



HOUSING
DIVERSITY
STRATEGY
.....
2013-2033



“High density close to stations is good because of the transport options available.”

.....
Whittlesea Interfaith Network,
Stage 2 Community Consultation

FOREWORD

Council is delighted to present the Housing Diversity Strategy for the established suburbs of the City of Whittlesea.

The established suburbs of Lalor, Thomastown, Epping, Mill Park, Bundoora, parts of South Morang and Whittlesea Township have experienced considerable change over the last few years. Our population has increased significantly and residents reflect a more diverse range of backgrounds. This changing demographic has also meant an older population and fewer people living at home.

To accommodate this change it is essential that Council ensures the right infrastructure and services are in place and that different types of housing are available to meet people's different needs, both now and in the future.

Council's first Housing Diversity Strategy for the established suburbs of the City of Whittlesea will ensure that housing growth occurs in the right way and in appropriate locations.

The Strategy builds on feedback we received from the community and outlines our vision for managing housing growth in our established suburbs. It identifies the areas that can accommodate change, including Activity and Neighbourhood Centres, and identifies areas that will be protected from further development.

Council's Housing Diversity Strategy will ensure a balanced approach is taken to managing housing growth ensuring it happens in the right locations, makes efficient use of existing resources and infrastructure, meets current and future housing needs and enables the established suburbs of the City to remain as places where residents want to live and enjoy.

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SECTION

01

INTRODUCTION



What is the Housing Diversity Strategy (HDS)?

The City of Whittlesea is currently experiencing significant housing growth and change. Much of the growth and change is in new growth areas¹. Yet, there is increasing pressure to manage residential development within the established urban areas of the municipality.

Increasing the availability of well located medium and higher density housing within the established areas will be important as the City changes. It is particularly an issue as household size declines. Different types of housing will ensure greater choice for residents as they move through life's different stages and their housing needs change.

Over the next 20 years the demographic profile of the municipality's established suburbs is forecast to change, resulting in the need for a greater range of housing types.

The Strategy:

- Sets out a strategic framework to assist with managing housing growth and change in the established suburbs of the municipality.
- Seeks to increase the availability of housing in the established areas of the municipality. More housing includes appropriate medium and higher density housing. The Strategy must respond to the changing demographic profile of the City and shifts in household preferences.
- Will guide the future location and diversity of housing. It will identify areas of housing growth and change, including areas where future housing growth will not be supported.

¹This study excludes the growth areas of Mernda, Doreen, Epping North, Wollert, Donnybrook, Eden, Beveridge, Woodstock, Laurimar.

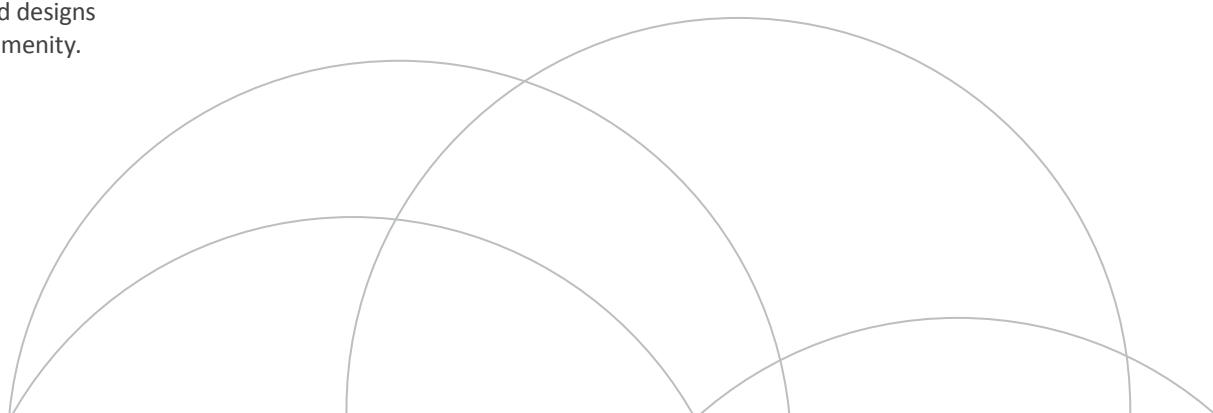


What the Strategy **will** do:

- Identify the appropriate housing mix to meet the community's existing and future housing needs.
- Determine the capacity of the established suburbs to accommodate the forecast housing growth.
- Establish preferred locations for housing growth. This includes guiding higher density housing in areas close to public transport and activity and neighbourhood centres and limiting housing growth where access to services is poor.
- Identify areas where different levels of housing change will be supported, thereby giving greater certainty to the community.
- Identify preferred housing types and designs in terms of residential density and amenity.

What the Strategy **will not** do:

- Encourage more high density housing. This project will manage the change that is already occurring in locations that are appropriate and well serviced.
- Set specific height limits and car parking rates. Council will undertake further work to set specific planning controls and design guidance.
- Specifically address affordable housing. Council has prepared a *Social and Affordable Housing Policy* to address this.
- Say "No Change". All areas across Melbourne will be responsible for accommodating a certain level of housing growth. As housing types change it is inevitable that our existing suburbs will also change.
- Force people to move house or develop their land. Council will also not develop the land but guide preferred locations for growth close to services and facilities.
- Direct all new housing growth into higher change areas. Each Housing Change Area will need to play a role in accommodating sufficient supply of housing and contribute to housing diversity.



Where does the Strategy apply?

The Strategy will only affect the established residential areas of the municipality (and some mixed use and commercial areas contained within activity centres).

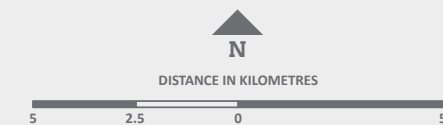
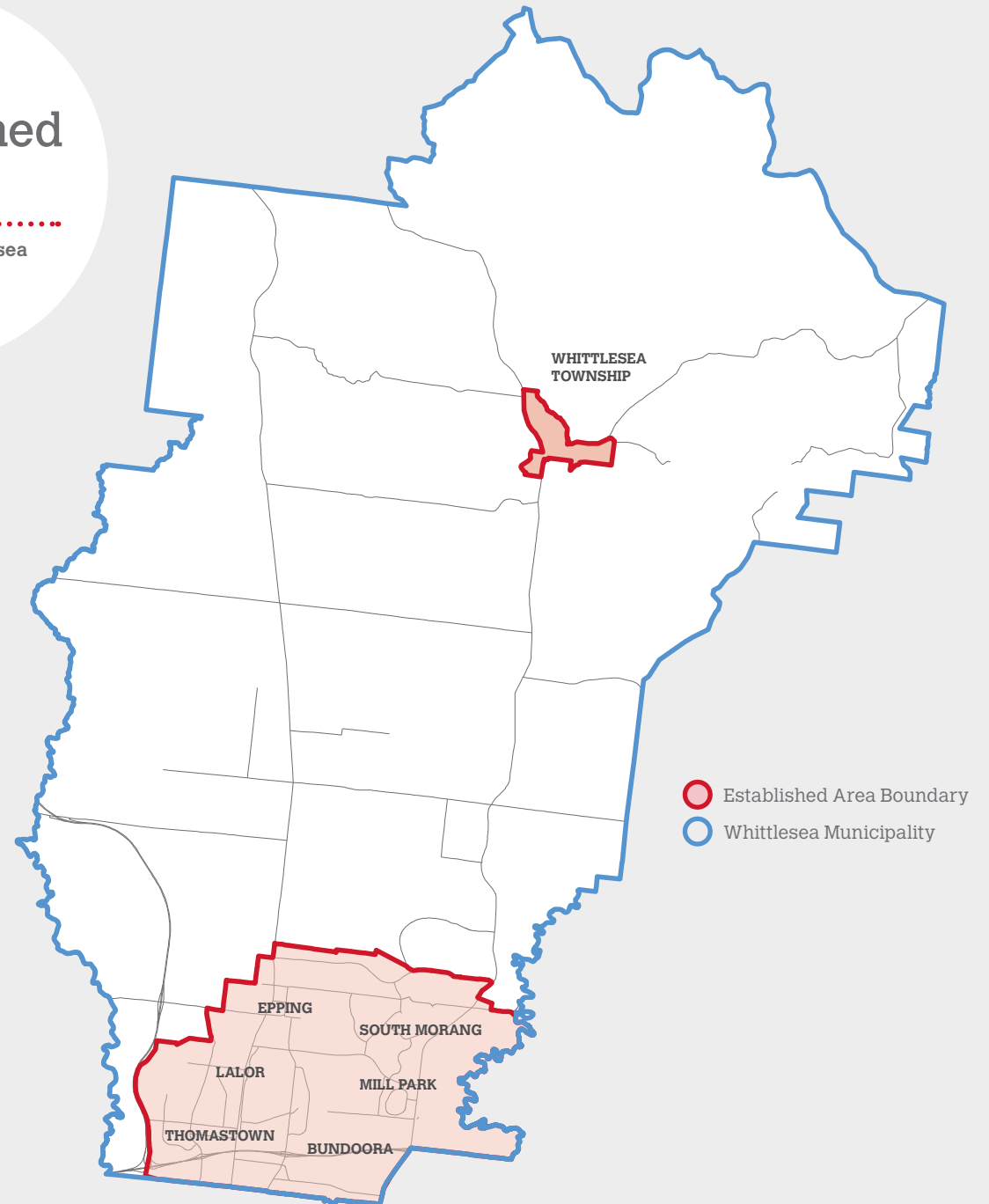
The Strategy is a long term plan that sets out how residential development should occur in the established suburbs of:

- Bundoora
- Epping (not Epping North)
- Lalor
- Mill Park
- Parts of South Morang
- Thomastown
- Whittlesea Township.

The Strategy excludes the growth areas of the municipality. The growth areas are currently guided by other strategic planning documents, for example, precinct structure plans and development plans.

Map 1: Established Areas

In the City of Whittlesea



Why do we need the Housing Diversity Strategy (HDS)?

Housing is a fundamental human need. It plays an important role in people's wellbeing by contributing to their physical and mental health.

Housing choice enables people to remain in the municipality. Our homes should cater for changing household needs such as when starting a family, or kids grow up and leave home, changing jobs or working from home.

The Housing Diversity Strategy has been prepared to ensure there is housing choice for all residents as they move through different life stages and their housing needs change. As the makeup of our households change, it is inevitable that our existing suburbs will undergo a level of change.

Council cannot prevent this growth. We will limit growth in some areas but we can't prevent growth from occurring. However the Strategy can help to ensure a balanced approach to housing growth. The approach will identify different locations and levels of change based on proximity to services and facilities.

The Housing Diversity Strategy will:

- Effectively manage housing growth in the most appropriate parts of our established areas.
- Respond to changing demographic and housing trends including an ageing population, changes to household and family types and changing preferences for housing types, styles and design.
- Respond to a mismatch of housing to current and forecast housing need.
- Prevent planning applications for medium and higher density housing being granted in an ad-hoc and inconsistent manner.
- Transition to Reformed Residential Zones have been announced by the State Government, and a transition to these zones will need to be completed by July 2014.

The Strategy will ensure that this change is carefully managed to ensure that our established suburbs continue to be places where we want to live.

The Strategy recognises the importance of providing high quality housing and design to ensure:

- The amenity of both existing and future residents is maintained
- The quality of life for residents is improved
- The attractiveness of our suburbs is enhanced.

Changing household preferences

The Grattan Institute (2011) found that "contrary to myth and assumptions, Australians want a mixture of housing choices" – not just a detached house on a large block². There is a growing trend for people wanting to live in townhouses or in apartments in locations that are close to family, friends or shops.

The housing people would choose is much more diverse than what the City of Whittlesea's housing currently provides. Existing housing in the municipality is dominated by detached three bedroom houses and little has changed over the last few decades.

² Kelly, Jane- Frances, Grattan Institute, *Getting the housing we want* (2011), pg. 1.



“Apartments
are better for
business and
safety and
the street.”

.....
Thomastown Pop Up Workshop,
Stage 2 Community Consultation



“High density housing around train stations and public transport corridors are the most important elements of planning for Whittlesea’s future.”

.....

Whittlesea Survey, Stage 2
Community Consultation

What has the process been so far?

This project is being undertaken in 3 stages. Preparation of the Housing Diversity Strategy (this document) forms part of Stage 2.

Stage 1: Background Analysis

This stage included the preparation of a Briefing Paper which provides a summary of the changing demographic profile of the established suburbs and discusses how population growth and a declining household size will have implications for the type, size and density of housing needed in the coming decades. Stage 1 Community Consultation was undertaken in April to June 2010.

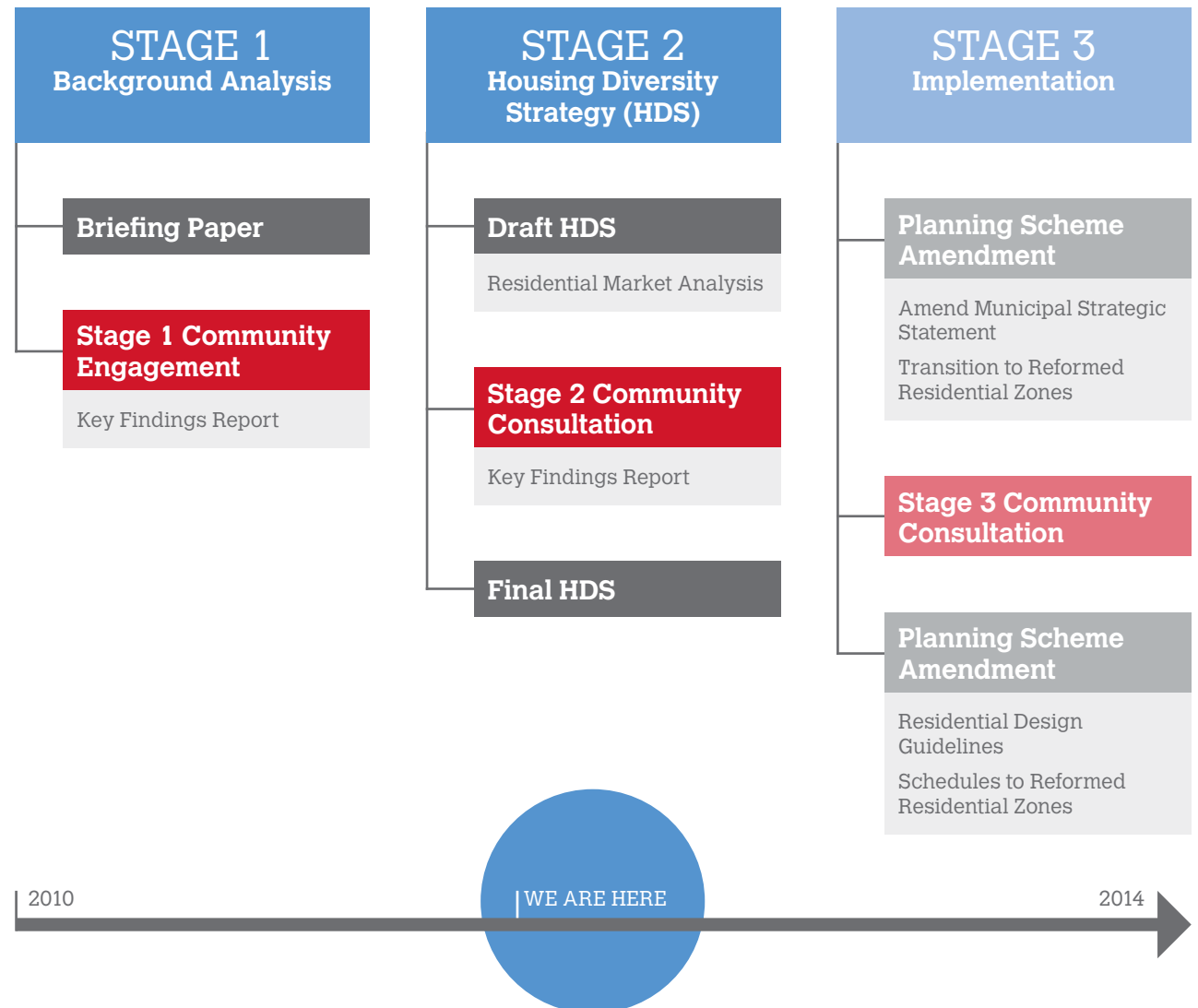
Stage 2: Housing Diversity Strategy

The Housing Diversity Strategy forms part of Stage 2, and outlines the future strategic direction of housing growth in the established suburbs. Stage 2 Community Consultation was undertaken in response to the preparation of the Draft Housing Diversity Strategy (2012) from March to May 2013.

Stage 3: Implementation

This stage will include two Planning Scheme Amendments. The first amendment will be to implement the Change Areas into the Whittlesea Planning Scheme in the form of the Reformed Residential Zones. Following this, preparation of planning controls and residential design guidelines will inform variations to the Schedules of the Reformed Residential Zones.

Diagram 1: Housing Diversity Strategy Process



Different dwelling types could include:

What is meant by diverse housing types?

Diverse housing types means: Detached housing, dual occupancies, townhouses, multi-units, shop-top housing and apartments.

Different tenure types including: rental, mortgage and owned properties.

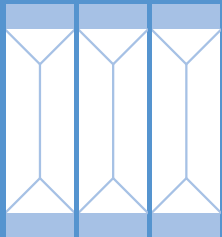
Different sizes: of external and internal floor space, and number of bedrooms.



Diagram 2: Different Dwelling Types

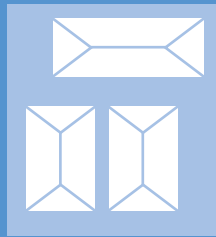
TOWNHOUSE
(often referred to as semi-detached)

Typically attached to one or more dwellings or separated by a small distance (less than half a metre). Generally with private grounds and no dwellings above or below.



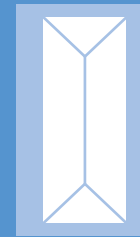
MULTI-UNIT

Several dwellings on a single or consolidated lot with private grounds, detached and generally with a shared area for car parking and access.



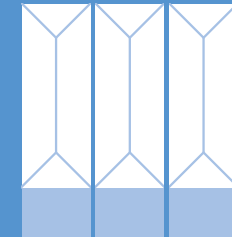
APARTMENT

Several dwellings within the same building footprint. Typically without private grounds but with a shared common entrance foyer or stairwell.



SHOP-TOP HOUSING

A house attached to a shop, usually above.



STREET VIEW

AERIAL VIEW

EXAMPLE

Why should we direct diverse housing into specific locations?

We know that the ways in which we live are changing. We also know that our cities continue to grow. If managed well this growth could lead to improved infrastructure, more and better services, more liveable and vibrant centres and a more sustainable urban form.

The types of houses we live in and their location is of fundamental importance to us. These factors affect our everyday lives in a number of ways:

- The length of our daily commute
- Whether we can walk to work, shops, parks and use public transport
- How often we see our family and friends
- Choices about how we bring up our children and whether we can remain living in the same area where we grew up.

Our housing also helps to build sustainable communities where people do not need to rely on the car to get around. It also provides the basis for an active, healthy lifestyle.

Please refer to Appendix 01 for a full discussion of the environmental, social and economic considerations for managing housing growth.

Benefits of the Housing Diversity Strategy

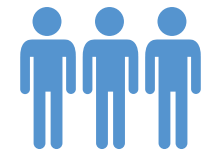


ENVIRONMENTAL

- Reduction in the outward expansion of our City by creating greater housing choice within the established suburbs.
- Increased proximity to services and facilities creating opportunities for reduced car use.
- Better access to public transport helping to reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.
- The preservation of productive agricultural land and other highly valued natural environments.

SOCIAL

- Greater social diversity by providing a wider range of housing types.
- Fosters more opportunities for social interaction through the provision of mixed use developments.
- Provides opportunities for access to social, community, educational and health services.
- Fosters healthier communities through the development of 'walkable' communities.
- Reduced social disadvantage caused by rising fuel prices and transport costs.
- Satisfies a growing trend for apartment style living.



ECONOMIC

- More efficient use of existing infrastructure and investment.
- Promotes an increased labour force mix.
- Increased productivity as a result of reduced journey to work times.

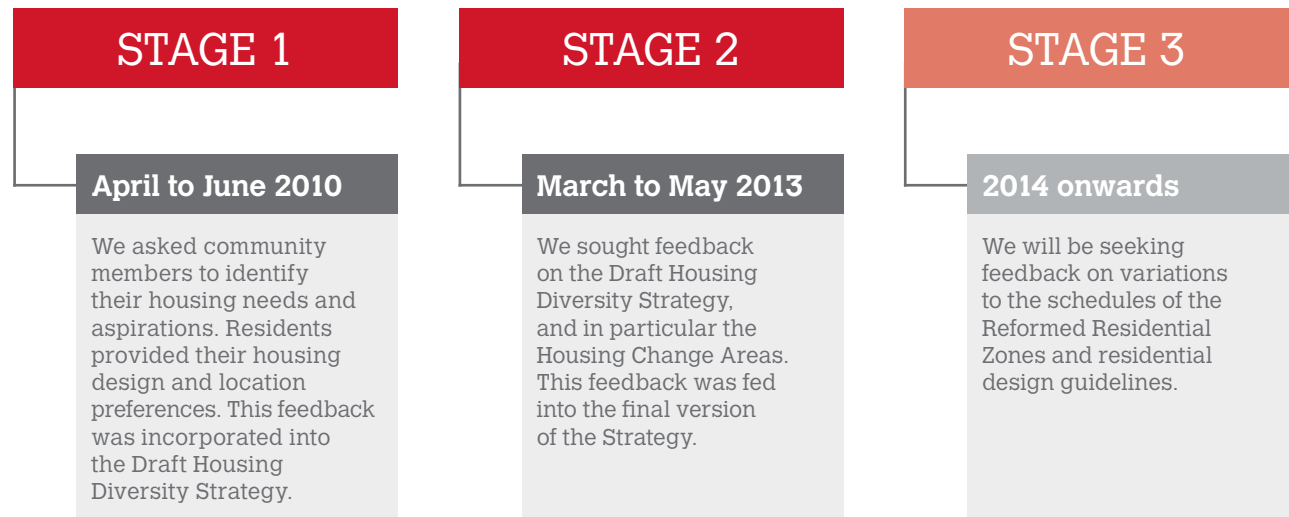


Community Consultation

Council developed the Strategy only after extensive consultation with the community. This helped to provide an understanding of housing issues, particularly as they relate to demand. It also enabled Council to identify community priorities and issues.

Council has undertaken community consultation throughout the development of the Strategy. The consultation included focus groups, design workshops, pop up workshops, drop in sessions, meetings with community groups, radio broadcasts, newspaper articles, Whittlescene articles, online drop in sessions... to name a few.

Diagram 4: Housing Diversity Strategy Consultation Process





What did the community say?

Difficulties accessing housing:

- Many residents expressed lack of housing choice in the municipality.
- During both stages of consultation, the community expressed difficulties accessing housing in terms of physical accessibility and suitability.
- During consultation, the community identified a shortage of good quality rental accommodation.
- Housing affordability, both in terms of rental accommodation and home ownership was identified as a concern for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities, as well as younger people, older households and single parent families.
- Housing designed for universal accessibility was also an important consideration for new developments.

Preferred locations for housing growth:

- The majority of residents were supportive of housing growth being directed into well serviced locations in activity and neighbourhood centres and close to public transport.
- Some residents felt that parts of the established suburbs should be protected from housing growth.
- The existing neighbourhood character and development density should be maintained where possible.

Preference for different housing types:

- Almost all residents supported greater housing diversity.
- Preference for smaller housing was common amongst younger person households, single parent families and older person households.
- Downsizing is a consideration for many older residents in the next 10 - 20 years.
- Affordable housing close to tertiary facilities and public transport was favoured by students.
- Preferences for larger homes (4+ bedrooms) was common among larger newly arrived migrant families and multi-generational households.



Important design elements:

- Landscaping to soften the appearance of medium and high density developments.
- Shared and communal spaces in medium and higher density developments. Usable, well designed (and not necessarily large) private open space.
- Good quality design and architecture.
- Provision of parking for medium and higher density developments.
- Increased building height in appropriate locations.
- Front and side setbacks to create building separation and landscaping.
- Environmentally Sustainable Design.
- Accessible design.

Over the two stages of consultation there has been broad support for:

- Increased housing density close to public transport
- A limit on further housing growth where access to transport is poor
- Greater housing diversity with smaller, as well as larger, housing.

The consultation outcomes of Stage 1 are documented in *House This*. The Key Findings Report provides a summary of the feedback received as part of Stage 2.

Common community concerns from consultation



“I will be forced to move or develop my property.”

Council response

The Strategy will not force any owners to alter their property. However if you wish to develop your property to include additional dwellings, a planning permit will still be required and Council will consider whether the application fits in with the vision of the proposed Housing Change Area.

“Council will purchase my land.”



Council response

Council will not purchase land for the purpose of private development. Council’s role is to guide future development and assess planning applications. In the first instance, further work will need to be done to prepare planning controls and residential design guidelines.

“More housing will result in strain on resources and infrastructure.”



Council response

By consolidating urban development in the established urban areas where there is existing infrastructure, the need to extend infrastructure networks is reduced and more efficient use of existing services can be achieved.

However it is true that further infill development also places additional demand on existing infrastructure and services.

Council will continue to advocate for improved infrastructure and prepare new strategic documents (such as structure plans) to guide new infrastructure and advocacy.



“I won’t be able to develop my property in the low change areas.”

Council response

Council will need to consider whether additional dwellings and subdivision complies with the vision of the Housing Change Area. Lower Change Areas will not be suitable for substantial housing change as they are poorly serviced in terms of access to the Principal Public Transport Network and services.

“The Strategy will result in traffic congestion.”



Council response

The Strategy hopes to relieve traffic congestion in the municipality by directing housing growth to locations in close proximity to public transport in order to encourage residents to use alternatives to the car. At a minimum this will help to reduce traffic congestion.

“I don’t want my suburb to change.”



Council response

Some parts of the established suburbs will need to continue to accommodate housing growth, both as a normal part of population growth and to cater for the community’s changing household needs. However as the makeup of households and their housing needs change, it is inevitable that the existing neighbourhood character will also change. The Strategy will need to carefully manage this change to ensure that our established suburbs continue to be places where we want to live. Council also has to have regard to State Government direction on where future housing growth should be located.

“The multi units are so poorly designed.”



Council response

Ultimately the Strategy will allow building height to increase in areas in close proximity to public transport and commercial areas to allow a greater diversity of housing types. However high density does not necessarily mean high rise. The ultimate height of new buildings will be determined by what Change Area they are in, and the impact on adjoining properties. Further strategic working will be undertaken to determine specific design detail, such as height limits.

Council response

Council understands there is ongoing community concern about the quality of medium and high density housing and the impact of new developments on the existing local character. Following adoption of the Strategy into the Whittlesea Planning Scheme detailed planning controls will need to be prepared to ensure medium and high density housing are high quality, with active street frontages, attractive landscaped areas, high quality public realm and parking.

“Apartments will be developed right next to me.”

SECTION

02

POLICY CONTEXT



What is Council's role in managing housing growth?

The role of Council is to provide strategic direction to guide the future mix, location and design of housing throughout the established residential areas of the municipality.

While the issue of housing growth is linked with the planning and provision of infrastructure and services, Council's role is limited to:

Planning, Regulation and Policy Development

- Ensuring the housing needs and priorities of existing and future residents are met within the existing legislative framework and Victorian Planning Provisions.
- Developing policies and structure plans to identify preferred locations for new housing.
- Preparation of planning controls and design guidelines to influence the way new housing is designed.

Advocacy

- Liaising with the development industry and State and Federal Government to promote desired housing outcomes such as housing affordability and accessibility and the provision of infrastructure and services.
- Negotiating with the development industry to facilitate the design of new development by ensuring that they are of high quality, appropriately serviced by infrastructure and offer high levels of amenity for residents.

What is the State Government's direction for planning and managing residential growth?

State Planning Policy requires Council to:

- Increase and ensure an adequate supply of housing in existing urban areas by facilitating increasing housing yield in appropriate locations.
- Locate new housing, in particular high density housing in or close to activity and neighbourhood centres and employment corridors.
- Ensure an adequate supply of redevelopment opportunities within an established urban area with access to a range of services, in particular good access to public transport.
- Ensure housing matches changing and future demographic profiles and facilitate more affordable housing closer to jobs, transport and services.

Plan Melbourne

The (draft) Plan Melbourne – Metropolitan Planning Strategy was released by the State Government in October 2013, seeking public comment by 6 December 2013. It elevates the status of Epping Central to a Metropolitan Activity Centre (previously a Principal Activity Centre); one of nine across metropolitan Melbourne.

Some key directions relating to housing include:

- Increasing the density and diversity of housing in walkable catchments of Activity Centres.
- Encouraging different housing types in strategic locations, so that more people can live closer to jobs and services.
- Improving the quality and amenity of residential apartments.

Plan Melbourne estimates that 57 per cent of all new dwellings (required by 2050) will be accommodated in Melbourne's established suburbs.

Once finalised, Plan Melbourne will replace Melbourne 2030 and Melbourne @ 5 Million.

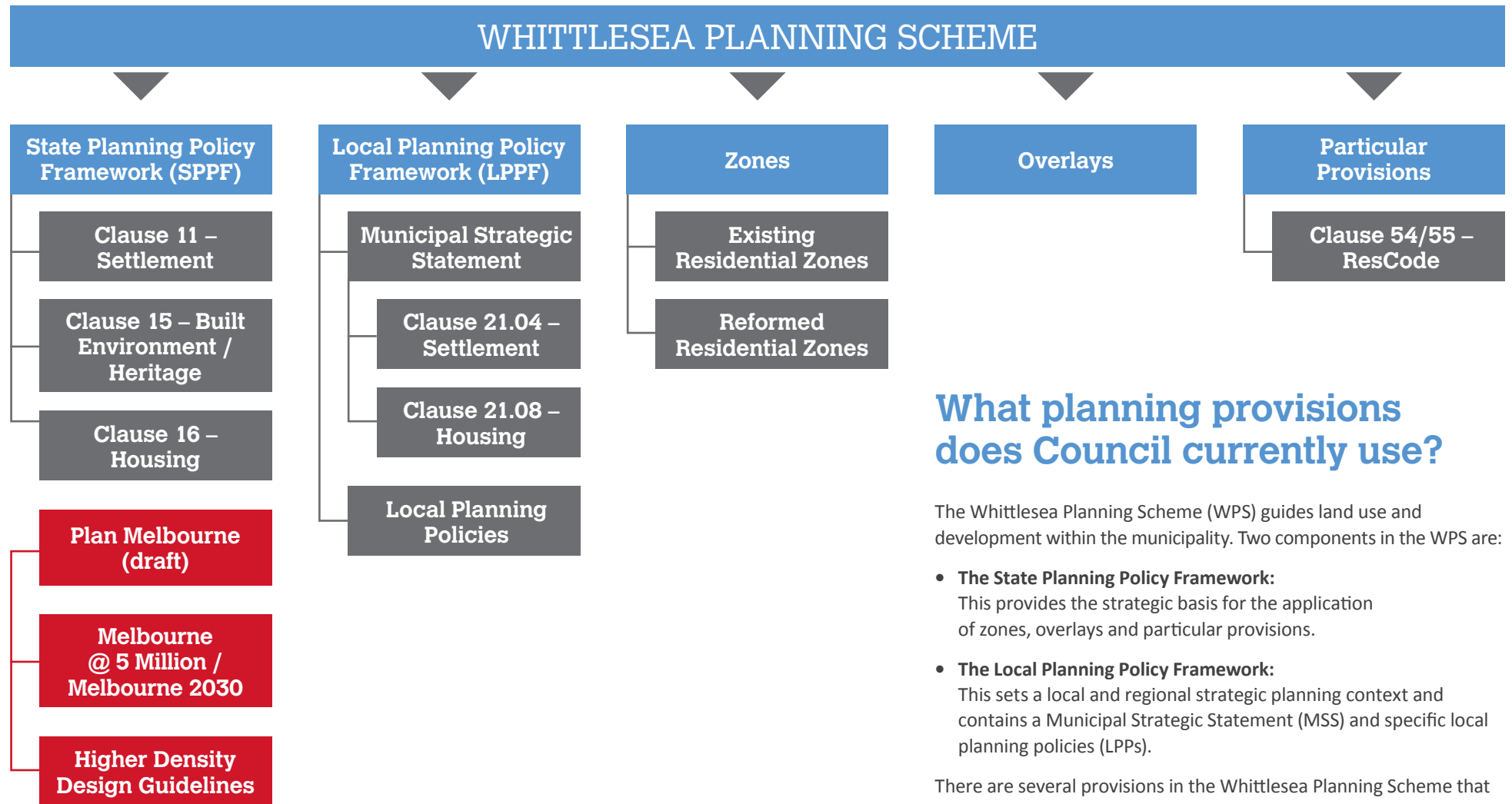
Melbourne 2030/ Melbourne @ 5 Million

Melbourne 2030 (released in 2002) is the State Government's strategic plan for metropolitan Melbourne referenced within Clauses 11 and 16 of the State Planning Policy Framework. Melbourne @ 5 Million (released in 2008) was prepared to guide the ongoing implementation of Melbourne 2030 in the context of unanticipated population growth.

Epping Central was recently identified in the State Government's Plan Melbourne as a Metropolitan Activity Centre because of its good public transport networks and services including providing a diverse range of jobs, activities and community facilities and services.

Refer to Appendix 02 for a full discussion of state and local planning policies pertaining to housing.

Diagram 5: Whittlesea Planning Scheme



What planning provisions does Council currently use?

The Whittlesea Planning Scheme (WPS) guides land use and development within the municipality. Two components in the WPS are:

- **The State Planning Policy Framework:**
This provides the strategic basis for the application of zones, overlays and particular provisions.
- **The Local Planning Policy Framework:**
This sets a local and regional strategic planning context and contains a Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and specific local planning policies (LPPs).

There are several provisions in the Whittlesea Planning Scheme that relate to the Strategy. In addition, zones, overlays, particular and general provisions affect development.

State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF)

Clause 11 – Settlement: References Melbourne 2030, and specifically encourages the concentration of major retail, residential, commercial, administrative, entertainment and cultural developments into activity centres which provide a variety of land uses and are highly accessible to the community.

Clause 15 – Built Environment and Heritage: Seeks to ensure that developments contribute positively to the local urban character and sense of place and minimises detrimental impacts on neighbouring properties.

Clause 16 – Housing: Seeks to increase the supply of housing in existing urban areas of metropolitan Melbourne by facilitating housing in appropriate locations close to Activity and Neighbourhood Centres and employment corridors that offer good access to services and transport. It also aims to achieve well designed medium density housing which respects the neighbourhood character, improves housing choice and makes better use of existing infrastructure.

Clause 54/55 – ResCode: Comprises a set of development objectives and standards which must be used when assessing planning permits for residential developments.

The Higher Density Design Guidelines: Sets out design principles that must be taken into account in the design of residential developments more than five storeys.

Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF)

The Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme contains the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and Local Planning Policies (LPPs).

Clause 21 – Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS): The MSS establishes the strategic framework for the municipality and shows how it supports and implements the SPPF.

It provides the basis for the use of zones and other land use controls within the Scheme.

Clause 21.04 – Settlement/Clause 21.08 – Housing: The strategic planning framework identifies ‘Housing’ as one of nine key land use planning objectives. Its aim is to ‘promote the establishment of increased diversity and quality in housing provision to meet the needs of existing and future residents of the City of Whittlesea in a manner which contributes positively to local character and sense of place’.

Specifically Clause 21.08-2 Housing Diversity and Affordability identifies completion of the Housing Diversity Strategy.

Reformed Residential Zones

In July 2013 the State Government introduced Reformed Residential Zones, which include:

- Residential Growth Zone
- General Residential Zone
- Neighbourhood Residential Zone.

The Reformed Residential Zones will provide Councils with the ability to identify preferred locations for housing growth (including locations where intensification should not occur) and apply local zone schedules to different areas to articulate preferred built form outcomes.

Currently residentially zoned land in the City of Whittlesea falls under either the Residential 1 Zone or Residential 2 Zone.

The timeframe for transition to the Reformed Residential Zones (to replace current Residential 1 & 2 Zoning) is by 1 July 2014. Council’s approach to transition in the Reformed Residential Zones is discussed in Section 6 – Implementation.

Features of the Reformed Residential Zones

The features of the Reformed Residential Zones are discussed in the table below.

FEATURES OF THE REFORMED RESIDENTIAL ZONES								
	ACTIVITY CENTRE ZONE (existing)	COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT ZONE (existing)	MIXED USE ZONE (improved)	RESIDENTIAL GROWTH ZONE (new)	GENERAL RESIDENTIAL ZONE (new)	NEIGHBOURHOOD RESIDENTIAL ZONE (new)	TOWNSHIP ZONE (improved)	LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ZONE (improved)
Zone	Enables consolidated community services, shops, offices and housing in Activity Centres.	Enables a range of uses and development including new housing and jobs growth in redevelopment areas.	Enables new housing and jobs growth in mixed use areas.	Enables new housing growth and diversity.	Respects and preserves urban character while enabling modest housing growth and housing diversity.	Restricts housing growth in areas identified for urban preservation.	Provides for residential and other uses in small towns. Enables modest housing growth.	Enables low density housing.
Where will it be used?	In Melbourne's Activity Centres and major regional town centres	Redevelopment sites such as former industrial land, underutilised urban areas and identified urban renewal locations where significant change is sought.	In areas with a mix of residential and non-residential development. In local neighbourhood centres undergoing renewal and around train stations, where appropriate.	In appropriate locations near activity areas, train stations and other areas suitable for increased housing activity.	In most residential areas where modest growth and diversity of housing is provided, it is consistent with existing neighbourhood character.	In areas where single dwellings prevail and change is not identified, such as areas of recognised neighbourhood character, environmental or landscape significance.	In townships.	On the fringe of urban areas and townships where sewerage may not be available.
What sort of housing can be expected?	High density housing	High and medium density housing	High and medium density housing	Medium density housing	Single dwellings and some medium density housing	Single dwellings and dual occupancies	Single dwellings and some medium density housing	Single dwellings

Source: Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, 2012



How will the Strategy address policy gaps in the Whittlesea Planning Scheme?

The Strategy will need to address provide clear policy guidance in relation to:

- Preferred locations for housing growth
- Changing neighbourhood character
- Housing design.

Guidance on preferred locations for housing

The current Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) identifies the need for housing diversity to some extent. Specifically it looks at medium density housing to cater for demographic changes. However, recent planning decisions illustrate there is an absence of specific guidance in the Whittlesea Planning Scheme for identifying preferred locations for housing growth.

The Strategy seeks to address this by identifying suitable locations for density within the established residential areas. It also identifies areas that are not suitable for increased housing growth.

Amending the MSS to outline the local response to managing change and responding to the community's needs will help achieve greater consistency in decision making.

Guidance around changing neighbourhood character

Some parts of the City of Whittlesea's established residential areas will need to continue to accommodate housing growth, both as a normal part of population growth and to cater for the community's changing household needs. However as the makeup of households and their housing needs change it is inevitable that the existing neighbourhood character will also continue to change.

The Housing Diversity Strategy ensures that the impact of this change is carefully managed to ensure that our established suburbs continue to be places that we want to live in.


Guidance on housing design

There is ongoing community concern regarding the quality of medium and higher density development. Mostly, concerns centre around the need for development to complement the existing neighbourhood character and, where appropriate, assist in shaping a preferred character.

The HDS recognises the importance of providing high quality built form and design outcomes to ensure that:

- The amenity of both existing and future residents is considered
- The quality of life for all residents is improved
- The attractiveness of our suburbs is enhanced.

Changes are required to the existing local planning policy framework to guide high quality design for new residential developments. The Reformed Residential Zones currently released by the State Government, will assist in guiding preferred built form outcomes implementing this policy framework.



**“I want to downsize,
and not worry
about mowing
lawns and keeping
a garden.”**

.....
**Whittlesea Community Festival
Pop Up Workshop,
Stage 2 Community Consultation**

SECTION

03

DISCUSSION OF KEY ISSUES



Who lives in our established suburbs?

The characteristics of current and future residents need to be understood to efficiently plan for the quantity, type and location of housing needed over the next 20 years¹. Increasing the availability of housing options within the established urban areas, particularly medium and higher density housing, will be important to respond to the changing demographic profile of the City and the shifts in housing preferences.

Population growth

In 2011 the population of the established areas was approximately 113,000 persons. This is forecast to increase by 18,600 over the next 20 years to 2031.

In the 15 year period from 1996 to 2011, 75 per cent of population growth in the City of Whittlesea occurred in growth areas outside the established areas.

Despite the dominance of growth area residential development driving population growth, population growth in the established areas between 2006 and 2011 (760 persons per annum) was considerably higher than the population growth rate between 2001 and 2006 (150 persons per annum). This trend suggests ongoing demand for new residential development in established areas.

Despite the overall forecast increase of 18,600 persons in the established areas over the next 20 years, the established areas is forecast to decline from 69 per cent of the total population in 2011 to just 44 per cent in 2031.

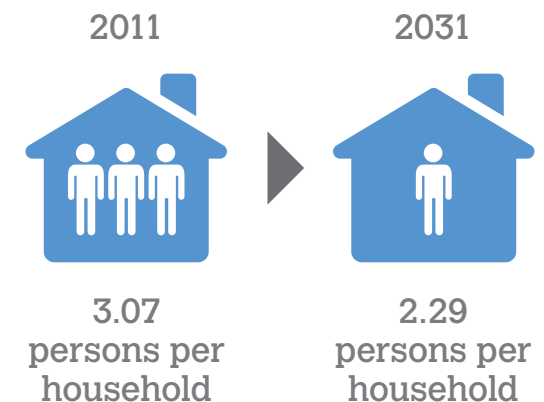
Household growth

It is estimated that the number of new households which need to be accommodated in the established suburbs over the next 20 years is 8,200 dwellings, which is approximately 410 new households every year.

Decline in the average household size as a result of changing household types, combined with forecast population growth, is expected to generate ongoing strong demand for new dwellings in the established suburbs.

Refer to Appendix 03 for a complete Demographic and Housing Profile.

Household size declining in established areas



Source: Essential Economics, Residential Market Analysis, 2012

¹This section includes text from the Residential Market Analysis prepared by Essential Economics in 2012. Other data has been collected from:

- the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 and 2011 Census data,
- the City of Whittlesea Community Profile, and
- Population forecasts prepared by .id consulting (2012).



Household types

A need for smaller dwellings is being driven by a changing demographic profile.

Currently almost half (45 per cent) of all households in the established suburbs are categorised as couples with children. However recent Census data shows that over the period 2011 to 2031, the established suburbs are forecast to have:

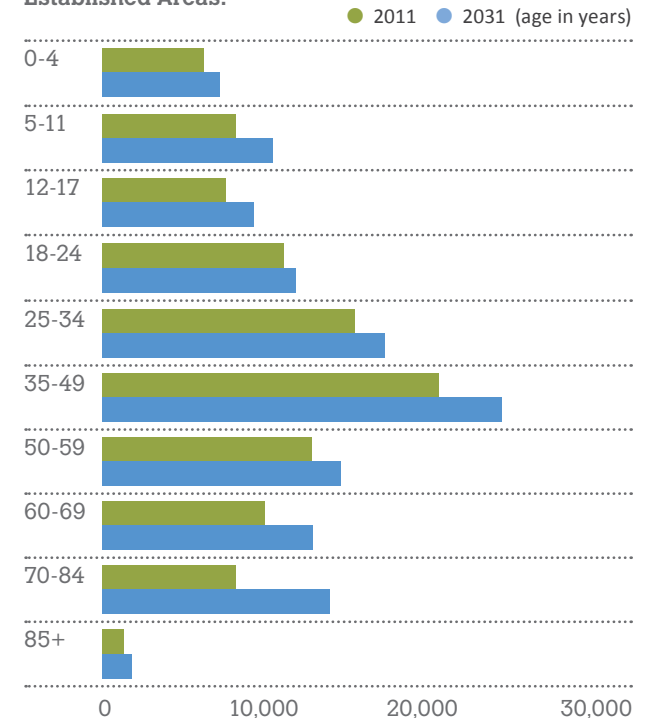
- A declining share of couples with children. This household type will account for just 18 per cent of additional households in the period 2011 to 2031.
- The percentage of couples without children and lone person households is expected to increase.

Over the next 20 years, couples without children and lone person households will comprise 65 per cent of the total forecast additional households in the established areas. Such a change highlights the changing drivers of dwelling demand in the established residential areas.

Age structure

Over the coming decades, the portion of older residents in the established areas is expected to increase. Between 2011 and 2031, the number of persons aged 60 years and over will increase from 18.99 per cent to 23.05 per cent, with the strongest growth in those aged 70-84.

Graph 1: Forecast Age Structure 2011 to 2031, Established Areas.



Source: forecast .id Population and household forecasts, 2011 to 2031 (Nov)

Forecast household types

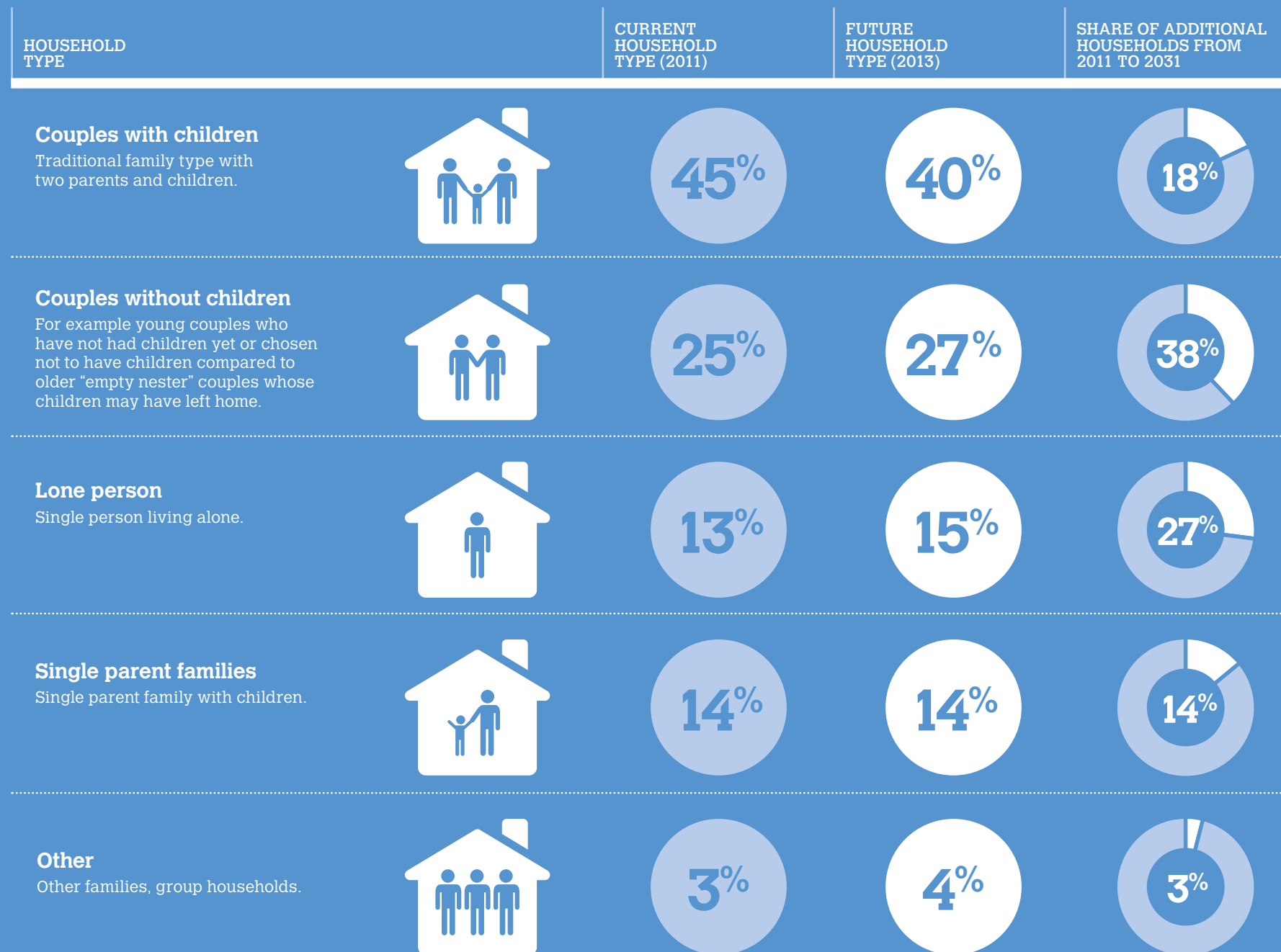


Diagram 6: Forecast Household Types

Source: Residential Market Analysis (2013), Essential Economics

What is our current housing stock?

Dwelling types

A gap has been identified between the established areas' existing housing stock and the housing needs of the community.

A significant shortfall exists in the supply of smaller housing in the municipality.

In 2011, detached dwellings accounted for 90.2 per cent of all dwelling types in the established suburbs.

Semi-detached housing (i.e. townhouses) accounted for only 4.3 per cent.

In 2006, 3 and 4 bedroom homes accounted for the majority (93 per cent) of the municipality's housing.

However dwelling preferences are changing and detached dwellings accounted for just 68 per cent of new dwellings in the established areas between 1996 and 2011. During this period, 32 per cent of new dwellings were semi-detached or units/apartments.

The increasing share of semi-detached housing or units and apartments suggests a growing acceptance and demand for medium and higher density housing types. However, in contrast to other middle ring suburbs in Melbourne, this figure is quite low. Semi-detached dwellings account for the majority of dwelling growth in Moreland (76 per cent), Darebin (64 per cent) and Whitehorse (84 per cent).

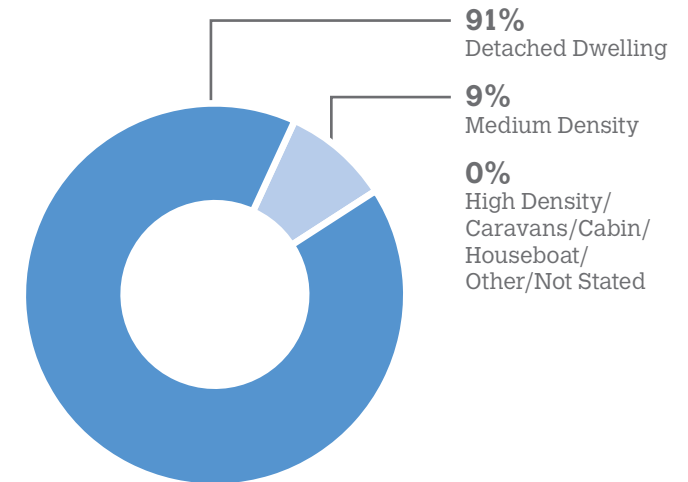
Key statistics

2006

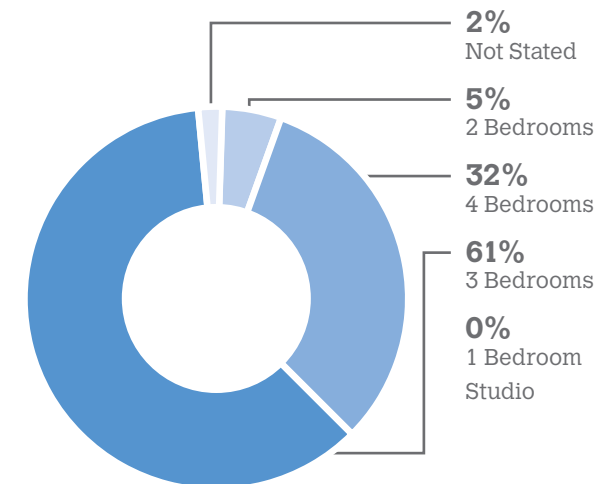
36 per cent of three bedroom dwellings in the municipality were occupied by only two people, and similarly a large percentage of the four or more bedroom dwellings were occupied by only two or three people.

80 per cent of studio apartments were occupied by three or more people which suggest difficulties accessing affordable housing. Clearly, there is a mismatch between household needs and available housing.

Graph 2: Dwellings by house type, Established Areas, 2006



Graph 3: All Dwellings, City of Whittlesea, 2006



Source: ID Consulting, 2012

What is the forecast demand for different dwellings and from whom?

It is expected there will be demand for 8,200 new dwellings over the next 20 years. This includes:

- 3,690 detached dwellings
- 2,860 semi-detached dwellings
- 1,650 apartments and units.

Demand for smaller housing types

Demand for housing in the established areas will be driven by smaller (one and two person) household types. This is a different household profile from that which influenced dwelling demand in the established suburbs over the past 50 years, and which has been dominated by couple with children households.

The demand for townhouses, units and apartments, is forecast to increase steadily over the forecast period, primarily due to the growing population of this housing type with couples without children and lone person households.

Demand for detached dwellings

However, demand for detached dwellings will continue to be the most dominant housing type in 2031 and will account for 81.2 per cent of total housing in the established areas, despite the shift in housing preferences.

Families with children who desire a detached dwelling have significant supply available in parts of the established suburbs in Whittlesea's growth areas, including Mernda and Epping North, as well as, for at least the next 20 years. The established areas are also able to accommodate a share of families with children, as these people are increasingly seeking higher-density housing close to public transport and other infrastructure.

What is our forecast housing supply?

The potential supply of additional housing in the established areas over the next 20 years to 2031 is estimated at 13,390 dwellings. This demonstrates that the established areas can accommodate different dwelling types to meet the forecast housing demand of 8,200 households over the next 20 years. The estimated surplus supply is therefore 5,190 dwellings.

Please refer to the Residential Market Analysis, by Essential Economics, 2012.

Fewer residents will want or need 3-4 bedroom homes. Instead, there will be a need for different housing types to suit our changing population.

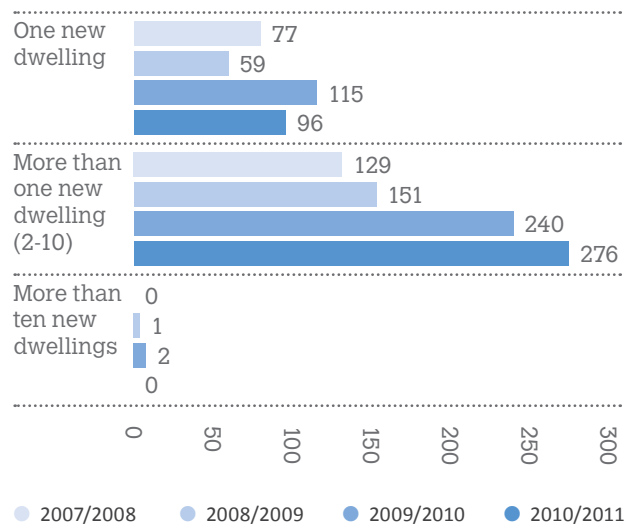
	DETACHED	SEMI-DETACHED	UNITS/APARTMENTS	TOTAL
Total Dwelling Demand	3,690	2,850	1,660	8,200
Total Dwelling Supply	4,135	3,145	6,110	13,390
Surplus	445	295	4,450	5,190

What planning decisions are being made?

The number of planning and building permits being issued for medium and higher density housing in the established suburbs is increasing.

Between 2007/2008 and 2010/2011³, applications for medium density developments more than doubled.

Graph 4: Residential Planning Applications Received by Council, City of Whittlesea, 2012



³ Note: The Planning Permit Activity Report for 2011/2012 was not available at time of report writing.

Issues in relation to planning applications include:

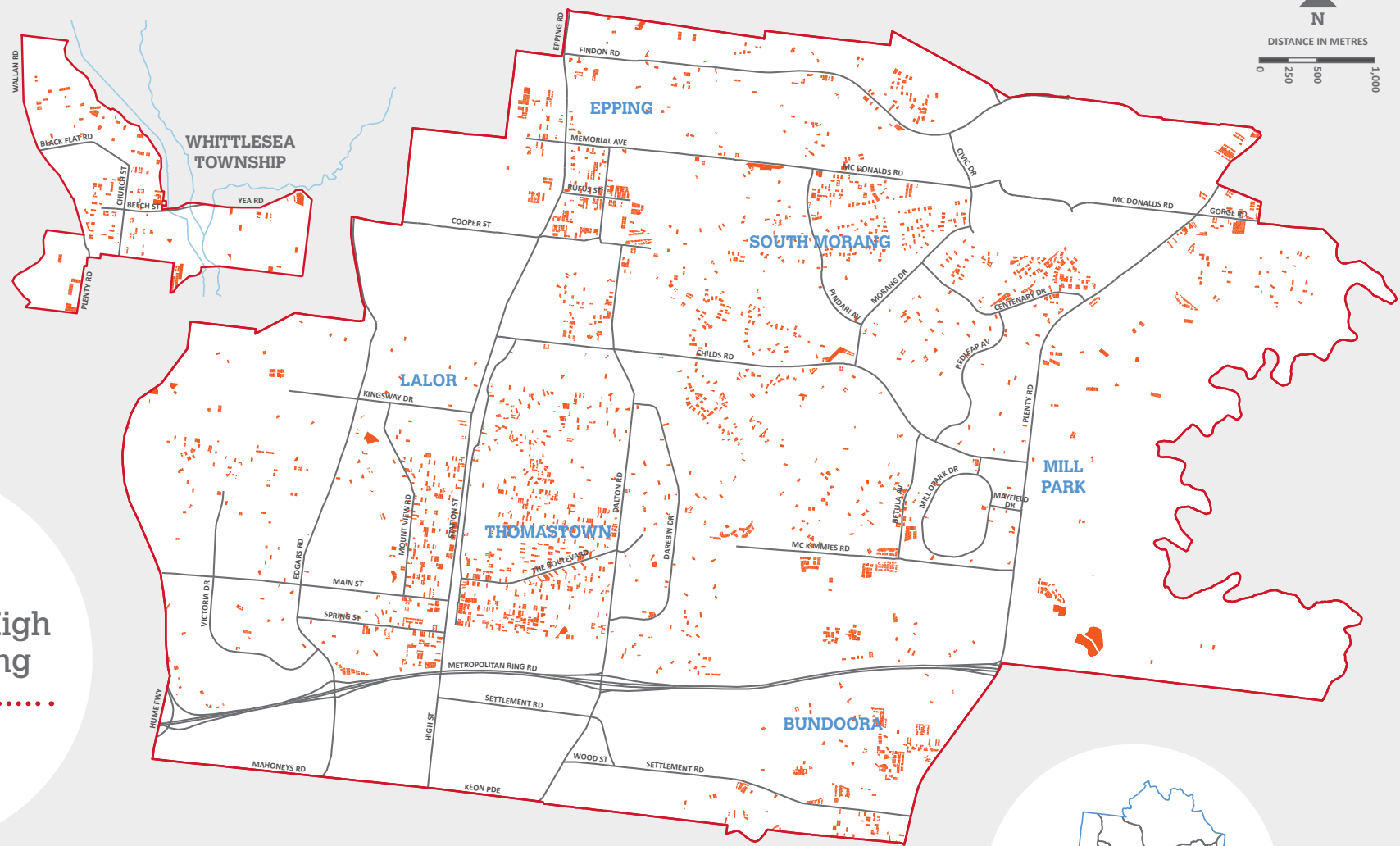
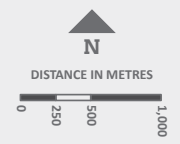
- A higher percentage of objections are made in relation to medium and higher density applications.
- Many planning applications are being appealed to Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).
- Approvals are granted without consistent strategic direction and regard to preferred locations for medium and higher density housing.
- Without policy guidance on the preferred character of the established suburbs, VCAT decisions have been based on existing neighbourhood character which can lead to a varied and inconsistent built form.

Where has medium and higher density housing occurred previously?

The City's planning provisions provide minimal strategic direction about preferred locations for more diverse housing outcomes. This is particularly so for medium and higher density developments. As a result, planning applications for such developments have been granted in an ad-hoc basis throughout the municipality.

Higher density developments have generally occurred on regular shaped lots that are in close proximity to rail stations, such as those found in Epping Central, Lalor and Thomastown.

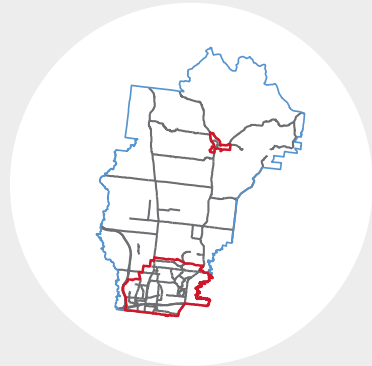
Refer to map on next page.



Map 02:
**Medium and High
 Density Housing**

In the City of Whittlesea

- Approved Medium and Higher Density Planning Permits
- Established Area Boundary



What are the key design issues with current residential developments?

Council recognises there is ongoing community concern over the scale and quality of medium and high density residential developments. A major concern is that new housing may not complement what already exists and not help in shaping a preferred neighbourhood character.


A common perception and a frequent planning objection is that the existing neighbourhood character is under threat. The challenge for the future is to provide residential development that:

- Respects the amenity of neighbouring residents,
- Enhances the appearance of our established suburbs.

Down the track we'll develop residential design guidelines and planning controls (Stage 3: Implementation).

Here are some examples of issues that have been identified with medium and high density housing in the municipality.





“We need a larger house as my children grow up and a smaller house once retired.”

.....

Whittlesea Community Festival
Pop Up Workshop,
Stage 2 Community Consultation

SECTION

04

HOUSING CAPACITY ASSESSMENTS



What is the capacity of our established suburbs to accommodate more growth?

Until recently, planning applications for medium and higher density housing have occurred throughout the established suburbs of the municipality and in areas remote from public transport, services and facilities.

This Strategy aims to provide guidance on appropriate locations for housing growth by assessing the capacity and suitability of each suburb to accommodate future developments. These include existing and proposed land use features, locational and site characteristics.

Housing Capacity Assessments were undertaken to:

- Identify those areas that have the capacity to accommodate additional housing development.
- Identify those areas that have limited capacity for additional housing development.
- Identify constrained land where there is minimal or no capacity for residential development.

Methodology for assessing dwelling capacity

A set of criteria used to assess capacity was identified in Stage 1 (Background Analysis and Stage 1 Community Engagement).

All of the criteria was mapped and analysed in conjunction with each other to determine areas of high, medium and low capacity.

Some of the criteria used to assess capacity include:

- **Locational criteria** (e.g. proximity to activity and neighbourhood centres, local and major shopping centres, public transport, open space, tertiary facilities, health and community facilities).
- **Site characteristics** (e.g. lot frontage, lot size, solar orientation, dwelling size, age of housing).
- **Existing planning provisions** (e.g. zones and overlays).
- **Land ownership** (e.g. vacant lots, government owned land, single dwelling covenants, rear laneways).
- **Subdivision patterns** (e.g. grid based vs. curvilinear subdivision patterns).

Those areas remote from these important elements (generally greater than 800 metres) were considered inappropriate locations for increased housing growth.

Refer to Appendix 03 for a full copy of the Housing Capacity Assessment.

Primary Capacity Criteria

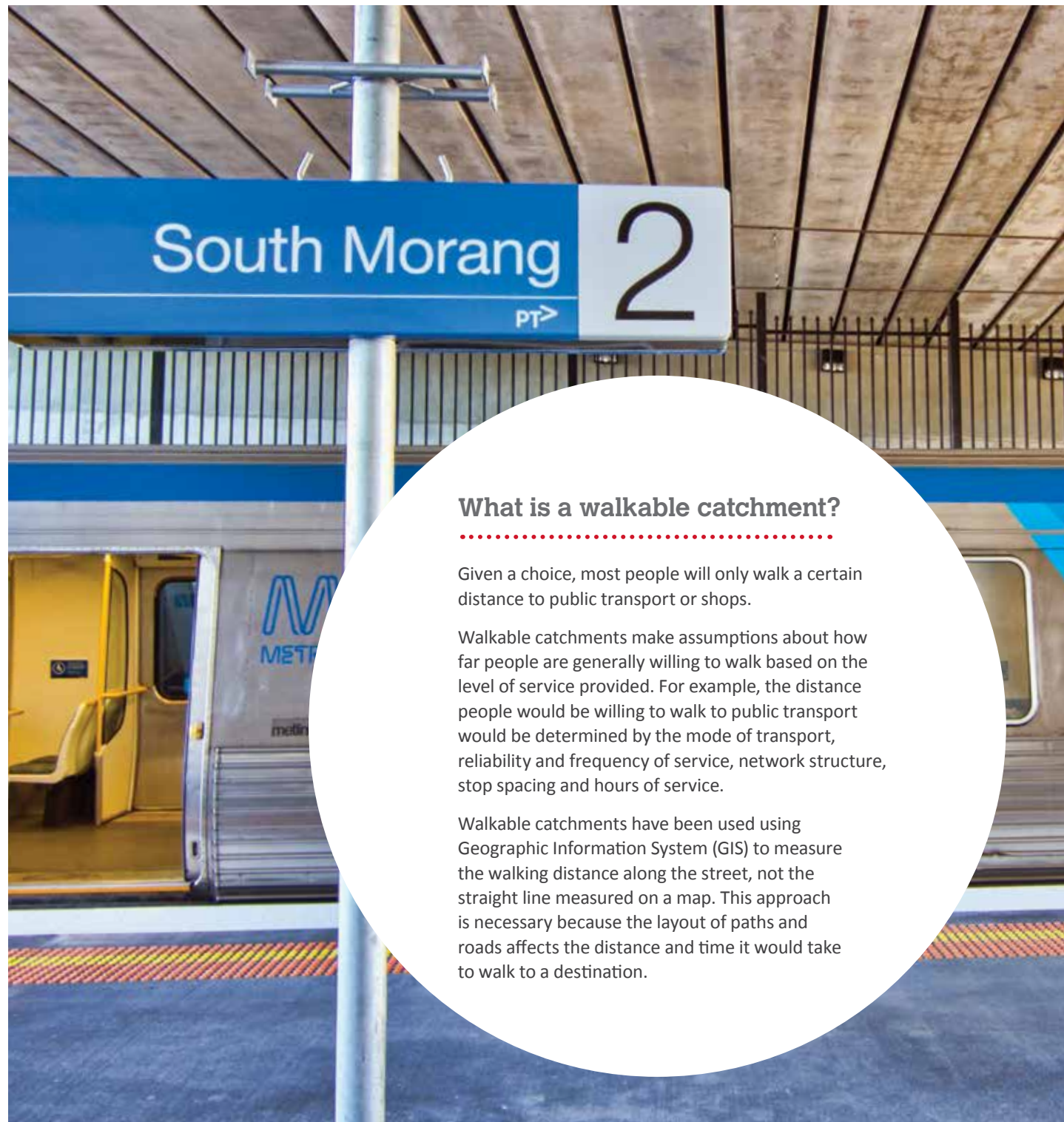
Proximity to the Principal Public Transport Network (PPTN) and activity and neighbourhood centres was identified as the primary considerations for guiding future housing growth.

Proximity to trains, trams and smart buses

It is generally accepted that 800 metres (about a 10 minute walk) is the maximum distance people will walk to high quality public transport (such as trains) compared to 200 metres for lower service modes, for example local buses.

The City of Whittlesea's Principal Public Transport Network Includes:

- Train (South Morang rail line)
- Tram (Route 86 along Plenty Road)
- Orbital Smart Bus (Route 901 and 902, travelling east-west)

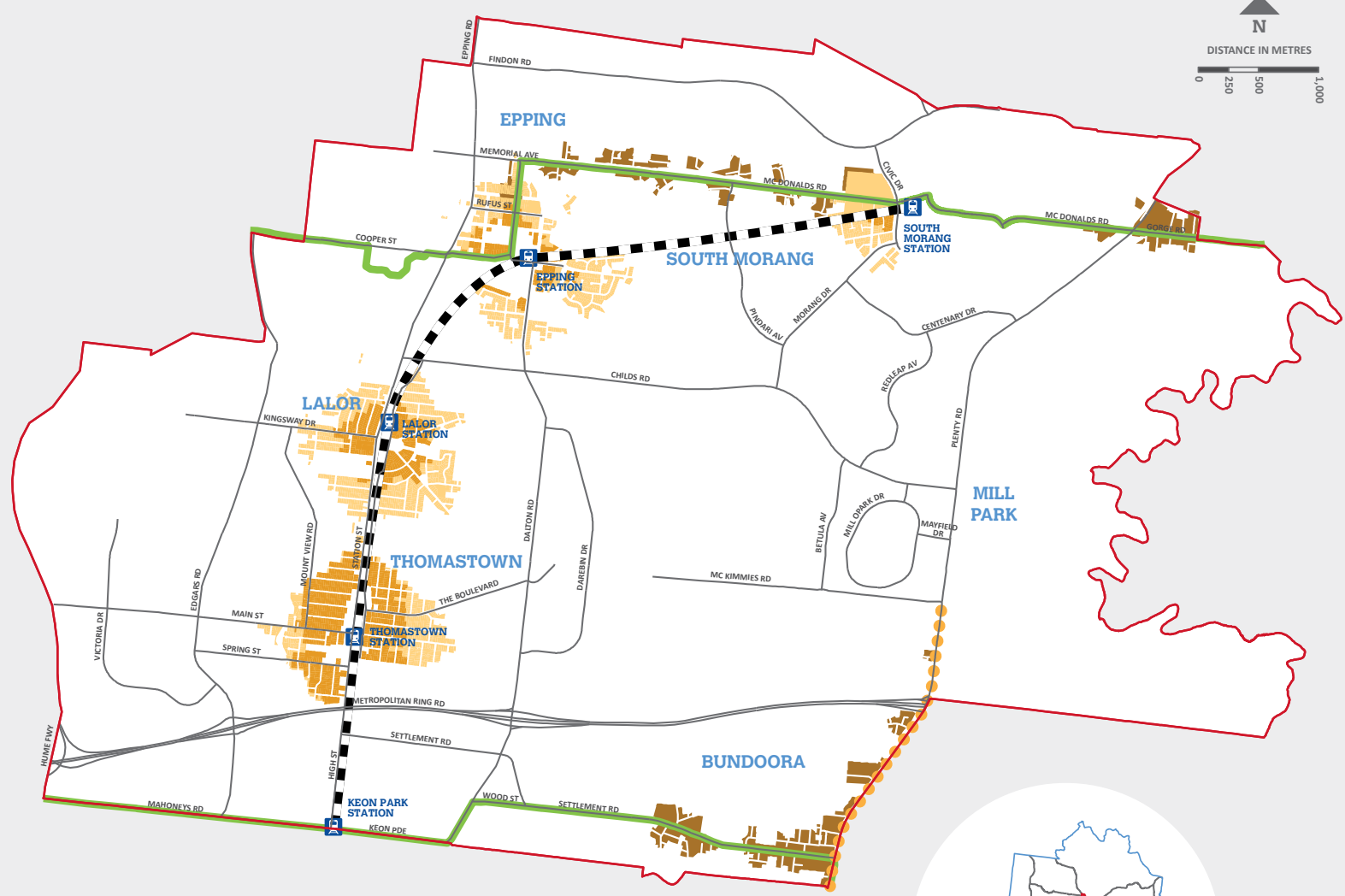
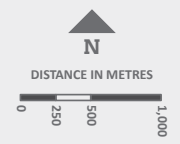


What is a walkable catchment?

Given a choice, most people will only walk a certain distance to public transport or shops.

Walkable catchments make assumptions about how far people are generally willing to walk based on the level of service provided. For example, the distance people would be willing to walk to public transport would be determined by the mode of transport, reliability and frequency of service, network structure, stop spacing and hours of service.

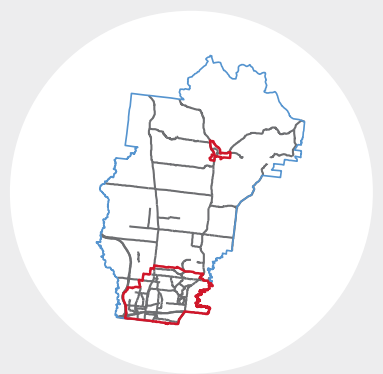
Walkable catchments have been used using Geographic Information System (GIS) to measure the walking distance along the street, not the straight line measured on a map. This approach is necessary because the layout of paths and roads affects the distance and time it would take to walk to a destination.



Map 3:
Walkable
Catchments from
the Principal
Public Transport
Network (PPTN)

- Train station
- Train line
- Smart Bus route
- Tram line
- Residential property within 200m walking distance from Smart Bus and Tram stops
- Residential property within 400m walking distance from Train Station
- Residential property within 800m walking distance from Train Station
- Established Area Boundary

Note: Whittlesea Township has been excluded as it is not serviced by the PPTN.



Distance to Metropolitan, Activity and Neighbourhood Centres, local shopping centres

By virtue of their status, activity centres are considered ideal locations for additional housing growth.

Walkable catchments differed across the hierarchy of centres – based on the size of the centre. Larger catchments were measured for the Metropolitan, Activity and Neighbourhood Centres, compared with the smaller local neighbourhood shopping centres.

The State Government's (draft) Plan Melbourne has identified the following activity centres in the established areas:

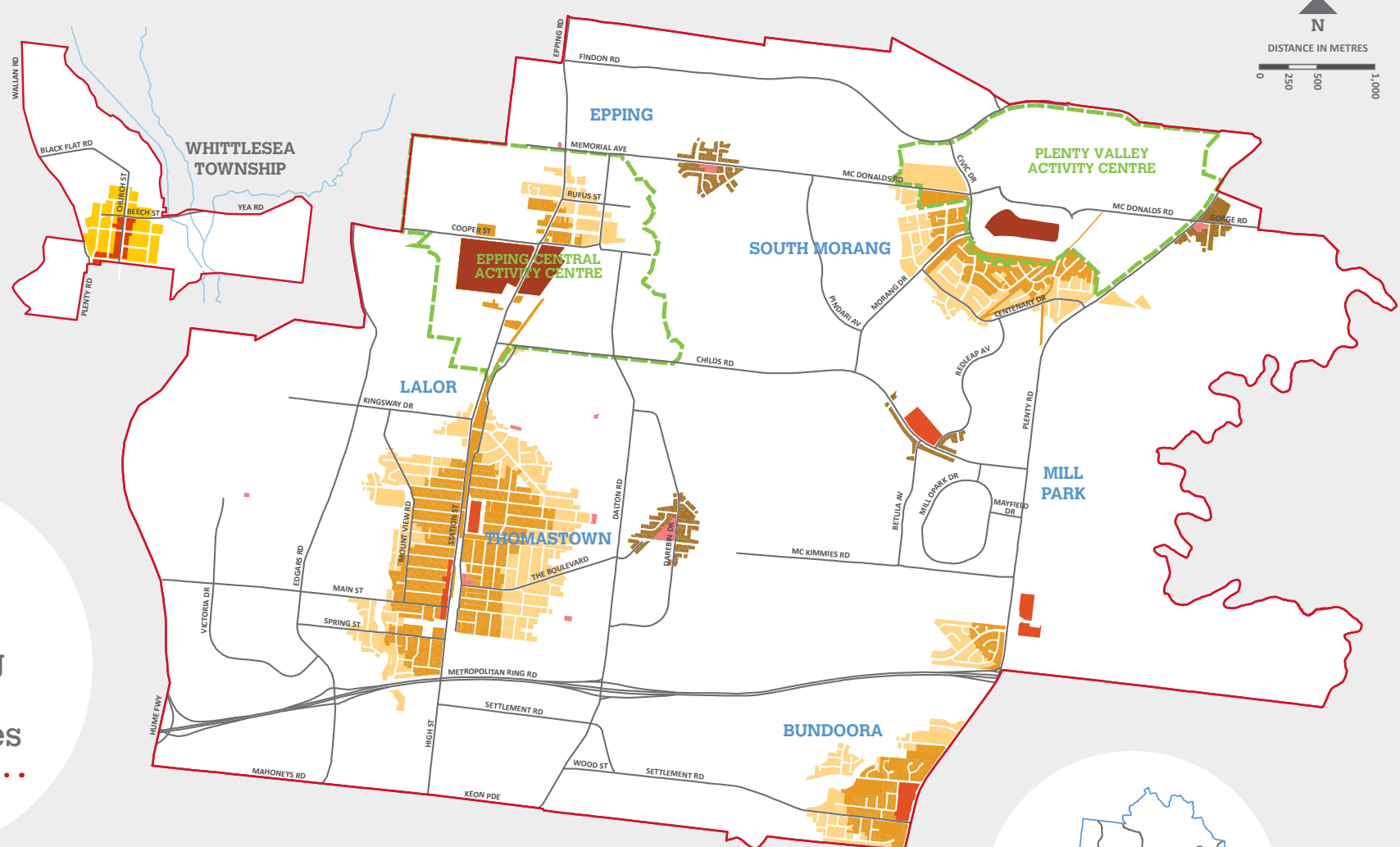
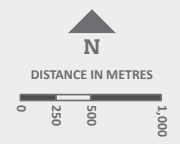
- **Metropolitan Activity Centre: Epping Central** (previously a Principal Activity Centre under Melbourne 2030)
- **Activity Centre: Plenty Valley** (previously a Major Activity Centre)
- **Neighbourhood Centre: Lalor, Thomastown and Bundoora** (previously Neighbourhood Activity Centres)
- **Health and Education Precinct: University Hill** (previously a Specialised Activity Centre)



What is an Activity Centre?

“A vibrant hub where people work, meet, relax and live. Usually well serviced by public transport, they range in size and intensity of use from local neighbourhood strip shopping centres to universities and major regional shopping centre”.

Source: Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, 2013.

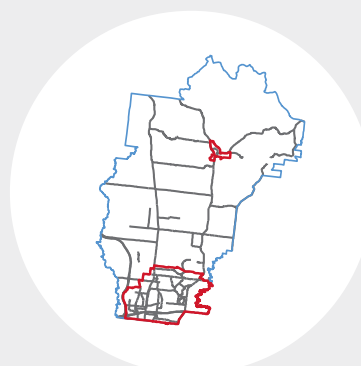


Map 4:
Walkable
Catchments
from Shopping
Centres/
Activity Centres

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| Residential property within 200m walking distance of shops | Major |
| Residential property within 400m walking distance of shops | Neighbourhood |
| Residential property within 800m walking distance of shops | Local |
| Residential property within 400m walking distance of Township shops | |

- Activity Centres
- Established Area Boundary

Note: Whittlesea Township has not been included in this analysis.

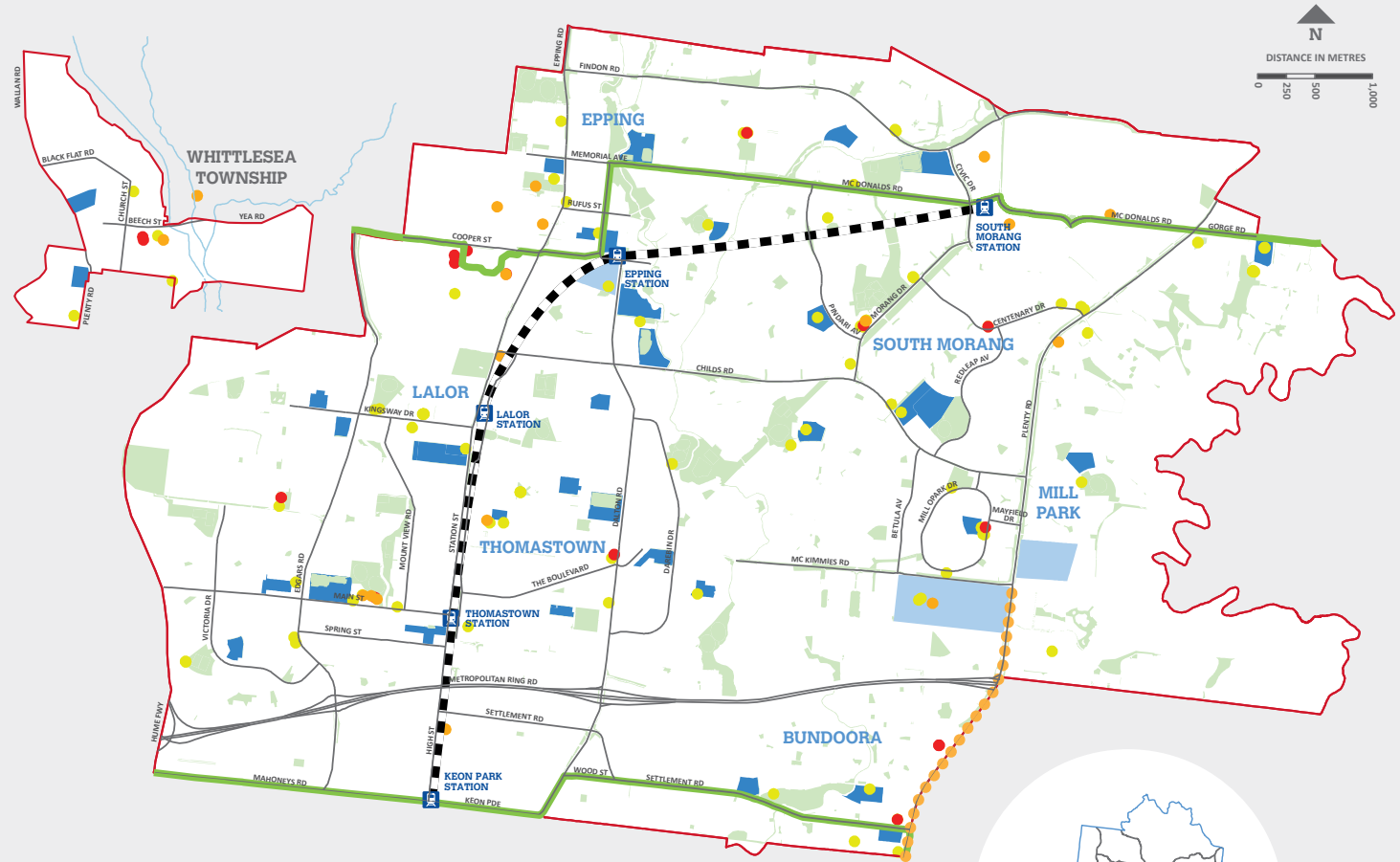


Other capacity considerations

Several other criteria were considered in the capacity assessments. Some are discussed below but refer to Appendix 03 for a comprehensive list.

Community Services and Facilities

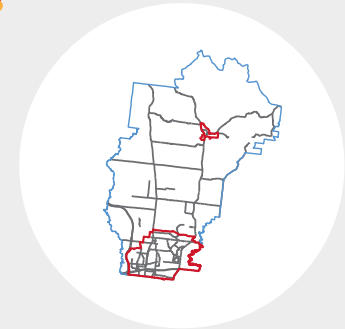
Health, education and community facilities are generally dispersed throughout the established areas. Those areas with clustered services have been used to determine future housing growth areas, as opposed to single purpose facilities only. Activity and Neighbourhood Centres contain the greatest concentration of facilities and services.



Map 5:
Community Services and Facilities



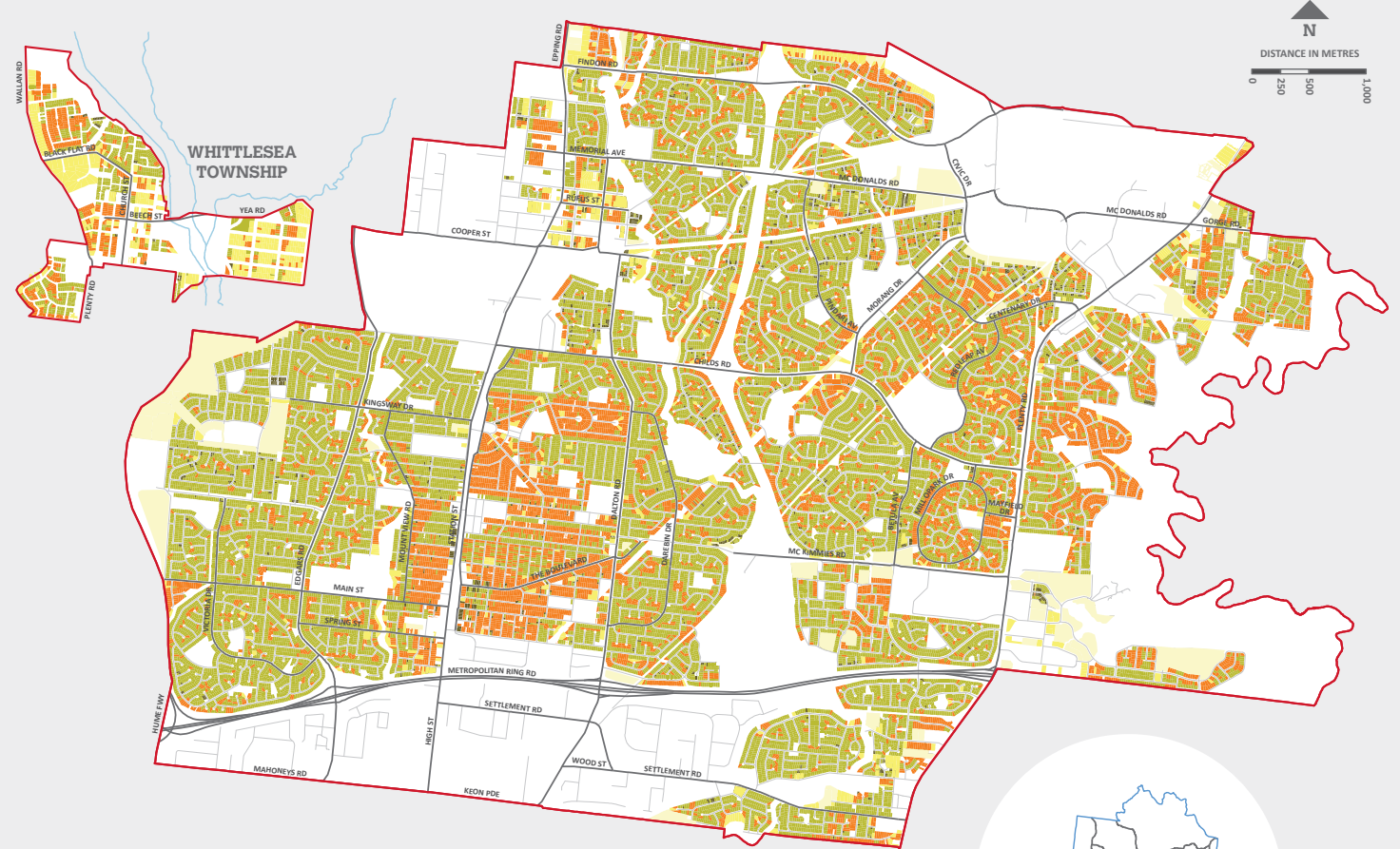
- Train station
- Train line
- Smart Bus route
- Tram line
- Childcare, Kindergartens, CACs, Playgroups
- Community Services
- Health Services
- Schools
- Tertiary Educational Facilities
- Open Space
- Established Area Boundary



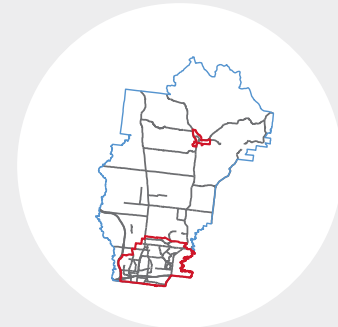
Lot size

There is broad consistency between the size of a lot and its development potential. In Lalor and Thomastown there is a concentration of moderate sized lots (650-1000sqm) and larger lots in Epping Central and parts of South Morang (greater than 800sqm).

A concentration of smaller lots in Bundoora, South Morang and Epping are generally indicative of medium density developments that have been constructed and subdivided in the past.



Map 6:
**Residential
Lot Size (sqm)**



Subdivision pattern

The subdivision pattern of the established areas impacts on its ability to increase density. For example, the layout of streets and lots can determine the connectivity of an area for both pedestrians and vehicles and the size of a lot will influence how many dwellings can be accommodated.

The established areas can generally be divided into two parts:

- The older grid based pattern in Lalor, Thomastown, and Epping where large, regular lots are attractive to developers.
- The curvilinear subdivision of Bundoora and Mill Park with irregular-shape lots that are more difficult to build multi-unit developments on.

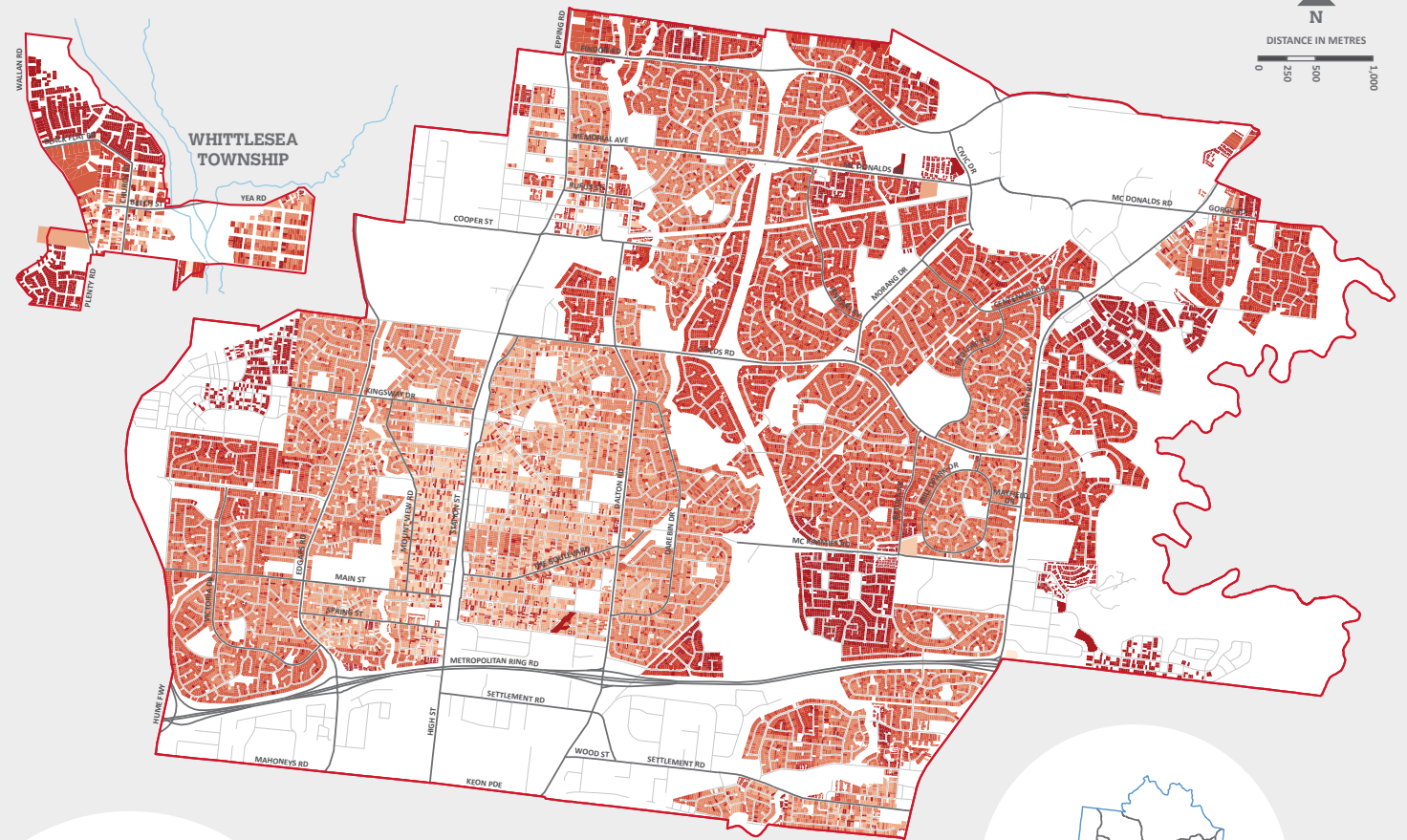


Dwelling age

The age of housing can influence the redevelopment potential of a site. Redevelopment potential also depends on the value of the land and the need for repairs or maintenance to the house. Housing age gives an indication of what existing housing may potentially be redeveloped into new housing. Generally, houses which are older than 30 years are more likely to be demolished or redeveloped to incorporate additional housing.









Post war housing is concentrated along the High Street corridor of Thomastown, Lalor, and Epping. Many houses in Thomastown and Lalor have been demolished to allow for the construction of new dwellings. To the east of the municipality (Bundoora, Mill Park, and South Morang), there is mostly newer housing.

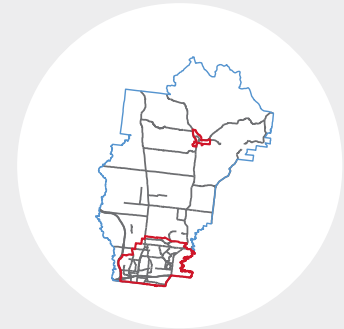
Whittlesea Township contains a number of properties built prior to 1949. However, most development is more recent (less than 20 years old) particularly in the residential areas to the north, south west and east of the Township.



Map 7:
Residential Dwelling Age



- | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|---------------------------|
|  | <1949 |  | 1980-1989 |
|  | 1950-1959 |  | 1990-1999 |
|  | 1960-1969 |  | 2000-present |
|  | 1970-1979 |  | Established Area Boundary |



Housing Capacity Assessment findings

The capacity analysis suggests that there are significant areas within the established suburbs of the City which are not appropriate for further housing growth. This may be because of site or location characteristics. However significant opportunities also exist to accommodate the changing needs of the community in those areas well serviced by the Principal Public Transport Network (PPTN) and Metropolitan, Activity and Neighbourhood Centres.

High capacity areas

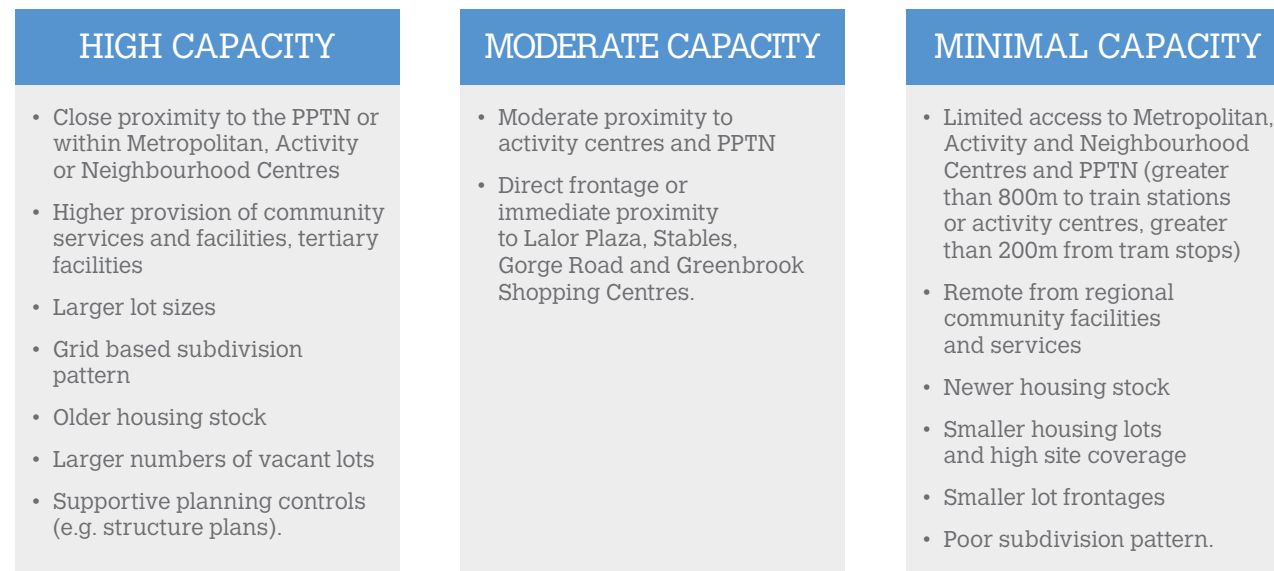
Areas nominated for higher levels of change have good access to Metropolitan, Activity or Neighbourhood Centres and the PPTN. Areas located adjacent to employment, public transport, community services and facilities are deemed to have a high degree of accessibility. Therefore they have a greater capacity to accommodate higher rates of residential change to meet the needs of future occupants.

In general all centres will be considered locations for future growth. However, the Neighbourhood Centres (Lalor, Thomastown, Bundoora) were considered to have less capacity in terms of scale and intensity, compared to the Epping Central Metropolitan Activity Centre and Plenty Valley (South Morang) Activity Centre.

Metropolitan and Activity Centres

It is the Metropolitan and Activity Centres that best show that they could accommodate growth. Based on their proximity to the PPTN, activity centres containing employment, community services and infrastructure are considered suitable to accommodate higher densities (apartments and mixed use developments) without detrimental impacts on the established residential areas.

Diagram 7: Housing Capacity Assessment Findings



Larger lots and high land vacancies in these centres also provide an ideal opportunity for development that provides for a range of dwelling types.

Detailed structure plans have been prepared by Council or are in the process of being prepared to guide the preferred scale, intensity and mix of residential development, and to address matters such as infrastructure capacity and design.

Neighbourhood Centres

Significant residential development can occur in Neighbourhood Centres given their location and site characteristics. However, because of the smaller scale of these centres, development needs to be sensitive to their existing neighbourhood role and function.

Some change in the Neighbourhood Centres was considered appropriate because of their proximity to services and public transport. Additional structure planning may be required for Lalor, Thomastown and Bundoora to provide a more detailed framework to better guide development in and around these centres.

Moderate capacity areas

The periphery of Neighbourhood Centres

These areas are within comfortable walking distance to either Activity or Neighbourhood Centres or the PPTN. Being on the periphery of the high capacity areas, they act as a buffer to the sensitive interface with lower capacity areas. Growth is therefore encouraged in these areas but at a lesser scale.

Moderate capacity was also identified around a number of smaller localised centres where additional housing in the form of shop-top housing or small scale multi-unit developments could work.

Minimal capacity areas

Residential areas outside Metropolitan, Activity or Neighbourhood Centres

Areas remote from the PPTN and Metropolitan, Activity or Neighbourhood Centres (generally greater than 800 metres) are considered inappropriate for additional housing growth and change. These areas normally have newer housing and are on smaller lots and with higher site coverage. Increasing the number of houses in these areas would lead to more households being dependent on private motor vehicles, with the obvious implications. Medium and high density housing is not encouraged in these locations.

The Whittlesea Township

A different approach to achieving additional housing growth and diversity should be considered for the Township (compared to the other established suburbs of the municipality).

Although surrounded by vast tracts of undeveloped land devoted primarily to pastoral activities, the Whittlesea Township is heavily constrained where new urban development is concerned.

The Township is surrounded by hills and ridgelines that provide an important backdrop to the town. Combined with the floodplains of Plenty River which bisects the existing Township, these features somewhat limit options for future residential expansion.

In addition to this, the Whittlesea Township is considered to have limited capacity for further infill development due to its remote location from the PPTN. Although a bus service is available within the Township, car based transport will continue to predominate given the area's remote location from higher order retail, employment and community services and facilities.

The Township is characterised by older housing and boasts a distinctive rural character which should be protected and enhanced.

The small scale of housing, housing type and the established vegetation are elements which should be maintained. However, the Township does need to accommodate some additional growth of more diverse housing types to respond to changes in demographic profiles. It is considered that along the main road entering the Township (Laurel Street) and closer to its centre (Church Street) there is some capacity to accommodate infill residential development.

These streets have greater capacity compared to the remainder of the Township to accommodate a more substantial built form that will not compromise the rural character of the Township. Such development on these streets will also play a role in activating the shopping centre core and the gateways into the Township.

SECTION

05

POLICY DIRECTION



Increasing pressure to redevelop our established residential areas with medium and higher density housing, forces us to consider how we want our suburbs to change over time. This change should be managed carefully to ensure the diverse needs of our residents are met, while our suburbs continue to be vibrant, attractive places to live.

Some areas within our established suburbs of the municipality will need to continue to accommodate change, both as a normal part of growth and to cater for the community's changing housing needs. The ability to manage how our neighbourhoods will grow depends on:

- Housing being directed to areas that can accommodate increased densities and diversity.
- The maintenance of more conventional housing densities in areas that are remote from services and facilities and the PPTN.
- An incremental level of change to provide a suitable transition and buffer between high and low change areas.

This Strategy sets out the strategic framework for future residential development in the established urban areas. It seeks a balanced approach to managing housing growth. It is an approach that recognises the different housing needs and expectations of the community regarding acceptable levels of change.

Ultimately the Strategy will provide the community and development industry with greater certainty regarding the types of buildings to be expected over the next 20 years.

What has informed the Housing Diversity Strategy?

- Community feedback
- State Government direction
- Housing Capacity Assessments
- Changing preferences for housing types
- Increasing development pressure.

It will identify 'high', 'incremental' and 'minimal' areas of change and will incorporate the appropriate Change Area Profiles to guide how these areas will change over time having regard to:

- Preferred density and level of housing growth and change
- Key design principles
- Preferred housing types.

POLICY DIRECTIONS



POLICY 01: HOUSING DIVERSITY



Changes in demographic and household structures suggest a growing demand for smaller houses, as well as larger homes (with four or more bedrooms.) This policy objective supports a range of different housing types in relation to size, density, scale and location. The benefit is that people have greater housing choice and can remain living in their community throughout various stages of their life.

Objective 1: To encourage a more diverse housing stock.

Strategy 1.1: Encourage a greater diversity of housing and dwelling sizes to include both smaller and larger housing.

Strategy 1.2: Encourage adaptable and accessible housing to enable the community to 'age in place'.

POLICY 02: PREFERRED LOCATIONS FOR HOUSING GROWTH



The degree of change expected for the established suburbs will not be the same for all locations and areas. This objective seeks a balanced approach to housing which encourages growth in areas with good access to the Principal Public Transport Network (PPTN), services and facilities, and limits change in those areas with poor access.

Objective 2: To direct housing growth into locations which have the capacity to accommodate change.

Strategy 2.1: Guide housing growth into areas in proximity to the PPTN and Metropolitan, Activity and Neighbourhood Centres.

Strategy 2.2: Minimise housing growth within areas where access to the PPTN and Metropolitan, Activity and Neighbourhood Centres is limited, or where it has been identified as having limited development potential.

POLICY 03: HOUSING CHANGE AREAS

The Housing Change Areas are based on a capacity assessment of accessibility to services and facilities, as well as physical and site attributes. This objective identifies Housing Change Areas to outline the level and type of housing growth and change for each area. These Change Areas have been developed to provide guidance to Council and greater certainty to the community and development industry regarding the types of housing growth and change to be expected in different parts of the municipality.

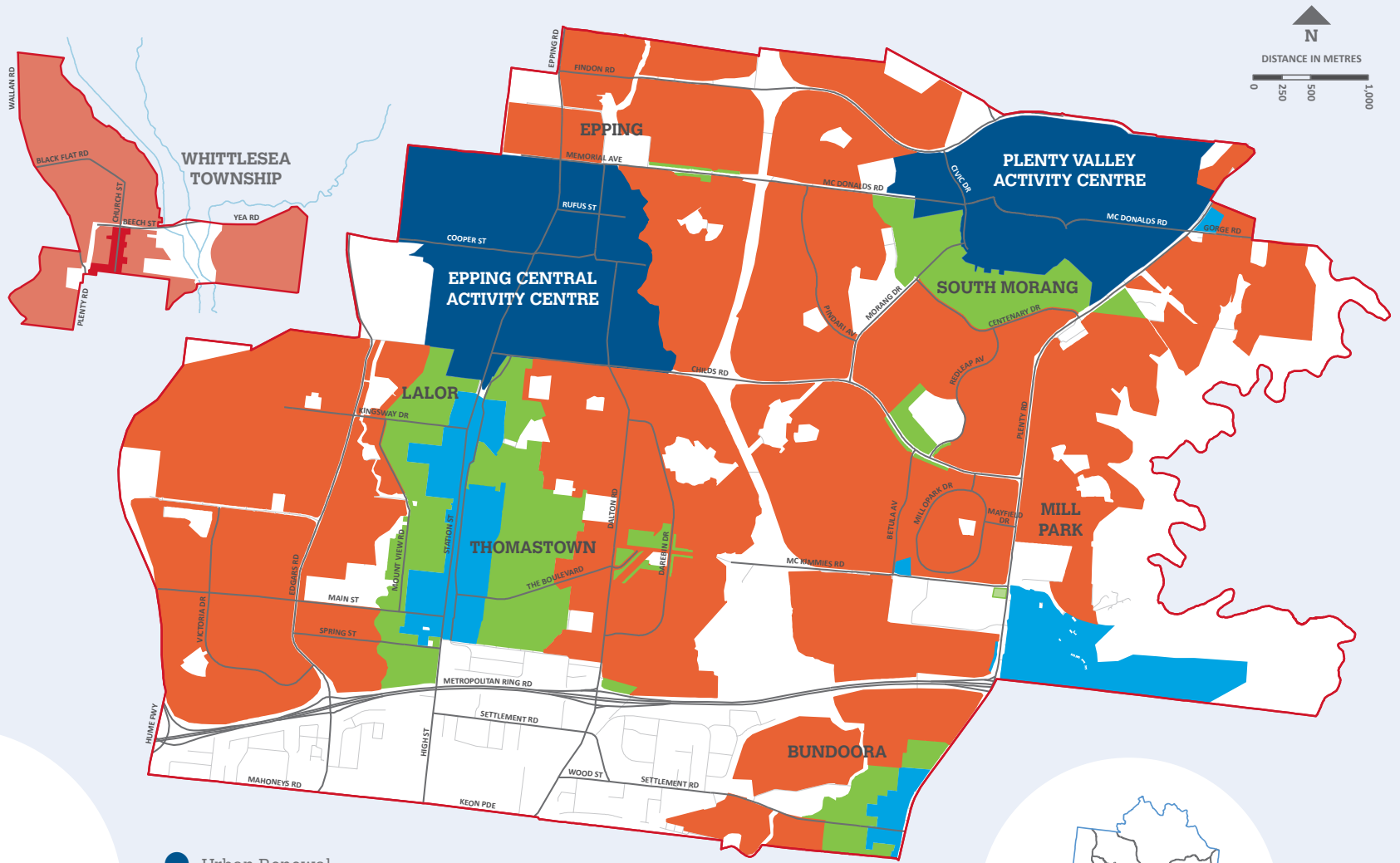
Objective 3: To accommodate varying levels of housing growth and change in the established residential areas of the municipality.

Strategy 3.1: Implement the Housing Change Areas as detailed below:

- Urban Renewal
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Neighbourhood Interface
- Suburban Residential
- Township Diversity
- Township Residential

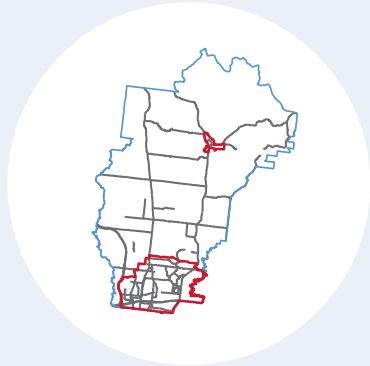
Strategy 3.2: Rezone existing residentially zoned land to the Reformed Residential Zones in accordance with the Housing Change Areas





Map 8:
**Housing
 Change Areas**

- Urban Renewal
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Neighbourhood Interface
- Suburban Residential
- Whittlesea Township Diversity
- Whittlesea Township Residential



URBAN RENEWAL



Proximity to transport and services



within 400m

Preferred block and housing types



TOWNHOUSE



MULTI-UNIT



APARTMENT



SHOP-TOP

Preferred Density

- Encourages higher density housing.

Proximity to Services and Facilities

- Epping Central is a Metropolitan Activity Centre and Plenty Valley (South Morang) is an Activity Centre.
- Both centres have good access to public transport, employment, health and community facilities and services.

Preferred Housing Types

- Townhouses
- Multi-units
- Small and large scale apartments
- Shop-top housing and mixed use developments.

Key Design Principles

Height

- A range of medium to high building heights that support increased density.
- Higher built form oriented towards main streets, public spaces, open space, creeks or important views.
- Building separation between 'tower' elements to ensure solar access, landscaping and visual separation.

Site Coverage

- Higher site coverage to facilitate increased densities.

Setbacks

- Minimal or no front setbacks to encourage activation of the street.
- Minimal or no side and rear setbacks that has regard to surrounding amenity.

Private Open Space

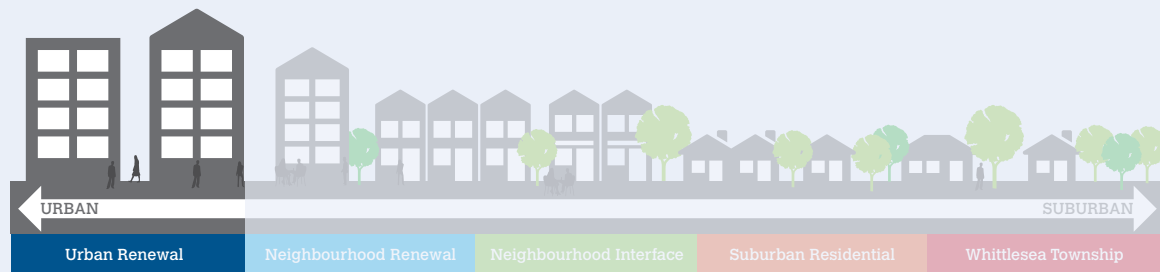
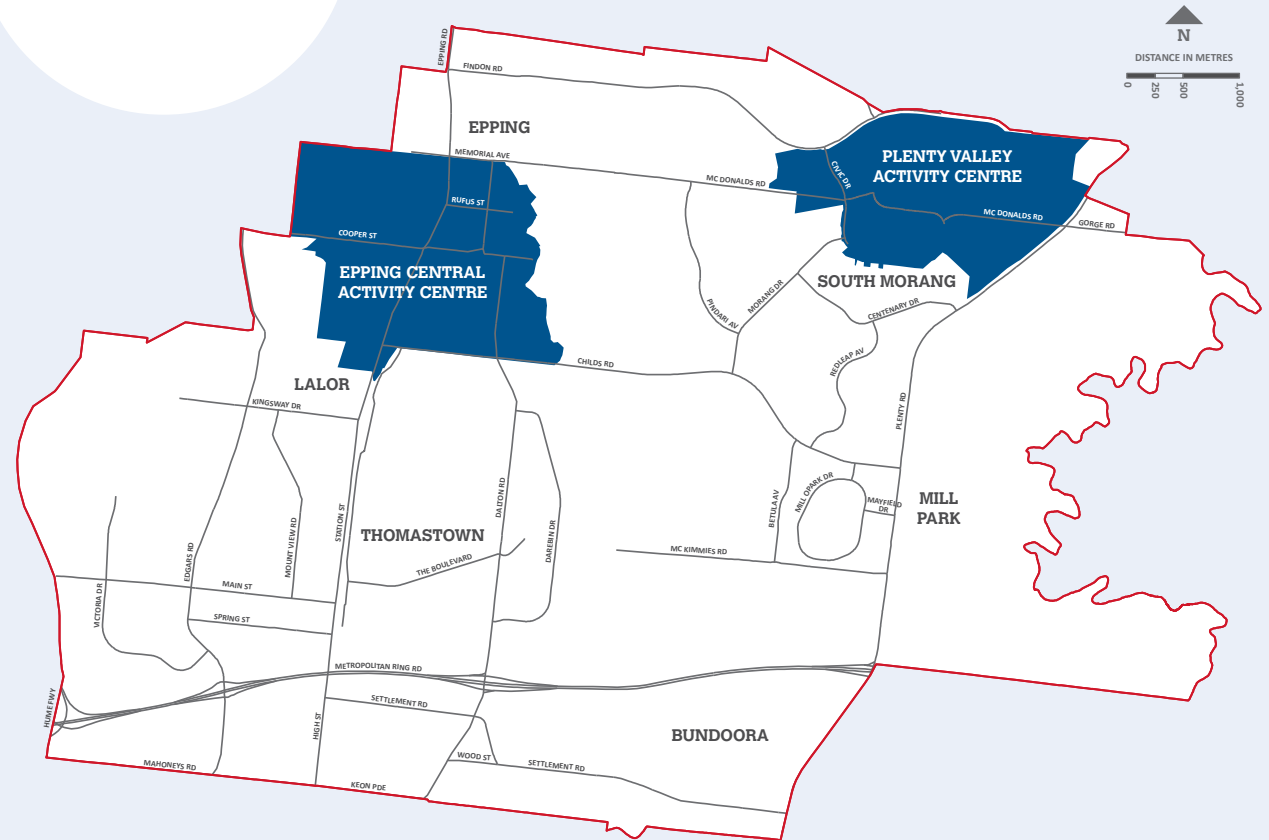
- Usable private open space, balconies and communal shared spaces.

Landscaping

- Landscaping to complement higher density built form.

- Urban Renewal
- Established Area Boundary

Map 9: Urban Renewal



NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL



Proximity to transport and services



within 400m

Preferred block and housing types



TOWNHOUSE



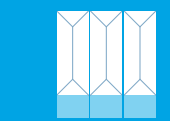
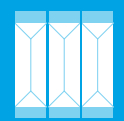
MULTI-UNIT



APARTMENT



SHOP-TOP



Preferred Density

- Encourages medium and higher density housing.

Proximity to Services and Facilities

- Close proximity to the Lalor, Thomastown and Bundoora Neighbourhood Centres.
- Close proximity (5-10 minute walk) to public transport and in particular the train and tram.
- Good mix of community services and facilities.

Preferred Housing Types

- Townhouses
- Multi-units
- Small scale apartments
- Shop-top housing and mixed use development

Key Design Principles

Height

- A range of medium building heights that allow street enclosure along main streets.
- Building heights that allow for all levels to achieve passive surveillance.
- Building heights that are of a human scale and integrate well with existing housing stock.

Setbacks

- Reduced front setbacks to encourage activation of the street, whilst still allowing sufficient space for low level landscaping.

Site Coverage

- Medium-higher site coverage to facilitate a balance between increased densities and landscape opportunities.

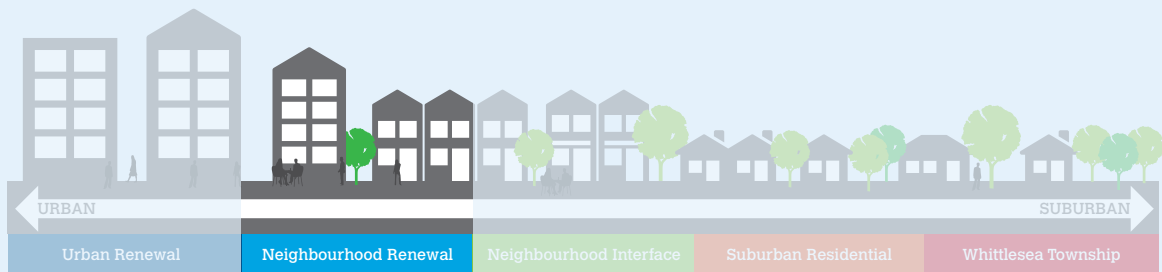
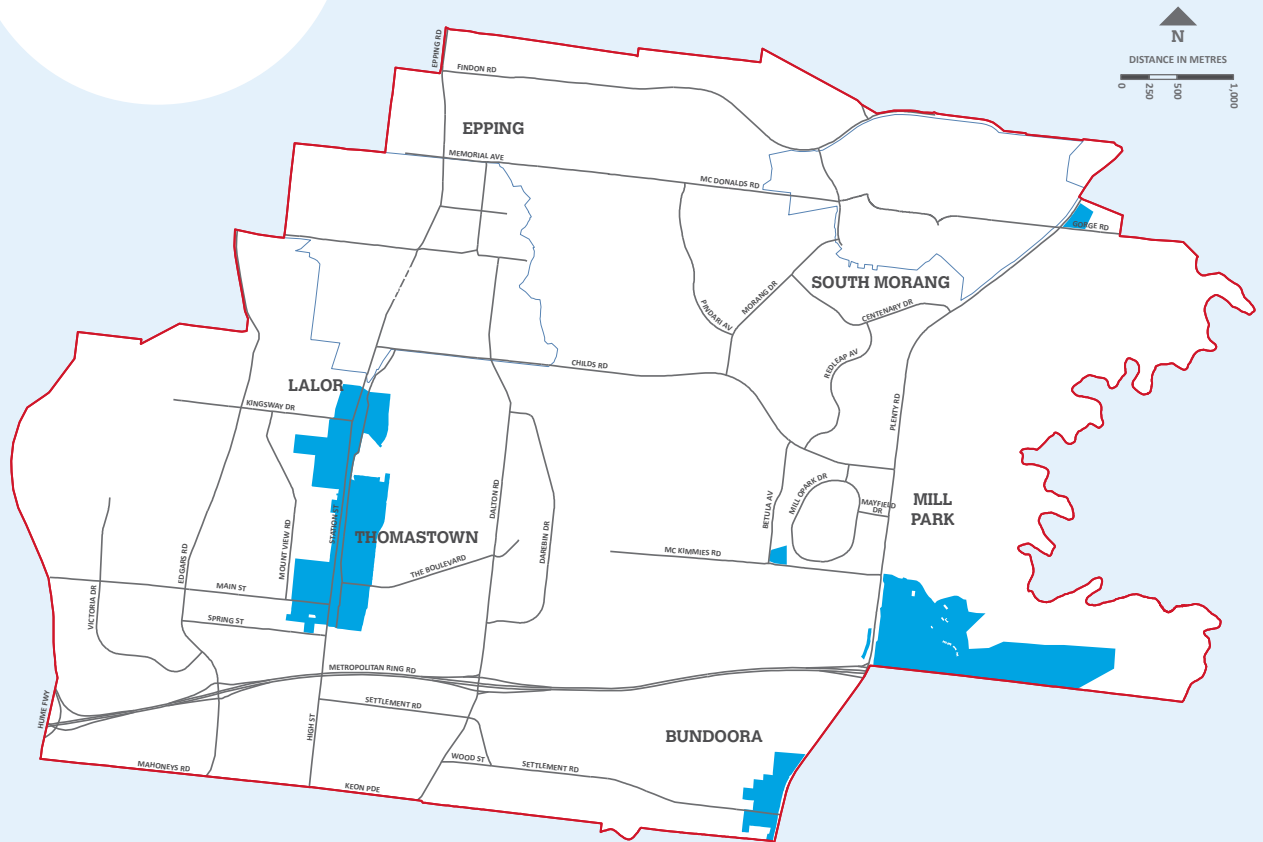
Private Open Space

- Usable private open space, balconies and communal shared spaces.

Landscaping

- Landscaping to complement medium to higher density built form.

Map 10:
**Neighbourhood
Renewal**



NEIGHBOURHOOD INTERFACE



Proximity to
transport and
services



within 800m

Preferred block and housing types



DETACHED
DWELLING



DUPLEX



DUAL OCCUPANCY



TOWNHOUSE



MULTI-UNIT

Preferred Density

- Encourages medium and standard density.

Proximity to Services and Facilities

- Moderate proximity (10-15 minute walk) to public transport and activity centres.
- Local neighbourhood shopping centres undergoing renewal.

Preferred Housing Type

- Detached dwellings
- Dual occupancies/Duplexes
- Townhouses
- Multi Units.

Key Design Principles

Height

- A range of low to medium building heights that support some housing diversity.
- Building heights that integrate well with existing housing stock.

Setbacks

- Moderate front setback to provide sufficient space for landscaping and a medium canopy tree.
- Sufficient side and rear setbacks to allow for some landscaping and external access to the rear.

Site Coverage

- Medium site coverage to facilitate a balance between increased densities and landscape opportunities.

Private Open Space

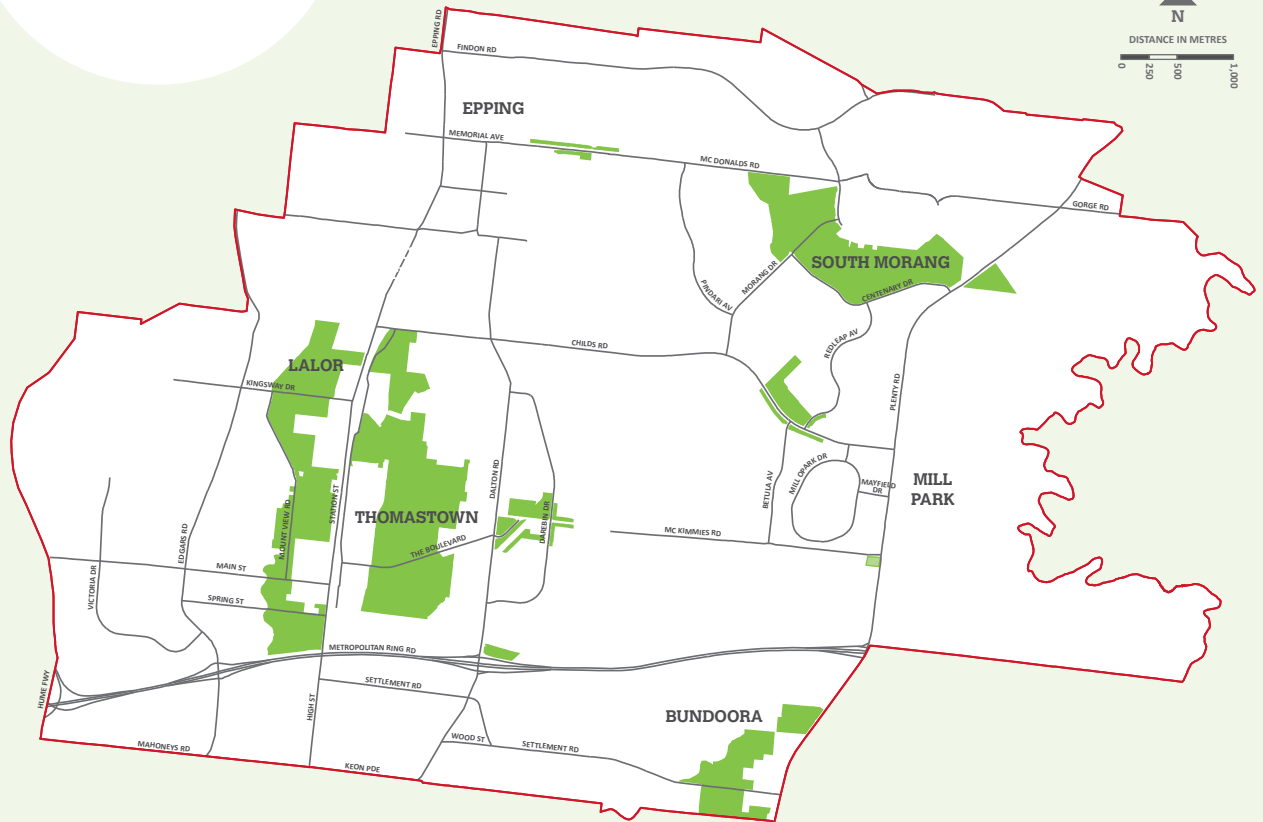
- Usable private open space.

Landscaping

- Landscaping to complement medium density built form.
- Medium sized canopy trees in the front setback.
- Large canopy tree in rear setback.

Map 11:
Neighbourhood Interface

- Neighbourhood Interface
- Established Area Boundary



SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL



Proximity to transport and services



800m+

Preferred block and housing types



DETACHED DWELLING



DUPLEX



DUAL OCCUPANCY

Preferred Density

- Encourages standard density.

Proximity to Services and Facilities

- Typically in proximity (15 minute plus walk) to public transport and activity centres.

Preferred Housing Types

- Detached dwellings
- Dual occupancies/Duplexes.

Key Design Principles

Height

- Low building heights to reflect the existing suburban scale and character.

Setbacks

- Front setback to allow for significant landscaping and large canopy trees to create a sense of openness to the street.
- Increased side and rear setbacks to provide for building separation and landscaping.

Site Coverage

- Standard site coverage to facilitate landscape opportunities.

Private Open Space

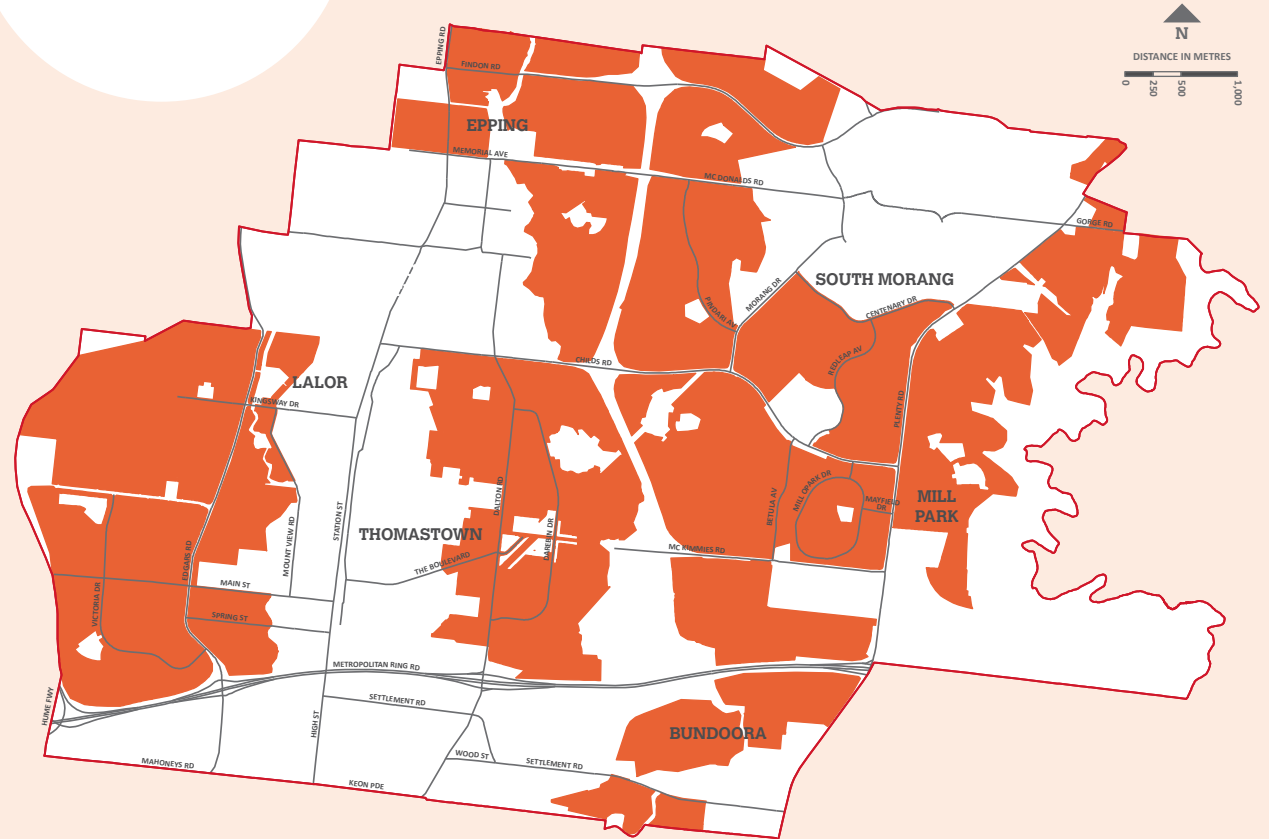
- An increased area of private open space to allow for significant landscaping.

Landscaping

- Large canopy tree in the front setback.
- Extra-large canopy tree in the rear setback.

Map 12:
Suburban Residential

- Suburban Residential
- Established Area Boundary



WHITTLESEA TOWNSHIP

TOWNSHIP DIVERSITY



Unique rural township setting



Preferred block and housing types



TOWNHOUSE



MULTI-UNIT



SHOP-TOP

The Township has two Housing Change Areas:

- Township Diversity
- Township Residential

Township Diversity

Preferred Density

- Encourages medium and standard density

Proximity to Services and Facilities

- Applies to the commercial mixed use areas of Church and Laurel streets.

Preferred Housing Type

- Shop-top housing
- Townhouses
- Multi Units.

Key Design Principles

Height

- A range of low to medium building heights that support some medium density housing along main streets.

Setbacks

- Minimal or no front setbacks to encourage activation of the street.
- Minimal or reduced side and rear setbacks.

Site Coverage

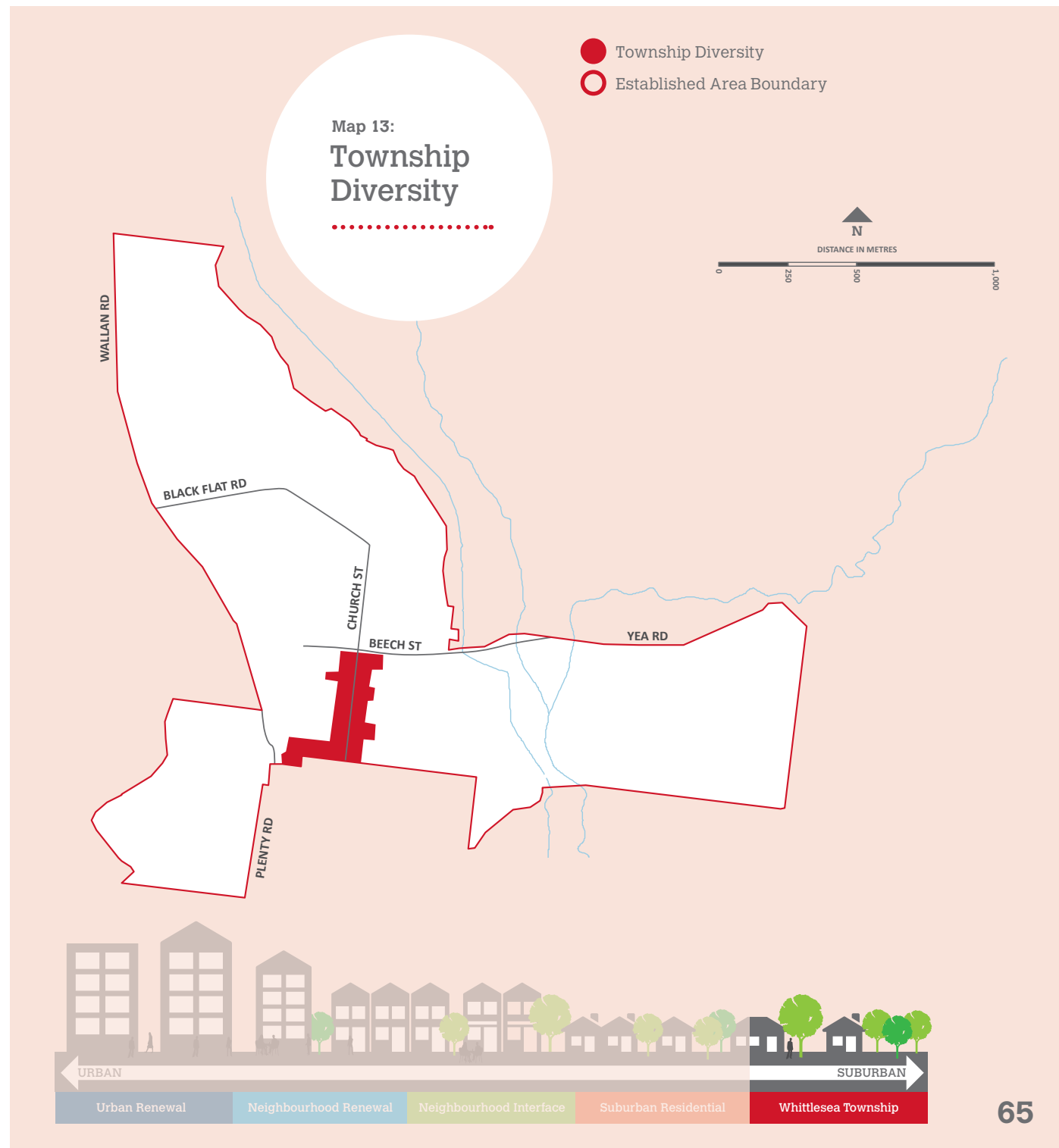
- Medium-higher site coverage to facilitate a balance between increased densities and landscape opportunities.

Private Open Space

- Usable private open space, balconies and communal shared spaces.

Landscaping

- Landscaping to enhance the rural Township character.



WHITTLESEA TOWNSHIP

TOWNSHIP RESIDENTIAL



Unique rural township setting



Preferred block and housing types



DETACHED DWELLING



DUPLEX



DUAL OCCUPANCY

Preferred Density

- Encourages standard density

Proximity to Services and Facilities

- Applies to the residential areas of the Township

Preferred Housing Types

- Detached dwellings
- Dual occupancies/Duplexes.

Key Design Principles

Height

- Low building heights to reflect the Township scale and character.

Setbacks

- Increased side and rear setbacks to provide building separation and landscaping.
- Front setback to allow for significant landscaping, a large canopy tree and sense of openness to the street.

Site Coverage

- Standard site coverage to facilitate landscape opportunities.

Private Open Space

- An increased area of private open space to allow for significant landscaping.

Landscaping

- Large canopy tree in the front setback.
- Extra-large canopy tree in rear setback.



SECTION

06

IMPLEMENTATION

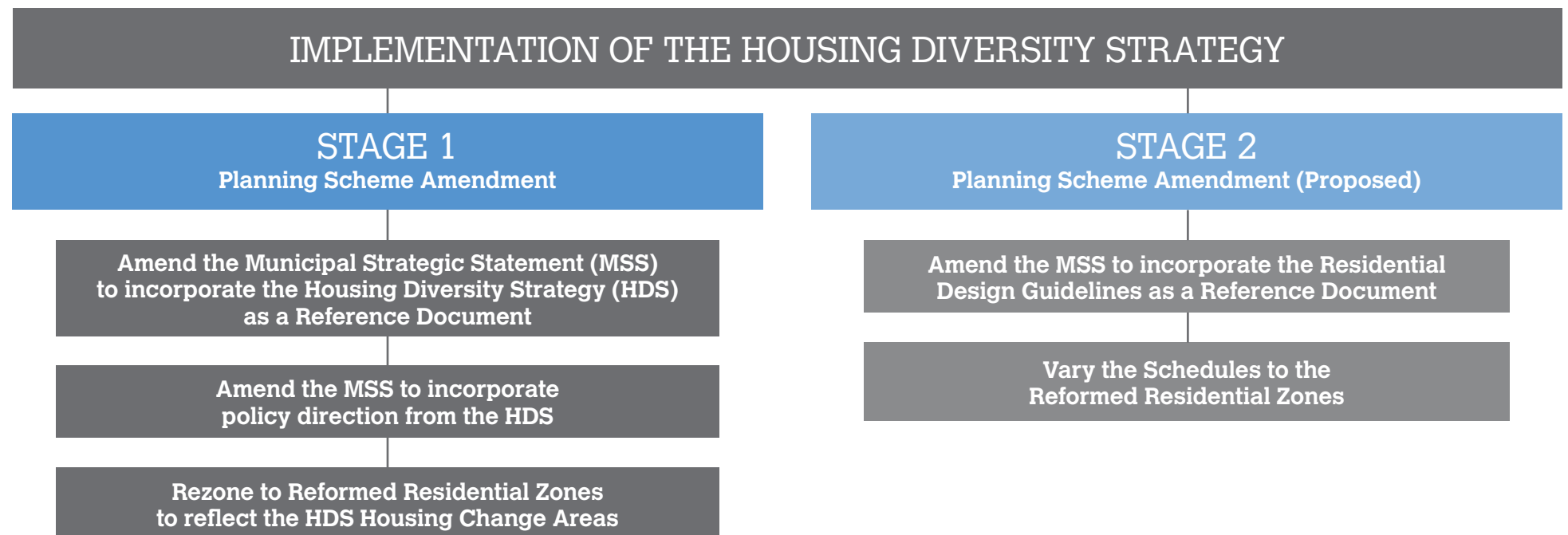


How will the Strategy be implemented?

To implement the key directions of the Strategy a series of actions will be required. These actions will include an amendment to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme and transitioning to the Reformed Residential Zones.

Implementation will take place in two stages:

Diagram 8: Implementation of the Housing Diversity Strategy



Stage 1: Planning Scheme Amendment

Amend the Municipal Strategic Statement/ Local Planning Policy

The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) establishes the strategic direction and policy context for the City of Whittlesea.

The first Amendment will implement the policies and objectives contained in the Strategy into the MSS to create a high level policy direction for infill residential development in the established areas.

Key points for inclusion are:

- Encouraging a larger portion of housing growth to occur in preferred locations as identified in the Strategy
- Improving the diversity of housing opportunities to meet the needs of the community
- Increasing the amount of accessible housing
- Guiding housing growth into locations where there is adequate infrastructure, services and transport to meet the needs of the community.

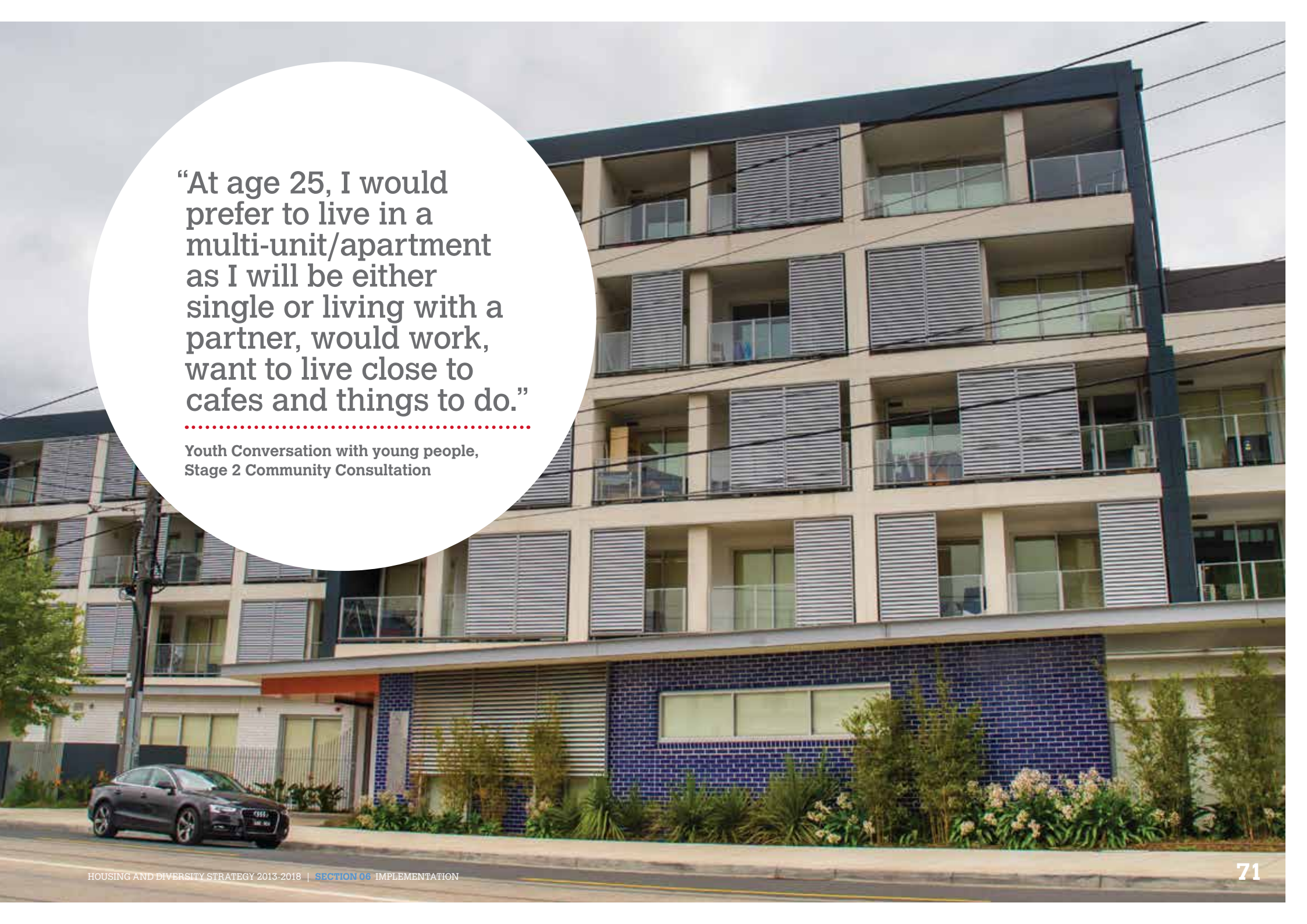
The Planning Scheme Amendment will outline a concise description of each Housing Change Area in terms of preferred character. It will also identify preferred locations for housing growth in the established urban areas of the municipality.

Transition to the Reformed Residential Zones

Councils have 12 months (from July 2013) to transition the new suite of residential zoning into their planning schemes. The transition to the Reformed Residential Zones is below.

Translation to the Reformed Residential Zones includes:

CHANGE AREA	PROPOSED REFORMED RESIDENTIAL ZONE
Urban Renewal	Activity Centre Zone
Neighbourhood Renewal	Residential Growth Zone for residential areas and Mixed Use Zone for commercial areas
Neighbourhood Interface	General Residential Zone
Suburban Residential	Neighbourhood Residential Zone
Whittlesea Township Residential	Neighbourhood Residential Zone
Whittlesea Township Diversity	General Residential Zone for residential areas and Mixed Use Zone for commercial areas



“At age 25, I would prefer to live in a multi-unit/apartment as I will be either single or living with a partner, would work, want to live close to cafes and things to do.”

.....

Youth Conversation with young people,
Stage 2 Community Consultation



Stage 2: Planning Scheme Amendment

Preparation of Residential Design Guidelines and Schedules to Reformed Residential Zones

Council will prepare Residential Design Guidelines that will be informed by urban design testing of each Housing Change Area.

The purpose of this testing will be to identify the most suitable built form having regard to the design principals of the Change Area and existing conditions. These guidelines will be used in conjunction with existing and future planning provisions.

The Planning Scheme Amendment for this stage will take place following the preparation of the Residential Design Guidelines and will include public exhibition of the draft planning controls.

It is anticipated that this Amendment will consist of the following changes to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme:

- Variation to Schedules of the Reformed Residential Zones to implement specific design objectives (such as setbacks, height, site coverage and front fences) in keeping with the preferred character of the Housing Change Areas.
- Introduction of the Residential Design Guidelines as a Reference Document in the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.
- Further changes to the MSS to introduce specific design objectives and strategies for each of the Change Areas.



Further strategic work

Preparation of Structure Plans for Neighbourhood Centres

The successful implementation of this Strategy will also require the preparation of structure plans for those centres identified as being suitable for growth. A structure plan has been prepared for Epping Central, the City of Whittlesea's Metropolitan Activity Centre and one is currently being prepared for the Plenty Valley Activity Centre. Structure Plans may be required for Whittlesea Township, Lalor, Thomastown and Bundoora Neighbourhood Centres. These structure plans will further refine the recommendations of the Strategy and will likely result in further amendments to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to ensure their specific recommendations are implemented.

Suggested project delivery for structure plans (in order of priority):

- Whittlesea Township Structure Plan
- Thomastown and Lalor Structure Plans
- Bundoora Structure Plan. Bundoora Shopping Centre is currently subject to a master plan process.

Evaluation and Monitoring

To keep pace with emerging housing issues and needs in the established urban areas of the municipality, and current best practice, the Strategy will be reviewed regularly. The review will assist Council to monitor the progress and effectiveness of its strategic direction.

To measure the outcomes of this Strategy, Council will review and assess the following information:

- Updated population and demographic profile
- Dwelling structure by household and family composition
- Dwelling type breakdown
- Number of new dwellings produced each year
- Details of the locations of new dwellings in relation to the Housing Change Areas

- Number of new dwellings and project scale (small, medium or large)
- Analysis of planning applications to determine whether they align with the Housing Change Area profiles
- Analysis of decision making and alignment with the Housing Diversity Strategy at VCAT
- Any other emerging housing trends and demographic changes.

Collection of this data will ensure that the Strategy can be reviewed and improved over time. Monitoring of the Strategy will commence following completion of Residential Design Guidelines and changes to Reformed Residential Zone schedules.

The Housing Diversity Strategy will ensure a balanced approach to housing growth in the established areas of the municipality. It will ensure that housing goes in the right locations, makes efficient use of existing services and infrastructure, meets current and future housing needs, and continues to make the established suburbs of the City of Whittlesea an attractive and enjoyable place to live.

.....

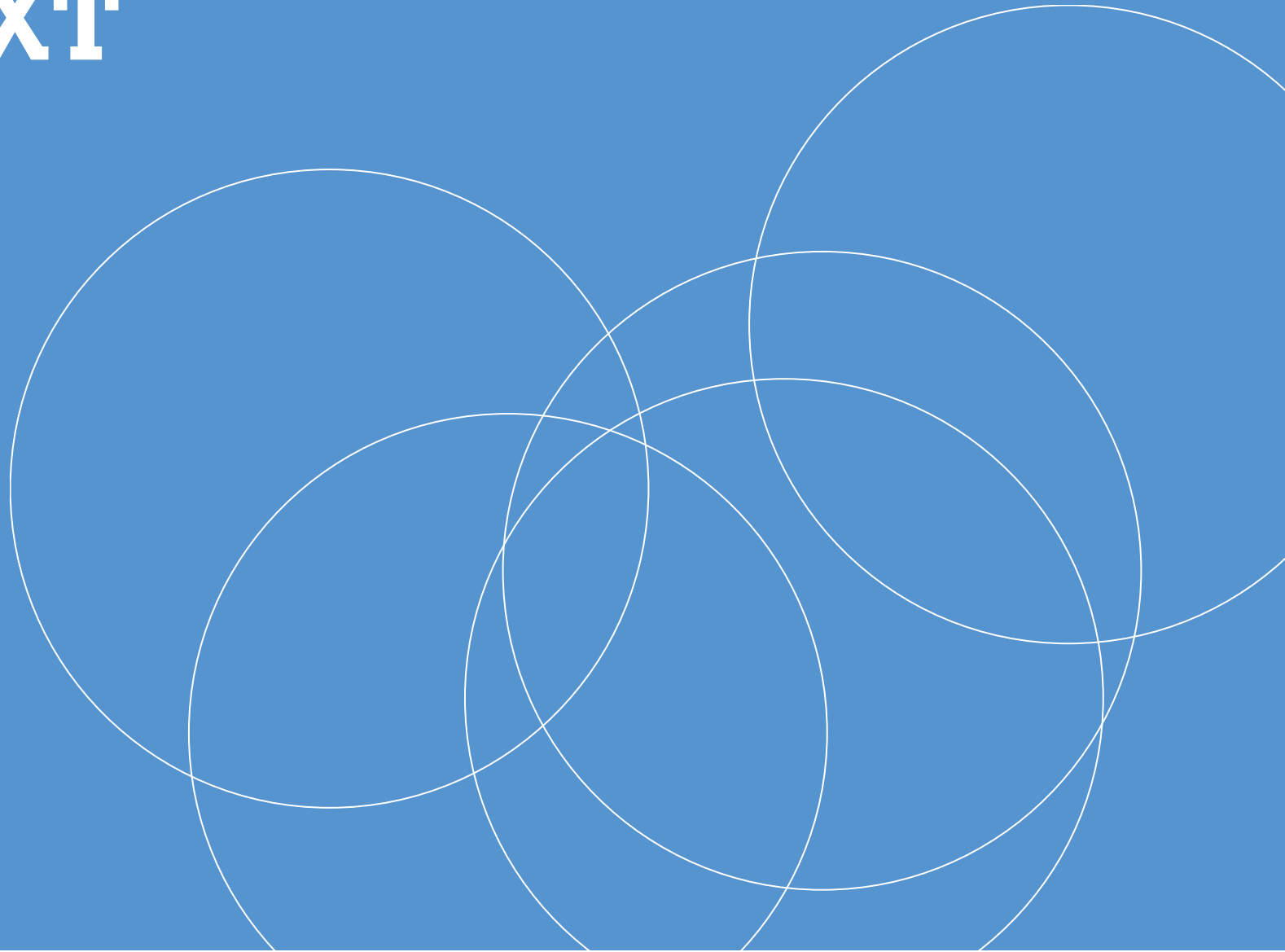


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APPENDIX 01

STRATEGIC CONTEXT



APPENDIX 01: STRATEGIC CONTEXT- KEY INFLUENCES ON HOUSING

A BALANCED APPROACH TO HOUSING GROWTH

We know that the ways in which we live are changing. We also know that our cities continue to grow. The type of house we live in and its location is important and can affect our everyday lives in a number of ways: the length of our daily commute; how often we see our family and friends; choices about how we bring up our children and whether we can remain living in the same area where we grew up.

A balanced approach to the delivery of housing can avoid the ‘decline that can come with a static population’ (Grattan Institute Report, 2011)¹. A diverse housing stock ensures a population can ‘age in place’ close to established social networks, family support and services, and so that as people age and are less able to maintain their homes and gardens, there will be opportunities to downsize within the area they have lived. Likewise, as children grow into adults, it is important to ensure there is adequate affordable housing available to remain in the area where they grew up.

Housing diversity also raises the questions of how we want our suburbs to grow and change and ultimately, how we want to live, now and in the coming decades. The population of our City will continue to grow, and if managed well this growth could lead to improved infrastructure, more and better services, more liveable and vibrant centres and a more sustainable urban form.

¹ Kelly, Jane-Francis, Grattan Institute Report, *Getting the housing we want* (2011), pg.10.

This section discusses the environmental, social and economic reasons to support a balanced approach to housing growth which includes a diversity of housing, and higher densities close to services and facilities.

Table 1: Summary of Housing Diversity Implications

Environmental	Social	Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the outward expansion of urban sprawl by creating greater housing choice within the established suburbs. • Increased proximity to services and facilities creating opportunities for reduced car use. • Better access to public transport helping to reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. • The preservation of productive agricultural land and other highly valued natural environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage social diversity by providing a wider range of housing to accommodate various family and household types and ages, to enable more people to live in and near areas with high amenity and access to services. • Fostering more opportunities for social interaction through the provision of mixed use developments which generate both day and night time activities in close proximity to services and shops, whilst at the same time enhancing the vitality and vibrancy of our activity centres. • Providing opportunities for the efficient and equitable provision of social, community, educational and health services. • Foster healthy communities through the development of 'walkable' communities. • Reduce social disadvantage caused by rising fuel prices and transport costs. • Growing trend for apartment style living. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more efficient use of existing infrastructure and investment • Promoting an increased labour force mix. • Increased productivity as a result of reduced journey to work times.

ENVIRONMENTAL

URBAN CONSOLIDATION MEANS LESS URBAN SPRAWL AND THE PROTECTION OF PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LAND AND OUR HIGHLY VALUED NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

There is a growing need to limit the outward sprawl of our cities and to consolidate our urban environments through infill development and by promoting development within designated activity centres accessible by public transport. New housing needs to be appropriately located to make use of services and to reduce our reliance on the car.

Until recently the municipality's green wedges (which contain the majority of the City's agricultural resources, water storage catchments, significant landscapes, flora and fauna, and heritage places) covered an area of 38,300 hectares; however the expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary in 2010 and 2012 resulted in the loss of more than 6,570 hectares.

By accommodating housing growth within our existing urban areas, particularly areas that are well serviced by public transport, infrastructure and services, there is less pressure to develop housing on the urban fringe and in our green wedges. This means less pollution, less environmental degradation and better accessibility to services and healthier communities.

THE RISE OF PEAK OIL AND LOCATIONAL DISADVANTAGE

Emerging implications for fossil fuel dependence and peak oil reinforces the need to reduce reliance on the car. Along with the effects of climate change, peak oil presents the greatest challenge to the way that our cities function. This is because everything from transportation through to the production of food and plastics depends upon the ability to extract oil in a way that is economically feasible. Once the world's total oil reserves become depleted- and there is

growing expert consensus that peak oil has already occurred²- the cost benefit scale is tipped, and oil will become scarcer and therefore more expensive³ e ().

Most agree that immediate planning is required to ensure that those areas remote from public transport are less vulnerable to fuel shortages and rising fuel prices. The 2008 report by Dodson and Sipe⁴ argues that even if the world does not experience a peak in oil production before 2020, many other petroleum supply factors will affect residents in Australian cities, particularly those in outer suburban areas. It is argued that outer suburban households will face substantially higher fuel prices during that period due to remoteness from services and facilities and dependence on the car.

Residents of Whittlesea are highly car dependent due to the inadequacies of public transport, lack of convenient walking proximity to shops and services and the low density and poor walkability of some development. By consolidating growth in our established suburbs and directing new housing into areas well serviced by public transport, the disadvantage caused by poor access to services and employment is likely to be alleviated somewhat.

Greater consideration needs to be given to less oil-dependent modes of travel, such as public transport, walking and cycling to ensure that our communities are socially and economically resilient to the impacts of peak oil. Further to this, integrating future housing into locations with access to transport, services and facilities will help to address the future vulnerability of our community.

² Campbell, Colin, Association for the Study of Peak Oil (2008).

³ Darebin City Council *Climate Change and Peak Oil Adaptation Plan* (2009)pg. 32.

⁴ Dodson, J & Sipe, N, Urban Research Program, *Unsettling Suburbia: The New Landscape of Oil and Mortgage Vulnerability in Australian Cities* (2008) pg. 3.

SOCIAL

HEALTH COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH CAR BASED CITIES

There are significant public health costs associated with urban expansion of car-based developments where opportunities for walking for practical purposes, such as to school or work, are limited. In 2004 the National Heart Foundation of Australia released *Healthy by Design: A Planners Guide to Environments for Active Living*. The strategy emphasises fostering healthy lifestyles through the development of walkable neighbourhoods.

It states “the annual, direct health care costs attributed to physical inactivity are about \$400 million. Engaging in regular physical activity reduces the risk of diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, colon cancer, obesity and injury. In addition, physical activity has been shown to alleviate depression and anxiety and increase social interaction and integration⁵.”

Due to the heavy reliance on cars for most trips in the municipality, the public health costs described above are a reality and ongoing threat to the City of Whittlesea community. The creation of more compact and therefore more walkable neighbourhoods will help to address many of these issues.

SOCIAL DIVERSITY AND WELLBEING

Diversity in housing can lead to a more diverse social mix, which is important to facilitate social inclusion and to develop and strengthen a sense of community.

Communities which encourage and facilitate walking and therefore reduce car dependency are more inclined to include those members of the community who are not able to drive or who have no access to a car, particularly elderly people

⁵ National Heart Foundation, *Healthy by Design- a Planners Guide to Environments for Active Living* (2004) pg.8.

and those on low incomes. It also important to enhance the vitality, vibrancy and safety of our urban areas, as people who walk to their destination, rather than drive, are more likely to utilise public spaces such as streets, parks and public squares.

A more diverse housing stock ensures that the diverse needs of disadvantaged groups, the aged, and people with different levels of ability are considered in the design of new housing. Accessible housing, good access to public transport, employment, social networks, services and facilities are all essential for residents to be able to feel fully connected to their community and the networks they require.

AGEING IN PLACE

A diverse housing stock is important because it affects the ability of the community to remain living in an area over the course of one’s life. It affects whether our children will be able to live close by as they grow, and as we grow older and some of us will consider downsizing, it affects whether there will be appropriate housing for us to move into. This is also true of young families wishing to ‘upsized’.

Housing needs to accommodate people at different life stages including single people, couples, young and older families, and households with different incomes and household compositions, so that they can establish meaningful and ongoing connections with their community.

Lack of housing choice can lead to older residents being forced to remain in larger homes that they are unable to maintain physically or economically or to move away from family and friends to smaller homes. As the population continues to age, options for lower maintenance, smaller forms of housing will need to be provided. Many older people will also seek or need accommodation in residential retirement villages or aged care facilities. Given the high cost

associated with retrofitting a home to make it accessible to someone who has limited mobility, it is important that new housing stock is designed to be adaptable up front. For example, bedrooms and bathrooms could be located on ground floors and front entrances could avoid the use of stairs. Ensuring new housing is located in walking distance to public transport, shops and health and community services is also important. Such housing options are currently very limited in the City of Whittlesea.

GROWING TREND FOR APARTMENT STYLE LIVING (AND WHY IT ISN'T GETTING BUILT)

Contrary to myth and assumptions, “Australians want a mix of housing types” and not just a detached house on a large block⁶. There is a growing trend for people wanting to live in a semi-detached home or in apartments in locations that are close to family, friends or to shops.

The housing people would choose is much more diverse than what the City of Whittlesea’s housing stock currently provides. Existing housing stock in the municipality is dominated by detached, 3 bedroom houses and little has changed over the last few decades.

A recent report by the Grattan Institute (2011)⁷ states that there are a number of factors and reasons why the housing we want is not getting built. The development industry has highlighted a number of political and financial reasons that deter them from undertaking infill development within established areas. These can include:

- The cost involved in holding land creates risk when there are uncertain planning processes in place that can unnecessarily extend the time required to gain planning approvals.

⁶ Kelly, Jane- Frances, Grattan Institute, *Getting the housing we want* (2011), pg. 1.

⁷ Kelly, Jane- Frances, Grattan Institute, *The Housing We’d Choose* (June 2011).

- As the dominant housing type in Australia, detached houses have been the focus of the highest amount of innovation in terms of streamlining construction process and costs. Widespread innovation is more difficult to find in other housing types.
- Multi-unit dwellings are often more costly to build because labour and material costs are higher and as such, developers are often unable to provide housing at a price that consumers can afford.
- During the Global Financial Crisis finance for apartments contracted much more rapidly than approvals for detached houses⁸. Unlike developments of detached homes, apartment buildings cannot be built and sold in increments. Banks therefore require a level of ‘pre-sale’ commitments of around 55-60% and sometimes as high as 90-100%. This process also constrains innovation in the property market as developments are geared towards the investor market. As such developers are more likely to invest in ‘standard’ residential products.

A CHANGING URBAN FORM

Some parts of the City of Whittlesea’s established areas will need to continue to accommodate housing growth, both as a normal part of population growth and to cater for the community’s changing household needs. However as the makeup of households and their housing needs change it is inevitable that the existing neighbourhood character or elements thereof will also change. The Housing Diversity Strategy will need to ensure that the impact of this change is carefully managed to ensure that our established suburbs continue to be places that we want to live.

There is ongoing community concern regarding the quality of medium and higher density development and the ability of new development to complement the existing neighbourhood character and where appropriate assist in shaping a

⁸ Kelly, Jane Frances, Grattan Institute, *The Housing We’d Choose* (2011)pg. 30.

preferred character. The Strategy recognises the importance of providing high quality built form and design outcomes to ensure that the amenity of both existing and future residents is maintained, the quality of life for all residents is improved and the attractiveness of our suburbs is enhanced.

ECONOMIC

USE OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The outward expansion of growth requires additional money and materials to build new infrastructure such as roads, drainage, sewerage, street lighting, public transport and community services. By consolidating growth close to existing infrastructure and services, the need to build new infrastructure is reduced, resulting in significant cost savings for government and developers, some of which can be passed onto homebuyers.

In 2003, SGS Economics and Planning Pty. Ltd. conducted a study comparing the costs of consolidating growth in established urban areas, with development in greenfield areas. It found that net savings can be made by accommodating more housing for infill and redevelopment situations, mostly in terms of providing social infrastructure. Recent research undertaken by Curtin University found that for every 1000 dwellings, the costs for infill and fringe development (in terms of physical infrastructure, transport and health costs) are \$309 million and \$653 respectively⁹.

DIVERSE HOUSING STOCK = DIVERSE EMPLOYMENT BASE

Labour force mix and a range of employment opportunities are prerequisites to a sustainable and cohesive community. Housing can play a key role in creating a

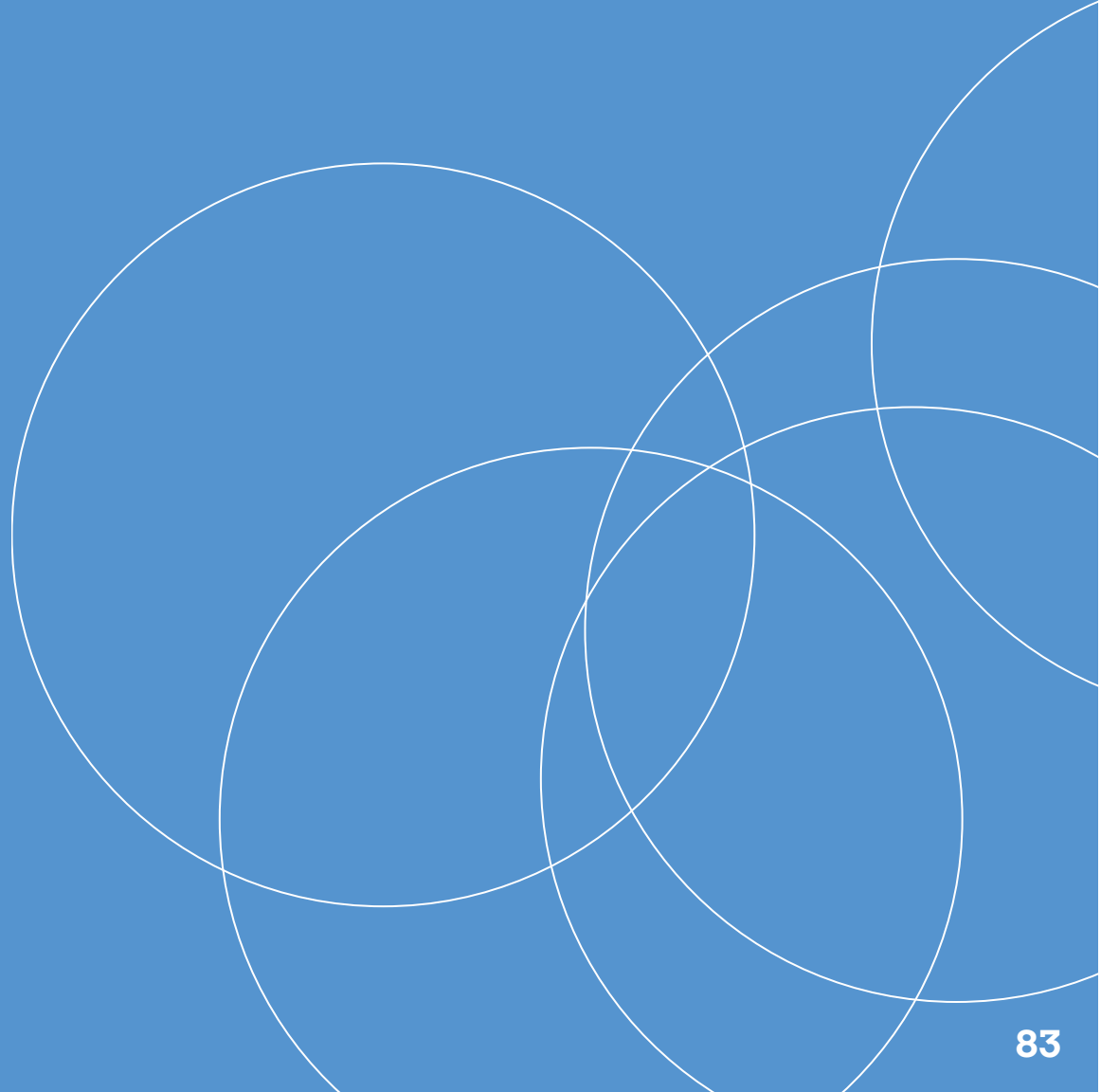
more diverse and vibrant local economy through the types of households it attracts. A resident population that includes a range of skill sets from a variety of employment sectors will attract a more diverse range of employers and businesses wanting to establish themselves in the City of Whittlesea. This in turn, reduces the municipality's vulnerability to economic downturn. In addition, household diversity encourages more vibrant local centres by increasing the number and type of shoppers and workers who use and support them.

A successful local economy is measured by its ability to provide an available mix of employment opportunities. Without a suitable local supply of housing, people find it difficult to access employment and must generally seek it elsewhere. Currently, 69% of City of Whittlesea residents are employed outside the municipality (2012). By ensuring a more diverse housing sector, and subsequently a more diverse employment base, there will be greater local employment opportunities to support a more resilient and adaptable local economy.

⁹ Trubka, R., Newman P, Blisborough, D Curtin University, *Assessing the Costs of Alternative Development Paths in Australian Cities* (2008) pg. 27.

APPENDIX 02

POLICY CONTEXT



APPENDIX 02 POLICY CONTEXT

Melbourne's population is expected to reach 6.5 million people in 2050, (2.5 million more people than in 2012) requiring an additional 1 million dwellings¹. The State Government has identified opportunities to accommodate much of this growth into the existing urban areas of Melbourne (57%).

This section outlines the State Government's direction with regard to planning and managing residential growth in Melbourne.

STATE WIDE PLANNING POLICIES AND STRATEGIES RELATING TO HOUSING

There are a number of state wide planning policies and strategies which relate to planning and managing housing growth. These have been used to inform a local response to managing housing growth, in the form of the Housing Diversity Strategy.

State Planning Policy requires Council to:

- Increase and ensure an adequate supply of housing in existing urban areas by facilitating increasing housing yield in appropriate locations
- Locate new housing, in particular high density housing in or close to activity and neighbourhood centres and employment corridors

- Ensure an adequate supply of redevelopment opportunities within an established urban area with access to a range of services, in particular good access to public transport
- Ensure housing matches changing and future demographic profiles and facilitate more affordable housing closer to jobs, transport and services

Plan Melbourne

The (draft) Plan Melbourne-Metropolitan Planning Strategy was released in October 2013, seeking public comment by 6 December 2013. It elevates the status of Epping Central to a Metropolitan Activity Centre; one of nine across metropolitan Melbourne.

Some key directions relating to housing include:

- Increasing the density and diversity of housing in walkable catchments of Activity Centres.
- Encouraging different housing types in strategic locations, so that more people can live closer to jobs and services.
- Improving the quality and amenity of residential apartments.

Once finalised, Plan Melbourne will replace Melbourne 2030 and Melbourne @ 5 Million.

Melbourne 2030

Melbourne 2030 (released in 2002) is the State Government's strategic plan for metropolitan Melbourne referenced within Clauses 11 and 16 of the State Planning Policy Framework.

¹ Victorian State Government (2013) *Plan Melbourne* pg. 53.

It seeks to concentrate urban expansion into activity centres that are well served by public transport and existing infrastructure to meet the needs of existing and future populations.

Of particular relevance to this report are the following directions for metropolitan Melbourne:

- Encourage a greater proportion of new development to locate at strategic redevelopment sites (including activity centres).
- Build up activity centres as important locations for a range of mixed uses including housing.
- Set clear limits to outward development to protect areas of important rural and agricultural values and limit fringe development to identified growth areas.
- Protect and support industries and functions important to maintaining an ongoing competitive economy.
- Promote development that is designed to be appropriate to its context and improves liveability.
- Ensure that housing matches changing and future demographic profiles and those opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Manage the urban system in a way that minimises its impact on the environment.
- Ensure that housing is more accessible to a range of services with good access to public transport.

Melbourne @ 5 Million

Melbourne @ 5 Million (released in 2008) was prepared to guide the ongoing implementation of Melbourne 2030 in the context of unanticipated population growth. It projects that metropolitan

Melbourne will grow by an additional 1.8 million people in the next thirty years (compared to Melbourne 2030 which predicted a thirty year growth of 1 million people). Of this new growth it estimated that 53% of new dwellings will need to be accommodated into the established areas of Melbourne, where access to public transport and other services will be important.

Housing Growth Requirements Project / Housing Capacity Assessments

In 2008 the State Government forecast that 316,000 new dwellings will need to be accommodated into Melbourne's established suburbs in the next 20 years. In response to this, the State Government commissioned SGS Economics and Planning Pty Ltd to undertake Housing Capacity Assessments (HCA) for each metropolitan council with the aim of identifying local capacity for growth, and to then inform the setting of housing growth requirements to establish clear and direct housing strategies that facilitate housing development and diversity.

Councils have been advised that the assessment reports will be circulated following finalisation of the metropolitan planning strategy (*Plan Melbourne*); however the use of data/findings remains unclear.

Planning For All of Melbourne

Following a review of Melbourne 2030, the State Government released Planning for All of Melbourne, an action framework which aimed to:

- Support councils to plan for future community needs by developing clear requirements for the amount and diversity of housing required in each municipality taking into account the

capacity of each area to accommodate growth and the protection of neighbourhood amenity and streetscape character.

- Provide clearer guidelines for municipal strategic planning including the need for housing to be more diverse, affordable and close to public transport.
- Increase certainty to communities and developers about the location of future housing.

This review identified:

- The difficulties of providing more housing within the established areas of Melbourne due to limited amount of land available and ready for development
- The increased cost of construction for developments- particularly those above 3 or 4 storeys
- Planning controls; and
- The complexity of building in established areas given limited supply and construction duration.

Transport Integration Act

The Transport Integration Act introduced in 2010 is the overarching policy framework for all transport and land use agencies. The policy framework integrates land use and transport planning and decision- making by requiring all land use agencies (including councils) to consider the likely impacts significant decisions will have on the transport system. It also provides supportive objectives and principles for integrated land use and transport planning.

WHITTLESEA PLANNING SCHEME

The Whittlesea Planning Scheme (WPS) guides land use and development within the municipality. It contains the State and Local Planning Policy Framework, and other provisions that affect how land can be used and developed. The WPS contains several provisions which are relevant to the HDS.

STATE GOVERNMENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) included in the Whittlesea Planning Scheme contains state-wide planning policies and strategies. Below is a discussion of the state wide planning policies and strategies that form part of the State Planning Policy Framework.

Clause 11- Settlement:

This Clause references Melbourne 2030, and specifically encourages the concentration of major retail, residential, commercial, administrative, entertainment and cultural developments into activity centres which provide a variety of land uses and are highly accessible to the community.

Clause 15 – Built Environment and Heritage:

This Clause seeks to ensure that developments contribute positively to the local urban character and sense of place and minimising detrimental impacts on neighbouring properties.

Clause 16- Housing:

Clause 16 of the SPPF provides policy guidance on ‘Housing’ in terms of the provision for:

- Integrated Housing
- Housing Diversity

- Housing Affordability
- Urban Consolidation
- Residential Aged Care
- Design and Location of Residential Aged Care
- Crisis Accommodation and Community Care

It seeks to increase the supply of housing in existing urban areas of metropolitan Melbourne by facilitating increased housing yield in appropriate locations close to activity centres and employment corridors and at other strategic redevelopment sites that offer good access to services and transport. Clause 16 also aims to provide for a range of housing types to meet increasingly diverse housing needs. In particular this Clause aims to achieve well design medium density housing which respects the neighbourhood character, improves housing choice and makes better use of existing infrastructure.

Clause 54/55 – Rescode:

Rescode is a state-wide specific Victorian Planning Provision in all planning schemes. It relates to the development of one dwelling on a lot (Clause 54), to two or more dwellings on a lot and residential buildings (Clause 55), and residential subdivisions (Clause 56). Clause 55 applies to multi-unit developments of 3 storeys or less and therefore Rescode does not apply to residential developments of 4 or more storeys.

Rescode comprises of a set of development objectives and standards relating to height, setbacks, site coverage, access to sunlight and daylight etc. Proposals are assessed against each development standard and used as a basis for planning approval as appropriate.

The Higher Density Design Guidelines

The Higher Density Design Guidelines (HDDG) contained in Clause 19.03 of the State Planning Policy Framework sets out design principles that must be taken into account in the design of residential urban spaces and buildings of four storeys or more. These include context, public realm, landmarks, views and vistas; pedestrian spaces; heritage; consolidation of sites and empty sites; light and shade; energy and resource efficiency; architectural quality and landscape architecture.

The Higher Density Design Guidelines have been developed to assist designers to prepare development applications and to help planners assess development applications. The Guidelines provide ‘best practice’ design advice for higher density residential development that promotes high quality public and private amenity and good design.

The Guidelines cover aspects including height, neighbourhood character, street setback, open space, overlooking and overshadowing. Designers need to determine the merit of the specific suggestions in the context of their proposed development and the objectives outlined in the Guidelines. Where designers consider a design suggestion should not apply, they are required to express clear justification regarding why this is so, and put forward an alternative to meeting the objective.

ZONES/ OVERLAYS

Reformed Residential Zones

In July 2013 the State Government introduced Reformed Residential Zones, which include:

- Residential Growth Zone

- General Residential Zone
- Neighbourhood Residential Zone.

It is considered that the Reformed Residential Zones will provide greater certainty and clarity regarding the nature and extent of residential developments permitted in certain areas, including where such development should not occur. The Reformed Residential Zones provide Councils with the ability to identify preferred locations for housing growth. The Zones also include a stronger emphasis on existing and preferred neighbourhood character through the introduction of local schedules to articulate preferred built form outcomes.

The ability for councils to apply local schedules to different areas is significant in affording local councils greater flexibility to articulate desired built form outcomes and neighbourhood character objectives within different precincts. As generally speaking current residential zoning does not discriminate between areas of low or high density, so that all residential zoned areas in the City of Whittlesea are subject to the same pressures of development, irrespective of their proximity to public transport or services.

The timeframe for transition to the Reformed Residential Zone (to replace current Residential 1 & 2 Zoning) is by 1 July 2014.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme contains the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and Local Planning Policies (LPPs).

The LPPs outline specific local requirements that must be considered when assessing development and land use planning permit applications. Each LPP provides the Responsible Authority an opportunity to state its position on a planning issue within the local context, and provides guiding principles for the consideration of planning permit applications.

Clause 21- Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS)

The MSS is an integrated policy statement which outlines the objectives for future land use planning and development within the municipality.

It provides the basis for the use of zones and other land use controls within the scheme.

Council is currently reviewing its Planning Scheme which will encompass the LPPF, currently applied Zones, Overlays and local variations to the Particular Provisions. The current planning scheme has not been comprehensively reviewed since the introduction of the new format planning scheme in 1999 (with the exception of minor amendments and updates to facilitate development and use outcomes). The review will include the myriad of planning issues contained within the Scheme and which includes but is not limited to medium and higher density housing, the urban rural interface, the natural environment, heritage places, retail and industrial activity, agriculture and social issues.

Clause 21.08- Housing

The strategic planning framework identifies ‘Housing’ as one of nine key land use planning objectives. Its aim is to “promote the establishment of increased diversity and quality in housing provision to meet the needs of existing and future residents of the City of Whittlesea in a manner which contributes positively to local character and sense of place”.

Clause 21.08-2 Housing Diversity and Affordability identifies the completion of the Housing Diversity Strategy.

More specifically, it highlights a number of opportunities to implement a more diverse housing sector. These include:

- Work with the housing development and real estate industries to identify opportunities for increasing the diversity of housing in all existing and future residential uses.
- Investigate the requirements of the lone persons housing market, including appropriate locations and types of housing with particular emphasis on infill sites which are close to a range of services and facilities.
- Ensure that subdivisions are responsive to site characteristics and diversity to meet needs and create visual interest.

CITY OF WHITTLESEA STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

Relevant Council strategies and policies are summarised below⁵:

POLICY		POLICY SUPPORT
Draft Regional Statement (2006)	Northern Housing (NRHS)	The formation of Regional Housing Groups was a key initiative of Melbourne 2030 to identify housing needs and issues specific to each region. The NRHS provides a strategic framework for the northern region’s housing needs in the context of projected population growth. It aims to provide guidance and direction for Council in the development and review of strategic planning work and to inform the coordination of future infrastructure provision.
Community Plan 2030, Council Plan 2013-2017 (2013)	Plan	The Council Plan was developed alongside the Community Plan, ‘Shaping Our Future’ 2030. These documents provide an overarching plan for Council which emphasise sustainable development, and the timely provision of services, facilities and spaces that support a healthy and connected community and a robust economic environment. The Council Plan 2013-2017, ‘Shaping our Future’, is a 4-year plan that sets out how Council will meet the strategic objectives of the Community

	Plan 2030.
Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017 (2013)	<p>This Plan was developed to take a holistic approach to local public health planning and considers a range of social, physical, economic and cultural factors that influence the health and wellbeing of the community. The plan demonstrates Council's commitment to helping create a healthier, more active community, and complies with the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, which requires councils to prepare a public health and wellbeing plan every 4 years. The Plan prioritises the following health and wellbeing goals and actions for this period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Community building •Planning for growth - healthy, liveable, socially connected communities •Community transport •Local employment opportunities with a focus on groups who experience significant barriers to employment •Preventing violence against women and promoting gender equity •Community safety •Preventing chronic disease through the Healthy Together Whittlesea initiative
Housing Strategy (2001)	The 2001 Strategy identifies gaps in the provision of housing in the municipality, in particular the need for a more diverse and affordable housing stock and more public and private rental accommodation. The Housing Diversity Strategy provides an update of this strategy in the context of unprecedented population growth, the changing demographic profile of the municipality and the housing issues that have arisen during the period that the Strategy was first prepared.
Social and Affordable Housing Policy (April 2012)	This Policy (adopted in 2012) was prepared to encourage and facilitate the growth of affordable, accessible and appropriate housing for very low, low and moderate income households across the municipality, with focus on social and affordable housing. It is considered that this Policy will form part of a review of Council's existing Housing Strategy.
Urban Character Assessments (1999)	The Assessments identified areas within the municipality which displayed a 'distinctive' neighbourhood character. That is, a collection of physical characteristics which form a streetscape character. The most common ranking for character value across the municipality was 'fair' implying a neighbourhood character that is neat, orderly and well maintained but generally indistinguishable.

	<p>Whilst the UCAs were undertaken in 1999, the findings of the report are not considered to have changed substantially during this time. Additionally, the UCA is based on existing character, and not preferred character. It is important that in those areas where neighbourhood character is not highly valued or of a high standard that Council develop a preferred neighbourhood character which new development should respond to.</p>
<p>Peter Lalor Housing Cooperative- Heritage Amendment</p>	<p>In 2012, Council proposed an amendment to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme (C157) to apply a heritage overlay to the Peter Lalor Housing Estate precinct. This precinct is an area of local historic and architectural significance, and the proposed heritage overlay intended to preserve its character, while still allowing some development to occur. At the Council meeting on 16 April 2013, Council resolved to abandon the Amendment on the basis that more inclusive options are available for honouring and preserving the history of the precinct and that, although the precinct is significant for its association with the Peter Lalor Cooperative Society achievements, the houses are not architecturally/aesthetically different, or significant, when compared to numerous houses of that period in the broader area.</p> <p>As of October 2013, Council is undertaking further consultation with property owners in the Peter Lalor Housing Estate to see if they are interested in individual heritage overlays being applied to their property.</p>
<p>Epping Central Structure Plan (Adopted by Council December 2011)</p>	<p>The Epping Central Structure Plan sets out the long-term vision for the Epping Central area, including where and how land will be used and developed over the next 20 years. By implementing the Epping Central Structure Plan, Epping will transform into a thriving regional centre with well-designed buildings and attractive public spaces where people can meet and enjoy outdoor events and activities. The Structure Plan also aims to preserve the unique historical places and features of Epping Central that are valued by the community. The Structure Plan was adopted by Council in December 2011, and a Planning Scheme Amendment to implement the Structure Plan into the Whittlesea Planning Scheme (in the form of the Activity Centre Zone) was formally exhibited in August/ September 2012. Council will be seeking adoption and ministerial approval in late 2013/ early 2014.</p>
<p>Lalor and Thomastown Master Plan (Adopted by Council December 2011)</p>	<p>The Master Plan was prepared to guide the public realm improvements to occur within the Thomastown (High Street) and Lalor (Station Street and May Road) shopping precincts.</p>
<p>Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2012-2022</p>	<p>The Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2012-2022 outlines a 10-year framework for Council and the community to work together towards a more sustainable future. The Strategy contains the Urban Development and Built Form Paper, which is one of seven other papers that have been prepared to guide policy directions, strategies and actions to address a number of sustainability issues in the municipality. The Strategy was</p>

(2013)	<p>adopted by Council in May 2013.</p> <p>The Urban Development and Built Form Paper suggest ways for Council to improve its urban planning processes and practices to achieve greater sustainability outcomes. The paper broadly discusses the relationship between how we plan our areas, and environmental issues including climate change, drought and changing weather conditions, and peak oil.</p>
Open Space Strategy (currently being reviewed)	<p>The current Open Space Strategy prepared in 1997 is considered out-dated and as such is no longer relevant. A review is currently underway to ensure a cohesive approach to land use planning and development within and around our open space areas to form part of a new Open Space Strategy. A revised Open Space Strategy Draft is expected in early 2014.</p>
Plenty Valley Activity Centre Structure Plan (currently underway)	<p>A Structure Plan is being prepared to provide the overall strategic direction for the growth of the Plenty Valley (formerly South Morang) Activity Centre and to facilitate a mix of retail, office, services and residential land uses.</p>

PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING IN THE CITY OF WHITTLESEA

To date Council's ability to assess planning applications in a thorough and timely manner has been significantly impacted by:

- An increasing proportion of planning applications receiving objections and which as a consequence requires decisions to be made by Council, rather than under delegate powers.
- Blockages in current assessment processes; and
- Decision making that is made in the absence of local policy.

LACK OF CLEAR POLICY GUIDANCE

Based on the findings of the *Making Local Policy Stronger* (2007) report, the State Government initiated a review of residential policies and zones to establish whether or not the application of the existing zoning provisions met with the overall strategic intent of State and local policies. As a result of this review, it became apparent that the creation of a new suite of residential zones should be investigated. Currently the Residential 1 Zone which applies to most of the established areas does not adequately provide for a range of dwelling densities.

Further strategic work must be carried out to establish clear direction about the location and type of housing growth and change to be expected within the established areas of the municipality that is consistent with State policy and objectives. To some extent the current Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) recognises that housing diversity and medium density housing is needed to address demographic changes, however a review of recent planning decisions identifies the absence of specific guidance in the planning scheme to identify the preferred character of the established areas, and where housing should be located including

where it is not appropriate. Although an Urban Character Assessment was undertaken in 1999 and adopted by Council, it is not a reference document or incorporated document in the Whittlesea Planning Scheme. Furthermore, the Urban Character Assessments provide little guidance in relation to future or preferred character.

The Housing Diversity Strategy seeks to address many of these issues by identifying suitable locations for density within the established areas, as well as identifying areas not suitable for increased housing growth. A specific local policy outlining the local response to managing change and responding to the community's needs and requirements will assist in achieving greater consistency in decision making.

DELEGATION AND ITS IMPACT ON DECISION MAKING

The City of Whittlesea is one of only a few municipalities which require all applications that receive one objection to be decided upon at a Council Meeting so that if a decision is later appealed at VCAT, Council's planning officers do not have the power under delegation to mediate with the applicant, which is contrary to VCAT's preferred approach. Effectively this can result in VCAT decisions being delayed by 6 to 9 months, which inhibits growth and development within the municipality.

A growing proportion of planning applications being considered by Council are for 2-10 dwelling on a site, or 10 or more dwellings (on a site). The proportion of applications with objections has also grown in response to such applications. This can result in inconsistency in decision making and lengthy delays. The HDS will provide greater opportunities for consistency in decision making but until such time as delegation is reviewed, statutory timeframes will be difficult to achieve.

VCAT DECISIONS

Due to the lack of policy guidance relating to the preferred character of the established suburbs, VCAT decisions have been based on existing neighbourhood character which can be problematic given that the current character is typically suburban with a varied and inconsistent built form.

In addition to this previous medium density developments have been approved on the basis of the need for infill development (within a metropolitan housing growth context). Clause 55 of Rescode states that 'State and Local Planning policy require that where opportunities arise for infill development, that these opportunities be taken in established residential areas with good access to facilities and services'.

SUMMARY

It is clear that the scope of existing planning policy in the MSS and the local policies of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme are limited with regard to statements of preferred character particularly in areas which have the potential for higher density housing. The MSS highlights the need for more diverse housing stock and for a strategic direction for the future location of medium density housing. Beyond this however, there is a lack of policy guidance for residential development despite past and present State Government policy providing some level of guidance on this matter. It is clear that changes to the existing local planning policy framework are required to guide the future location of increased housing density and diversity that promotes high quality design. The New Residential Zones currently released by the State Government, subject to greater review, may provide the necessary tools to implement this policy framework.

APPENDIX 03

HOUSING CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

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APPENDIX HOUSING CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

This section establishes the capacity of the established suburbs to accommodate existing and future housing needs in a balanced and sustainable way that also recognises the diverse housing needs of the community.

Until recently, planning applications for medium and higher density housing have occurred throughout established suburbs of the municipality and in areas remote from public transport, services and facilities.

To manage the future needs of the community and to relieve pressure for housing within all existing suburbs, future housing growth will need to be directed into preferred locations to encourage a healthier community, less car based travel and reliance on fossil fuels, as well as more amenable places.

The HDS aims to provide guidance on appropriate locations for housing growth by assessing the capacity and suitability of each suburb to accommodate future developments. These included existing and proposed land use features, locational and site characteristics.

METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSING DWELLING CAPACITY

Capacity Assessments were undertaken to:

- Identify those areas that have the capacity to accommodate additional housing development;

- Identify those areas that have limited capacity for additional housing development, and
- Identify constrained land where there is minimal or no capacity for residential development.

A set of criteria used to assess capacity was identified in Stage 1 (Background Analysis and Stage 1 Community Engagement).

All of the criteria was mapped and analysed in conjunction with each other to determine areas of high, medium and low capacity.

Some of the criteria used to assess capacity included:

- **Locational criteria** (e.g. proximity to activity and neighbourhood centres, local and major shopping centres, open space, tertiary facilities, health and community facilities).
- **Site characteristics** (lot frontage, lot size, solar orientation dwelling size, age of housing).
- **Existing planning provisions** (zones and overlays).
- **Land ownership** (vacant lots, government owned land, single dwelling covenants rear laneways).
- **Subdivision patterns.**

Those areas that demonstrated the highest capacity for housing growth were those close to:

- public transport,
- activity and neighbourhood centres containing employment,
- community services, and
- infrastructure including recreation centres and libraries.

Those areas remote from these important elements (generally greater than 800 metres) were considered inappropriate locations for increased housing growth.

WHAT IS A WALKABLE CATCHMENT? - Given a choice, most people will only walk a certain distance to public transport.

Walkable catchments or ‘ped sheds’ make assumptions about how far people are generally willing to walk based on transport mode, reliability and frequency of service, network structure, stop spacing and hours of service.

It is generally accepted that 800 metres (about a 10 minute walk) is the maximum distance people will walk to high quality public transport (such as trains) compared to 200 metres for lower service modes, for example buses.

Walkable catchments have been used using Geographic Information System (GIS) to measure the walking distance along the street, not the straight line measured on a map. This approach is necessary because the layout of paths and roads affects the distance and time it would take to walk to a destination.

PRIMARY CAPACITY CRITERIA

TRANSPORT: PRINCIPAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK (PPTN)

Proximity to the PPTN and activity and neighbourhood centres was identified as the primary considerations for guiding future housing growth.

The City of Whittlesea’s Principal Public Transport Network Includes:

Train (South Morang rail line)

Tram (Route 86 along Plenty Road)

Orbital Smart Bus (Route 901 and 902, travelling east -west)

Proximity to the PPTN is the most important locational criteria and has been identified as the primary consideration for guiding future housing growth. Within these criteria, different levels of capacity have been identified and are discussed below in the following sections.

Within the City of Whittlesea the existing public transport network is based around the South Morang fixed rail corridor to the west, the 86 tram route along Plenty Road to the east, and the two Smart Bus orbital routes travelling east-west, complemented by localised bus networks.

See Map 1: Walkable Catchment from the Principal Public Transport Network (PPTN), Established Areas, 2013.

TRAIN

The South Morang Line (which has recently been extended) provides a major link to the CBD as well as access to a number of local, employment, and retail and education destinations.

A 400/ 800 metre walkable catchment, which equates to a five to ten minute walk, has been used to determine an area’s convenient accessibility to public transport. This is applied to the fixed rail stations (Epping, South Morang, Lalor, and Thomastown) as these are more legible than tram or bus stops and are generally well supported by commercial and retail uses. Trains are considered to be the most frequent, time

efficient and the highest patronage compared with other modes of public transport.

TRAM

The 86 tram route travels along Plenty Road to Bundoora RMIT and provides an important service to the eastern corridor of the municipality, in what is otherwise poorly serviced by public transport.

A 200 metre walkable catchment (which equates to a 3 minute walk) has been used as a guide around each of these stops to determine suitable catchments for increased densities. This was reduced from 400 metre walkable catchment for the reasons discussed below:

- In response to feedback received during Stage 1 community consultation which identified the tram as having less capacity and service coverage than the train.
- Due to the curvilinear subdivision pattern of the residential area abutting the tram route, the distance and time required to access the tram stops typically exceeds the 200 metre walkable catchment.
- The 86 tram route only services a small portion of the established areas.

As such, it is considered secondary locational criteria and has been allocated a 200 metre walkable catchment.

SMART BUS

The Orbital Smart Bus Routes (901 and 902) travel along McDonalds and Settlement Roads. Whilst these routes provide high frequency compared with local bus routes, and important and reliable access to nearby

education facilities, regional centres and transport interchanges, the stops are often poorly located (902 mostly covers the industrial precinct in Thomastown and is remote from the surrounding residential area) and are less than compared to fixed rail. Whilst the routes provide an essential east-west connection, the areas they service are typically isolated and remote, and often require an intermodal transfer, for example with a train. As such a smaller walkable catchment of 200 metres has been applied to these stops (which equates to a 3 minute walk).

PROPERTIES ABUTTING MAIN ROADS AND THE PPTN

It is considered that properties on main roads with direct frontage to the PPTN there is greater capacity to accommodate housing. The reasons are described below:

- Intensification on main PPTN routes could result in increased patronage of public transport and will protect the future viability of existing public transport infrastructure. For example better use of the Smart Bus, greater priority for trams and the potential expansion and increased frequency of rail services.
- Arguably housing growth along main roads (on the PPTN) will result in the application of good urban design principles including minimal amenity impacts on neighbouring properties, street activation with continuous active frontage to provide a safe and vibrant pedestrian environment, active streets connecting activity centres to provide an urban experience close to typically suburban areas.

However not all roads are appropriate for additional housing growth. There is a hierarchy of roads on the Smart Bus route that due to their width and scale could more comfortably accommodate an increased

density of housing, as well as some major arterial roads which have limited capacity to absorb larger buildings/ housing densities. Whilst it is considered that any increased development potential should only be applicable to properties directly fronting Smart Bus routes the capacity of the road and other considerations such as streetscape and proximity to services will also influence capacity for further residential development.

Those properties not directly fronting Smart Bus routes have limited capacity for additional housing growth.

See Map 2: Properties Abutting Main Roads, Established Areas, 2013.

LOCAL BUS ROUTES (NON-PPTN)

Local bus routes cover a substantial part of the established areas and service many of the major roads to nearby shopping destinations such as Epping Plaza, Plenty Valley, Northland Shopping Centre and Greensborough Plaza.

However it is considered that bus stops will not inform the future location of housing for reasons stated below:

- Poor accessibility;
- Fairly limited service provision in terms of frequency, efficiency and coordination.
- Limited hours of operation, often finishing too early.
- Routes are often subject to change compared to permanency of fixed rail transport.

DISTANCE TO ACTIVITY CENTRES AND SHOPS

By virtue of their status, 'activity centres' are considered ideal locations for additional housing growth.

Walkable catchments differed across the hierarchy of centres – based on the size of the centre. Larger catchments were measured for the Metropolitan, Activity and Neighbourhood Centres, compared with the smaller local neighbourhood shopping centres.

More emphasis has been applied to walkable catchments of major and regional shopping centres (contained within activity centres) than activity centres themselves. This is because in some instances the Metropolitan and Activity Centres boundaries' span a large area (in some instances more than 2-3 kilometres). Also, the boundaries of Neighbourhood Centres are not clearly defined as structure planning has not been undertaken in these areas as yet.

See Map 3: Walkable Catchments from Activity Centres and Shopping Centres, Established Areas, 2013.

The established areas' Activity Centres and their designation in Plan Melbourne is described on the following page:

Table 13: Activity Centre Classifications

Activity Centre Classification according to Plan Melbourne	Application	Description
Metropolitan Activity Centre (formerly Principal Activity Centre)	Epping Central	Epping Central was recently identified in Plan Melbourne as a Metropolitan Activity Centre because of its good public transport networks and service delivery role including providing a diverse range of jobs, activities and community facilities and services. Epping Central is a large centre with a mix of activities that are well serviced by public transport. The size and location of Epping Central means that it has an especially important role to play as a focus for community activity, services and investment. It has a larger regional catchment area than Plenty Valley.
Activity Centre (formerly Major Activity Centre)	Plenty Valley (formerly South Morang)	Plenty Valley is similar to Epping Central but serves a smaller sub regional catchment area. South Morang provides additional scope to accommodate ongoing investment and change in retail, office, community, service and residential markets. It is a centre that has a mix of activity and is well serviced by public transport.
Neighbourhood Activity Centre	Bundoora, Lalor, Thomastown and Whittlesea Township	<p>These centres have a limited mix of uses, meet local needs and are dominated by small business, shops and limited community services. They offer some local convenience services and some public transport provision but are not necessarily located on the PPTN.</p> <p>Local Neighbourhood Centres (described in the MSS) apply to general areas. These centres have limited development potential, and it is considered they will serve a limited local function.</p> <p>Note: The Township is defined as a Neighbourhood Activity Centre under the Planning Scheme as it does not contain an Urban Growth Boundary.</p>
Health and Education Precinct (formerly Specialised	University Hill	University Hill is an important economic precinct that provides a mix of economic activity and generates a high number of work and visitor trips.
Activity Centre)		

SHOPPING CENTRES WITHIN ACTIVITY CENTRES

Accessibility to services and facilities is a key criterion that has been used to guide growth and change.

Shopping centres that were included in the capacity assessment all contained a supermarket capable of satisfying a weekly shop. As a high proportion of private vehicle trips are undertaken for the purpose of shopping, it is important to provide housing in walking distance to shopping facilities. Increasing the number people living close to shopping facilities can greatly improve the viability of shopping centres, particularly at a local level.

Varying walkable catchments were applied to shopping centres, depending on their place in the hierarchy (of shopping centres) is discussed below.

- **Regional Shopping Centres** (E.g. Epping Plaza, Plenty Valley): A 400 metre walkable catchment has been used around the City's regional shopping centres as they attract the greatest number of shoppers.
- **Large Neighbourhood Shopping Centres** (E.g. Bundoora Square, Lalor Shopping Centre, University Hill, Thomastown Shopping Centre): A 400 metre walkable metre catchment have been used for these centres as they also have a diverse range of shopping outlets and are often readily accessible by foot or public transport and are well integrated with the surrounding residential area.

- **Small Neighbourhood Shopping Centres:** A 200 metre buffer distance has been used as a guide for these centres as they often have a limited number of shops. There is considered to be opportunities for shop top housing which will have the potential to significantly revitalise these centres.
- **Local Centres:** Local Shopping Centres have not been included as they do not satisfy basic grocery needs and therefore do not attract the same quantity of shoppers.

OTHER CAPACITY CONSIDERATIONS

Several other criteria were considered in the capacity assessments. Some are discussed below.

PROXIMITY TO SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Community Services and Facilities

Health, education and community facilities are generally dispersed throughout the established areas. Activity Centres and Neighbourhood Centres contain the greatest concentration of facilities and services. Those areas with clustered services have been used to determine future housing growth areas, as opposed to single purpose facilities only.

The established areas contain two major tertiary educational facilities: NMIT in Epping Central and RMIT (East and West campus) in Bundoora. NMIT is a vocational institution which offers a variety of TAFE and higher education programs. In 2011, the NMIT- Epping campus had 3,731 student enrolments compared to 6,366 student enrolments at the Bundoora Campus of RMIT.

Both facilities attract students from across the northern metropolitan region. Currently the lack of rental housing in close proximity to both facilities, and the lack of affordable housing more generally, have forced many students to live in suburbs further away and to commute long distances. There is significant opportunity to provide for student accommodation within and around the two campuses. In both instances, the proximity of each campus to the PPTN provides further support for such opportunities.

See Map 4: Services and Facilities, Established Areas, 2013.

Open Space

Proximity to open space was identified during consultation to be important for all age groups to promote health and wellbeing through exercise and social connectedness. The map shows there are several 'pocket parks' (neighbourhood parks) scattered within the established areas, however there is limited access to 'open space' (i.e. active open space, community sporting facility, major park, sportfield) in Activity Centres and along the PPTN, particularly in Lalor and Thomastown. The provision of public open space in these locations in particular, will become increasingly important as residential densities increase.

Opportunities for additional open space along creeks, pipe tracks and encumbered land will be considered in the future planning of the established areas and their activity centres, however open space alone should not directly influence capacity for future development potential.

The Township is generally well serviced by public parks and open space.

Neighbourhood Parks abut most residential neighbourhoods and a large open space is centrally located between Yea Road, the Scrubby River, Laurel Street and residential land to west of the Township.

See Map 5: Open Space, Established Areas, 2013

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Lot size

There is a broad consistency between the size of a lot and its development potential. In Lalor and Thomastown there is a concentration of moderate sized lots (650-1000sqm) and larger lots in Epping Central and parts of South Morang (greater than 1000sqm).

A concentration of smaller lots in Bundoora and Epping are generally indicative of medium density developments that have been constructed and subdivided in the past.

The Township is characterised by properties of all sizes. Compared to the established suburbs to the south of the municipality, lot sizes are generally larger (1000-3000sqm). A number of larger rural properties (<2ha) are located to the periphery of the study area.

See Map 6: Residential Lot Size, Established Areas, 2013.

Dwelling Age

The age of housing can influence the redevelopment potential of a site. Redevelopment potential also depends on the value of the land and the need for repairs or maintenance to the house). Housing age gives an

indication of what existing housing may potentially be redeveloped into new housing.

Generally, houses which are older than 30 years are more likely to be demolished or redeveloped to incorporate additional housing. Post war housing is concentrated along the High Street corridor (Thomastown, Lalor, and Epping). Many houses in Thomastown and Lalor have been demolished to allow for the construction of new dwellings. To the east of the municipality (Bundoora, Mill Park, and South Morang) housing is comprised of newer developments.

Whittlesea Township contains a number of properties built prior to 1949. However, most development is more recent (less than 20 years old) particularly in the residential areas to the north, south west and east of the Township.

See Map 7: Residential Dwelling Age, Established Areas, 2013.

Subdivision Pattern

The established areas subdivision pattern has a big impact on the ability to increase density. For example, the layout of streets and lots can determine the connectivity of an area for both pedestrians and vehicles and the size of a lot will influence how many dwellings can be accommodated.

The established areas can generally be divided into two parts:

- the older grid based pattern in Lalor, Thomastown, and Epping where large, regular lots are attractive to developers, and

- The curvilinear subdivision of Bundoora and Mill Park with irregular-shape lots that are more difficult to build multi-unit developments on.

Dwelling Size/ Type

The prevailing housing type in an area will influence the likelihood of similar housing types being constructed. For example in areas where multi-unit developments have occurred, developers are more likely to develop more of the same housing type.

The City of Whittlesea typically represents a conventional suburban character. Densities for most locations are characterised by single storey detached dwellings. New forms of infill development have changed the original housing stock, including more recent townhouse and multi-unit developments.

Whilst development has been relatively dispersed, there is a concentration of multi-unit development in Lalor and Thomastown (and to a lesser extent in Epping). This pattern of development corresponds with proximity to the rail corridor and activity centres and regular shaped lots.¹

The Township is characterised by single detached dwellings. Whilst there are very few dual occupancy and medium density developments in the Township, there are several lots <350sqm which suggest previous subdivisions (and therefore older density developments).

¹ 300sqm parcels account for previous for multi-unit developments that were not captured in the audit of multi-unit developments in the last 10 years.

See Map 8: Residential Dwelling Size, Established Areas, 2013.

Rear Laneways

Rear laneways allow for greater dwelling yield by using the whole of the site which typically would be consumed for vehicular access (driveways and car parking). Rear laneways are concentrated in Thomastown, with a small number of examples in Epping and Mill Park.

See Map 9: Rear Laneways, Established Areas, 2012

Lot Frontage

Larger lot frontages allow greater flexibility in the design of new developments. Constraints imposed by the need for landscaping, vehicle access and side setbacks are reduced. Larger lot frontages (>20 metres) are generally dispersed across the established areas, with very few strategic sites (2.5%) exceeding a 30 metre frontage. There doesn't appear to be a pattern of consistency in terms of where certain lots sizes are generally located, however most lots contained within the established areas have a frontage which is less than 20 metres (85%). The frontages in the Township vary greatly between 15 and 100 metres. More recent developments show a more consistent setback (15-20 metres) with the remainder of the municipality.

See Map 10: Residential Lot Frontage, Established Areas, 2013

Site Coverage

The site coverage of an existing dwelling affects its ability to accommodate additional dwellings on a site. Further to this, larger sites with low site coverage have greater capacity to accommodate additional

dwellings than those with high site coverage. Site coverage in Lalor, Thomastown, Epping and Bundoora is generally quite low (<25%) compared to the newer housing stock in Mill Park, for example River Gum Estate and Carlingford Estate in Lalor, which has a slightly higher site coverage (25-50%). There are very few examples of high site coverage (>50%) in the established areas.

See Map 11: Residential Site Coverage, Established Areas, 2013

Vacant Lots

There are a significant number of vacant lots in Epping Central and South Morang activity centres, but not elsewhere along the PPTN. There are significant vacancies in existing infill developments/ subdivisions in University Hill, Mosaic Living (Lalor) and Meridian Business Park.

See Map 12: Land Ownership, Established Areas, 2013

EXISTING PLANNING CONTROLS

Current planning controls inform the current use and development of land as outlined in earlier chapters.

Zoning

This study applies to all residentially zoned land. Included within this is zoning which allows residential development to occur (Business 1 Zone, Business 2 Zone, Special Use Zone, Mixed Use Zone, Activity Centre Zone). Whilst these zones have been included within this analysis (because they support residential development) and are typically contained within activity centre boundaries, further structure planning will be need undertaken to be undertaken by Council to identify additional sites and potential rezonings.

Planning Overlays

The following additional provisions apply to the established suburbs. These are generally related to specific planning issues (or a set of issues) and apply to specific parcels of land and constrain the development and use of the land to varying degrees.

See Map 13: Planning Overlays, Established Areas, 2013.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

High Capacity	Moderate Capacity	Minimal Capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly adjacent to PPTN or within activity centres • Higher provision of community services and facilities, tertiary facilities • Larger lot sizes • No remnant vegetation • Grid based subdivision pattern • Older housing stock • Larger numbers of vacant lots • Supportive planning controls (e.g. structure plans) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate proximity to activity centres and PPTN • Direct frontage or immediate proximity to Lalor Plaza, Stables, Gorge Road and Greenbrook Shopping Centre • Proximity to open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to Metropolitan, Major and Neighbourhood Centres and PPTN (>800m to train stations or activity centres, >200m from tram stop) • Remote from regional community facilities and services • Newer housing stock • Smaller housing lots and high site coverage • Smaller lot frontages • Poor subdivision pattern

HIGH CAPACITY AREAS

Areas nominated for higher levels of change have good access to Metropolitan, Activity or Neighbourhood Centres and the PPTN. Areas located adjacent to employment, public transport, community services and facilities are deemed to have a high degree of accessibility. Therefore they have a greater capacity to accommodate higher rates of residential change and service the needs of future occupants.

A greater proportion of new developments will be directed into these areas. In general all centres will be considered locations for future growth. However, the Neighbourhood Centres (Lalor, Thomastown, and Bundoora) were considered to have less capacity in terms of scale and

intensity, compared to the Epping Central Metropolitan Activity Centre and Plenty Valley (South Morang) Activity Centre.

Metropolitan and Activity Centres

It was the Metropolitan and Activity Centres that best showed that they could handle growth. Based on their proximity to the PPTN, activity centres containing employment, community services and infrastructure were considered suitable to accommodate higher densities (apartments and mixed use developments) without detrimental impacts on established residential areas.

Epping Central was recently identified in Plan Melbourne as a Metropolitan Activity Centre because of its good public transport networks and service delivery role including providing a diverse range of jobs, activities and community facilities and services.

Larger lots and high land vacancies in these centres also provide an ideal opportunity for development that provides for a range of dwelling types.

Detailed structure plans have been prepared or are in the process of being prepared to guide the preferred scale, intensity and mix of residential development, and to address matters such as infrastructure capacity and design.

Neighbourhood Centres

Significant residential development can occur in Neighbourhood Centres given their location and site characteristics. However, because of the

smaller scale of these centres, development needs to be sensitive to their existing neighbourhood role and function.

Some change in the Neighbourhood Centres was considered appropriate because of their proximity to services and public transport. Additional structure planning may be required for Lalor, Thomastown and Bundoora to provide a more detailed framework to better guide development in these centres.

MODERATE CAPACITY AREAS

The periphery of Neighbourhood Centres

These areas are within comfortable walking distance to either Activity or Neighbourhood Centres or the PPTN. Being on the periphery of the high capacity areas, they act as a buffer to the sensitive interface with lower capacity areas. Growth is therefore encouraged in these areas but at a lesser scale.

Moderate capacity was also identified around a number of smaller localised centres where additional housing in the form of shop-top housing or small scale multi-unit developments could work.

MINIMAL CAPACITY

Residential areas outside Metropolitan, Activity or Neighbourhood Centres

Areas remote from the PPTN and Metropolitan, Activity or Neighbourhood Centres (generally greater than 800 metres) were considered inappropriate for additional housing growth and change.

These areas normally have newer housing and are on smaller lots and with higher site coverage. Increasing the number of houses in these areas would lead to more households being dependent on private motor vehicles, with the obvious implications. Medium and high density housing is not encouraged in these locations.

The Whittlesea Township

Although surrounded by vast tracts of undeveloped land devoted primarily to pastoral activities, the Whittlesea Township is heavily constrained where new urban development is concerned.

The Township is surrounded by hills and ridgelines that provide an important backdrop to the town. Combined with the floodplains of Plenty River which bisects the existing Township, these features somewhat limit options for future residential expansion.

In addition to this, the Whittlesea Township is considered to have limited capacity for further infill development due to its remote location from the PPTN. Although a bus service is available within the Township, car based transport will continue to predominate given the area's remote location from higher order retail, employment and community services and facilities.

The Township is characterised by older housing and boasts a distinctive rural character which should be protected and enhanced.

A different approach to achieving additional housing growth and diversity should be considered for the Township (compared to the other established suburbs of the municipality).

The small scale of housing, housing type and the established vegetation are elements which should be maintained. However, the Township does need to accommodate some additional growth of more diverse housing types to respond to minor changes in demographic profiles. It is considered that along the main road entering the Township (Laurel Street) and closer to its centre (Church Street) there is some capacity to accommodate infill residential development.

These streets have greater capacity (compared to the remainder of the Township) to accommodate a more substantial built form that will not compromise the rural character of the Township. Such development on these streets will also play a role in activating the shopping centre core of the Township and the gateways into the Township.

Table 11: Summary of the Existing Planning Provision, Established Areas

Provision	Purpose and Description	Implications for the HDP
Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO)	<p>The purpose of a VPO is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect areas of significant vegetation and minimise loss due to development. • Protect areas of special significance, natural beauty, interest and importance; • Maintain and enhance habitat and habitat corridors for indigenous fauna and encourage the regeneration of native vegetation. 	<p>VPO1 applies to the Plenty Valley and the surrounding areas of Mernda, Doreen and South Morang to protect the red gum, black box, white box, grey box, yellow box and various other native grasses.</p> <p>Significant vegetation which is protected by the VPO may constrain development opportunities.</p>
Heritage Overlay (HO)	<p>The purpose of an HO is to conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance and ensure development does not adversely affect such places.</p>	<p>The HO applies to subject sites dispersed throughout the municipality.</p> <p>Areas identified as having historical significance may act as a constraint if it is considered that the development will adversely affect the natural or</p>

		cultural significance, character or appearance of the place. However in some instances the restoration/ conservation of an identified heritage place may allow a land use that would otherwise be prohibited.
Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO)	The purpose of a PAO is to identify and reserve land which is proposed to be acquired by an authority to be used for a public purpose and ensure that changes to the use or development of the land do not prejudice the purpose for which the land is to be acquired.	PAO2 relates to the acquisition of land by Vic Roads for the purposes of the proposed E6 freeway which extends from the Metropolitan Ring Road north to High St and Plenty Road. The land designated for public acquisition does not permit residential development.
Special Building Overlay (SBO)	The purpose of an SBO is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify land in urban areas liable to inundation by overland flows from the urban drainage system as determined by, or in consultation with, the floodplain management authority; and Ensure that development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, is compatible with the flood hazard and local drainage conditions and will not cause any significant rise in flood level or flow velocity. 	The SBO applies throughout the established areas on land liable to inundation to flooding. This is mostly near waterways. Whilst the SBO does not significantly constrain residential development, the following matters must be considered when assessing a planning application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The susceptibility of the development to flooding and flood damage. The frequency, duration, extent, depth and velocity of flooding of the site and access way; and The effect of the development on redirecting or obstructing floodwater and stormwater.
Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO)	The purpose of the EAO is to ensure that potentially contaminated land is suitable for sensitive uses which could be adversely affected by any contamination, including residential uses.	When evaluating the residential development opportunities for a site the level of contamination of a site will need to be considered. If land is found to be contaminated, the site must be remediated to a suitable level prior to its development for residential purposes or other

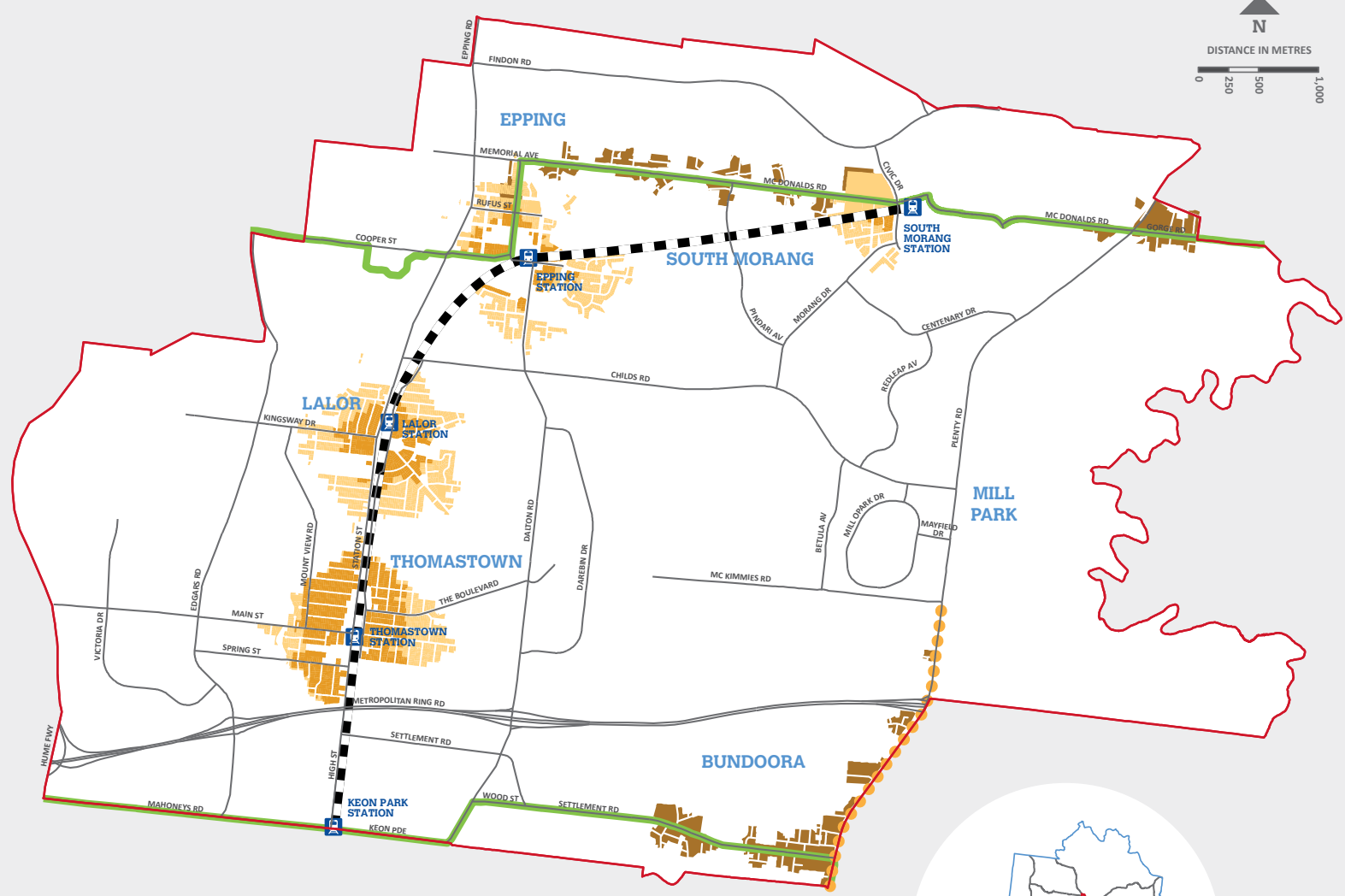
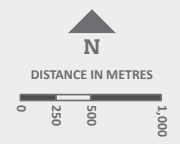
		<p>sensitive uses. This may impede development potential in terms of implications to costs and timeframes.</p> <p>An EAO applies to three sites in Epping – 522 High St., 102-120 Cooper St. and 183-189 Cooper St- which have been identified as potentially contaminated land. Clause 45.03 does not currently contain any specific EAO sites, however strategic work has commenced within the Epping Central area to identify potential sites for inclusion.</p>
<p>Development Plan Overlay (DPO)</p>	<p>The purpose of the DPO is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas which require the form and conditions of future use and development to be shown on a development plan before a permit can be granted to use or develop the land; • Exempt an application from notice and review if it is generally in accordance with a development plan; and • A development plan for the whole area that the DPO applies must be created before a permit can be granted for a single site. 	<p>Many of the approved Development Plans that apply to the established areas of the municipality are redundant or have been superseded by more recent strategic work.</p> <p>These are discussed below:</p> <p>DPO1/2: These Development Plans relate to residential estates within the Whittlesea Township. DPO1 is mostly fully developed.</p> <p>DPO3/4: The Plenty Gorge River Gum Estate is now fully developed.</p> <p>DPO7/8/25/26: The South Morang Structure Plan is currently being prepared and will provide guidance to these areas.</p>

		<p>DPO10: Janefield / University Hill is almost fully developed.</p> <p>DPO13: The Epping Plaza Development Plan will be removed as part of the Epping Central Structure Plan Planning Scheme Amendment.</p> <p>DPO20: Mosaic Living Carlingford is now almost fully developed.</p> <p>In addition to this, the detailed planning controls and Residential Design Guidelines that will form Part 2 Planning Scheme Amendment for the HDP will take precedence on the future use and redevelopment of the subject land.</p>
<p>Design and Development Overlay (DDO)</p>	<p>The purpose of the DDO is to identify areas which are affected by specific requirements relating to the design and built form of new development.</p>	<p>DDO7 applies to the South Morang Major Activity Centre.</p> <p>DDO10 applies to the strategic redevelopment sites in Epping Central and will be removed as part of the Epping Central Planning Scheme Amendment.</p> <p>These DDO controls provide specific guidance around siting and design considerations to ensure a high quality urban design outcome in the municipality's Principal and Major activity centres. In such instances, the development potential of these sites is not necessarily constrained but a specific high density design objective is sought.</p> <p>The DDOs apply more specific requirements than those that will</p>

		ultimately be prepared for the Change Areas as part of the Housing Diversity Strategy.
Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO)	<p>The purpose of the LSIO is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify land in a flood storage or flood fringe area affected by the 1 in 100 year flood or any other area determined by the floodplain management authority; and • Ensure that development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, is compatible with the flood hazard and local drainage conditions and will not cause any significant rise in flood level or flow velocity. 	<p>The overlay applies to Darebin and Edgars Creeks.</p> <p>Whilst the SBO does not significantly constrain residential development, the following matters must be considered when assessing an application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The susceptibility of the development to flooding and flood damage. • The frequency, duration, extent, depth and velocity of flooding of the site and access way; and • The effect of the development on redirecting or obstructing floodwater and stormwater.
Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)	<p>The purpose of a SLO is to identify, conserve and enhance significant landscapes and landscape character objectives of an area.</p>	<p>As a result of the Urban Growth Boundary (UBG) extension, the area around the Quarry Hills is being carefully monitored by the City to ensure that the 'logical inclusions' process being led by the State government does not adversely affect the SLO designation of the area. This affects only a minor proportion of the established areas.</p> <p>New developments must consider the impact on the landscape due to height, bulk, colour and general appearance. The impact of building and works on significant views is also considered.</p>

		<p>SLO1 applies to the Whittlesea Hills. This Overlay seeks to retain the 'non-urban break' between the Mernda Township growth area and the Whittlesea Township. The hills are important as they also provide visual relief, interest and definition of the Plenty River Valley and the extent of the Western Plains.</p> <p>New development must be located well below the ridgeline along Plenty Road and minimal impact of built form intrusion into the natural environment.</p>
Single Dwelling Covenants	<p>The purpose of a single dwelling covenant is to limit the use and development of a lot to no more than one dwelling (restricts the development of 2 or more dwelling on a site).</p> <p>The covenant applies to land in Lalor and Mill Park.</p>	<p>The application of single dwelling covenants restricts the development of additional dwellings on the site.</p> <p>The process to remove a covenant can be quite onerous. For covenants applied prior to 1991 a planning permit cannot be granted to remove or vary a restrictive covenant if a beneficiary owner may suffer detriment of any kind. This test is very stringent as it is difficult to prove that there would be no detriment.</p> <p>For covenants applied after 1991 a planning may permit be granted to remove or vary a restrictive covenant if the responsible authority (Council) is satisfied that any benefiting landowners will be unlikely to suffer material detriment, including financial loss or loss of amenity.</p>
Peter Lalor Housing Cooperative-Heritage	<p>In 2012, Council proposed an amendment to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme (C157) to apply a heritage overlay to part of the Peter Lalor Housing Cooperative. This precinct is an area of local historic and architectural significance, and the proposed heritage overlay intended to</p>	<p>If a heritage overlay were to be applied to individual properties, further work would need to be undertaken to determine under what circumstances a planning permit would be required for the development</p>

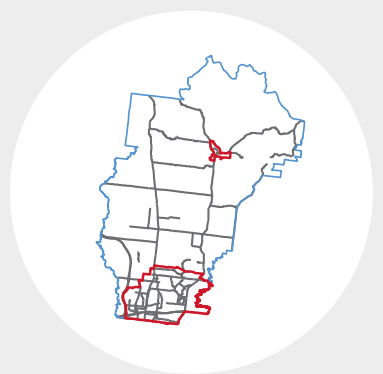
<p>Amendment (Proposed Planning Scheme Amendment C157)</p>	<p>preserve its character, while still allowing some development to occur.</p> <p>At the Council meeting on 16 April 2013, Council resolved to abandon the Amendment on the basis that more inclusive options are available for honouring and preserving the history of the precinct and that, although the precinct is significant for its association with the Peter Lalor Cooperative Society achievements, the houses are not architecturally/aesthetically different, or significant, when compared to numerous houses of that period in the broader area.</p> <p>As of October 2013, Council is undertaking further consultation with property owners in the Peter Lalor Housing Cooperative to see if they are interested in individual heritage overlays being applied to their property.</p>	<p>of dwellings.</p>
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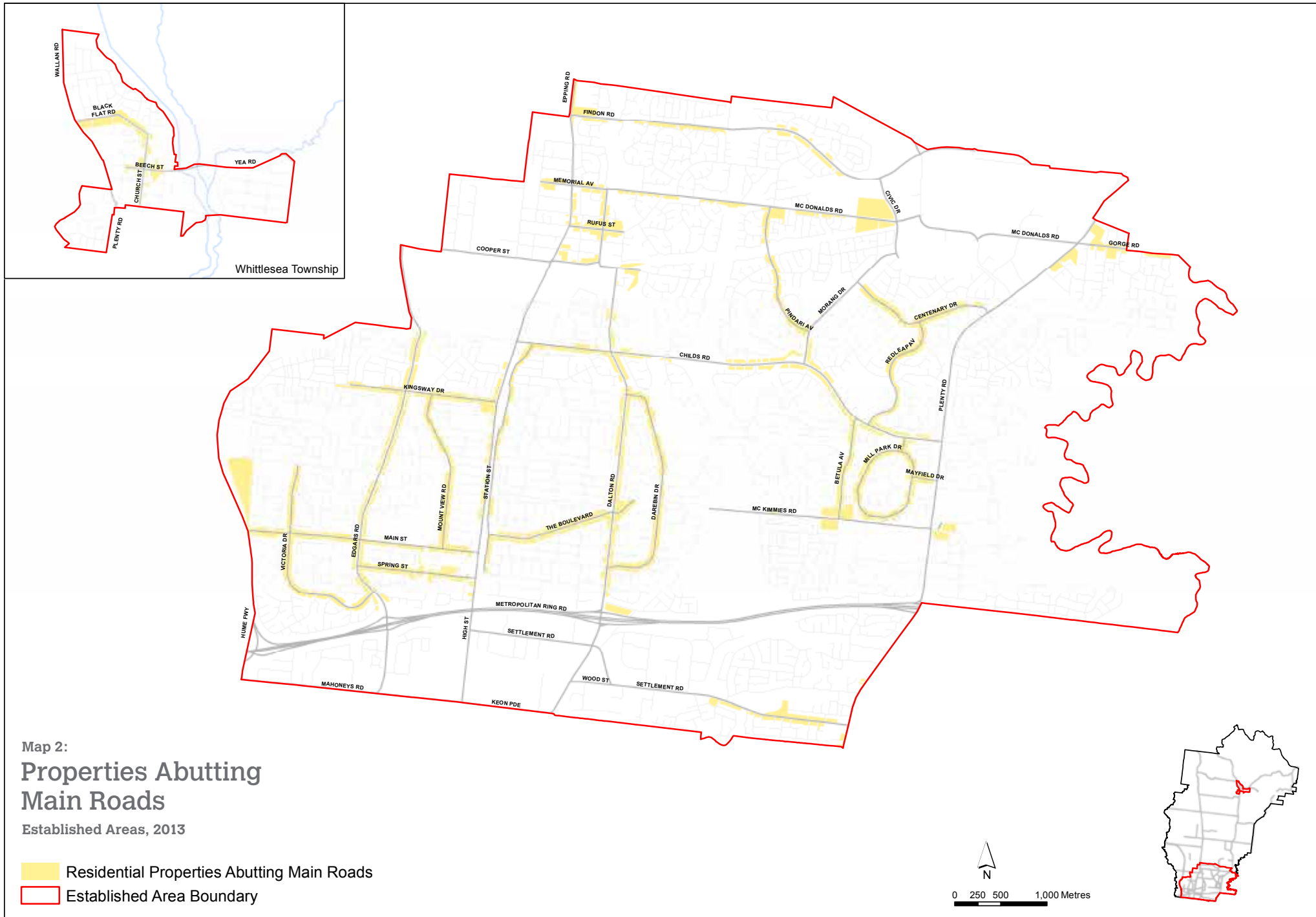


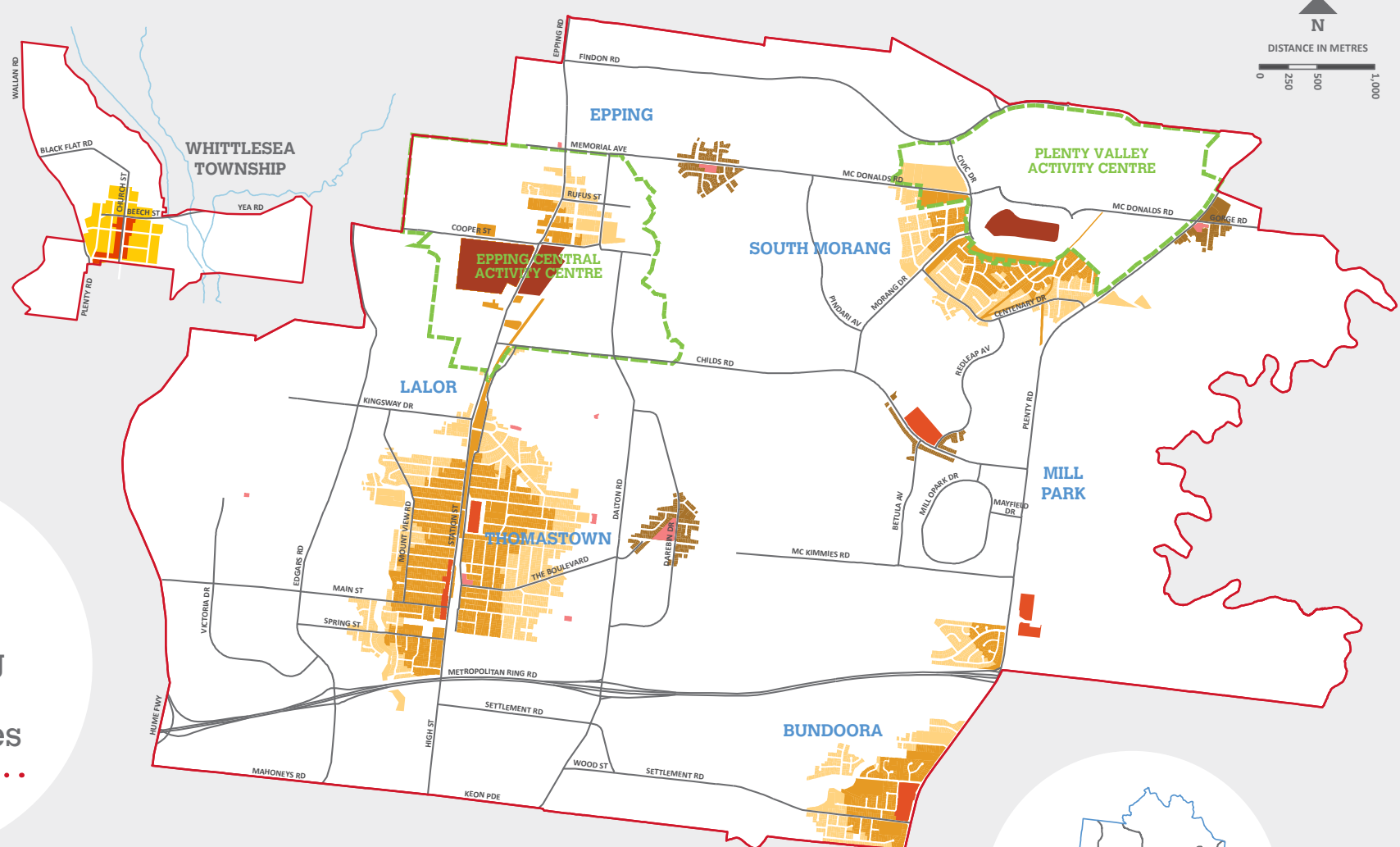
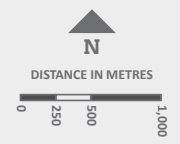
Map 1:
Walkable
Catchments from
the Principal
Public Transport
Network (PPTN)

- Train station
- Train line
- Smart Bus route
- Tram line
- Residential property within 200m walking distance from Smart Bus and Tram stops
- Residential property within 400m walking distance from Train Station
- Residential property within 800m walking distance from Train Station
- Established Area Boundary

Note: Whittlesea Township has been excluded as it is not serviced by the PPTN.







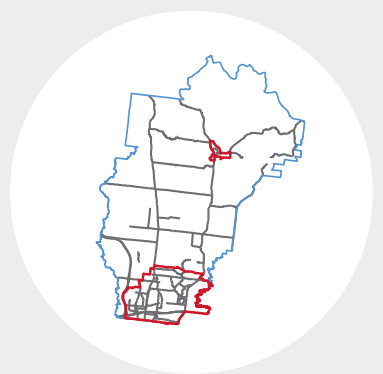
Map 3:
Walkable
Catchments
from Shopping
Centres/
Activity Centres

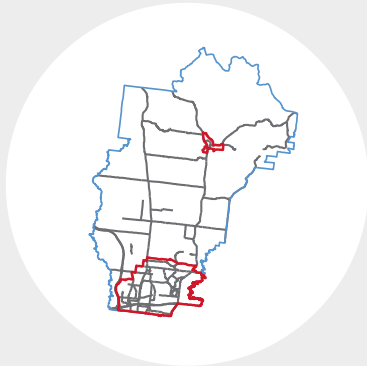
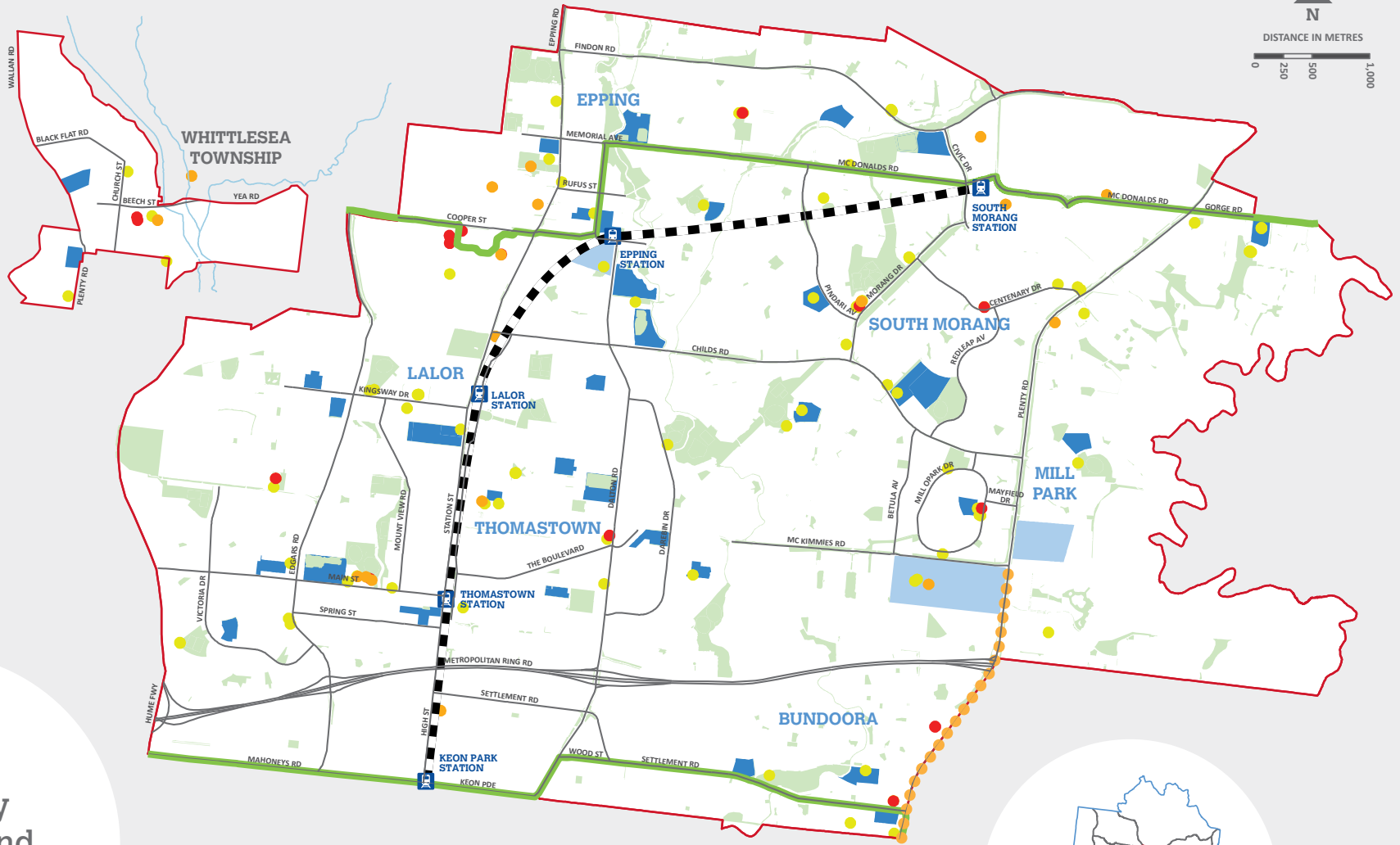
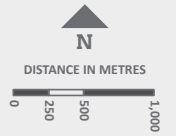
- Residential property within 200m walking distance of shops
- Residential property within 400m walking distance of shops
- Residential property within 800m walking distance of shops
- Residential property within 400m walking distance of Township shops

- Shopping Centres**
- Major
 - Neighbourhood
 - Local

- Activity Centres
- Established Area Boundary

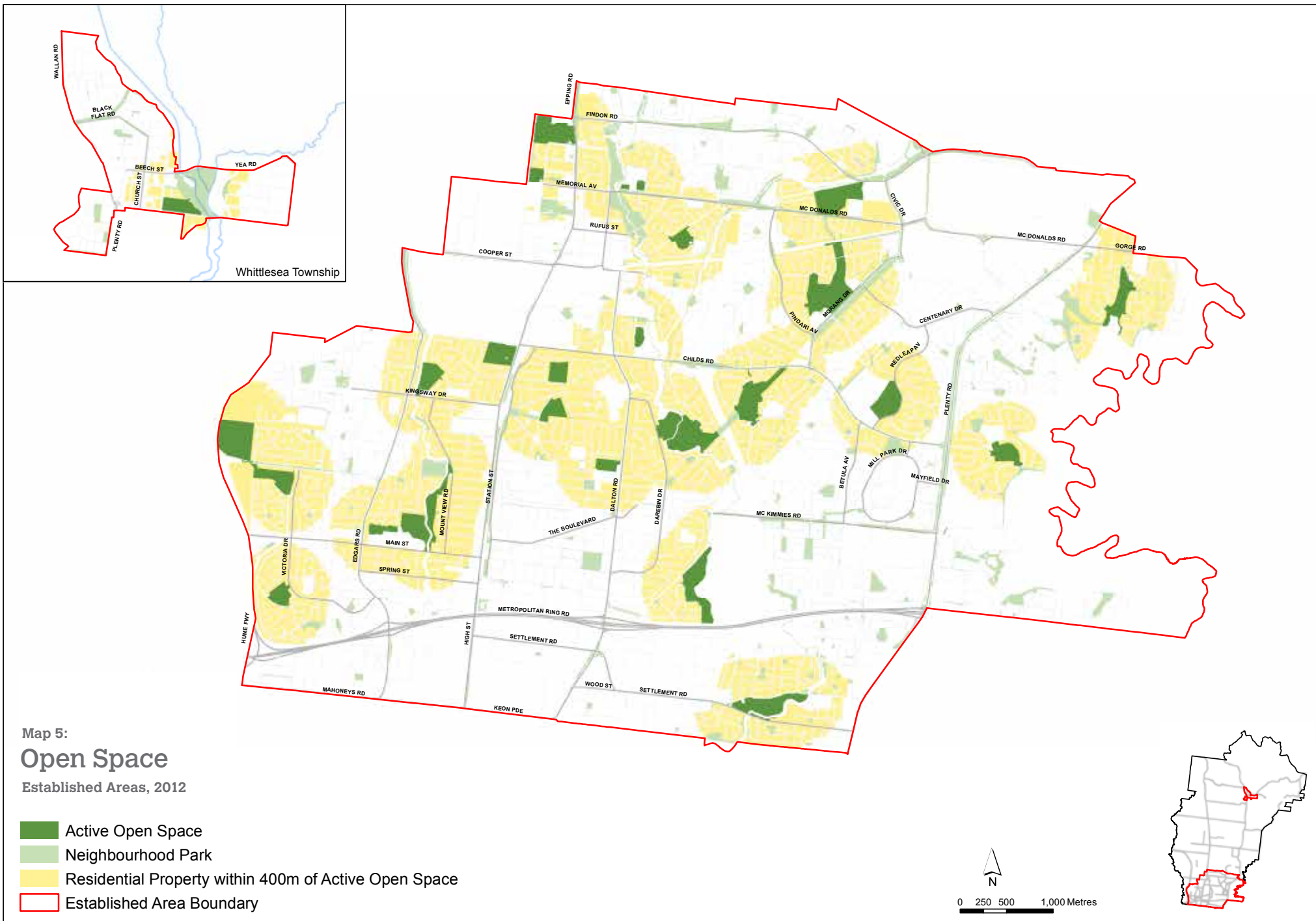
Note: Whittlesea Township has not been included in this analysis.





Map 4:
Community
Services and
Facilities

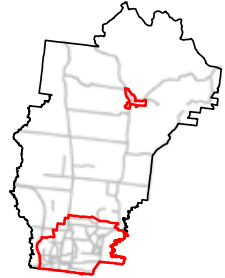
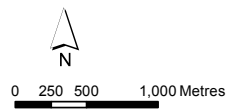
- Train station
- Train line
- Smart Bus route
- Tram line
- Childcare, Kindergartens, CACs, Playgroups
- Community Services
- Health Services
- Schools
- Tertiary Educational Facilities
- Open Space
- Established Area Boundary

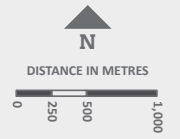
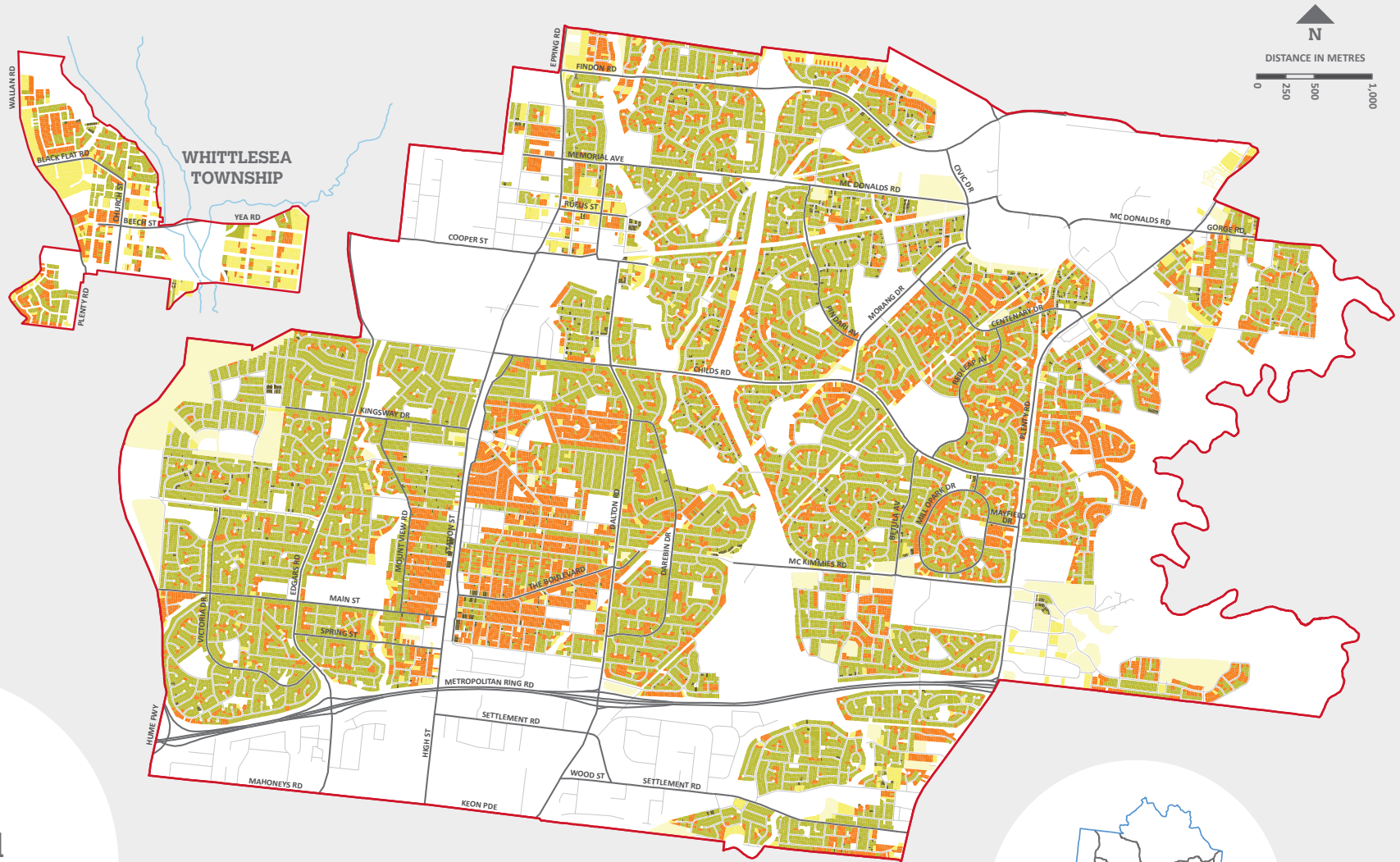


Map 5:
Open Space

Established Areas, 2012

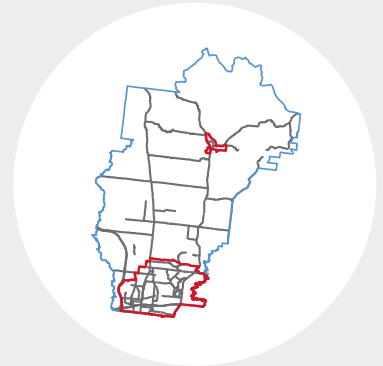
- Active Open Space
- Neighbourhood Park
- Residential Property within 400m of Active Open Space
- Established Area Boundary

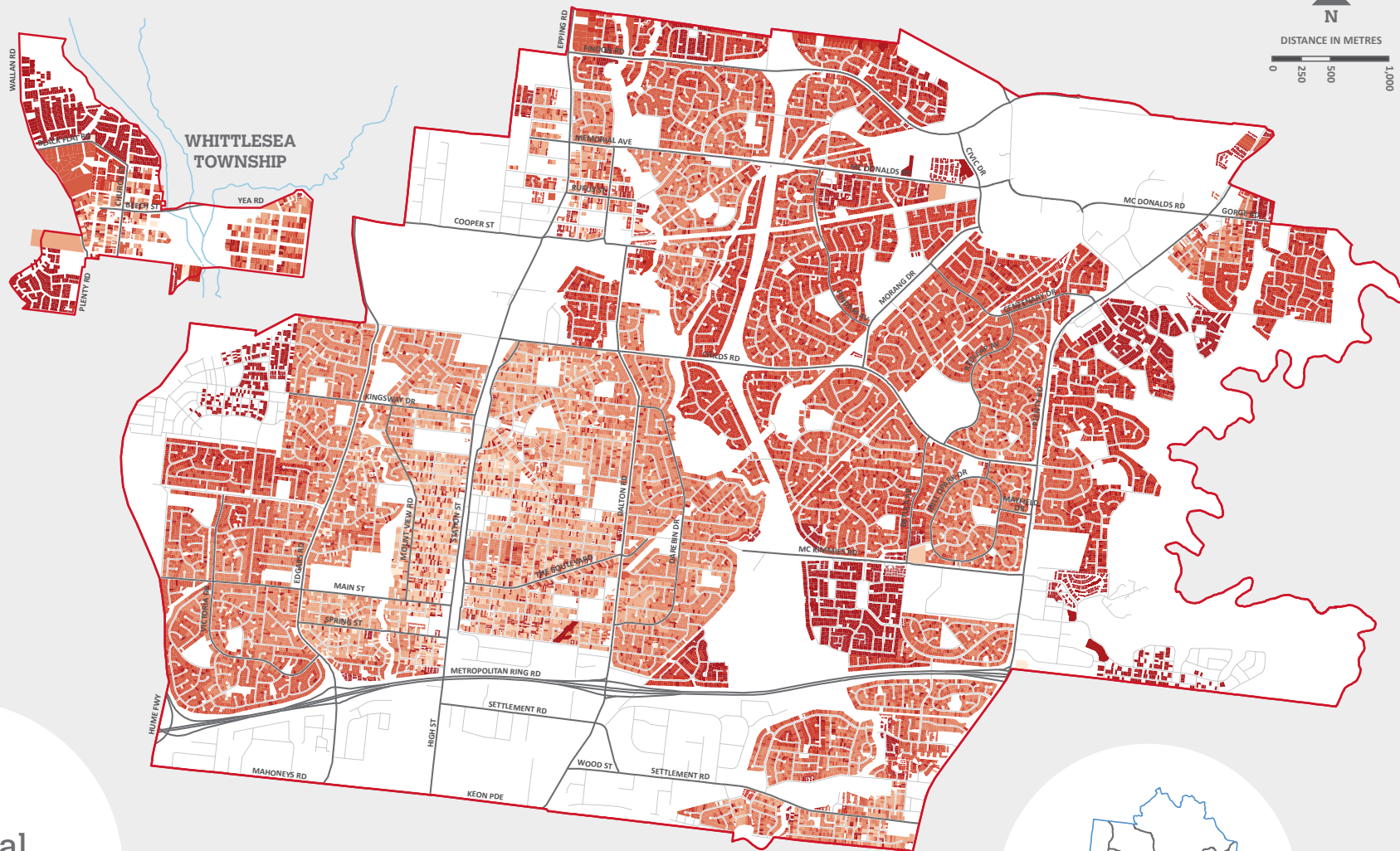




Map 6:
Residential
Lot Size (sqm)

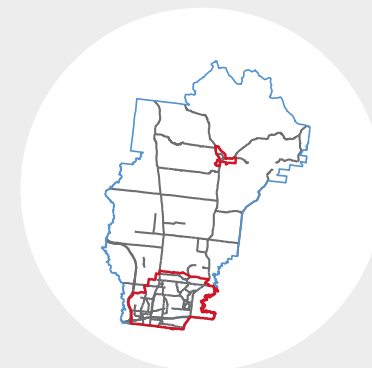
- <300
- 300-650
- 650-1000
- 1000-5000
- >5000
- Established Area Boundary

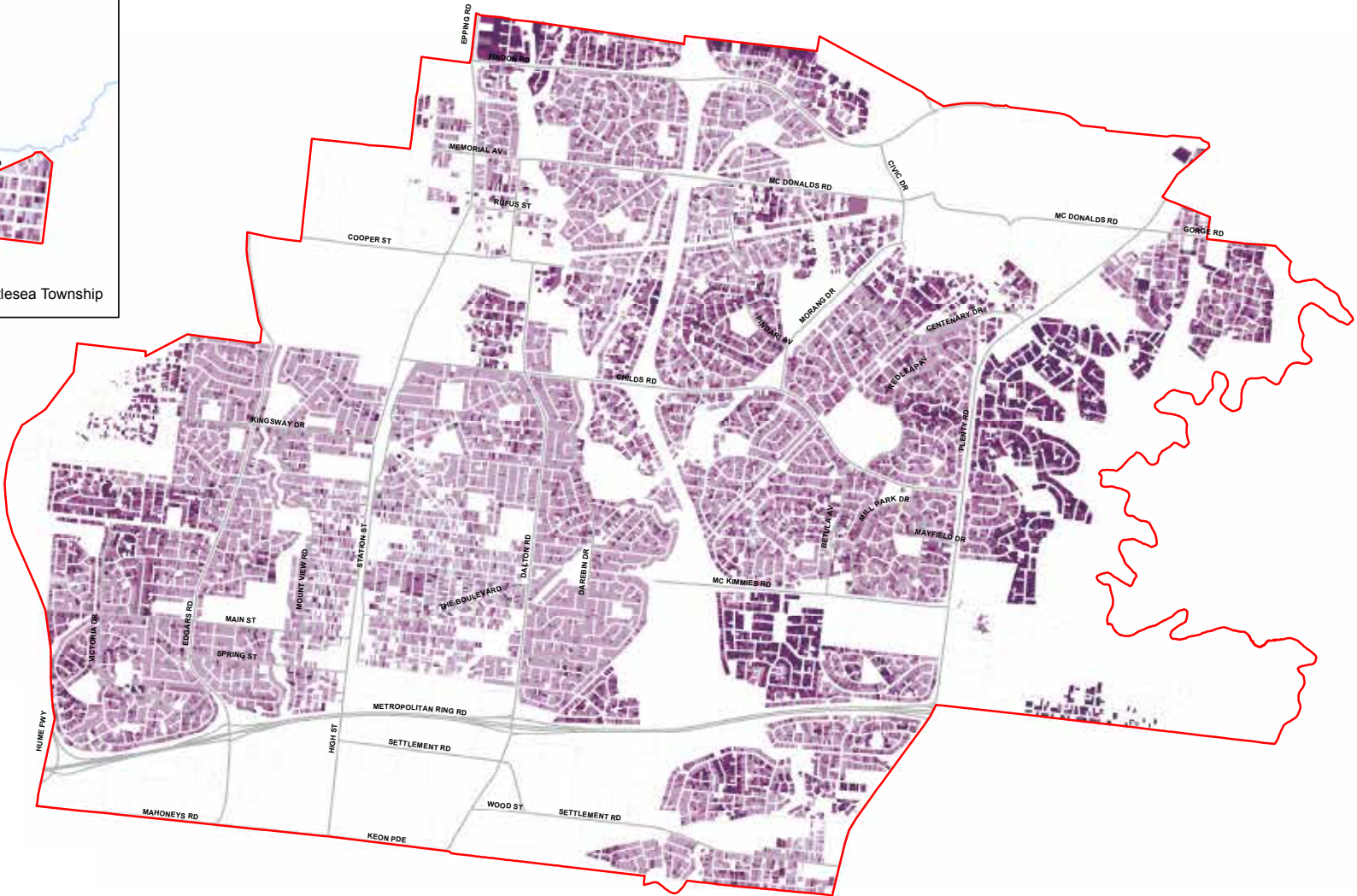
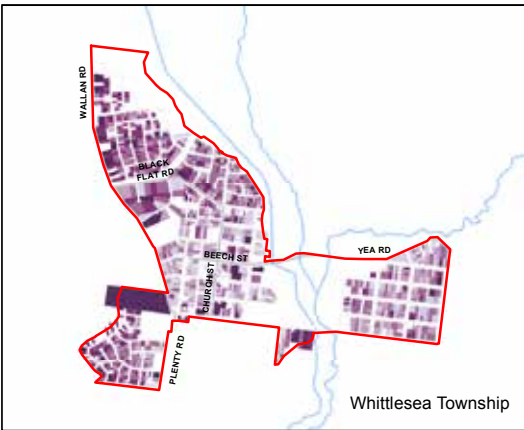




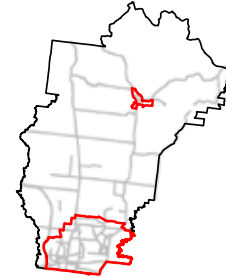
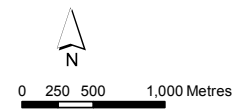
Map 7:
Residential
Dwelling Age

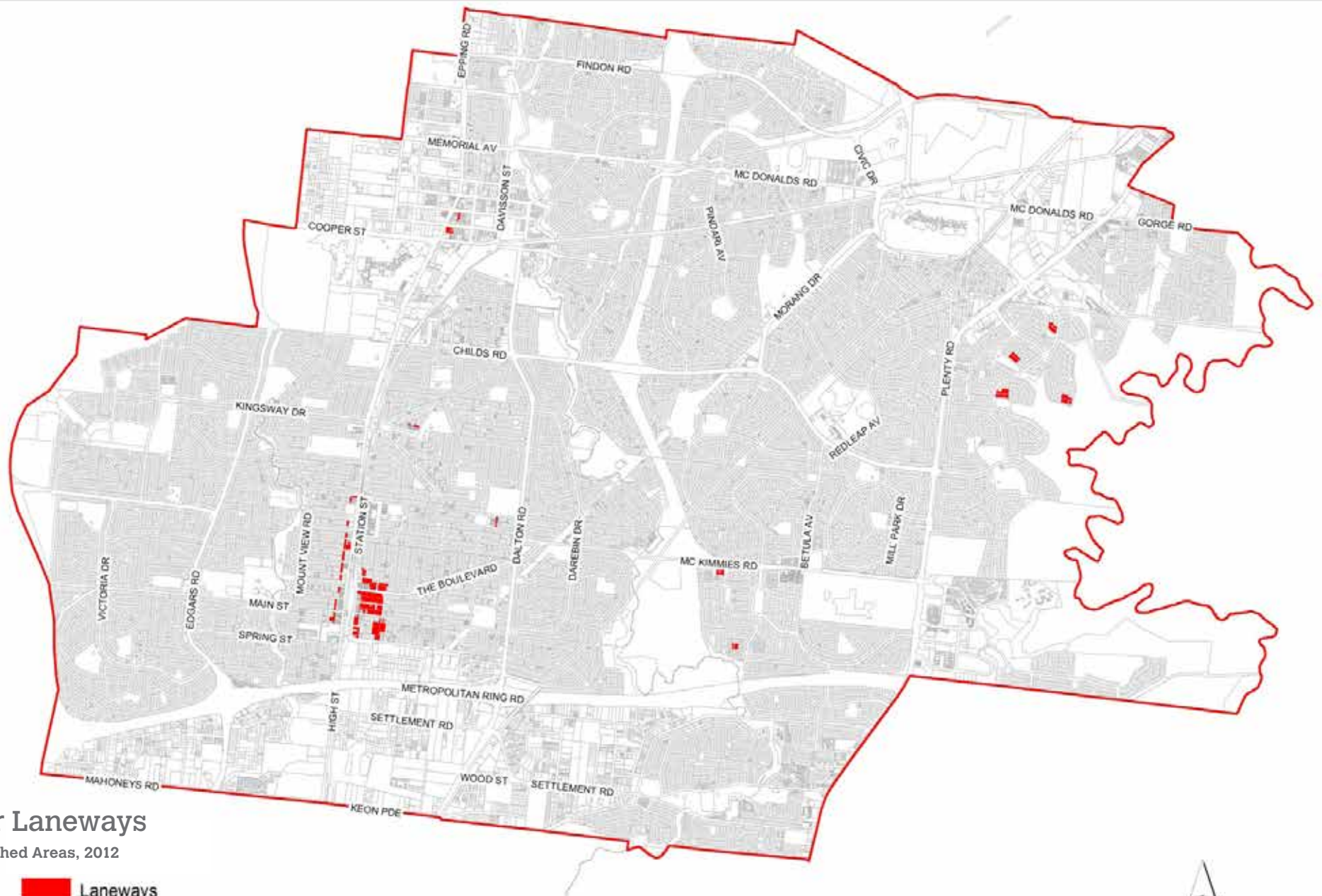
- <1949
- 1950-1959
- 1960-1969
- 1970-1979
- 1980-1989
- 1990-1999
- 2000-present
- Established Area Boundary





Map 8:
Residential Dwelling Size
Established Areas, 2012

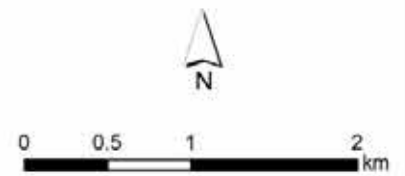


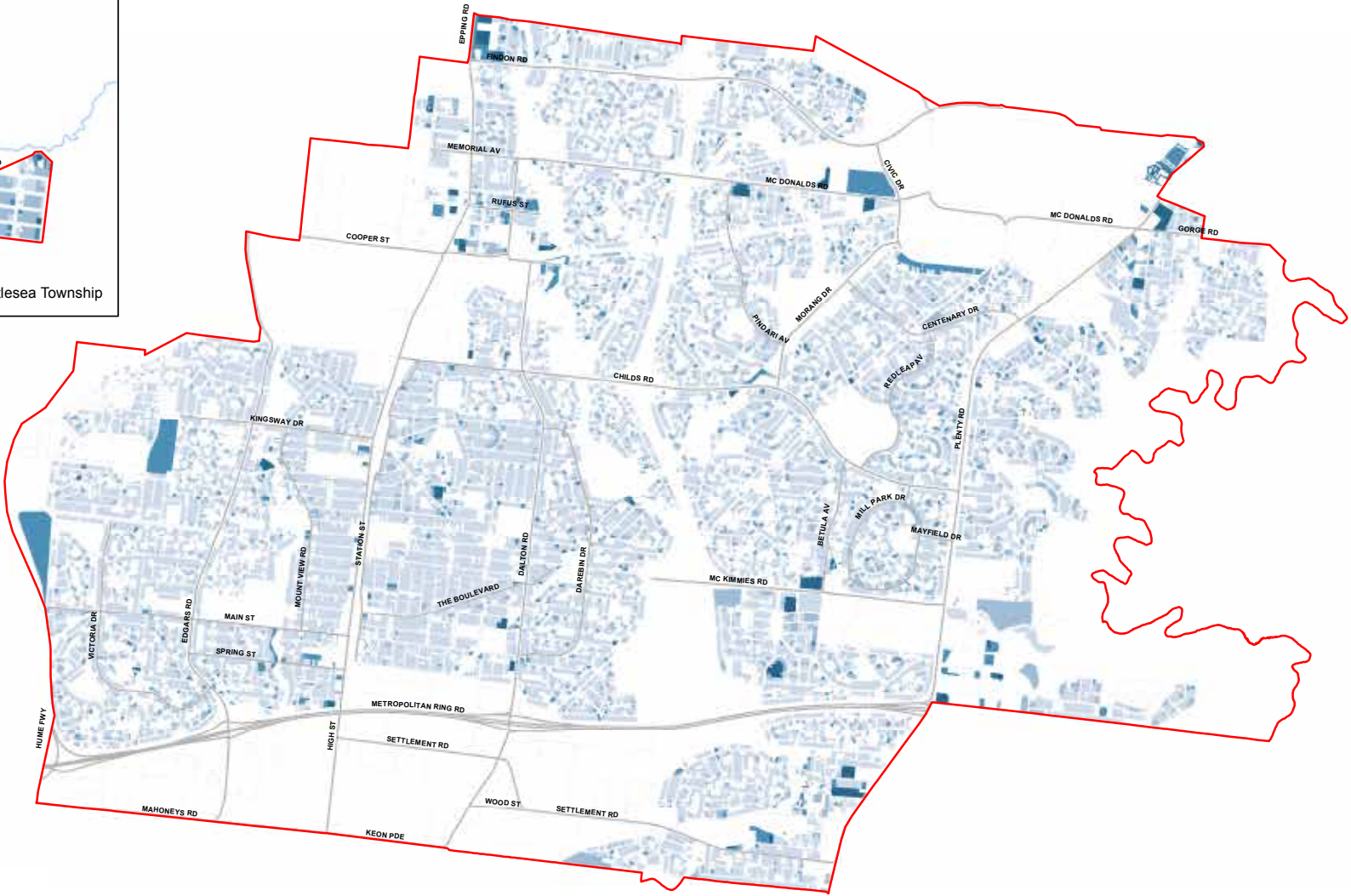
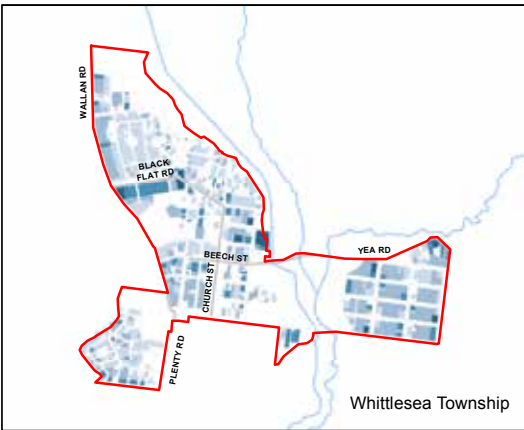


Map 9:
Rear Laneways

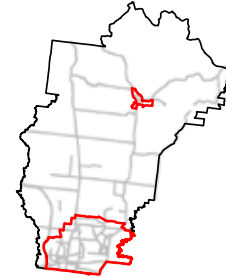
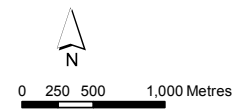
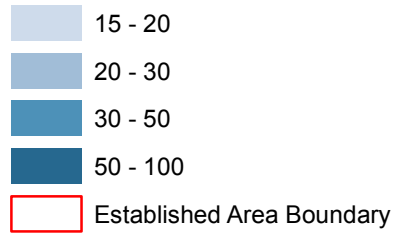
Established Areas, 2012

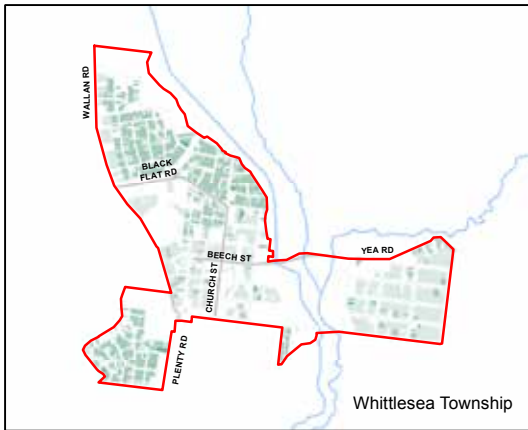
- Laneways
- Established Area
- Property



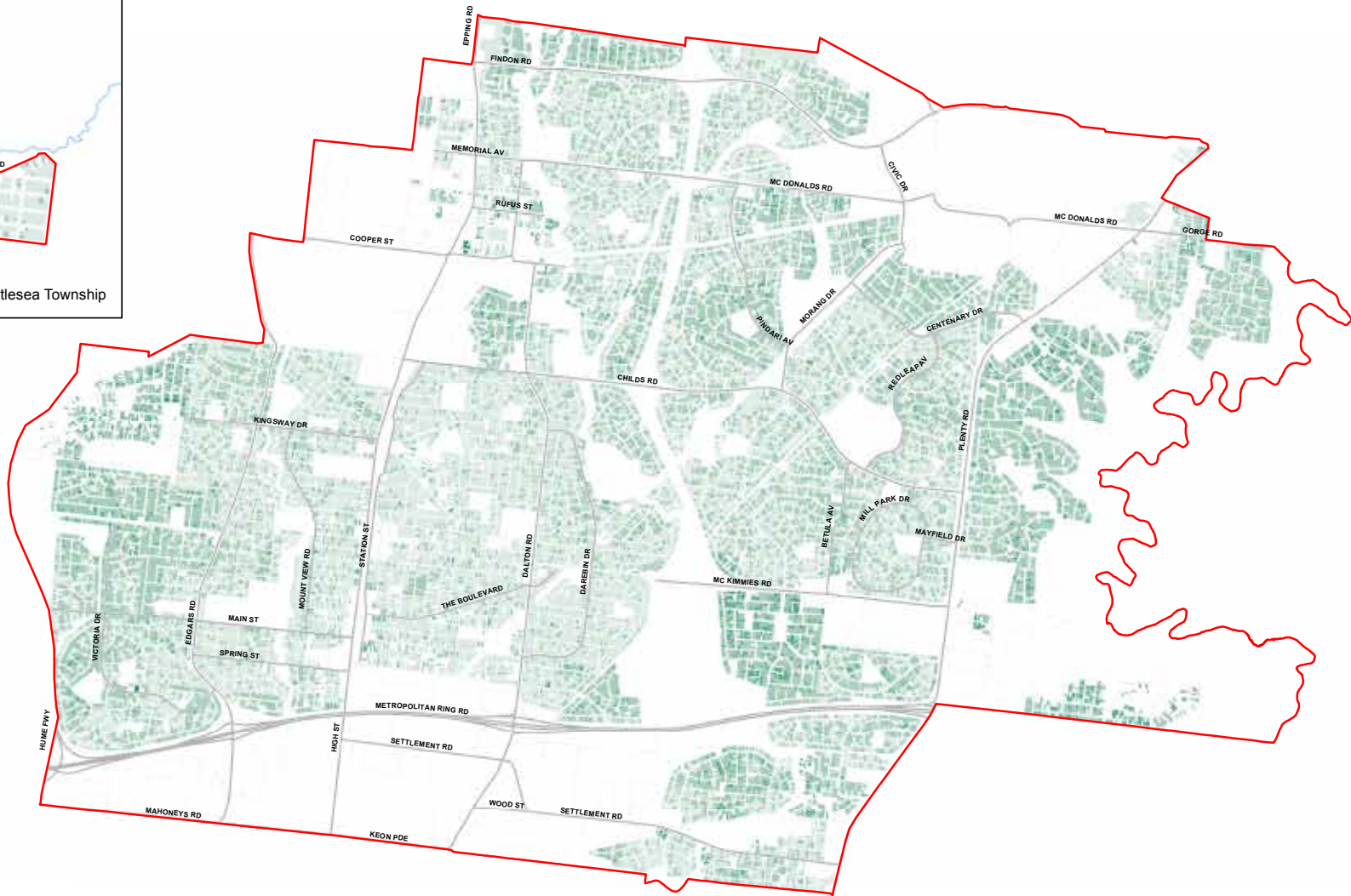


Map 10:
**Residential
 Lot Frontage**
 Established Areas, 2012

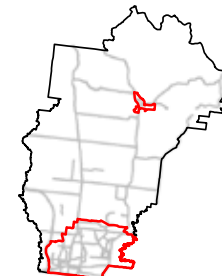
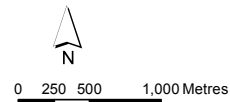
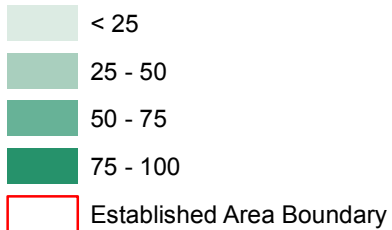


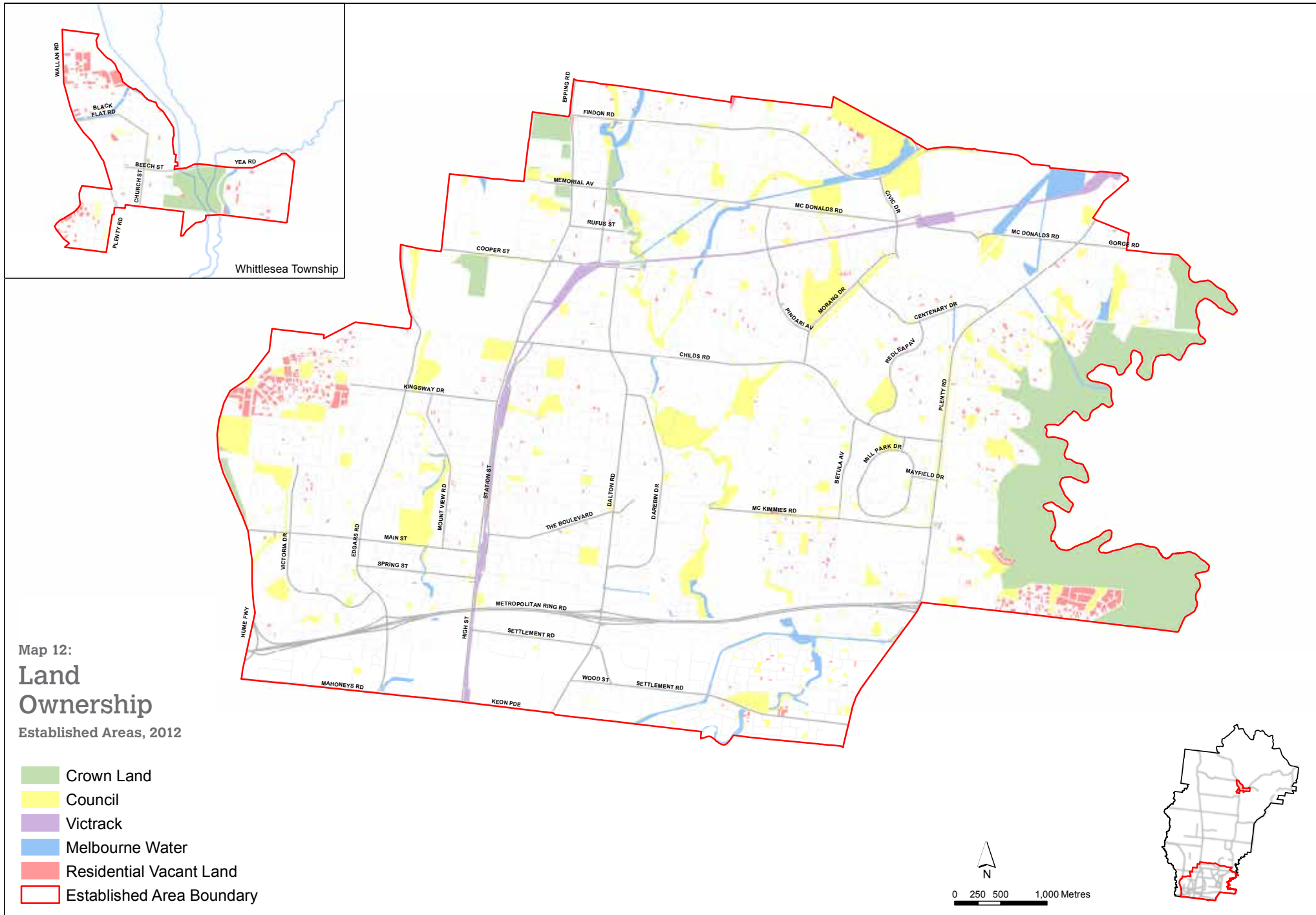


Whittlesea Township



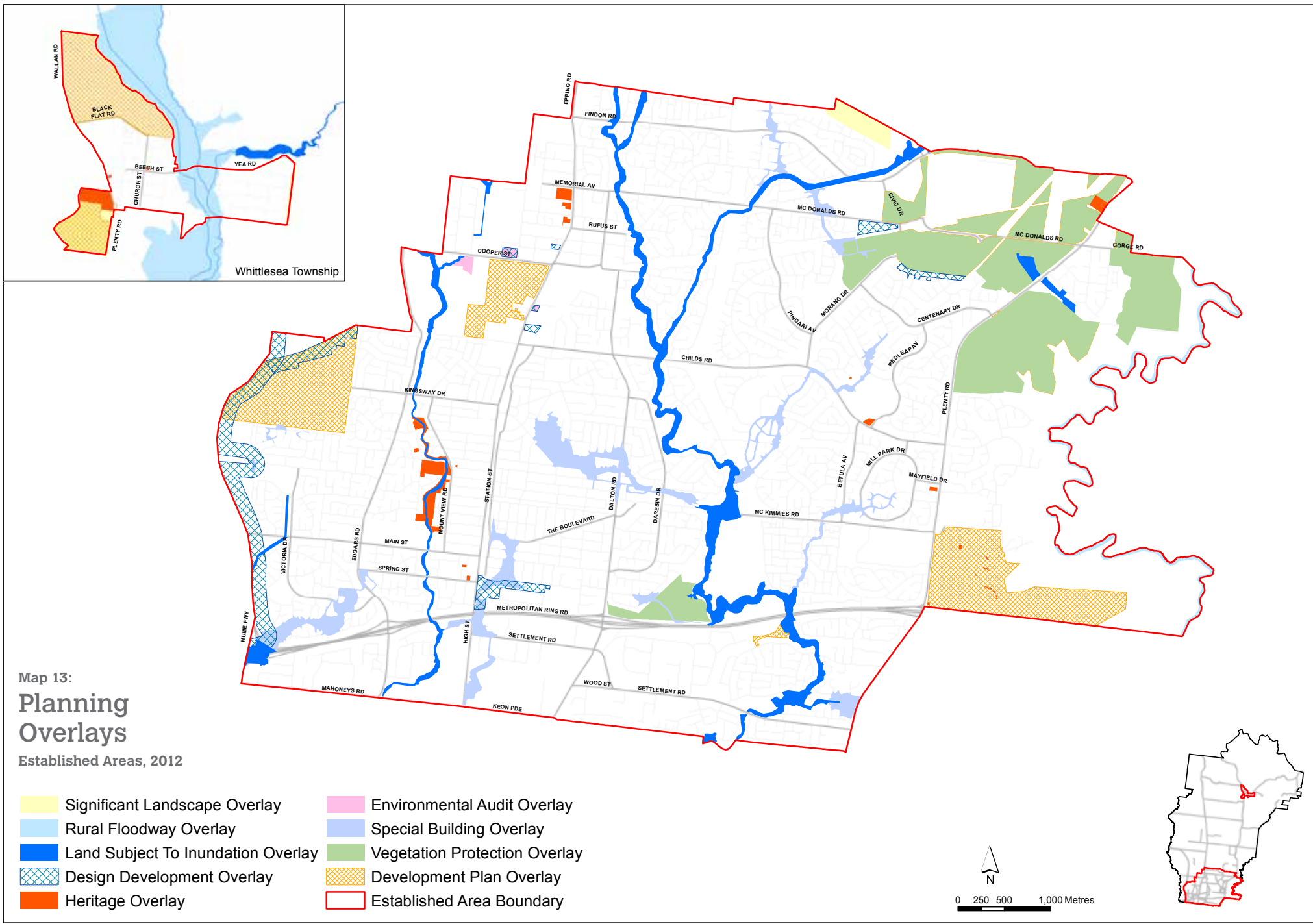
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**Residential
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 Established Areas, 2012





Map 12:
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 Established Areas, 2012

- Crown Land
- Council
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APPENDIX 04

DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING PROFILE

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APPENDIX 04 DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING PROFILE

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The characteristics of current and future residents of the City of Whittlesea need to be understood in order to efficiently plan for the quantity, type and location of housing needed over the next 20 years.

This section includes text from the *Residential Market Analysis* prepared by Essential Economics in 2012. Other data has been collected from:

- the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 and 2011 Census data,
- the City of Whittlesea Community Profile, and
- Population forecasts prepared by .id consulting (2012).

The established areas are experiencing:

- Significant population growth;
- An increasing number of households;
- A declining average household size;
- Changing household and family types;
- An ageing population; and
- Significant migration from neighbouring municipalities and from overseas.

Population Growth

As growth in the region is occurring, the housing needs of the municipality's established areas are becoming increasingly distinct from

that of the growth areas. A need for smaller dwellings in the established areas is being driven by a changing demographic profile.

As one of Melbourne's identified growth areas, the City of Whittlesea is anticipated to absorb much of the region's growth. Between 2006 and 2011 the population of the City of Whittlesea grew at an average rate of 4.7% per annum well above the overall growth rate for metropolitan Melbourne (approximately 2.0%).

The majority of the forecast population growth will be directed to the greenfield areas of the municipality; however significant growth and change will occur in the established areas, where most of the City's current population (approximately 70%) is located.

The population of the City of Whittlesea is forecast to increase from 163,540 persons in 2011 to 296,910 persons in 2031 (refer to Table 1).

Table 1: Population Forecasts, Established Areas and City of Whittlesea, 2011-2031

	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	Change from 2011 to 2031	
						Number	Average Annual Growth Rate
Established Areas	112,980	117,350	123,760	128,100	131,580	18,600	0.8%
City of Whittlesea	763,540	203,930	239,000	269,480	296,910	133,370	3.0%
Established Area portion of COW	69.1%	57.5%	51.8%	47.5%	44.3%	13.9%	—

Source: Essential Economics, *Residential Market Analysis*, 2012.

Despite the dominance of greenfield residential development driving population growth in Whittlesea, population growth in the established suburbs between 2006 and 2011 (760 persons per annum) was considerably higher than the population growth rate between 2001 and 2006 (150 persons per annum). This suggests ongoing demand exists for the established suburbs as a location for new residential development.

In 2011 the population of the established areas was approximately 113,000 persons. This is forecast to increase by 18,600 over the next 20 years to 2031.

In the 15 year period from 1996 to 2011, 75% of population growth in the City of Whittlesea occurred in growth areas outside the established areas.

As a share of the total population in the City of Whittlesea, the established areas is forecast to decline from 69% in 2011 to just 44% of the total population in 2031. This is despite the overall population of the established suburbs increasing by 18,600 persons over the period.

Household growth

Similar to other areas of Victoria, as the population continues to grow, the number of households within the City is also expected to grow.

The number of new households in the established suburbs is expected to increase from 36,810 in 2011 to approximately 45,010 households in 2031 (Essential Economics, *Residential Market Analysis* 2012). This represents a net increase of **8,200** households which need to be accommodated over the next 20 years, which is approximately 410 new households every year (Refer to Table 2).

Table 2: Changing Average Household Size, Established Areas, 2011-2031

	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	Growth from 2011 to 2031
Population	112,980	117,350	123,760	128,100	131,580	18,600
No. of Households	36,820	39,060	41,730	43,590	45,010	8,190
EA average Household Size	3.07	3.00	2.97	2.94	2.29	2.27

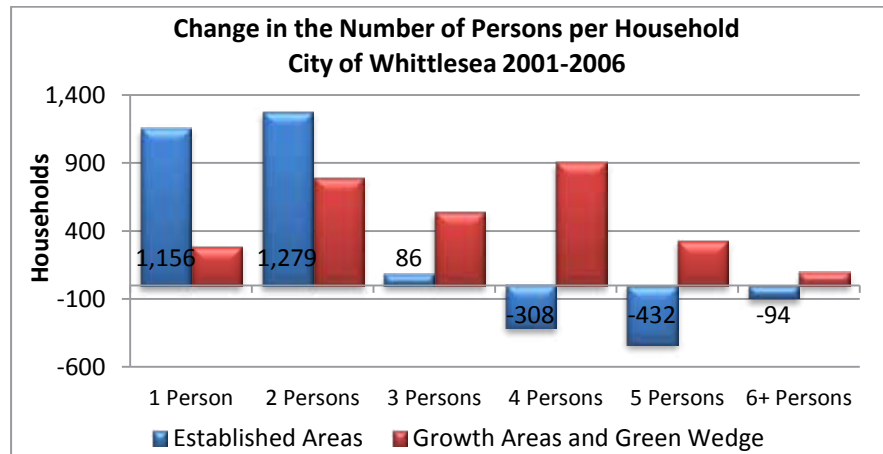
Source: Essential Economics, *Residential Market Analysis*, 2012.

The municipality’s household growth is explained by the expected decline in the number of persons per household. As the number of households in the municipality is increasing, the average household size is declining.

In 2006, the average household size in the established areas was 3.01 persons per household, compared to 3.19 in 2001 which is due to an increase in the number of households with fewer persons.

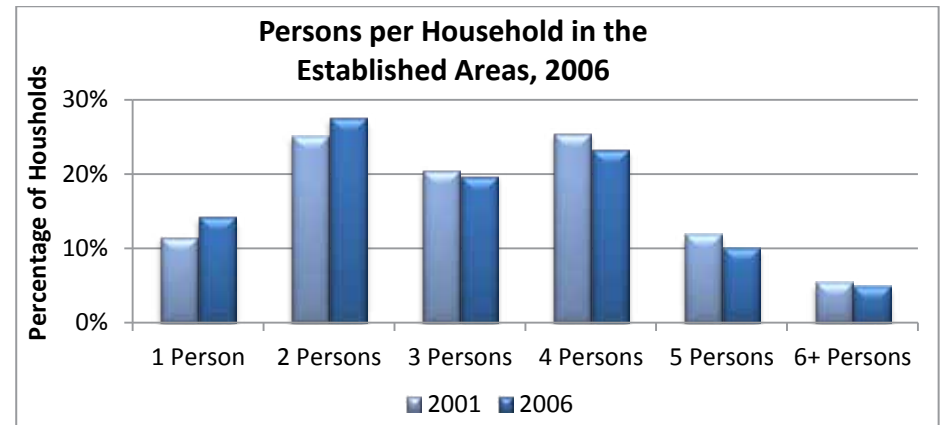
Whilst in 2011 the average household size did increase to 3.07 a decline is expected to continue over the next 20 years.

Figure 1: Change in the Number of Persons per Household from 2001 to 2006, City of Whittlesea



Source: ID Consulting 2012

Figure 2: The Number of Persons per Household, Established Areas, 2006



Source: ID Consulting 2012

Household types

The decline in household size can be explained by the change in family and household types. Figures 3 & 4 show that from 2001 to 2006 larger household types in the established areas were declining, whilst smaller households (single parent families with young and older children and older couples without children) are continuing to rise.

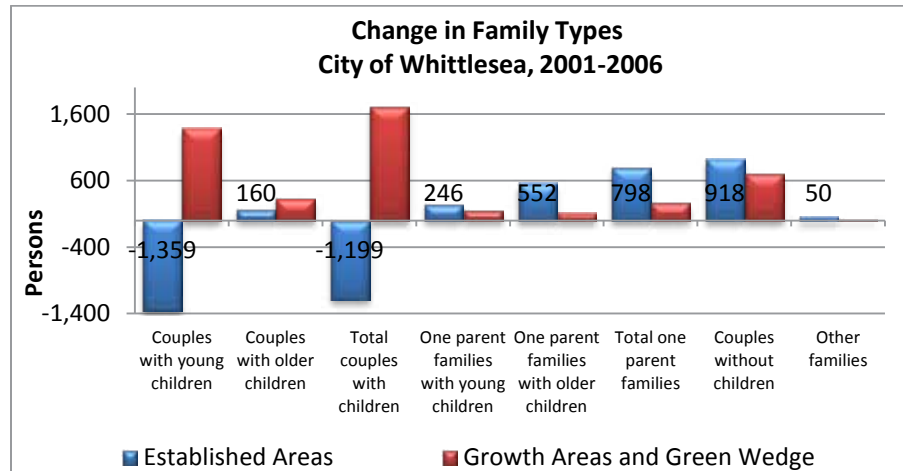
Currently almost half (45%) of all households in the established suburbs are categorised as couples with children. However recent Census data shows that over the period 2011 to 2031, the established suburbs are forecast to have:

- A declining share of couples with children. This will account for just 18% of additional households in the period 2011 to 2031.

- The percentage of couples without children and lone person households is expected to increase.

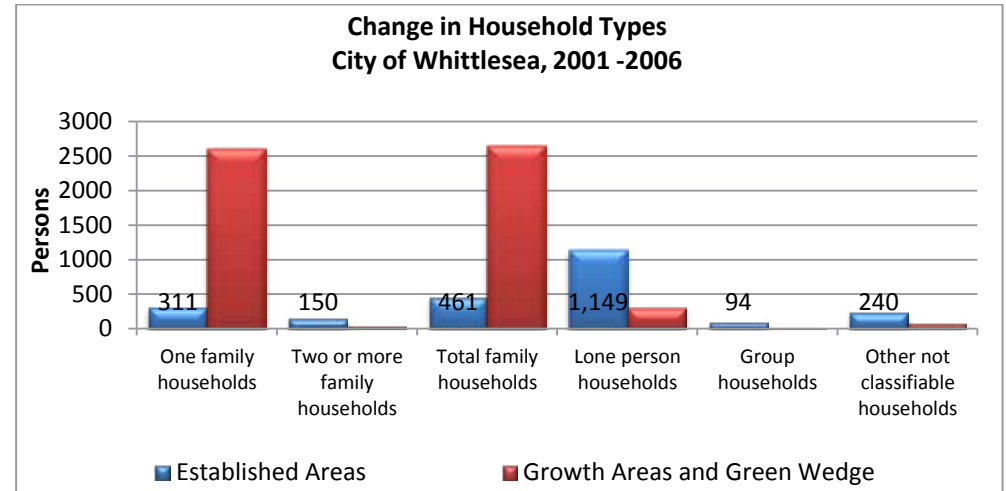
Over the next 20 years, couples without children and lone person households will comprise 65% of the total forecast additional households in the established areas. Such a change highlights the changing drivers of dwelling demand in the established residential areas.

Figure 3: Change in Family Types from 2001 to 2006, City of Whittlesea



Source: ID Consulting 2012

Figure 4: Change in Household Types from 2001 to 2006, City of Whittlesea



Source: ID Consulting 2012

Table 3: Forecast Household Type, Established Areas, 2006 to 2031

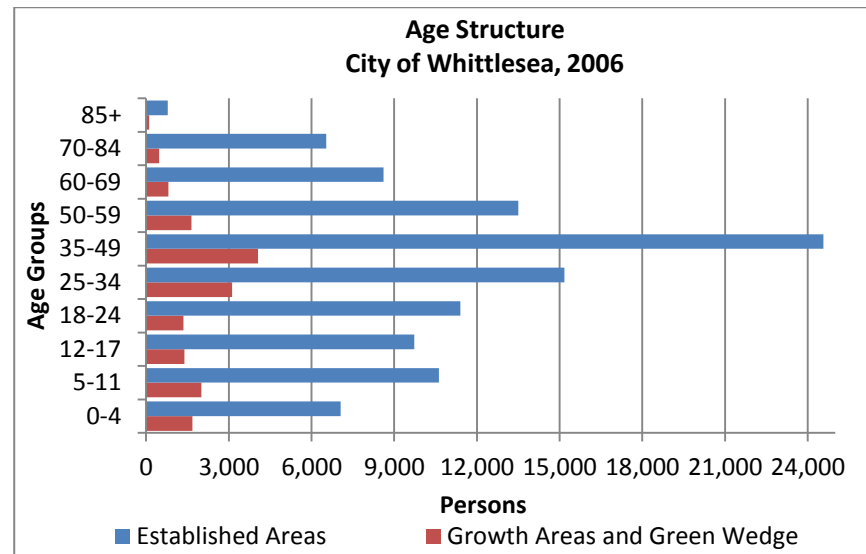
Household Type	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
Couples without dependents	23%	25%	26%	27%	27%	27%
Couple families with dependents	46%	45%	42%	41%	40%	40%
One parent family	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%
Other families	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Total families	85%	85%	84%	84%	83%	83%
Lone person households	13%	13%	14%	15%	15%	15%
Group households	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Total households	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Essential Economics, Residential Market Analysis, 2012.

Ageing Population

Currently, the established area is made up of a relatively young constituency, with 73% of the population under the age of 50 and 36% under the age of 25, refer to Figure 5.

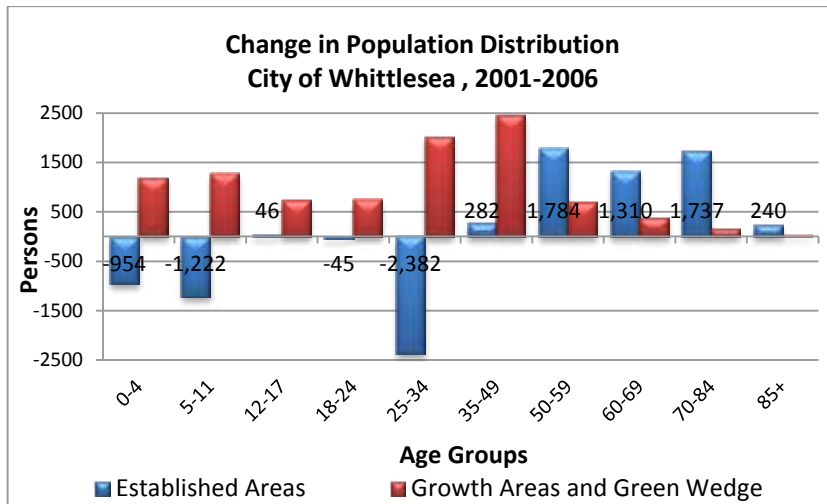
Figure 5: Age Structure, City of Whittlesea, 2006



Source: ID Consulting 2012

Over the past few decades, the portion of older residents in the established areas has increased and younger age groups have declined. Between 2001 and 2006 the number of persons under 35 declined by 4,557 and the number of person over 35 increased by 5,353 persons (Refer to Figure 6).

Figure 6: Change in Age Structure from 2001 to 2006, City of Whittlesea



Source: ID Consulting 2012

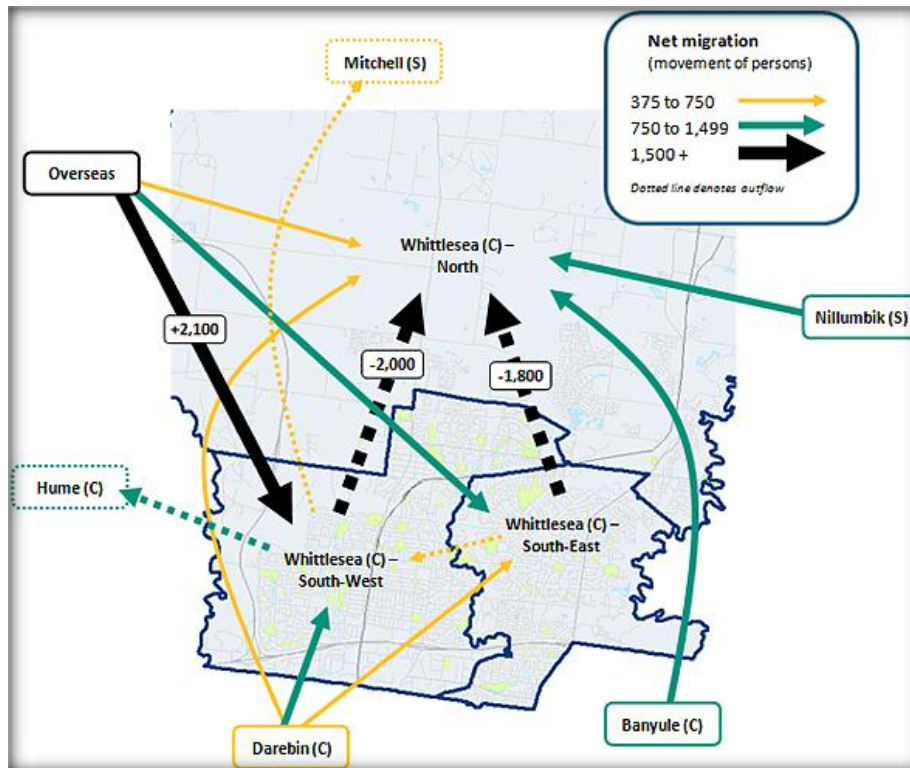
Migration

Migration is a significant contributor to the ways in which the population changes. Map 1 shows the migration pattern of migrants to and from the City. There is significant pressure for residential expansion from existing residents moving within the municipality, migrants from other cities, and most notably migrants from overseas. Between 2001 and 2006, 30% of the municipality's current residents moved. Of those residents:

- Approximately 56% moved from outside the municipality, including from other parts of Australia and overseas; and
- Approximately 43% moved within the city, the majority from the established areas to the north of the municipality.

Emigration of residents from the City of Whittlesea to other parts of Australia and overseas also occurred during this period however it is difficult to determine a true number.

Map 1: Historical Migration Pattern, City of Whittlesea, 2001 to 2006



Source: ID Consulting 2012

Residential Mobility

Understanding the reasons why people move to and from an area can shed light on the role of the housing market, and the extent to which an area is functioning effectively. For example, the provision of community facilities and services, employment opportunities, the availability of new

residential land, the cost of housing and market preferences will have an influence on where people choose to live.

The municipality has a relatively high residential mobility rate. In 2006, despite the municipality's high occupancy rate (98%), 10% of residents moved into the established suburbs in the previous year and 32% of residents moved house in the previous 5 years.

The expense of changing house is a disincentive for residents, particularly ageing residents who are on a fixed income, who could otherwise downsize to a more suitable house. According to the Grattan Institute, Australians pay one of the highest transaction costs of moving house in the OECD¹ and Victorian home buyers pay the highest among Australians. Refer to Table 4 to see the cost of stamp duty (transaction rate) for an average house in the suburbs of the established area.

¹ The Housing We'd Choose, Jane-Frances Kelly, P. 26

Table 4: Average Cost of Stamp Duty for Detached Houses, Established Areas, 2012

	Median House Price (detached)	Cost of Stamp Duty	% of Stamp Duty
Bundoora	\$502,000	\$22,090	4.4%
Doreen	\$430,000	\$17,870	4.2%
Epping	\$380,000	\$15,370	4.0%
Lalor	\$390,000	\$15,870	4.1%
Mernda	\$395,000	\$16,120	4.1%
Mill Park	\$416,000	\$17,170	4.1%
South Morang	\$412,000	\$16,970	4.1%
Thomastown	\$415,000	\$17,120	4.1%
Whittlesea township	\$336,000	\$13,170	3.9%
City of Whittlesea	\$405,000	\$16,620	4.1%

Source: Social and Affordable Housing Policy and Strategy (April 2012) p. 44

The lack of smaller lower maintenance homes (i.e. 1 and 2 bedroom apartments and townhouses) within existing communities also acts as a barrier for residents to downsize. Older residents with a desire to remain in their community are provided with little alternative to remaining in their family home².

In Mill Park, for instance, a retired couple currently living in their family home, which took them a large portion of a life time to own, is not likely to willingly sell their home to purchase another smaller home outside of their community for an added cost of approximately \$17,000. If provided with the ability to move into a smaller home while remaining in their existing community, older residents might consider downsizing.

² A survey completed by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (2005), found that 64.6% of homeowners surveyed wanted to “age-in-place” and 83% of those respondents acknowledged that “their attachment was not necessarily to the home but to the local area” including facilities, services, networks and the people. (AHURI, *Ageing In Place* (2005), pg. 2).

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

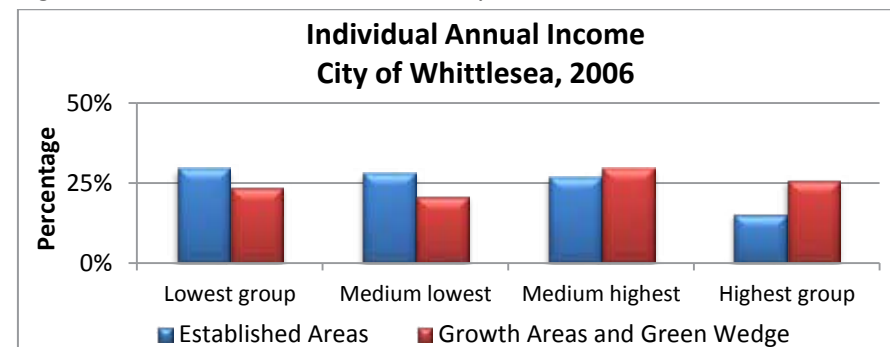
Housing affordability includes more than just the upfront purchase or rental costs of a dwelling. Housing affordability also includes the ongoing running and maintenance costs. Dwellings remote from services and facilities incur higher transport costs for residents, as do poorly designed dwellings which often require significant levels of heating and cooling, thus reducing the affordability of the dwelling. With increasing housing costs and decreasing annual incomes, it is essential that new dwellings are both more affordable to maintain and located in areas close to public transport, employment and services. To ensure that future housing is guided to these areas and well designed, policy needs to assist in reducing the overall cost of housing in the established areas.

- The portion of low income individuals and household are increasing.
- The level of mortgage and rental stress is high.
- The level of home ownership is declining.
- The supply of social housing is low.
- The level of car ownership is high and increasing.
- The level of socio-economic disadvantage is generally high.

Declining Annual Income

Annual individual and household incomes in the established areas are comparatively low and declining. In 2006, the established areas had a larger portion (30%) of individuals in the lowest income quartiles than compared to the growth areas (24%) or the MSD (25%). Refer to Figure 7.

Figure 7: Individual Annual Income, City of Whittlesea, 2006

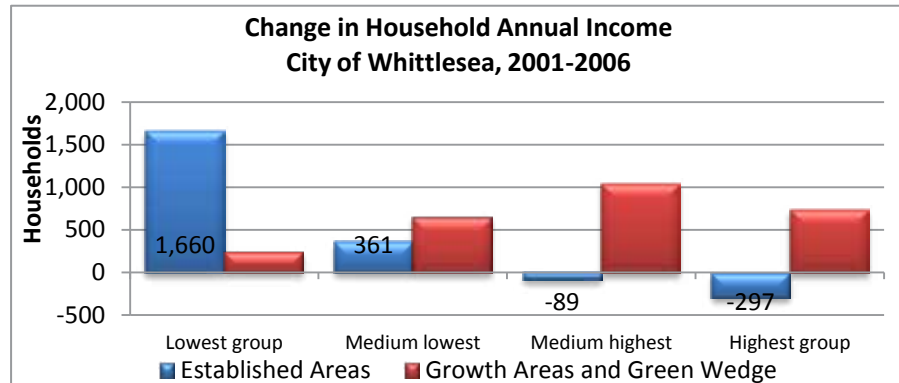


Source: ID Consulting 2012

Despite lower than average incomes, the median home loan repayments and rent for the established areas is nearly equal to the metropolitan average. Currently, the quality of life of households with lower incomes is reduced due to the limited range of housing choices.

Between 2001 and 2006, a 26% increase occurred in households in the lowest income quartile while a 3% decrease occurred in households in the two highest income quartiles (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Change in Household Annual Income from 2001 to 2006, City of Whittlesea



Source: ID Consulting 2012

Rental and Mortgage Stress

Residents are increasingly facing issues of housing affordability in the established areas. Compared to the MSD, the established areas are experiencing high levels of mortgage³ and rental⁴ stress⁵. In 2006, 16% of households purchasing their home in an established area were experiencing mortgage stress, compared to only 10% in the MSD. In the same year, 31% of households renting their homes in an established area

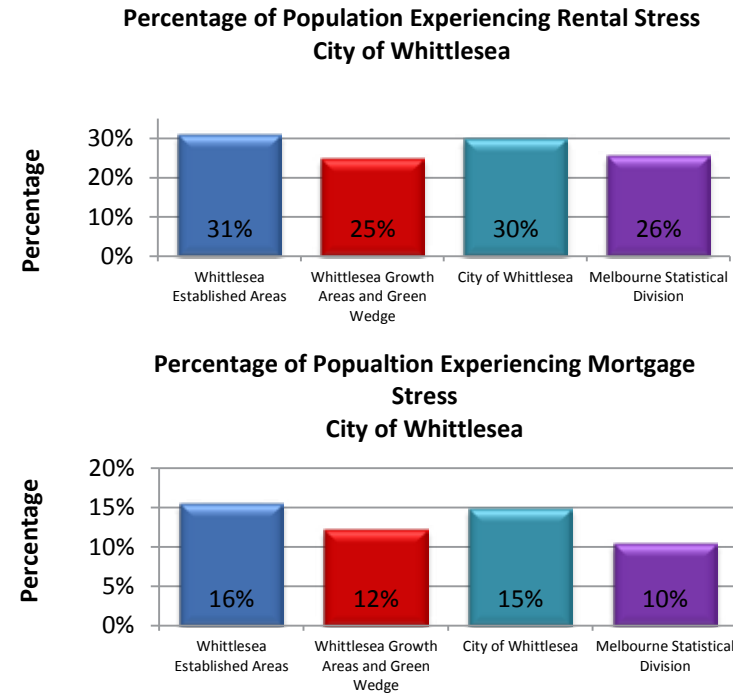
³ Mortgage Stress is defined as households in the lowest 40% of equalised incomes (income adjusted using equivalence factors to remove the effect of household size on income) across Australia, who are paying more than 30% of their usual gross weekly income on home loan repayments.

⁴ Rental Stress is defined as households in the lowest 40% of equalised income (income adjusted using equivalence factors to remove the effect of household size on income) across Australia, who are paying more than 30% of their usual gross weekly income on rent.

⁵ City of Whittlesea

were experiencing rental stress compared to only 26% in the MSD (refer to Figure 9).

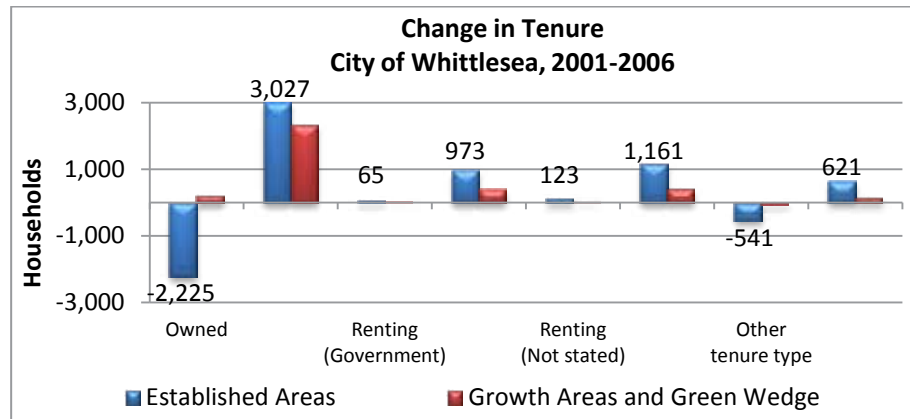
Figure 9: Housing Stress (Mortgage and Rental), City of Whittlesea, 2006



Declining Home Ownership/ Tenure

The number of households that own their home in the established areas is declining. Between 2001 and 2006 home ownership declined by 14% (refer to Figure 10).

Figure 10: Change in Housing Tenure Type from 2001 to 2006, City of Whittlesea



Source: ID Consulting 2012

Public and Social Housing Stock

City of Whittlesea residents in need of housing assistance, including low income families, homeless people and/or others requiring long-term support have limited access to public housing. A considerably low portion (2%)⁶ of the municipality's dwelling stock is public housing compared to the MSD (approximately 2.7%)⁷. The majority (92%)⁸ of the municipality's stock is located in the established areas.

⁶City of Whittlesea, Social and Affordable Housing Policy and Strategy (2012),pg. 49-50.

⁷The MSD has a minimum public housing stock of 2.7% because 2.7% of households are renting from a government authority, however it could have a higher percentage.

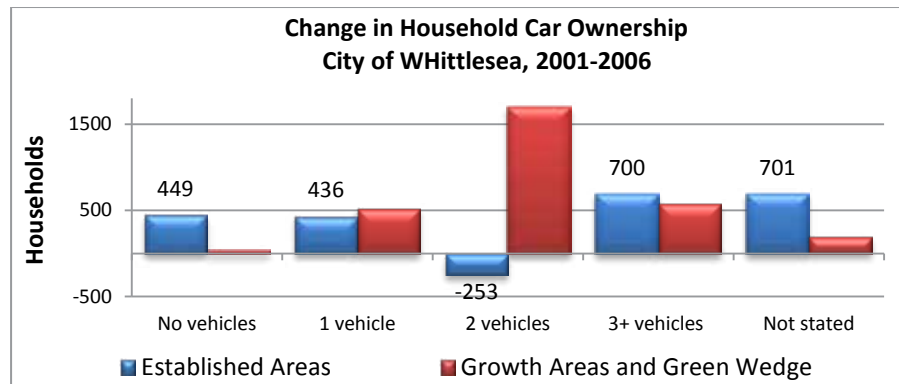
⁸City of Whittlesea, Social and Affordable Housing Policy and Strategy (2012) p. 49-50.

Car Ownership

Overall, car ownership is growing and is expected to continue to do so into the future. In 2006, the majority (88%) of all households in the established areas had at least 1 car, which is higher than the MSD (83%). Between 2001 and 2006, the number of households with a single car, together with households with 3 or more cars, grew by more than twice as many as households without a car (refer to Figure 11).

In 2006, households in single detached houses were most likely to have at least one car (88%+), compared to medium and higher density housing across the municipality (refer to Figure 12). Only households in single bedroom medium density dwellings were equally (50%) as likely to live without a car as with a car. All other household types were likely (66%+) to have at least one car. The municipality's car reliance is contributing to its overall vulnerability to rising fuel prices.

Figure 11: Change in Household Car Ownership, City of Whittlesea, 2001-2006 (2012)



Source: ID Consulting 2012

Figure 12: Car Ownership by Housing Type by Number of Bedrooms, City of Whittlesea, 2006



Source: Traffix Group, 2011 based on 2006 Census Data

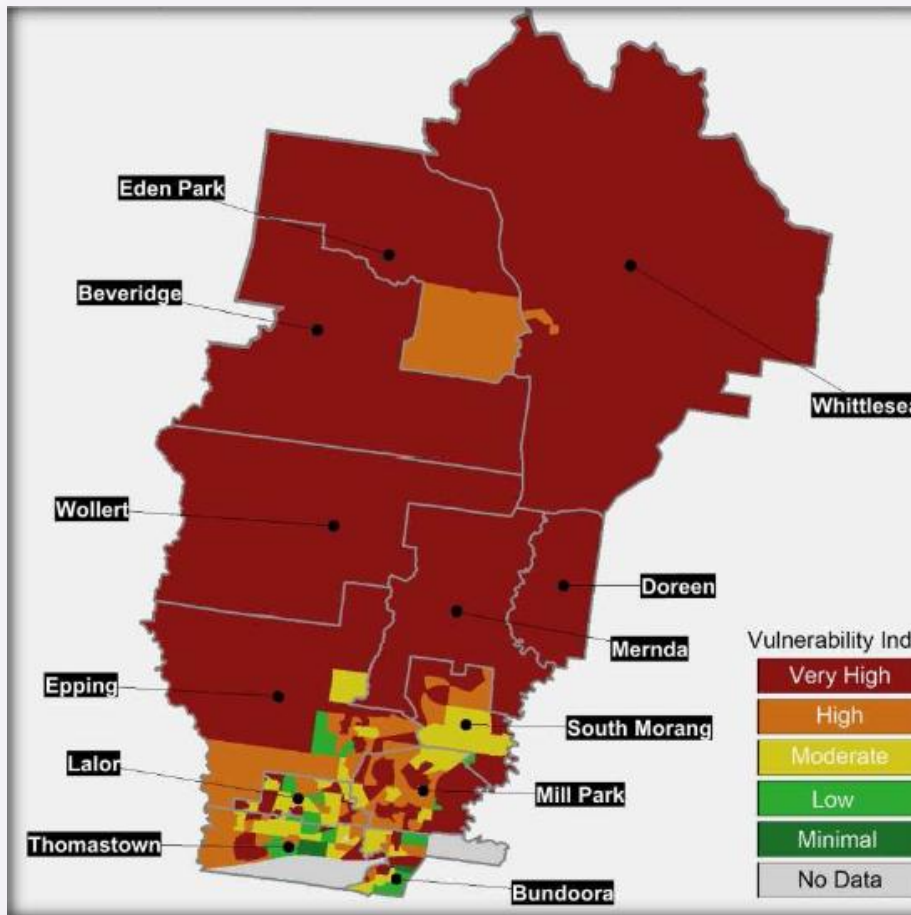
Vulnerability Level

According to the VAMPIRE Index⁹, the majority of the City of Whittlesea has a high to very high level of vulnerability due to the population's mortgage, petrol and inflation risks (refer to Map 2). This is typical of outer suburban areas which, because of the cheap housing attracts modest-income purchase, who are more highly dependent on the car for travel.

Compared to the City of Whittlesea overall the established areas of the municipality (Bundoora, Lalor and Thomastown) have a moderate to normal level of vulnerability, likely as a result of their proximity to train stations.

⁹ Dodson, J and Sipe, N The Vulnerability for Mortgage, Petrol and Inflation Risk and Expenditure (VAMPIRE) Index combines information from Australian Census data on car dependency, mortgages and incomes at the CD level, to measure household socio-economic vulnerability.

Map2: VAMPIRE Index Mapping Vulnerability, City of Whittlesea



Source: City of Whittlesea Affordable Housing Strategy (2012) pg. 33

HOUSING STOCK PROFILE

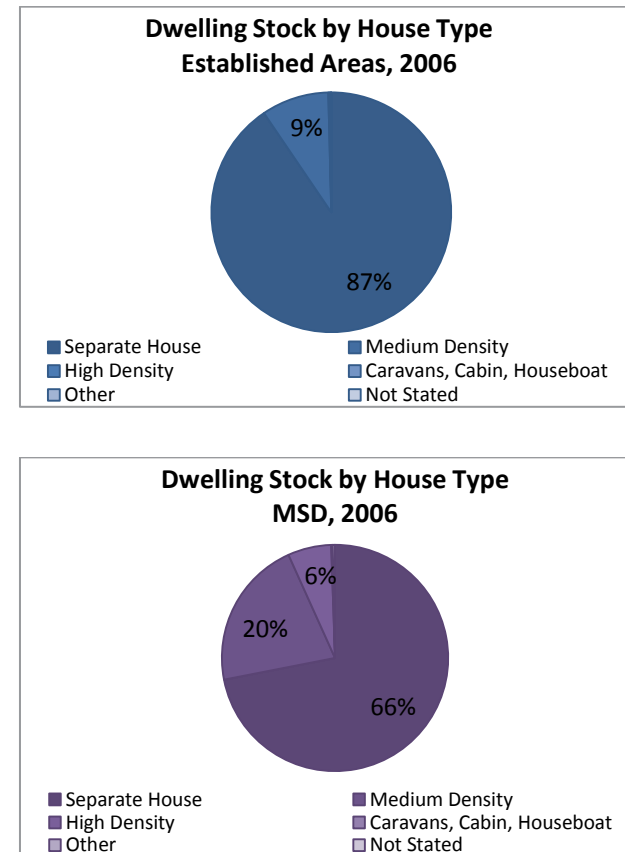
A gap has been identified between the City's existing housing stock and the housing needs of the community. A significant short fall exists in the supply of one and two bedroom dwellings within the City. In recent years, a shift has occurred to supply some medium and higher density housing. Policy needs to guide the development of a more diverse housing stock to locations which can sustainably accommodate an increase in persons, including areas close to public transport, employment and services rather than ad hoc development as occurs now.

- The majority of the existing housing is comprised of 3 and 4 bedroom detached dwellings.

Housing Types

Compared to the MSD, the dwelling stock of the established areas has a high portion of separate/detached houses (see Figure 13).

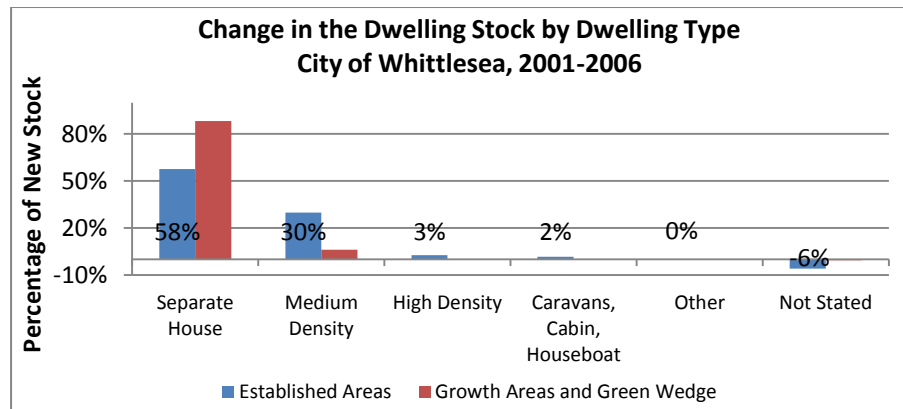
Figure 13: Dwelling Stock by Structure Types, Established Areas and MSD, 2006



Source: ID Consulting 2012

Between 2001 and 2006, a third of housing growth in the municipality occurred in medium¹⁰ and high¹¹ density housing, however the majority of growth (58%) remained in separate houses (refer to Figure 14)¹². Growth in separate houses is known to consume high levels of resources as a result of its sprawling nature, and typically places residents in areas remote from services, causing them to rely heavily on the car for transportation.

Figure 14: Change in Dwelling Stock by House Type, City of Whittlesea, 2001-2006



Source: ID Consulting 2012

¹⁰ Medium density housing includes semi-detached, row, terrace, townhouses and villa units, plus flats and apartments in blocks of 1 or 2 storeys, and flats attached to houses.

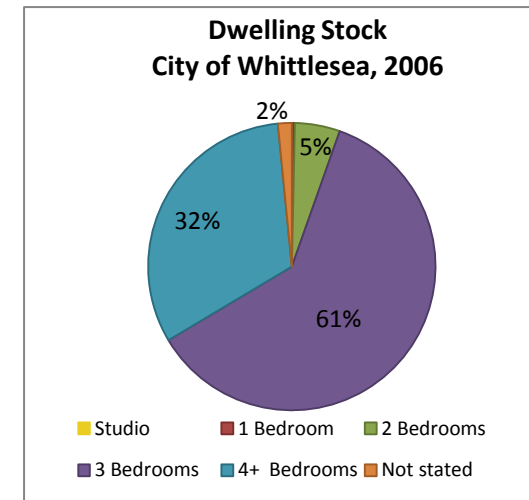
¹¹ Higher density housing includes flats and apartments in 3 storey and larger blocks.

¹² ID Consulting 2012

Number of Bedrooms

The majority (93%) of the municipality's dwelling stock is characterised 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings (refer to Figure 15).

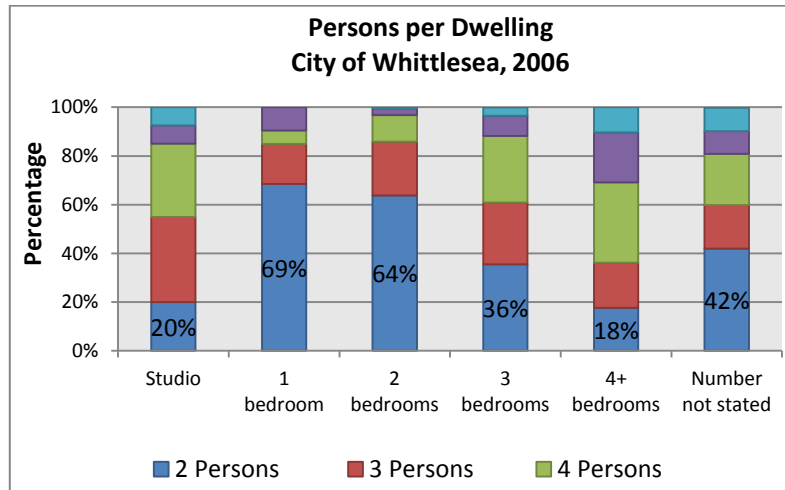
Figure 15: The Percentage of Dwellings per Number of Bedrooms (%), City of Whittlesea, 2006



Source: ID Consulting 2012

In 2006, 36% of 3 bedroom dwellings in the municipality were occupied by only 2 people, and similarly a large percentage of the 4 or more bedroom dwellings were occupied by only 2 or 3 persons (refer to Figure 16). This shows a mismatch between household needs and the available housing stock.

Figure 16: Percentage of Persons per Number of Bedrooms (%), City of Whittlesea, 2006



Source: ABS Census 2006, Expanded Community Profile, Tables X29

Given the changing demographic profile of the established areas and increased house prices within the area, a greater diversity in housing stock is required to properly meet the needs of the population. In 2006, 80% of studio apartments were occupied by 3 or more persons which suggests difficulties accessing affordable housing stock.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Together, planning approval and building approval trends in the City of Whittlesea demonstrate the development industry's interest in supplying higher density dwellings. According to Spatial Economics Housing Development Data, 28% of dwellings constructed in the municipality between 2004 and 2008, were residential developments of 20 dwellings or more, compared to 61% which were developments of between 1 and 2 dwellings.

The number of planning and building permits being issued for higher density housing in the established areas is increasing. Currently there is very little strategic direction to guide higher density applications. Policy guidance is needed to ensure greater certainty and consistency, and ultimately a more streamlined approval process.

- The number of building and planning applications for medium density residential developments is increasing.
- A comparatively lower number of planning applications are being determined by delegation (decisions by Council officers).
- A significant number of planning applications are being appealed to VCAT.
- Planning applications are being approved without consistent strategic direction with regard to location and diversity across the municipality.
- The majority of medium and higher density housing developments have occurred in Thomastown and Epping.

Building Approval Data

According to the Building Commission of Victoria, the number of building permits being issued by Council for the development of new residential buildings has increased over the last ten years, particularly between 2007 and 2011. Specifically, building permits approved for multi-unit dwellings peaked most recently in 2010 (refer to Table 5)¹³.

Table 5: The Number of Residential Building Approvals, City of in Whittlesea, 2004-2011

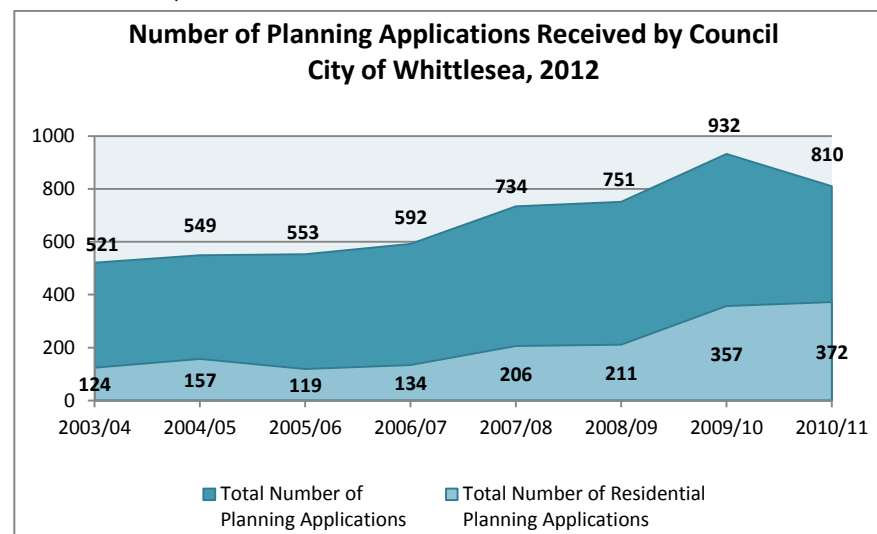
Building Approvals				Annual Change		
Year (ending June 30)	Separate Dwellings	Other Dwellings (multi-unit dwellings)	Total Dwellings	Change in Separate Dwellings	Change in Other Dwellings	Total Dwellings
2010-11	3,257	540	3,797	-274	237	-37
2009-10	3,531	303	3,834	1,107	-91	1,016
2008-09	2,424	394	2,818	417	309	726
2007-08	2,007	85	2,092	466	-170	296
2006-07	1,541	255	1,796	422	53	475
2005-06	1,119	202	1,321	421	178	599
2004-05	698	24	722	-58	-62	-120
2003-04	756	86	842	-50	46	-4
2002-03	806	40	846	96	-9	87
2001-02	710	49	759	168	39	207

Source: ID Consulting 2012

Planning Permit Activity

According to the State Planning Permit Activity Reports (PPAR), the number of planning applications received by Council has increased by more than 50% in the last nine years. Specifically, applications for new residential developments have tripled since 2003 (refer to Figure 17). A notable decline occurred in the total number of received applications in 2010/2011, whilst the rate of residential applications lodged with Council remained relatively consistent with the previous year.

Figure 17: The Number of Planning Applications Received by Council, City of Whittlesea, 2012

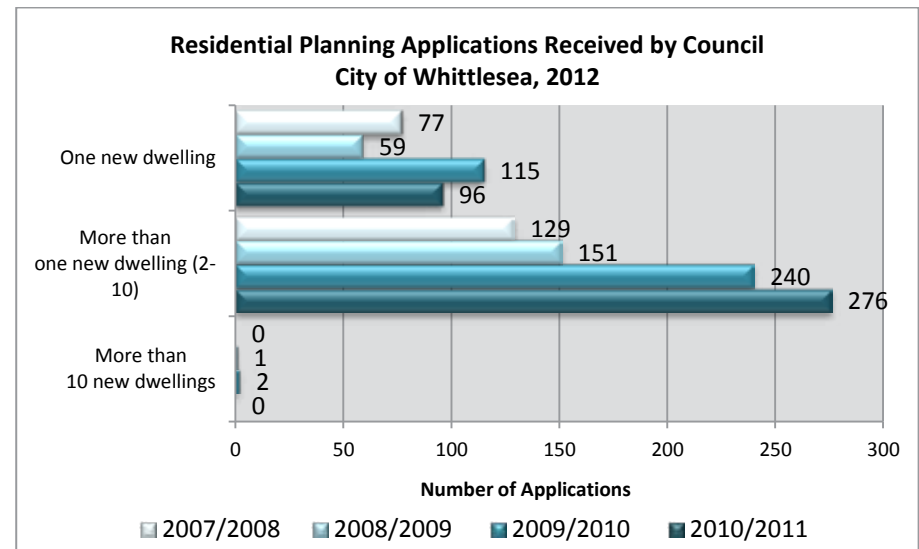


Source: Planning Permit Activity in Victoria 2003-11

The overall growth in the number of applications during the nine year period reflects a change in State policy regarding growth and development of the outer northern suburbs and the increasing complexity of the Planning Policy Framework within Victoria. It also highlights a generally good economic period with a steady growth in population within Melbourne. The Global Financial Crisis explains the recent reduction in the number of planning applications received by Council (2010/2011).

The largest increase in residential applications has been in medium density residential developments¹⁴. Between 2007/2008 and 2010/2011¹⁵, the number of planning permit applications for medium density residential developments more than doubled across the municipality. Applications for high density residential developments were also received in that period (however none were considered in either 2007/2008 or 2010/2011) (see Figure 18).

Figure 18: The Number of Residential Planning Applications Received per Development Type, City of Whittlesea, 2007-2012



Source: Planning Permit Activity in Victoria 2007-11

Planning Permit Decisions: Delegation, Council and VCAT

Generally the majority of planning applications received by Council have been approved. Between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011, the majority (70%) of all planning applications were approved or a notice of decision to approve was issued. The remaining applications during this time period were refused and a small number (5%) were appealed to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) (refer to Table 6).

¹⁴ Medium density residential developments are developments between 2 and 10 dwellings per lot.

¹⁵ Note: The Planning Permit Activity Report for 2011/2012 is not yet available.

Table 6: Number of Planning Applications Refused vs. Sent to VCAT, City of Whittlesea, 2009 - 2011

	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	Metro Average	Trend
Refusals	7%	3%	10%	5%	Increasing
Review lodged at VCAT	5%	4%	9%	10%	Increasing

Source: Planning Permit Activity in Victoria 2007-11

Compared to the Metropolitan average (92%) a limited number of planning applications (70%) were assessed under delegation (2010/2011). In 2011, only 64% of residential planning applications were determined under delegation by Council officers and 16% were decided by Council. This is a reflection of the City's unique policy that requires any application that receives one or more objection to be decided by Council rather than under delegated authority.

Objections

Residential planning applications generally receive a higher percentage of objections compared to other planning applications. In 2011, 21% of all determined residential planning applications received an objection¹⁶. Of those residential planning applications to receive an objection, 50% received 2 or more (refer to Table 7).

¹⁶ The numbers of objections include those that were later withdrawn.

Table 7: Objections Received for Residential Applications, City of Whittlesea, 2009-2011

	2009		2010		2011		Total	
	Number of Applications	%	Number of Applications	%	Number of Applications	%	Number of Applications	%
No objection	235	80%	286	75%	223	79%	744	78%
1 objections	28	9%	52	14%	32	11%	112	12%
2-5 objections	28	9%	38	10%	21	7%	87	9%
6 + objections	4	1%	4	1%	5	2%	13	1%
Total No. of applications to have received objections	60	20%	94	25%	58	21%	212	22%
Total No. of applications	295	100%	380	100%	281	100%	956	100%

Source: City of Whittlesea 2012

VCAT

The lack of policy direction in the Planning Scheme has financial and political implications for Council when applications are appealed to VCAT. From 2009/2010 to 2010/2011, 27 applications were refused by Council and taken to VCAT. In that time period, it was estimated that of the planning applications refused by Council and which were contrary to the Council officer's recommendation, 89% of decisions were overturned at VCAT.

Following a review of applications that were refused by Council and appealed at VCAT; the grounds of refusal are varied. It is clear that until Council's decision making has had little regard to locational context. The policy guidance that will follow the preparation of the Housing Diversity Strategy will give increased certainty to Council which will result in consistent and appropriate decision making, which will in turn reduce the need for as high a number of applications (in particular minor applications) to be referred to Council for decision.

It can be argued that this is due to the lack of policy guidance regarding the assessment of residential planning applications. When an application is recommended for approval by Council officer, but refused by Council, the average cost to Council if appealed to VCAT is estimated at \$6000.

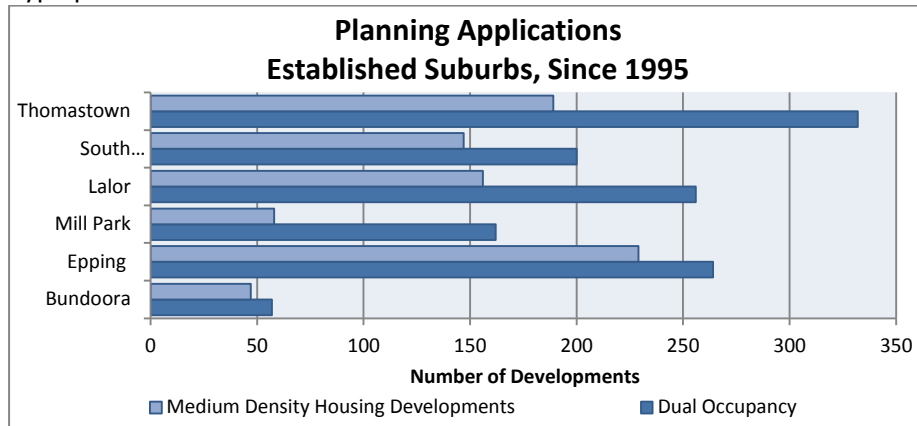
Distribution of Multi-Unit Applications

At present, the local planning provisions, contained in the Whittlesea Planning Scheme, provide minimal strategic direction with regard to the preferred location of more diverse housing outcomes, and particularly higher density developments. As a result, planning applications for such developments have been granted in an ad-hoc basis throughout the residential areas of the municipality.

Map 3 illustrates the distribution of applications for developments of two or more dwellings per lot, in the established areas. Higher density developments have generally occurred on regular shaped lots that are in close proximity to railway stations, such as those found in Epping Central, Lalor and Thomastown. Fewer higher density developments have occurred on lots that are generally small and irregular in shape, and remote from public transport, such as those found in Bundoora, Mill Park and South Morang, where the roads are often curvilinear.

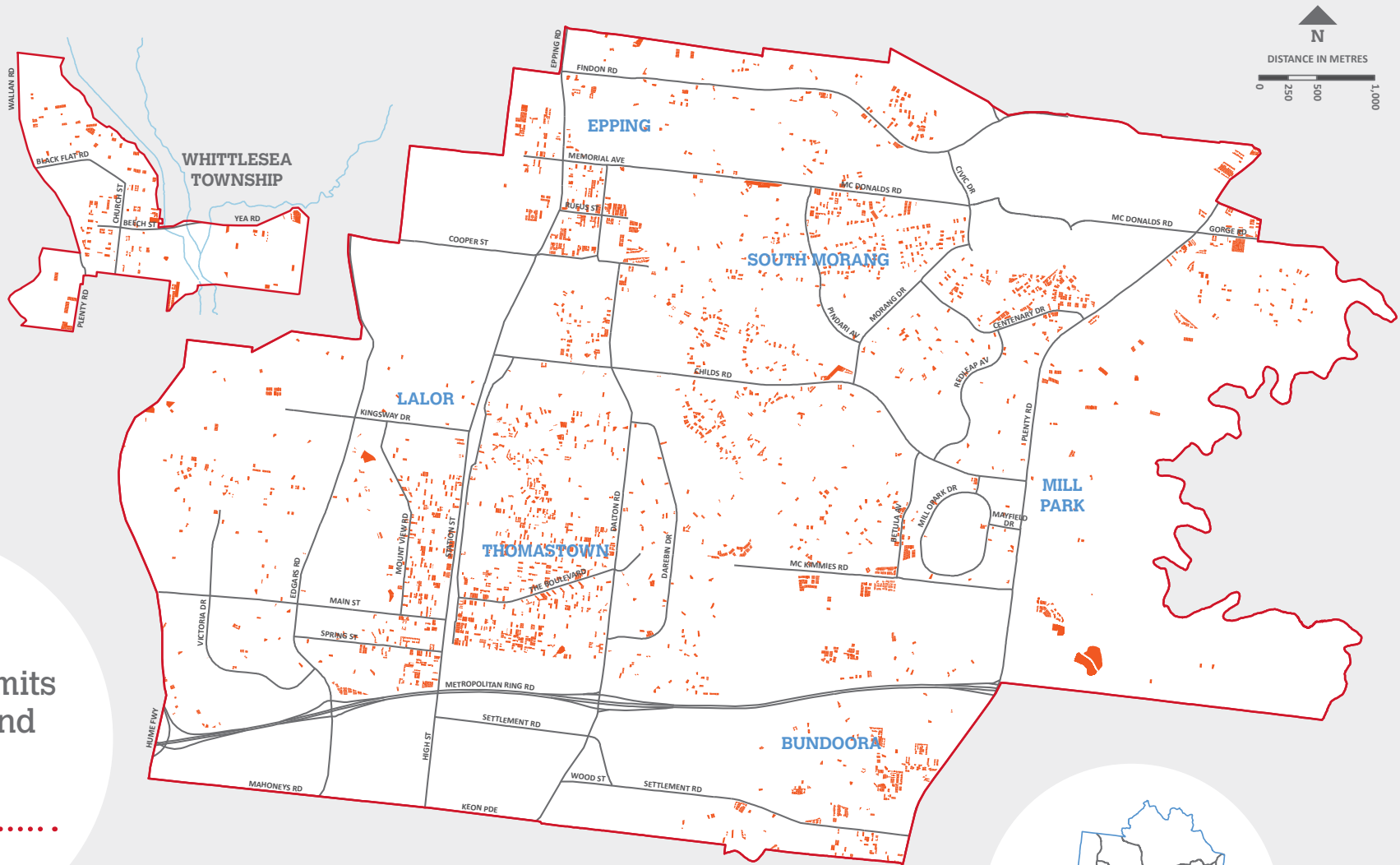
Since 1995 the highest number of planning applications for dual occupancy has occurred in Thomastown, Epping and Lalor. The largest number of medium density residential applications for more than 3 dwellings on a lot were in Epping and Thomastown (refer to Figure 19). These trends demonstrate that locational criteria and site characteristics play a key role in determining suitability for medium and higher density developments. However without clear guidance applications are being considered in locations across the city. The HDS will provide more guidance on the appropriate locations for future housing growth.

Figure 19: The Number of Planning Applications for Each Development Type per Suburb



Source: City of Whittlesea 2012

See Map 3: Approved Planning Permits for Medium and High Density Housing, Established Areas, 2013



Map 3:
**Approved
 Planning Permits
 for Medium and
 High Density
 Housing**

Established Areas, 2012

- Approved Medium and Higher Density Planning Permits
- Established Area Boundary



25 Ferres Boulevard
South Morang VIC 3752
Telephone 03 9217 2170
TTY 133 677
Email info@whittlesea.vic.gov.au
www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au



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