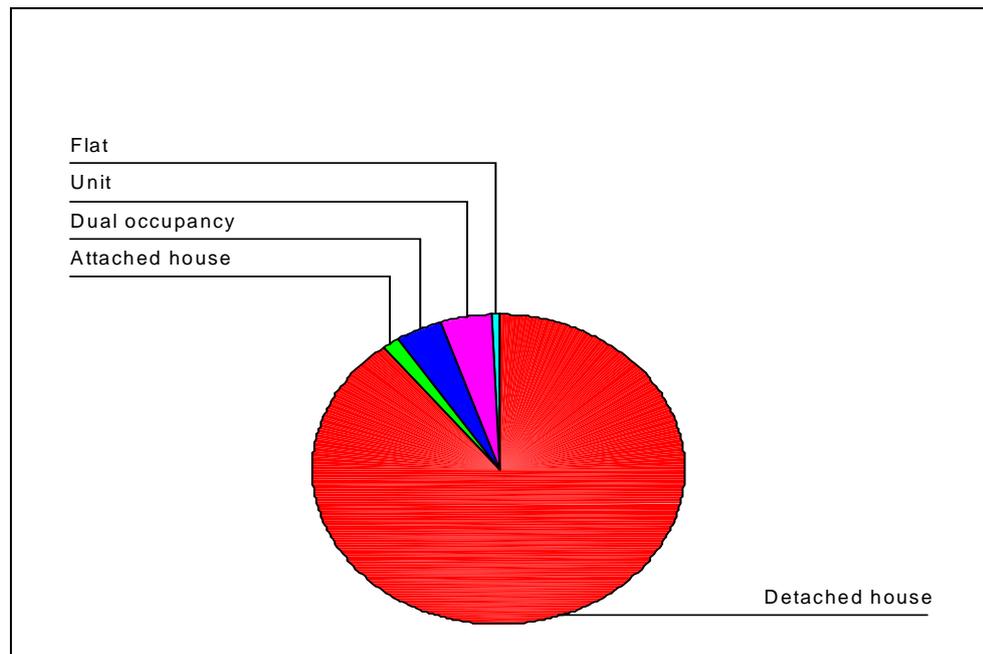


Figure 8 City of Whittlesea Preferred Dwelling Type for Moving Households 1998

Subdivision design varies markedly across the existing urban areas. Typically, subdivision design in the western half of the urban areas is 'grid' based where in the eastern half subdivision design is predominantly 'curvilinear'. Newer areas are moving back toward more traditional approaches to design where commonly a modified grid based design is applied. Correspondingly, there are variations in the level of permeability and allotment size and housing design which is influenced to a large degree by approaches to subdivision design.

## Important Issues

Statistics regarding housing choice and level of satisfaction provide an insight into both objectives for future housing provision and matters which must be addressed when considering redevelopment or infill opportunities.

While the City will continue to attract predominantly young families, it is essential that the housing needs of a more diverse cross section of the population are planned for. This is to cater for the needs of new residents but also to accommodate the needs of existing residents looking to move within the City. Movements within the City account for a substantial proportion of all housing demand wherein residents have a strong tendency to move in an outward direction along the major transport corridors. The City must also acknowledge the vital role that it can play in influencing the type of residents that are attracted to the municipality through housing provision. Diverse housing forms will bring long term diversification in demographic composition and create interest and identity within urban areas.

Character is an important element in all urban areas. In this context redevelopment and infill development proposals must respect and add to the character of existing urban areas. Similarly, planning for new urban areas must be respectful of and incorporate elements of the natural environment where ideally housing forms and styles of subdivision should be influenced by, rather than being imposed upon the natural environment.

### 21.02-5

19/01/2006  
VC37

#### The City of Whittlesea – Its Growth Prospects

The City of Whittlesea is a designated growth area of metropolitan significance and is projected to reach a population of approximately 147,280 persons by the year 2016 (refer Figure 9).

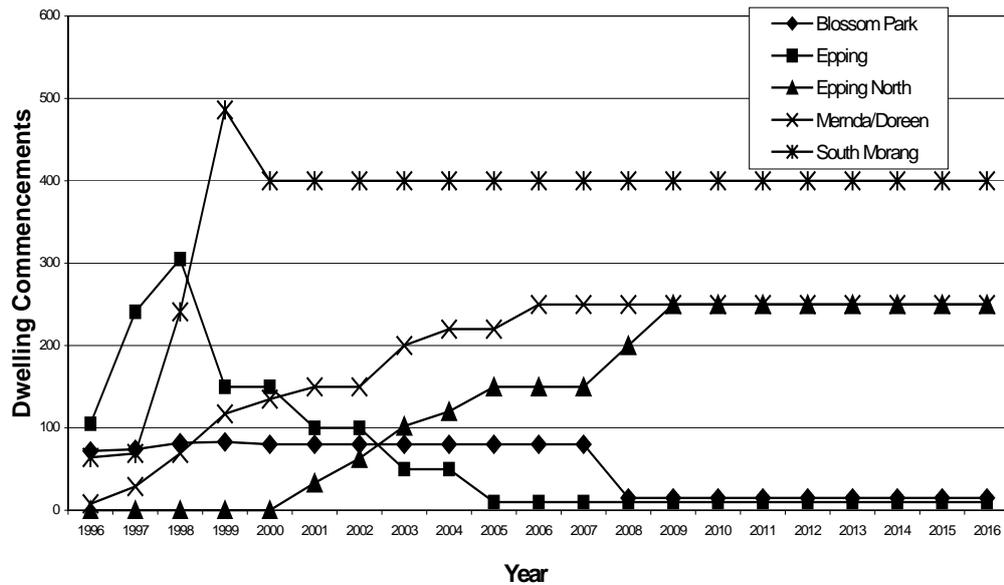
1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	Total Population Change	*Average Annual % Change
106,212	115,352	126,408	136,766	147,280	41,280	1.96%

*\* Note that average annual percentage change is different from total percentage change. It is a calculation of the average change in total population for each year of the projection period.*

*Figure 9 Total Forecast Population Change Statistics, City of Whittlesea 1996 – 2016*

The City will continue to provide for significant greenfield residential development throughout the forecast period. This development will be concentrated primarily in the Plenty Valley and Epping North in accordance with the growth opportunities nominated in the *Plenty Valley Strategic Plan and Epping North Strategic Plan*.

Growth within the Plenty Valley will be focused in South Morang and Mernda where the City is forecast to produce around 900 – 1,000 new dwellings per year. While Mill Park, Lalor, Thomastown and Epping currently dominate Whittlesea in terms of population size, by the end of the forecast period South Morang is expected to grow to a similar population level. Growth in Epping North is forecast to account for a smaller, but significant, share of total population growth with up to 150 new dwelling commencements occurring each year up to 2005. Beyond 2005 it is forecast that Epping North will support 250 new dwelling commencements per year until at least 2016 (refer Figure 10)



Forecast Dwelling Commencements

*Figure 10 City of Whittlesea Main Competing Development Fronts*

The large established urban areas will significantly decline in their share of total population over the projection period. Small levels of growth occurring in Bundoora, Whittlesea Township and the Rural North will see these precincts maintain their share of total population growth to 2016

Average household size is forecast to remain relatively high early in the projection period as a result of the large number of new young growing households migrating to the City of Whittlesea. While this will continue to occur throughout the projection period, once a large enough population base is established, the aging population structure will inevitably influence a declining household size (refer Figure 11).

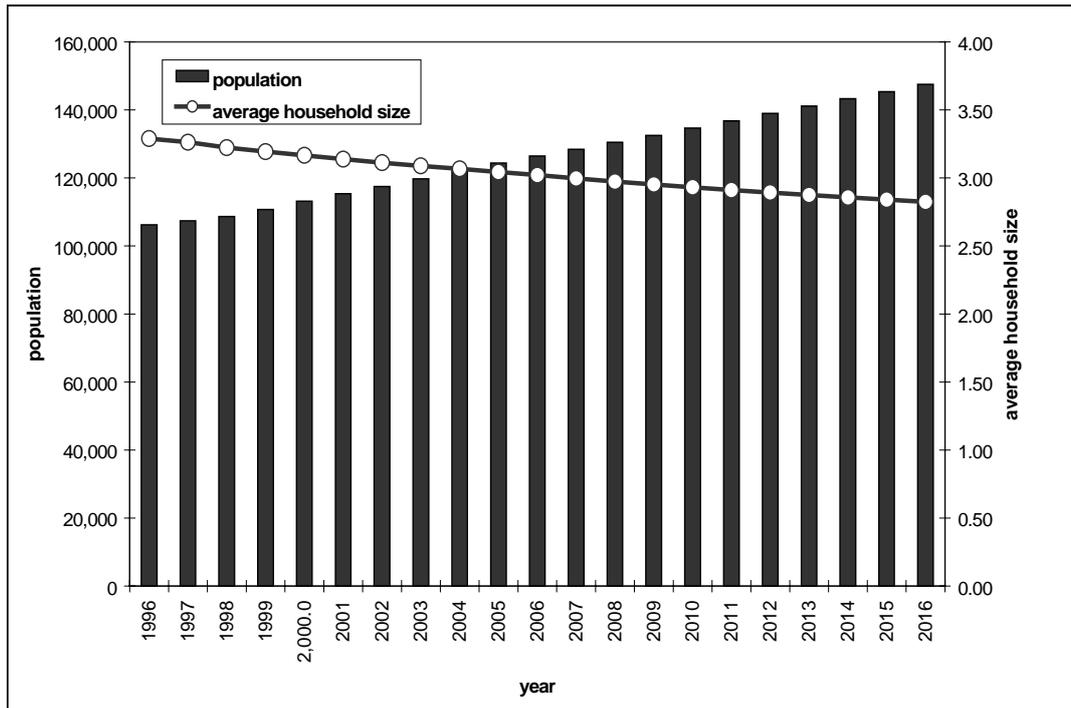


Figure 11 City of Whittlesea Projected Average Household Size and Total Population 1996-2016

### Important Issues

As one of Melbourne's fastest growing municipalities, meeting the demands of a rapidly expanding population is one of Whittlesea's greatest challenges. In addition to meeting the needs of new residents and expanding population in growth areas, the City will also put in place strategies to combat the problems associated with ageing and declining populations in established areas.

The provision of physical and social infrastructure in a cost effective and timely manner is of paramount importance. Growth area planning in this context often relies on individual developers contributing to two levels of infrastructure. This includes infrastructure to meet the needs created directly by the development and secondly contributing equitably toward the establishment of items of infrastructure which serve a more extensive catchment. Setting in place mechanisms to require, apportion and administer funds will be of particular importance if the City is to provide and maintain infrastructure in a sustainable manner.

The State Government is continuing to devolve responsibility for long term infrastructure planning and provision at a regional and local level from the State to Local Government. This process, along with the impacts of privatisation on the ability of servicing authorities to forward plan for the growth of Melbourne will pose significant challenges for the City of Whittlesea. In particular, the City will require resolution of long term strategies to ensure that land reserved for residential, industrial and commercial development can be suitably serviced.

Rapid population growth will also require careful management and delineation of the boundaries between land reserved to accommodate growth and land set aside for rural or conservation purposes.

**21.02-6**19/01/2006  
VC37**The City of Whittlesea – Its Transportation Networks**

The road network within the City of Whittlesea consists of a grid of north–south and east west main and secondary roads. The roads are spaced approximately two to five kilometers apart. The main north–south routes are High Street/Epping Road and Plenty Road. The main east–west links are Mahoneys Road/Keon Parade, Settlement Road, Childs Road, Cooper Street, McDonalds Road, Craigieburn Road, Donnybrook Road and Whittlesea Yea Road. Many of these roads are predominantly two lane, two way roads, a number of which will ultimately require widening and/or duplication.

North–south road capacity is currently severely limited beyond the City and east–west road links are discontinuous particularly at their eastern and western terminuses due to natural land features such as the Plenty River and the Merri Creek. The network of internal collector and lower order roads offers a varying level of connectivity throughout the municipality. To a large extent the level of connectivity is influenced by approaches to subdivision design and models of urban development. Notably, connectivity in the eastern half of the urban areas in Mill Park, and to a lesser extent Bundoora, is constrained by a curvilinear road design which causes movements to become indirect and overly reliant on the main and collector road network.

Public transport is limited to heavy rail which extends to Epping connecting the municipality to Melbourne, light rail along Plenty Road which extends to McKimmies Road and a series of private bus lines. These services provide a disjointed level of public transport and constrained ability to move from east to west and vice versa across the municipality. Highly developed land use and transportation relationships are not apparent at rail stations and bus stops where the synergies between public transport routes and commercial and employment centres have not been capitalised upon.

**Important Issues**

The lack of north–south road capacity and continuous east west routes pose a significant constraint on the future growth and development of the City. The allocation of future residential growth opportunities and their relationship to land reserved for short and long term employment growth will increase the need for and incidence of east–west movements across the municipality. These movements are important for private car based travel, freight movements and public transport routes. Resolution of the preferred hierarchy of east–west transport routes including their eastern and western terminus is a priority.

Planning for extension of the existing heavy and light rail services is essential to the ultimate successful integrated development of the City. While it is accepted that extensions to the metropolitan heavy and light rail systems do not occur ahead of demand, the likelihood of extensions can be enhanced by two principle factors. Firstly, land must be set aside to accommodate the extension and, secondly, planning for beneficial land uses in proximity to interchanges and routes must occur. Flexibility of use of the future routes is also a key factor, where if appropriate planning takes place, there may be the potential to utilise a future heavy rail route as a bus route for example. In other words, routes should be viewed as ‘transport corridors’ as opposed to fixed option dedicated routes.

Subdivision design and land use patterns must also incorporate opportunities for the introduction of public transport. These efforts should be directed toward the introduction of bus service, but other forms of transportation such as bicycle routes should be considered in the same manner. Similarly, a high level of connectivity within and between subdivisions will enhance the effectiveness of transportation networks generally.

Key road proposals affecting the future road network include resolution of the preferred alignment of the Hume Freeway and the local arterial network. Resolution of the preferred alignment is of particular significance to the forward planning process for Cooper Street and Epping North.

**21.02-7**19/01/2006  
VC37**The City of Whittlesea – Its Commercial Activity Centres**

Activity centres are the core retail shopping centres that incorporate a variety of commercial and community facilities and may support surrounding employment areas.

Activity Centres play a vital role in the provision of a focus for the provision of goods and services and employment and depending on their size and location, a range of community activities. Activity centres often also have an important part to play in the development of public transport routes and interchanges and the establishment of associated land uses. It is essential that existing and future residents of the City of Whittlesea are provided with a range of accessible activity centres which fulfil their shopping, employment, social and recreation needs.

The City of Whittlesea currently has a high level of escape expenditure in retail spending. In supply terms, this suggests that there is an under supply of gross retail floor space or that there are certain classes of retail activity which are under represented.

Retail demand analysis reveals that the City is currently under supplied by a substantial amount of retail floorspace. According to the type of retail centre, it is further evident that the City is relatively well served with local and neighbourhood centres but is relatively under supplied by accessible higher order centres.

Higher order centres are limited to an existing sub regional centre in Epping and a planned centre in South Morang. The existing centre in Epping is not conveniently located with regard to the rapidly expanding population at South Morang and within the Plenty Valley in the eastern half of the municipality. Further, the proposed employment areas in South Morang, in the absence of development of a substantial commercial centre lacks a focus for the establishment of associated goods, services and employment opportunities.

Lower order centres at Lalor, Thomastown, Bundoora and Mill Park play an important role in providing local goods and services and a focus for community meeting places and activities. Prior to the establishment of Epping Plaza, the absence of a designated focus(s) for the provision of higher order goods and services had resulted in a high level of escape expenditure and a lack of diversification in economic activity and job creation.

**Table 1 Activity Centre (existing) Summary**

TYPE OF ACTIVITY CENTRE	EXISTING GLFA M2	NET ADDITIONAL APPROVED GLFA M2	TOTAL EXISTING & APPROVED GLFA M2
<b>Regional/Sub-Regional</b>			
South Morang Activity Centre*		50,000	50,000
Epping Plaza	31,600	20,000	51,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,600</b>	<b>70,000</b>	<b>101,600</b>
<b>Large Neighbourhood Centres</b>			
Lalor Shopping Centre	12,920		12,920
Bundoora Shopping Centre	13,875		13,875
Mill Park Stables	10,600		10,600
Mill Park Shopping Centre		4,500	4,500

## WHITTLESEA PLANNING SCHEME

TYPE OF ACTIVITY CENTRE	EXISTING GLFA M2	NET ADDITIONAL APPROVED GLFA M2	TOTAL EXISTING & APPROVED GLFA M2
(Unitex)			
Laurimar Park*		10,000	10,000
South Morang Local Structure Plan area*		10,000	10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,395</b>	<b>24,500</b>	<b>61,895</b>
<b>Neighbourhood Centres</b>			
Thomastown Shopping Centre	4,250		4,250
Whittlesea Township Shopping Centre	4,150		4,150
Lalor Plaza	3,000		3,000
Lalor Hub	2,060		2,060
Dalton Village	2,580		2,580
Kingsway Drive & Frank Street	2,440		2,440
Greenbrook Shopping Centre	2,000		2,000
Main Street / Edgars Road	1,970		1,970
Lorne Street	910		910
Rochdale Square	870		870
Waratah Street	450		450
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,680</b>		<b>24,680</b>
<b>Local Centres</b>			
Johnstone Street & Arundel Avenue	1,930		1,930
Mahoneys Road & Jeffrey Street	1,880		1,880
High Street (Epping)	1,500		1,500
Plenty Road & Gorge Road	1,100		1,100
The Boulevard & Station Street	890		890
Alexander Avenue	760		760
Anderson Road	730		730
McFadzen Avenue & Hughes Parade	690		690
Mill Park Drive	610		610
Moira Avenue & Churchill Avenue	420		420
High Street & Memorial Avenue	370		370

TYPE OF ACTIVITY CENTRE	EXISTING GLFA M2	NET ADDITIONAL APPROVED GLFA M2	TOTAL EXISTING & APPROVED GLFA M2
Ruthven Street	340		340
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,220</b>		<b>11,220</b>
<b>Isolated Corner Shops</b>			
Childs Road & Salicki Avenue	140		140
Grenda Drive	140		140
Aranda Place	110		110
Trawalla Avenue	110		110
Killara Road	100		100
Somerset Road & Blackwood Crescent	80		80
Horne Street	80		80
Carrington Boulevard & Victoria Drive	70		70
Carbeen Drive & Hibiscus	60		60
Robert Street	60		60
Amery Street & Rodford Road	50		50
Tasman Drive	50		50
Jacaranda Drive	50		50
Macquarie Drive	40		40
Jovic Road & High Street	30		30
Commercial Drive	30		30
Green Street	20		20
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,220</b>		<b>1,220</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>106,115</b>	<b>94,500</b>	<b>200,615</b>

*\* Denotes retail centres where there development has not commenced but where approvals or forward planning strategies have made provision for sites to be developed. Note 50,000 square metres represents the lower estimate for the South Morang Activity Centre, 80,000 square metres represents the upper limit.*

### Important Issues

The provision of higher order retail centres is of paramount importance to the future of the City of Whittlesea. Epping Plaza is anticipated to consolidate its role in the western half of the municipality. The eastern half of the municipality currently lacks such a focus although a site has been designated for the future South Morang Activity Centre. Whilst the two centres are in proximity to one another, a recent study has found that both centres will eventually provide a substantial focus for the eastern and western halves of the City. The

role of each of the centres within the retail hierarchy will evolve to eventually distinguish between centres of a similar order.

The City must also progressively plan for and enhance opportunities to develop beneficial transportation and land use planning objectives. This will necessitate adopting a long-term view of the future of each of the centres in partnership with the developers and the State Government. Preservation of the capacity of lower order centres to serve local functions is an important consideration. Lower order centres however, will require progressive amenity improvements and revitalisation if they are to continue to trade successfully.

## 21.02-8

19/01/2006  
VC37

### The City of Whittlesea – Its Employment Centres

The City of Whittlesea is fortunate to have large tracts of land which have been developed for employment generating purposes and good prospects for future development. The City is well represented in manufacturing, warehousing and distribution activities with a number of companies currently involved in the manufacture of car components, building, furniture, clothing and footwear products.

Industrial and other employment generating activities, however, are currently spread disproportionately across the City. The traditional industrial estates in the southern areas have been progressively developed with few remaining infill opportunities. The relative attractiveness of these areas has recently been enhanced by the construction of the northern section of the metropolitan Ring Road. Generally, however, these areas are focussed on declining sectors of the economy and have a poor visual amenity.

Prospects for future development are good based on anticipated levels of population growth and other locational advantages and increasing levels of home based business and telecommuting. To foster increased growth in employment generating activities the City will support the reservation of land for employment purposes in four major locations;

- (i) Cooper Street;
- (ii) South Morang,
- (iii) Mernda/Doreen; and
- (iv) The Janefield site in Bundoora.

Development of these sites will assist in establishing diversification of employment opportunities and a more balanced distribution of employment opportunities although there are some servicing constraints to be overcome especially within the Cooper Street Precinct and Mernda/Doreen. The strategic rationale for the allocation of these sites has been progressively developed through the Plenty Valley Strategic Plan, and the General Plan.

### Important Issues

If the City is to sustain long-term employment growth within a diversity of sectors it must progressively upgrade the appearance of employment centres and increase the choice and location of land available for employment generating activities. The City must ensure that land is capable of being developed at short notice with an adequate level of supply ahead of demand in a variety of locations and that its infrastructure is sufficient to sustain and enhance the City's competitiveness in attracting business and providing employment. In keeping with wider objectives to diversify the demographic profile of residents the City must also ensure that there is diversification in employment opportunities, including home based employment in home businesses and telecommuting.

Planning for employment growth with easy access to future residential areas and activity centres is essential if the City is to develop effective focuses for the establishment of higher order goods and services. A preferred location for one-off employment uses which require substantial buffers or which for a variety of other reasons are not appropriate for employment areas such as Cooper Street must also be specified to avoid inappropriate encroachment into non-urban areas.

**21.02-9**19/01/2006  
VC37**The City of Whittlesea – Its Environmental Features and Character**

A feature of many rapidly growing fringe areas is the lack of character and identity they possess and subsequently their inability to generate a sense of place and community. The City of Whittlesea is characterised by an abundance of natural features that contribute greatly to the attractiveness and amenity of the region. The northern parts of the municipality comprise state forests, national parks, grasslands of national significance, recreation areas, water catchments, extensive rural areas, red gum woodlands and a network of rivers, creeks and drainage lines which extend into the urban areas.

With significant new urban development planned, the opportunity exists to differentiate new urban areas from each other and to provide individual character and identity which will assist in instilling a much needed sense of place and community.

More importantly however these features, the variety of all life forms, the different plants, animals and micro-organisms and their habitats all contribute to the basic conditions which sustain human and other life forms.

**Important Issues**

The City of Whittlesea contains many diverse and rich urban and environmental features which must be identified, preserved and enhanced in order to retain the intrinsic qualities and character of the municipality in the face of rapid urban development.

Particular emphasis must be placed upon the identification of the ‘values’ of the non-urban areas which contain these features both in the Whittlesea context and the wider northern region. Incremental incursion into these areas beyond the boundaries of land reserved for future urban development must be avoided to ensure long term preservation and enhancement of the character of the City of Whittlesea.

The importance of environmental features within areas reserved to accommodate urban growth (employment and residential) and their ability to contribute to the creation of character and a sense of place cannot be overstated. These features offer both the opportunity to distinguish between residential growth areas, activity and employment centres and to unify and define the character of the City of Whittlesea.

Ensuring that growth does not physically encroach into environmentally sensitive areas is a step in the right direction but to ensure environmental assets are retained for future generations individuals, community organisations, businesses and governments must acknowledge that everyone has a role to play. Within the City of Whittlesea this will entail placing increased importance on the identification of environmental values, including on-going management requirements, minimising off site detrimental impacts caused by development and fostering partnerships through planning and other frameworks. Key areas where immediate improvement is required are in the treatment of waterways, both from a water quality and abutting development perspective, vegetation removal, minimising the impacts of pest plants and animals and emphasising the benefits to be gained through the pursuit of energy efficient design.

**21.02-10**19/01/2006  
VC37**The City of Whittlesea – Its Non-Urban Areas**

Over 70 per cent of the City of Whittlesea is comprised of rural or non-urban areas. These areas are home to many of the City’s environmental features including:

- the Plenty Gorge Parklands;
- the Kinglake National Park;
- extensive River Redgum Woodlands;
- grasslands of national significance;

- flora and fauna sites and habitats of local, regional, state and national significance identified within the NEROC report (North Eastern Region of Councils);
- significant hills such as the Whittlesea and Quarry Hills; and
- significant watercourses such as the Plenty River and Darebin and Merri Creeks.

The rationale for preservation of many of these features within the Plenty Valley was established through comprehensive investigations which culminated in the preparation and approval of the *Plenty Valley Strategic Plan*. Importantly, this plan sought to balance the identification of land suitable for urban development with land to be reserved for conservation or other purposes where urban development should not be permitted. The City of Whittlesea will reaffirm the importance of the sites and areas of significance identified within the Plenty Valley Strategic Plan. However, it will also seek to complement this work by expressing the significance and ‘values’ of the rural or non-urban areas within the municipal context rather than just for the Plenty Valley.

While it is accepted that much of the land contained within the non-urban areas does not constitute agricultural land of ‘high’ significance, the wider intrinsic landscape and character qualities of these areas must be recognised. At the local level, these areas constitute the setting for and shape the allocation and extent of land reserved for future urban development. Identification of areas from which urban development will be excluded will ensure that the City retains and enhances a strong local character. The City of Whittlesea will also endeavour to recognise the wider role of the non-urban areas within the regional and metropolitan context.

### **Important Issues**

The General Plan identified that the non-urban areas are under extreme pressure for urban expansion, rural residential subdivision, subdivision into small rural lots, recreation and leisure, extractive industry and a range of other large one-off urban based uses which require a rural setting.

If not properly controlled, these pressures could lead to degradation of the rural land resource and the attractive rural landscape which is a feature of the northern parts of the City. To redress this situation the City of Whittlesea will require interim measures to be established pending completion of a comprehensive ‘Rural Review’ as alluded to within the General Plan. The purpose of the review is to establish a comprehensive framework to guide decision making within the non-urban parts of the City of Whittlesea.

A fundamental task associated with the rural review will be to establish, within a policy context, the municipal objectives for the non-urban areas. In this context the potential for the non-urban areas to establish the City of Whittlesea as a unique city both within and beyond the is unquestionable.

## **21.02-11**

19/01/2006  
VC37

### **The City of Whittlesea - Its Physical Infrastructure Provision**

The provision of essential basic items of hydraulic infrastructure, that is, sewer, water and drainage is fundamental to the future of any growth area. The existing outlook in capacity terms particularly with regard to localised sewer provision in lieu of extension of the **North Western Trunk Sewer** is problematic. Telecommunications infrastructure is traditionally left to Telstra to require on subdivisions, or to other carriers to initiate as they desire, but emerging technologies and community needs suggest that provision for optical fibre cabling requires Council direction.

Sewer – existing provision

- The **Merri Creek Main** services Epping, Lalor, Thomastown.
- The **Darebin Creek Main** services South Morang, parts of Epping and Mill Park.
- The **Plenty River Branch** services parts of Mill Park (east of Plenty Road) and Bundoora.
- The **Edgars Creek Branch** services parts of Lalor and Thomastown.

- The **Cades Road Treatment Plant** services the Whittlesea Township.

#### Sewer – future provision

A staged approach to the upgrade of sewer infrastructure will occur to enhance capacity within the existing sewer systems. Major enhancements will occur to the Merri Creek Main and the Edgars Creek Branch to support development within Epping North and Cooper Street.

The **Darebin Creek Main** has capacity to service the growth within the **South Morang** Local Structure Plan area (western precinct) to a capacity of approximately 7,000 lots. The capacity however, is restricted due to throttling problems downstream and will require a detention tank(s) system to be constructed adjoining the Darebin Creek in McKimmies Road, Bundoora. It is anticipated that once established, this system will also be capable of accommodating flows from the Janefield development in Bundoora. There is also capacity in the Darebin Creek Main to service 2,500 residential lots in the south-eastern part of the **Epping North** Strategic Plan area. This capacity is also reliant on the use of detention tanks within Epping North and the Bundoora facility.

The **Plenty River Branch** has capacity to serve the remainder of the Riverside Estate and the eastern precinct of the **South Morang** Local Structure Plan area.

The **Merri Creek Main** and the **Edgars Creek Branch** have initial capacity to serve a total of 2250 lots with augmentation of these existing systems via the use of detention tanks and pump stations. Additional capacity will be made available following the extension of the north west trunk sewer (or its equivalent). A four-stage process is proposed to enhance these systems.

Capacity within this system is restricted to ‘dry weather’ which will necessitate the establishment of a detention tank(s) system to store flows during wet weather and during peak periods.

The Cades Road Treatment Plant has capacity to service un-connected properties within the township which were formerly zoned ‘*Reserved Living Zone*’ or ‘*Residential C Zone*’ but will require augmentation to cope with flows generated by development within the urban precincts of the **Whittlesea Township** Local Structure Plan.

#### Water – existing provision

Tourourrong Catchment Reservoir is the principal supply source for the municipality, supplying water to the Yan Yean Storage Reservoir, which in turn transfers water to a number of service reservoirs three of which are within the City.

- **Quarry Hill**, which services South Morang, Epping, Epping North and Mill Park.
- **Morang**, which services the existing urban areas.
- **Eastern Hill**, which services the Whittlesea Township.

#### Water – future provision

The **Quarry Hill** reservoir has capacity to accommodate anticipated growth within the **South Morang** Local Structure Plan area. It will also service early stages of development in **Epping North**, although an additional tank will be required (in the Quarry Hills) to service the ultimate development.

The **Morang** reservoir has capacity to accommodate growth within its catchment to service parts of the Plenty valley.

The **Eastern Hill** reservoir has capacity to accommodate growth within the **Whittlesea Township**.

#### Drainage

The City is contained within the catchments of three major watercourses, the Plenty River, the Darebin Creek and the Merri Creek. These watercourses and their tributaries provide suitable opportunities for the establishment of drainage facilities. Of increasing importance

however, is the establishment of these facilities in a manner which is both environmentally and economically sustainable.

Increasingly, Melbourne Water as the authority responsible for main drainage, is favouring the establishment of wetlands systems to control water quality prior to discharge. While this type of drainage control can be accommodated within growth areas on the basis of a drainage scheme, existing areas where there are known drainage problems including lack of capacity and water quality problems will require on-going site specific measures to improve performance. Where integrated drainage solutions are identified in association with drainage schemes, it is important to carefully consider impacts on the surrounding development and spatial allocation of other land uses and activities, in particular open space

It is accepted that drainage facilities often incorporate some capacity for passive leisure activities. However, where there is drainage scheme in place, land occupied by the facility and covered by an easement of inundation will not be included within open space contributions attributable to the development which is subject of the drainage scheme.

### **Optical Fibre Cabling**

The community's needs for telecommunications services, and for broadband infrastructure to deliver them, are rapidly changing and growing, but there are constraints on delivering that infrastructure in a timely and cost effective manner.

It is believed that optical fibre networks will prove to be the most effective, and most environmentally acceptable means of delivering such infrastructure. Early provision will support initiatives to foster economic development by attracting industries and businesses which can effectively utilise this technology in communications, including many forms of home based businesses and telecommuters.

### **Important Issues**

The provision of physical infrastructure, particularly sewerage, is the key strategic issue in relation to the location and timing of future urban development in the City of Whittlesea. Yarra Valley Water is at an advanced stage in the preparation of a servicing strategy for the land which is already zoned for urban development in Mernda/Doreen. A servicing strategy is also in place for the Merri, Edgars and Darebin systems to ensure provision of sewer to Epping North and Cooper Street

The North Western Trunk Sewer is the key infrastructure project which will determine when and how various sites are to be sewered within and beyond the City of Whittlesea. The cost and timing of extension of this facility to the City are impediments to development. In the interim, the City of Whittlesea has a key role to play in the allocation of spare sewer capacity in a manner which is consistent with desirable planning strategies and which is economically viable. Closer working relationships will need to be developed between Melbourne Water and Yarra Valley Water and the City will need to develop clear strategies to assist servicing agencies in undertaking forward planning for these unserviced areas.

Similarly, although less problematic, the provision of water and drainage will require co-ordination to achieve service provision which is responsive to the needs generated by development and which can be funded in a cost effective manner.

Conversely, provision for optical fibre cabling will address an emerging community need issue, in a manner which should provide a range of community benefits and help foster economic development.

### **Summary**

*The snapshot and important issues provide a context for the establishment of key land use planning objectives, strategies and actions and will guide Whittlesea's decision making on land use and related matters.*