



Vision 2020 By Design

A Built Environment Framework for Yarra Ranges

VOLUME I
OVERVIEW REPORT

Shire of Yarra Ranges

MAY 2008

plān|ī'sphēre [// urban strategy planners]

Planisphere with Planning Collaborative Pty Ltd

Foreword

This report looks at the Shire in terms of the built environment, of urban areas, towns and villages and agricultural lands. It makes recommendations which will assist in preserving the character of the Shire for future generations by guiding the design, siting and style of new development so that the visual amenity of the Shire is not diminished by new development, but is enhanced by it.

This report identifies nine distinct urban and rural area types and presents guidelines for each. It also provides guidelines for a range of specific development types and landscape areas.

For many planning permits, this report will require applicants to ensure that their building fits into the urban or rural setting and complements the character of the immediate area. To assist, Council requires applicants to demonstrate that their building is responsive to the characteristics of the local area. To ensure this, applicants complete a Context and Site Description, as a first step in the design process.

In recognition of changing community attitudes and in line with Council policy, the report also encourages applicants for planning permits to meet minimum requirements for the sustainable design and operation of their building.

Implementation of *Vision 2020 By Design* is a high priority action for the Council. It will:

- ◆ Give practical effect to important aspects of Vision 2020 and Council's environmental leadership initiatives.
- ◆ Result in improved protection of significant landscapes and better targeted, more effective planning controls.

Study Team's Foreword

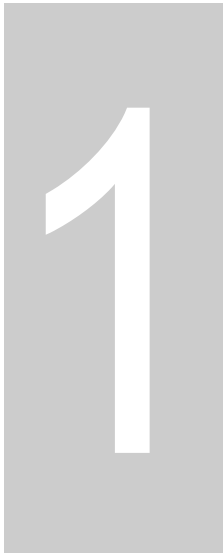
This project began life as a 'Built Environment Framework'. We have suggested it be retitled to reflect more appropriately the imperative and drive needed to realise it: *Vision 2020 By Design*. In summary, the study team's assessment is that:

- ◆ The landscape of much of Yarra Ranges is a very significant resource for metropolitan Melbourne and urgently needs stronger protection.
- ◆ The distinctive identity of many of the Shire's localities is under threat from 'place-less' development that fails to add to local character.
- ◆ More can and should be done to improve the environmental sustainability of development in the Shire.
- ◆ The tools currently used by the Council to deal with building siting and design need to be better focused and made more effective.

Vision 2020 By Design shows how development in the Shire of Yarra Ranges can be made more responsive to local identity and sensitive landscapes, and how design quality and environmental sustainability can be improved.

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Delivering *Vision 2020 By Design*

1.1 Introduction

Delivering *Vision 2020* By Design

*Vision 2020*¹, the Shire's acclaimed community plan, contains directions and proposals that call for a significant improvement in the design quality of development across the municipality. The purpose of this project is to show how this improvement can be delivered.

The Shire of Yarra Ranges has a very diverse range of urban and rural environments, each of which has its own identity. While many of the environments have characteristics that are highly valued by the community, some commonly lack any positive design elements that contribute a strong sense of identity.

These urban and rural landscapes undergo progressive change, due to many factors, but predominantly due to increasing population in urban centres and smaller townships, the desire for people to live in semi-rural environments and more-intensive farming practices.

Council recognises that the quality of the urban and rural areas of the Shire is valued by residents, businesses and visitors. Tourism is important to the financial health of the Shire and the high value of townscapes and landscapes must be preserved if this attribute of the shire is to be retained. However, progress must be accommodated and development in urban and rural areas must be allowed to continue.

The community is becoming increasingly aware of quality of life issues, and the maintenance of the landscape qualities of the Shire.

¹ Shire of Yarra Ranges community plan – sets the long term strategic direction for the Shire

How *Vision 2020 By Design* responds to Council Priorities

Vision 2020

The Council's acclaimed and widely supported community plan Vision 2020 has articulated the community's vision for the Shire. The priority now is to implement it.

Much of *Vision 2020's* content is directly relevant to the way the Shire plans its built environment, both in terms of private development and public works. It stresses the importance of local identity, protection of environments and landscapes, design quality, and sustainable urban form and building design.

***Vision 2020 By Design* shows how development in the Shire can be made more responsive to the directions established in Vision 2020.**

Environmental Leadership

Planning in the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges area has a long pedigree of environmental concern and protection. The Council has recently taken steps to strengthen its role in environmental leadership through initiatives such as the Climate Change Commitment and the Environmental Leadership Program.

The Shire's environmental initiatives have yet to find expression in urban design and built form policy. It is now timely to review these policies, and to propose new approaches that will assist in achieving the Council's environmental objectives.

***Vision 2020 By Design* shows how development in the Shire can become more environmentally sustainable.**

The Landscape and Identity of Yarra Ranges

Yarra Ranges contains some of the state's most attractive and significant landscapes. The Shire is custodian of a landscape that needs to be maintained and enhanced not only as a home for many and a place of agricultural production but also as an escape from the city, as a place of beauty, as an opportunity for recreation, and as a location of continuing attraction to visitors and tourists from a wide catchment.

Naturally this means that lots of people want to visit, live and work in the Shire. But development needs to be well sited, designed and managed if we are to avoid 'killing the goose that laid the golden egg'. It also needs to respect and add to the distinctive character of the different types of rural and urban environment found across the Shire.

***Vision 2020 By Design* shows how development in the Shire can be made more responsive to local identity and significant landscapes in the Shire.**

Adequacy of Planning Controls

The Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme includes provisions that require a planning permit to be obtained for a wide range of developments, particularly in relation to landscape and environmental impacts. However, many of these provisions are insufficiently targeted or ineffective.

There is now a much stronger acceptance of the need for unambiguous controls with greater use of overlays and more prescriptive requirements rather than broad discretionary provisions.

***Vision 2020 By Design* shows how planning scheme tools can be used more effectively to improve the quality of development across the Shire.**

1.2 Sustainable Design in Yarra Ranges

1.2.1

Key Directions for Sustainable Design in Yarra Ranges

The study has found that five key directions are vitally important in considering a sustainable future for the Shire's built environment. These are:

- Sense of Place
- Protection of Environments
- Design Quality
- Sustainable Urban Form
- Sustainable Building Design

Each of these is an important aspect of the future sustainability of the Shire's built environment, as explained below.

Sense of Place

The Shire's towns, villages and rural areas each have their own visual identity which is valued by residents and visitors. The purpose of this study is to ensure that new buildings and new civic development projects respect and reinforce the identified and valued character of each town, village and distinct rural area in the Shire.

It is important that these particular characteristics are maintained and enhanced, rather than being devalued or lost, as development proceeds. Managing the siting, design and appearance of new buildings, their landscape and their contribution to the streetscape, townscape or rural environment will ensure that the unique character and appearance of the various localities of the Shire are able to grow and evolve whilst maintaining their basic underlying qualities.

Protection of Environments

The Shire is important, in terms of its landscape and built form character, as an edge of the developed urban area of Melbourne, and as a landscape resource for the metropolitan population as a whole, as well as for its own inhabitants. Along with the Mornington Peninsula, it includes arguably the most attractive scenery to be found in a metropolitan municipality.

The Shire is custodian of a landscape that needs to be maintained and enhanced not only as a home for many and a place of agricultural production but also as an escape from the city, as a place of beauty, as an opportunity for recreation, and as a location of continuing attraction to visitors and tourists from a wide catchment. Substantial parts of the Shire's landscape are also important ecologically, for reasons of biodiversity and habitat.

Design Quality

Good design in the built environment is not simply limited to aesthetically pleasing design. It encourages a sense of local identity, seeks to improve people's experience of a space or locality and plays a role in the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the built form. It contributes to making a place that people want to be in.

Good urban design should help to strengthen people's sense of place. An important way in which that can occur is to use urban design to express the underlying, or valued, landscape and cultural character of an area.

Sustainable Urban Form

Many of the provisions in the study are aimed at achieving a more sustainable urban form. Consolidation of new development into existing urban centres has many environmental and social benefits. It reduces travel distances, makes public transport more viable, reduces car dependency and supports more energy-efficient modes of travel, makes better use of existing infrastructure, preserves natural vegetation, and adds life and vitality to urban areas.

Sustainable Building Design

Vision 2020 By Design makes a number of recommendations which are consistent with the Council's Environment Strategy and which focus on making new buildings more environmentally efficient. These recommendations are included in a Sustainable Design Policy which covers building design, the siting of buildings, the use of water and energy, and new development in established built-up areas.

1.2.2

Five Sustainable Design Imperatives for Yarra Ranges

Based on the preceding analysis, we recommend that the Shire adopts the following *Sustainable Design Imperatives* to guide future development:

Sense of Place

New development must add to the character and identity of distinct localities in the Shire.

Protection of Environments

New development must respect and protect sensitive environments, significant landscapes and cultural and natural heritage.

Design Quality

New development must be of high design quality.

Sustainable Urban Form

New development must contribute to environmentally sustainable forms of urban and rural development.

Sustainable Building Design

New development must incorporate best practice in ecologically sustainable building design.

1.2.3

Delivering the Sustainable Design Imperatives

The products of this study have been explicitly designed to assist the Council in delivering the *Sustainable Design Imperatives*. The diagram on the following page shows how the study products relate to each *Sustainable Design Imperative*. Only limited links are shown – the diagram would be too complex if all links were shown.

The next chapter describes and illustrates the landscape and urban form character types and the design issues found in Yarra Ranges. Chapter 3 proposes an ESD policy for Council to adopt, plus a number of process innovations aimed at upgrading the environmental performance of developments in the Shire. Chapter 4 contains the report's implementation recommendations.

Sustainable Design Imperatives

Study Product & Location in Report

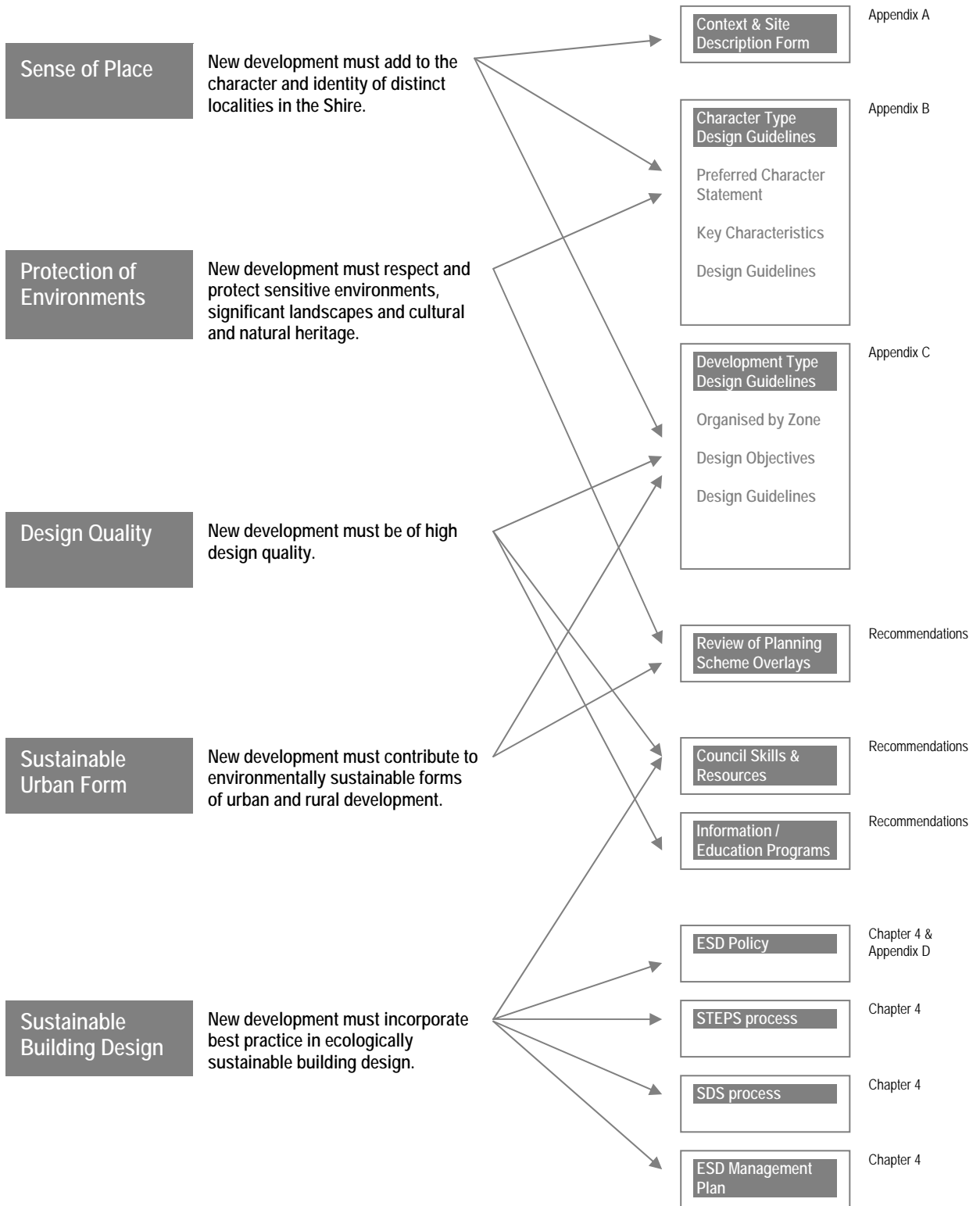


Diagram 1.1: Relationship of Study Products to *Sustainable Design Imperatives*
 Only limited links are shown – the diagram would be too complex if all links were shown

1.2.4 Priority Design Issues in the Shire

While it is important that the visual character of all rural and urban areas of the Shire is of a high standard, it is in areas where pressure for development is most intense and where building activity is concentrated, that attention needs to be focused.

Equally, there are places where the existing landscape is highly valued, and where changes to those landscapes need to be most carefully carried out so that the visual appearance and landscape character that is so highly valued is not diminished but is enhanced as development proceeds.

The application of these Guidelines will address these priorities. This will require vigilance by all players: Council, infrastructure agencies, property owners and developers, to maintain and enhance the varied rural and urban character of the shire, one of its greatest assets.

High Priority Locations

Areas that are considered to be most highly valued or whose character is potentially under the most threat from on-going development activity are:

- Rural Landscapes
- Business & Commercial Areas
- Centres of Green Wedge Area Settlements
- Activity Centre Residential Hinterlands

High Priority Development Types

Development types that are of greatest concern are:

- Urban or industrial style development in Rural Zones
- Public realm design in Rural Zones
- Most forms of development in Business Zones
- Residential development in activity centre hinterlands (Residential Zone)
- Relating to landscape and natural features

Response 1: Design Guidelines

Vision 2020 By Design's analysis and Design Guidelines respond to the priority design issues.

The high priority locations are described in Chapter 2 of this report, *The Character of Yarra Ranges*. The *Character Type Design Guidelines (Volume II)* provide guidelines, intended to form part of the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, aimed at improving the sustainability of built form in these priority locations.

The high priority development types are also described in Chapter 2 of this report, *Development types and issues*. The *Development Type Design Guidelines (Volume II)* provide guidelines, intended to form part of the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, aimed at improving the sustainability of these priority development types.

Response 2: Improved Planning Application Processes

Improved planning application processes are proposed in section 1.3 and Chapter 4 (below). The categories of development to which each of these processes would apply (summarised in Diagram 1.3) are informed by the study team's understanding of the priority design issues faced by the Council.

1.3 Implementation Overview

Overview of Implementation Recommendations

This study recommends that the Council adopt six implementation strategies:

1. Augment the MSS (Municipal Strategic Statement)
2. Revise / Upgrade Planning Scheme Local Policies
3. Upgrade Planning Scheme Overlays
4. Improve Planning Application Processes
5. Raise Community Awareness
6. Improve Council Procedures

Diagram 1.2 on the next page shows how these six strategies relate to each of the study products, and summarises the implementation actions – fuller details of which are contained in Chapter 4: Implementation.

Implementation Strategies

Summary of Recommended Action

Augment the MSS (Municipal Strategic Statement)

The Shire's Landscape & Urban Form

ESD Policy

Include the five *Sustainable Design Imperatives* (Ch1), wording based on *The Shire's Landscape & Urban Form* (Ch2), the Preferred Character Statements (Ch2) and Development Type Design Objectives (Ch2) in the revised MSS.

Revise / Upgrade Planning Scheme Local Policies

Character Type Design Guidelines

Preferred Character Statement

Key Characteristics

Design Guidelines

Development Type Design Guidelines

Organised by Zone

Design Objectives

Design Guidelines

Include the *Character Type Design Guidelines (Volume II)*, *Development Type Design Guidelines (Volume II)* and the *ESD Policy* (Appendix B) in a Local Planning Policy in the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme.

Upgrade Planning Scheme Overlays

Review of Planning Scheme Overlays

Identify in the MSS an intention to review the suite of overlays and other permit triggers (eg Significant Landscape Overlays) with a view to rationalising and improving the effectiveness of controls and policies relating to the built environment (Chapter 4).

Improve Planning Application Processes

Context & Site Description Form

STEPS process

SDS process

ESD Management Plan

Require, for specified types of planning application (refer to section 1.3 for details):

A Context & Site Description Form (Appendix A) to be lodged for endorsement prior to submitting the Planning Permit application.

The STEPS, SDS and ESD Management Plan processes to be followed (Chapter 3).

Raise Community Awareness

Information / Education Programs

Raise community awareness by making the guidelines available in an attractive format for planning applicants, objectors and others with an interest in the built environment of the Shire (Chapter 4).

Improve Council Procedures

Council Skills & Resources

Improve Council design expertise by introducing a training and mentoring system for Council approvals staff, and make available information sessions for Councillors.

Require Council buildings and works to conform to the guidelines in *Vision 2020 By Design*.

Prepare Technical Notes to guide the design of Council works in the public domain.

(Chapter 4)

Diagram 1.2: Overview of Implementation Recommendations

A Better Process for Planning Applications

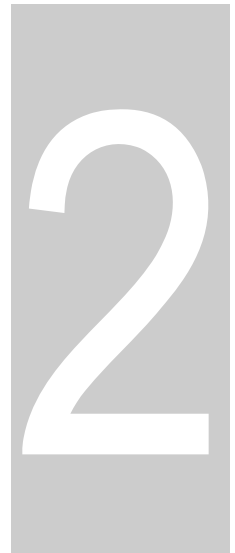
Successful delivery of the *Sustainable Design Imperatives* established by this study will be partly achieved by applying the Design Guidelines contained in *Volumes II and III* to this report. But it is also important to set in place processes that will assist planning applicants to produce better quality, more sustainable proposals. This study recommends four process initiatives, as Diagram 1.2 makes clear:

Process Initiative	How Applied	Details
Context & Site Description Form	To be lodged for retail/commercial developments, medium & high density residential developments and shop-top housing/mixed use developments, for endorsement prior to submitting the planning permit application.	Appendix A
STEPS Process	To be followed in association with permit applications for residential developments, including individual dwellings, town houses, multi-unit developments, residential additions or extensions, and the residential component of a mixed use building.	Chapter 3
SDS Process	To be followed in association with permit applications for non-residential developments.	Chapter 3
ESD Management Plan	To be prepared for residential developments of more than 10 units and non-residential uses of more than 1,000m ² , for endorsement at the time of approving the planning floor area permit application.	Chapter 3

The categories of development to which each of these processes would apply are summarised in Diagram 1.3 on the next page. They are based on the study team's understanding of the priority design issues faced by the Council. Chapter 2 of this report looks at these in some detail. Here we provide a brief overview.



Diagram 1.3: Additional Process to be followed by Planning Permit Applicants to implement *Vision 2020 By Design*



Character & Design in Yarra Ranges

This chapter outlines the landscape and urban character of the Shire, then introduces the topics covered by the Design Guidelines contained in Volumes II and III.

The Character of Yarra Ranges

- Significance of the Shire's Landscape
- Evolution of the Shire's Urban Fabric

Character Types (*refer to Design Guidelines in Volume II*)

- Rural Landscape Types
- Business & Commercial Area Types (Metropolitan Area)
- Centres of Green Wedge Settlement Types
- Residential Area Types

Development Types & Issues (*refer to Design Guidelines in Volume III*)

- Development in Green Wedge & Rural Zones
- Development in Business Zones
- Development in Residential Zones
- General Design Issues

The Character and Development Types are introduced in this Chapter with photographs and a short text outlining the topic area. The Guidelines themselves are reproduced in Volumes II and III.

As illustrated in diagram 1.1 in Chapter 1, the Design Guidelines aim to help implement four of the five Design Imperatives on which *Vision 2020 By Design* is founded: *Sense of Place*, *Protection of Environments*, *Design Quality* and *Sustainable Urban Form*. The fifth Imperative – *Sustainable Building Design* – is primarily addressed in Chapter 3.

The Design Guidelines contained in Volumes II and III are intended to be implemented through the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, as described in Chapter 4. They are also intended to be reproduced, to a design submitted separately with this report, as brochures for widespread use with planning applicants and others, as also described in Chapter 4.

The Character Type Design Guidelines in Volume II are intended to be used alongside the Development Type Design Guidelines in Volume III. In other words, for any given development proposal in the area covered by this study, there will be a relevant Character Type Design Guideline and at least one Development Type Design Guideline that should be consulted.

2.1 The Character of Yarra Ranges

Significance of the Shire's Landscape



Metropolitan Melbourne is located at the intersection of a variety of distinct landscape types. These include the foothills of the Great Dividing Range, the Western Basalt Plains, the eastern hills and vales that underlie most of Melbourne's eastern suburbs, the Port Phillip sandbelt, and the coastal areas of Port Phillip.

The Shire of Yarra Ranges comprises a fringe area of metropolitan Melbourne and the most extensive of the 12 Green Wedge areas identified in Melbourne 2030. None of the Growth Areas defined in Melbourne 2030² is located in the Shire. The Council's Vision 2020 refers to the Shire as 'a rich mosaic of urban settlements, productive rural holdings, healthy waterways, native bushland and forest', and as 'one of the most beautiful natural environments in the nation'.



Yarra Ranges is a municipality that straddles the urban/rural interface in a location where one of the state's most attractive and significant landscapes meets the edge of the metropolitan area. The landscape itself is a major attraction for residents and visitors, in the form of both forests and mountains and the cultivated, pastoral valleys. Yarra Valley towns such as Healesville and Warburton, are tourist attractions in their own right. Residential areas in the heavily vegetated hills environments have a character that is significant to visitors as well as pleasant to live in.

Therefore the Shire is important, in terms of its landscape and built form character, as an edge of the developed urban area of Melbourne, and as a landscape resource for the metropolitan population as a whole, as well as for its own inhabitants. Along with the Mornington Peninsula, it includes arguably the most attractive scenery to be found in a metropolitan municipality. The Shire is custodian of a landscape that needs to be maintained and enhanced not only as a home for many and a place of agricultural production but also as an escape from the city, as a place of beauty, as an opportunity for recreation, and as a location of continuing attraction to visitors and tourists from a wide catchment.



This study has identified the following Rural Landscape Types in the settled areas in the Shire:

- Dandenong Ranges Landscape Type
- Red Soil Intensive Agricultural Landscape Type
- Rolling Agricultural / Bushy Agricultural Landscape Type
- Open Valleys Landscape Type
- Yarra Ranges Valleys Landscape Type

These Rural Landscape Types are delineated in the maps on the following pages, and photographs of each can be found in Section 2.2 (below) and Volume II.



² Melbourne metropolitan strategic plan – sets the long term strategic direction for Melbourne

Evolution of the Shire's Urban Fabric



Urban development in the Shire includes an extension of the Melbourne suburbs encompassing Mooroolbark, Kilsyth, Chirnside Park and the once separate rural service centre of Lilydale; the ribbon of developed area extending to Belgrave; the small settlements of the Dandenong Ranges; small valley townships like Yarra Glen, Seville and Yarra Junction; and the larger country towns Healesville and Warburton. Rail lines to Lilydale, Healesville and Warburton facilitated the earlier phases of development. From the 1920s, the growth of car use accelerated development in the west of the Shire – numerous buildings survive from this era in the Dandenong Ranges and around Warburton and Healesville.

Typically development of settlements has gradually expanded from a core established in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. Large scale urban expansion east of Lilydale was curtailed with the approval of the Upper Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Region Strategy Plan in 1982.



Mooroolbark, Mt Evelyn, Kilsyth, Chirnside Park and Lilydale are now largely surrounded by suburban development that has continued throughout the post World War 2 era. The Chirnside Park activity centre continues to develop in the form of a typical outer suburban, car-based collection of shopping malls and 'big box' retailers. Lilydale's centre contains a mix of traditional strip shopping and more recent 'big box' surrounded by car park' developments in a layout that is disjointed and dispersed. A good deal of linear, highway-based commercial and industrial activity has also emerged since the 1950s.

This study has identified the following urban fabric types in the settled areas in the Western half Shire:

- Business & Commercial Area Types (Metropolitan Area)
- Street Based Activity Centres
- Mall or Big Box Based Activity Centres
- Industrial Areas & Highway Strips
- Large Rural Township Centres
- Smaller Rural Settlement Centres
- Dandenong Ranges Hamlet Centres
- Residential Area Types
- Urban Residential Areas
- Activity Centre Residential Hinterlands



These urban fabric types are delineated in the maps on the following pages, and photographs of each can be found in Volume III.

2.2 Character Types

VOLUME II
Character Type Design Guidelines
Preferred Character Statement
Key Characteristics
Design Guidelines

Rural Landscape Types

Dandenong Ranges Landscape Type
 Red Soil Intensive Agricultural Landscape Type
 Rolling Agricultural / Bushy Agricultural Landscape Type
 Open Valleys Landscape Type
 Yarra Ranges Valleys Landscape Type

Business & Commercial Area Types (Metropolitan Area)

Street Based Activity Centres
 Mall or Big Box Based Activity Centres
 Industrial Areas & Highway Strips

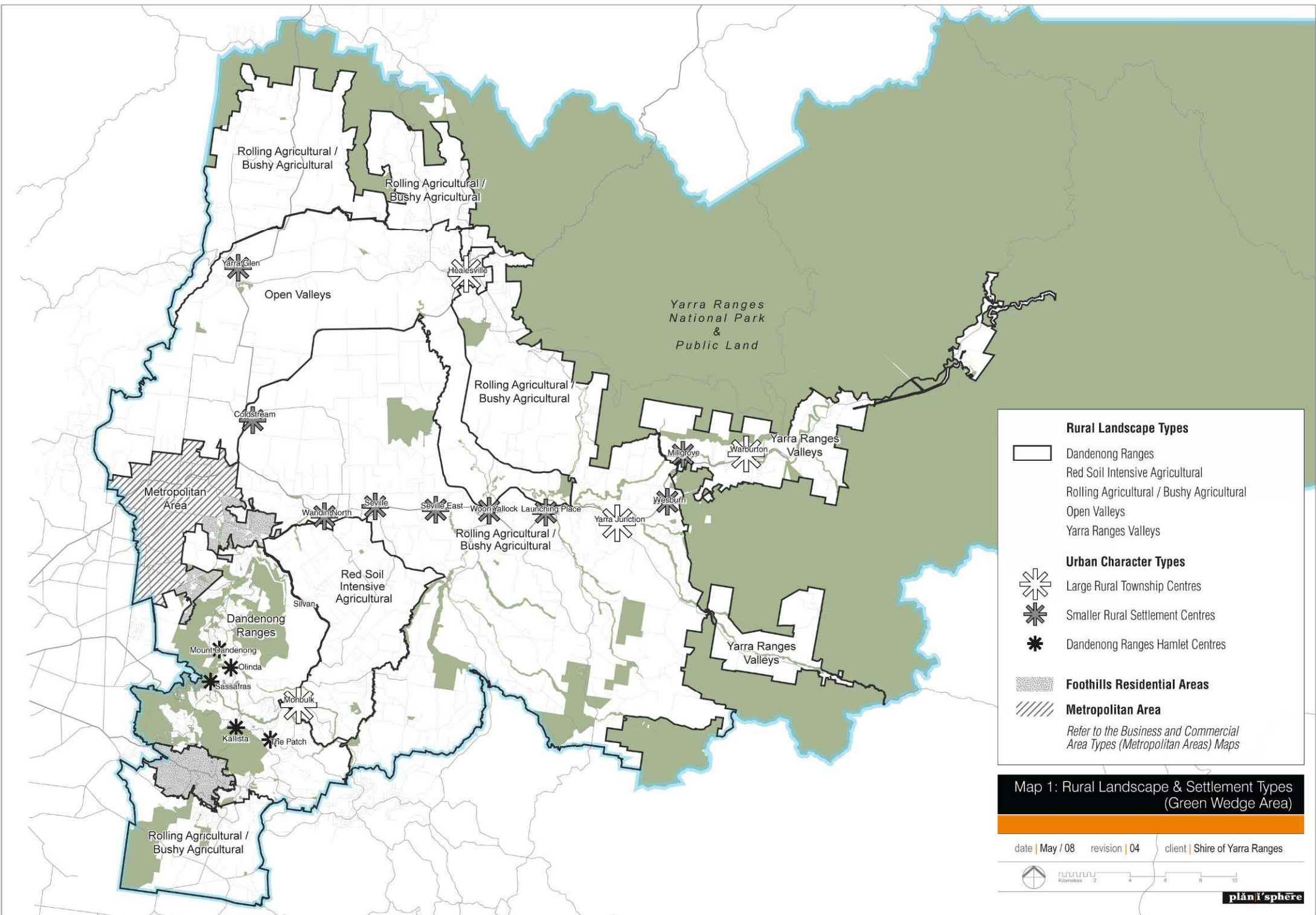
Centres of Green Wedge Settlement Types

Large Rural Township Centres
 Smaller Rural Settlement Centres
 Dandenong Ranges Hamlet Centres

Residential Area Types

Urban Residential Areas
 Activity Centre Residential Hinterlands

The maps on the following pages delineate these Character Type Areas.



Rural Landscape Types

-  Dandenong Ranges
-  Red Soil Intensive Agricultural
-  Rolling Agricultural / Bushy Agricultural
-  Open Valleys
-  Yarra Ranges Valleys

Urban Character Types

-  Large Rural Township Centres
-  Smaller Rural Settlement Centres
-  Dandenong Ranges Hamlet Centres

Foothills Residential Areas



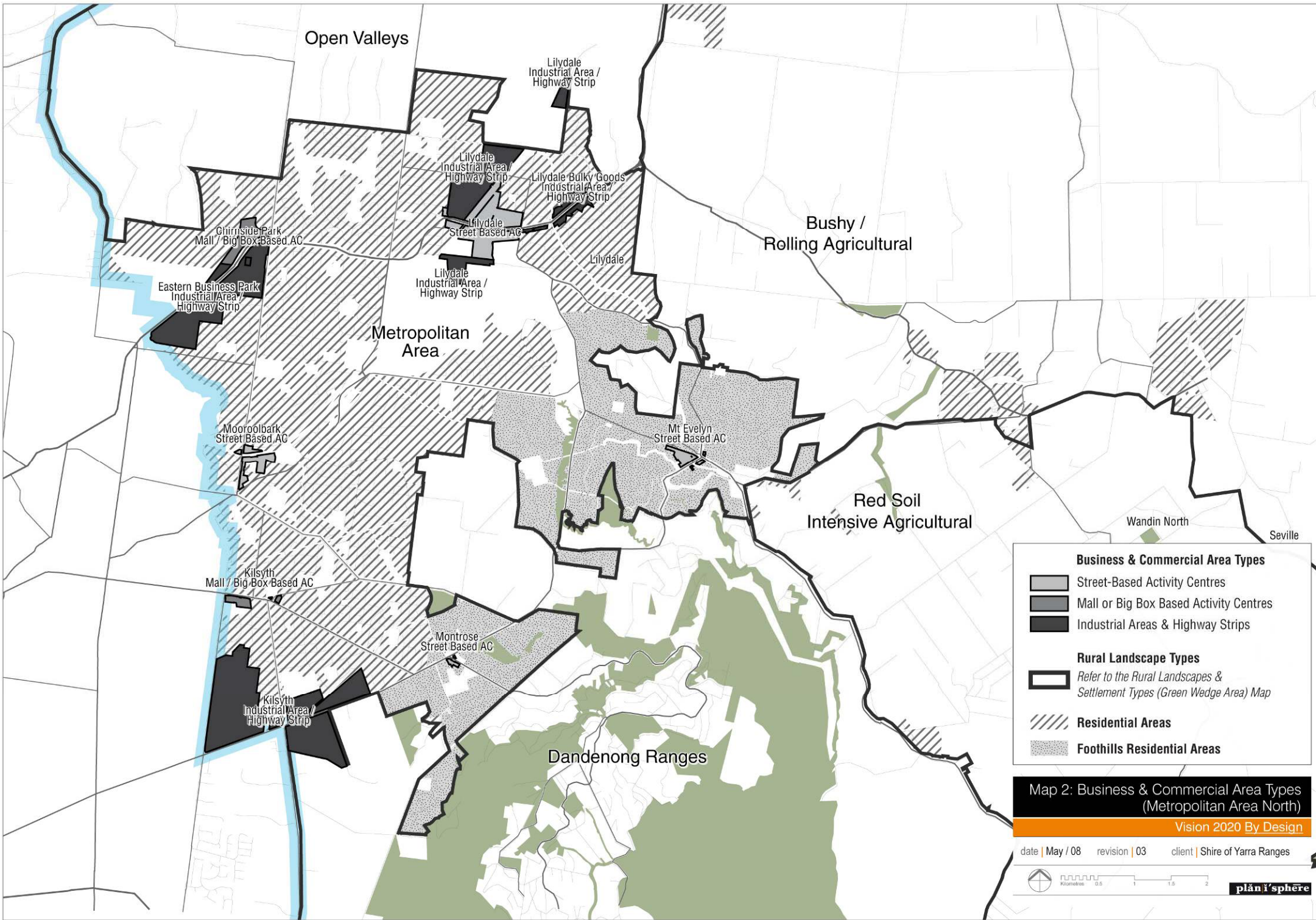
Metropolitan Area

Refer to the Business and Commercial Area Types (Metropolitan Areas) Maps

Map 1: Rural Landscape & Settlement Types (Green Wedge Area)

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Open Valleys

Lilydale Industrial Area / Highway Strip

Lilydale Industrial Area / Highway Strip

Lilydale Bulky Goods Industrial Area / Highway Strip

Lilydale Street Based AC

Bushy / Rolling Agricultural

Christie Park Mall / Big Box Based AC

Eastern Business Park Industrial Area / Highway Strip

Lilydale Industrial Area / Highway Strip

Metropolitan Area

Lilydale

Mooroolbark Street Based AC

Mt Evelyn Street Based AC

Red Soil Intensive Agricultural

Wandin North

Seville

Kilsyth Mall / Big Box Based AC

Montrose Street Based AC

Kilsyth Industrial Area / Highway Strip

Dandenong Ranges

Business & Commercial Area Types

- Street-Based Activity Centres
- Mall or Big Box Based Activity Centres
- Industrial Areas & Highway Strips

Rural Landscape Types

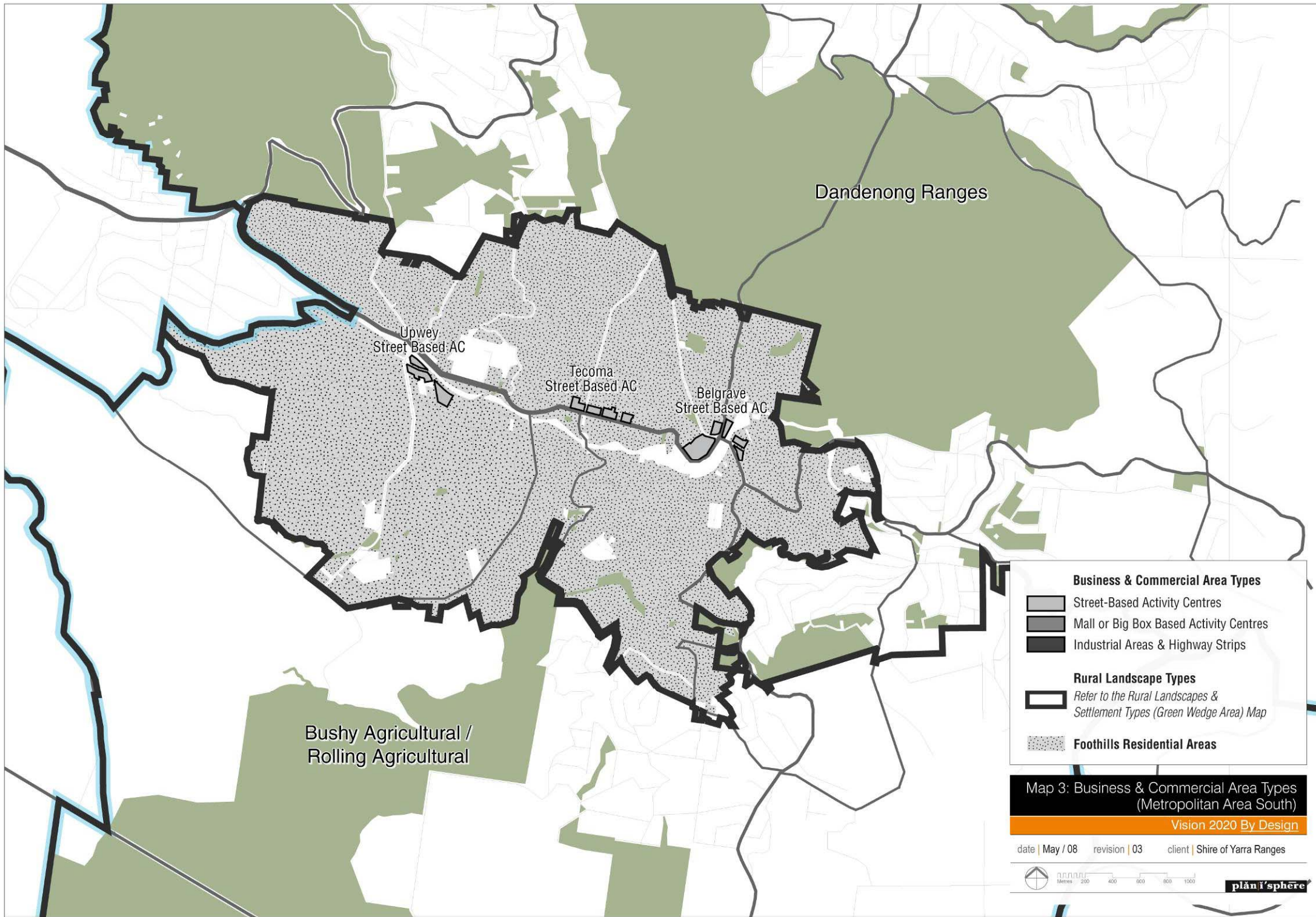
- Refer to the Rural Landscapes & Settlement Types (Green Wedge Area) Map
- Residential Areas
- Foothills Residential Areas

Map 2: Business & Commercial Area Types (Metropolitan Area North)

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Business & Commercial Area Types

-  Street-Based Activity Centres
-  Mall or Big Box Based Activity Centres
-  Industrial Areas & Highway Strips

Rural Landscape Types

-  Refer to the Rural Landscapes & Settlement Types (Green Wedge Area) Map

Foothills Residential Areas

- 

**Map 3: Business & Commercial Area Types
(Metropolitan Area South)**

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Rural Landscape Types

Applies to development in the following Zones: LDRZ, RLZ, GWZ, GWAZ, RCZ, FZ.

The *Design Guideline sheets* for each of these Types are contained in Volume II. Each area is delineated in the maps on the preceding pages.

Dandenong Ranges Landscape Type

The Dandenong Ranges are the most prominent and substantial hills close to Melbourne, with dense forested scenery and intimate fern gullies that have attracted day trippers ever since white settlement. They provide an iconic backdrop to most long distance views across Melbourne's eastern suburbs. Includes areas around *Kalorama, Olinda, Ferny Creek, Kallista*.



Red Soil Intensive Agricultural Landscape Type

The Red Soil Intensive Agricultural areas in the Shire are the intimate patchwork of intensively cultivated hills and vales that extend from the Silvan Reservoir to the Woori Yallock and Cockatoo Creeks. Includes areas around *Silvan, Wandin, Monbulk*.



Rolling Agricultural / Bushy Agricultural Landscape Type

The Rolling Agricultural / Bushy Agricultural areas in the Shire are broad acres of pleasantly undulating land with mountain backdrop, partly forested, but mainly cultivated. Includes areas around *Yellingbo, Seville, Hoddles Creek, Macclesfield, Gruyere, Warramate Hills and Dixons Creek*.



Open Valleys Landscape Type

The Open Valleys area of the Shire is pastoral plains with gentle topography centred around the Yarra River floodplain, bordered by the slopes and foothills of the adjoining Ranges. Includes areas around *Yarra River Floodplain*.



Yarra Ranges Valleys Landscape Type

The Yarra Ranges Valleys in the Shire extend along the valley floors of the Yarra River and Little Yarra River, enclosed by long steep forested slopes. The area is largely undeveloped with a range of rural/ pastoral uses and large stands of remnant native vegetation. Includes areas around *Woods Point Road, Yarra Junction-Noojee Road*.



Business & Commercial Area Types (Metropolitan Area)

The *Design Guideline sheets* for each of these Types are contained in Volume II. Each area is delineated in the maps on the preceding pages.

Street Based Activity Centres

Applies to development in the following Zones: B1Z and other Business Zones.

Street Based Activity Centres form part of the street-based urban structure of the Shire's metropolitan area. In the Business Core, buildings and activities front directly onto traditional streets (roadways with footpaths) that link directly to adjoining residential areas. Locations include the business cores of *Lilydale (Major Activity Centre: street-based); Neighbourhood Activity Centres: Belgrave, Belgrave South, Montrose, Mooroolbark, Mt Evelyn, Tecoma and Upwey.* Excludes the Business Zoned areas of *Dandenong Ranges Hamlet Centres and Smaller Rural Settlement Centres* (see below).



Mall or Big Box Based Activity Centres

Applies to development in the following Zones: B1Z and other Business Zones.

Mall or Big Box Based Activity Centres are shopping mall or 'big box' based, usually located along major highways, in which the built form is typically separated from the street system by off-street car parking, and in which pedestrian circulation once inside the building or mall is fully segregated from vehicular traffic. Locations include the mall-based centres of *Chirnside Park (Major Activity Centre); Kilsyth (Neighbourhood Activity Centre) and large format retail / big box developments in street-based activity centres.*



Industrial Areas & Highway Strips

Applicable to development in the following Zones: B1Z, B2Z, B3Z, B4Z; IN1Z, IN2Z, IN3Z

Industrial Areas and Highway Strips in the Shire are agglomerations of factory or warehouse or shed-style buildings often with yards, usually not classified as activity centres, often spread in linear fashion along the edge of a highway. Locations include *Burwood Highway and Maroondah Highway, Eastern Business Park, Lilydale bulky goods precinct, Kilsyth; Rural/ Service industrial shops along Monbulk Road.*



Centres of Green Wedge Settlements

The *Design Guideline sheets* for each of these Types are contained in Volume II. Each area is delineated in the maps on the preceding pages.

Large Rural Township Centres

Applies to development in the following Zones: B1Z and other Business Zones.

Large Rural Townships (Green Wedge Area) in the Shire have grid based centres developed from early beginnings (many Victorian era), encompassed by more recent lower density residential areas that gradually merge into the surrounding landscape. Locations include *Yarra Junction, Warburton, Healesville, Monbulk*.



Smaller Rural Settlement Centres

Applies to development in the following Zones: R1Z, TZ.

Some Smaller Rural Settlement Centres (Green Wedge Area) in the Shire have developed around a small collection of shops and perhaps a hotel on a highway (sometimes with an extensive residential hinterland), while others are little more than a loose scattering of farms and houses. Locations include *Wandin North, Seville, Seville East, Launching Place (RLZ*), Wesburn (RLZ*), Millgrove (RLZ*), Coldstream, Yellingbo, Silvan, The Patch, Woori Yallock, Yarra Glen*.

*RLZ means that the area is an area of Rural Living Zone rather Township Zone.



Dandenong Ranges Hamlet Centres

Applies to development in the following Zones: Business (B) Zones.

The Dandenong Ranges Hamlet Centres (Green Wedge Area) in the Shire are distinct but irregular concentrations of shops and other community buildings typically strung along a ridge top roadway or cross road, hemmed in by tall forest surrounds. Locations include *Kalorama, Olinda, Ferny Creek, Kallista, Mount Dandenong, Sassafra*.



Residential Area Types

Each area is delineated in the maps on the preceding pages.

Urban Residential Areas

Applies to development in the following Zones: R1Z, R2Z, R3Z, MUZ, TZ.

The Shire's Urban Residential Areas are many and varied in their neighbourhood character. A Neighbourhood Character Study completed in 2002 analysed and described them, dividing the areas into character precincts organised by location. Because of this previous work, these areas have been excluded from the brief for this project. The Council intends to update the study to take account of developments since 2002, including the introduction of the ResCode suite of tools into the Planning Scheme.

Includes all metropolitan areas zoned Residential 1 Zone except in the hinterland of Activity Centres, as defined in the Shire's Housing Strategy.

Preferred Character Statement

Statements of Preferred Character were prepared for each character precinct in the Neighbourhood Character Study.

Within residential areas, it is possible to distinguish four main character types:

Built Form/Landscape Relationship	Character Type
Built form dominated residential areas	'Urban'
Spacious residential areas in a garden setting <i>(formal street pattern, generally modified grid)</i>	'Garden Suburban'
Spacious residential areas in a garden setting <i>(informal, generally curving street pattern with courts/cul-de-sacs)</i>	'Garden Court'
Landscape dominated residential areas	'Bush Suburban'

Within each of these four main character types, there can be wide variations. These are important in differentiating the character of one neighbourhood from another, and in creating or strengthening sense of place. The character types developed in the early stages of the Neighbourhood Character Study were Garden Suburban, Garden Court, New Garden Court, Bush Garden, Yarra Valley Town, Hills Forest, Hills Bush and Rural Parkland. The key characteristics of these types are outlined in the section below. These categories were further refined to create location based precincts (eg. Coldstream Precinct 1 and 2) in the study.

Design Guidelines for this Character Type appear in the Neighbourhood Character Study.

Activity Centre Residential Hinterlands

Applies to development in the following Zones: R1Z, R2Z, MUZ.

The Council's Housing Strategy has delineated Residential 1 Zoned areas in the immediate hinterland of most Activity Centres as consolidation areas. In these areas, the Council intends to encourage development of higher density housing as part of a strategy of consolidating activity in and close to Activity Centres.

Includes Residential 1 Zone hinterlands around most Activity Centres, as defined in the Shire's Housing Strategy.

Preferred Character Statement

Statements of Preferred Character were prepared for each character precinct in the Neighbourhood Character Study. The Council intends to revise these to accommodate the emphasis on encouragement of higher density housing in these areas.

Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines for this Character Type appear in Volume III. Key existing characteristics of these areas are described in the Neighbourhood Character Study. Significant long term change is anticipated in these areas to be planned for through Structure Plans for individual centres.

2.3 Development Types & Issues

VOLUME III
Development Type Design Guidelines
Organised by Zone
Design Objectives
Design Guidelines

Development in Green Wedge & Rural Zones	Development Types Public Realm (eg Highways & Roads)
Development in Business Zones	Built Form Fences, Signs & Parking Residential Development within Activity Centre Business Zones
Development in Residential Zones	Residential Development in Activity Centre Hinterlands (Residential Zone) Residential Development outside Activity Centre Hinterlands
General Design Issues	Vegetation Urban / Rural Interfaces Relating to Streamsides / Open Space Corridors Landscape Impact Assessment Significant Views Building Siting in Open Landscapes Development on Rural Ridgelines and Hillside

Development in Green Wedge & Rural Zones

Applies to development in the following Zones: UDG, GWZ, GWAZ, RCZ, FZ.

The *Design Guideline sheets* for each of these Types are contained in Volume III.

Development Types

Residential

Dwellings are an integral element of the rural and farming environments. Houses that are suitable for urban areas can look out of place and inappropriate in more isolated settings. Location, design and siting need to be considered in different ways from urban settings.

Large Industrial-Style Sheds

The rural landscape is adversely affected by new structures which are out of scale or character with their setting. Large structures (machinery sheds, processing and packing sheds, barns, etc.), if poorly designed or located, intrude into the views and vistas.

Glasshouses / Sheeting of Orchards, Vineyards

Intensive agricultural activity often includes large temporary or permanent structures which enclose crops to improve productivity. These structures are a necessary element of contemporary farming practices and their visual presence in the landscape is increasingly common.

Front Boundary Fences & Gates

Gates and adjacent walls or fences should be of modest appearance, in keeping with the character of the remainder of the property boundary fence and with the character of the local environment and the neighbourhood. Property identification signs should be of a size related to their purpose but recessive and unobtrusive, and complementary to the local character, in size, style and design, rather than dominating the visual environment.

Signs in Rural Areas

Rural and semi-rural roads are important elements of the landscape. Commercial premises require adequate signage to alert approaching motorists. A balance is required between visibility and information and visual intrusiveness.

Formed Driveways & Internal Roads

Drives, especially those cut into sloping land and those whose surface contrasts with the adjacent ground colours, can be a visual blight and an undesirably dominant element of a rural landscape.

Public Realm (eg Highways & Roads)

The character of highway and main road corridors are important elements of the appreciation of the Shire's rural and semi-rural areas, especially for visitors who come to the shire to experience its landscapes and vistas, and do this predominantly from moving vehicles.

Road environments and the views from them rely on natural features, vegetation and greenery to give them their particular character and value.

Development in Business Zones

Applies to development in the following Zones: B1Z and other Business Zones.

The *Design Guideline sheets* for each of these Types are contained in Volume III.

Built Form

Building Siting, Scale and Design

New buildings should not dominate their street environment. The retention and enhancement of the character and amenity of a commercial area requires new buildings to be of similar scale, size and height to those existing in the area. .

New buildings should be designed having regard for materials, colours, variations in plan form and roof form in order to reduce the apparent bulk and add visual interest to the appearance of the building.

'Big Box' Retail Buildings

The trend towards very large retail outlets has produced structures that are out of character with traditional retailing. The visibility and external appearance of such structures is out of proportion with the required exposure for identification of the premises. Associated car parking, pedestrian access and visual dominance are aspects of big box retail outlets that are inconsistent with the character of many urban and semi-urban environments

Setbacks

Buildings should be sited to form part of a consistent street frontage. Set backs from side boundaries should be similar to those of nearby buildings.

Public/Private Interface

The way that buildings interface with the street and other public spaces – particularly at ground floor – is one of the main ingredients of success for an activity centre.

Side & Rear Walls

Tilt-slab or blockwork walls which are visible are unattractive, add to the apparent bulk of a building and reduce the character and amenity of the public realm. The nature of such buildings does not mean that they have to be visually unattractive.

Even if on a property boundary and an adjacent site is undeveloped, boundary walls should not be left undecorated.

Verandahs

The character of many townships and hamlets is enhanced by the provision of verandahs to shops and commercial premises. Post-supported verandahs are a particular and attractive feature of rural settlements and free-standing convenience or general stores.

Landscaping, Fences, Signs & Parking

Landscaping

Landscaping can play an important role in integrating a development with its surrounds.

Fences & Security

Chain-mesh fences with barbed-wire tops are common in some highway and light industrial locations. While security and transparency are necessary, alternative material can enhance the quality of the street environment. Solid fences (such as timber palings) are effective screens to untidy or unattractive storage yards.

Signs in Commercial Areas

Signs are a necessary and informative element of retail and commercial areas. They advise the type of business or service available in a premises, they advertise products available and the add interest and vitality to the public environment. Excessive signage is

counter-productive, with too many signs or unnecessarily large or brightly-lit signs dominating the streetscape and losing their individual and collective effect and usefulness.

Car Parking

Concentrations of parked cars are unattractive in the streetscape environment. Set backs to commercial properties can be designed and landscaped to reduce the visual impact of parked cars. Parking areas can be located at rear or side of large premises.

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability of buildings is a major theme of this study. It is particularly important in business zones and commercial areas, because many developments in these areas are large and have the potential to consume significant amounts of energy.

Heritage

Older buildings often contribute to a valued sense of place and the valued character of an area. Retaining them can help to provide a sense of continuity in areas subject to development change.

Residential Development within Activity Centre Business Zones

High Density Residential Building Type

The benefits of housing diversity, urban lifestyle and proximity to community services and retail and social facilities can be achieved by the development of high-density residential accommodation in suitable locations.

In the more urbanised towns, there is potential for higher density housing in the town centre. This may be in conjunction with other land uses, such retail or office use, or stand-alone.

Shop Top Housing / Mixed Use Development

Commercial and retail areas are made livelier, safer and more viable if there are people living within the area. Mixing uses within buildings as well as along street frontages can add to the interest and vitality of activity within a commercial centre.

Shop top housing is a traditional form of accommodation and its potential is realised by the encouragement of commercial developments which include well-designed residential accommodation at upper levels.

Residential accommodation above retail premises brings people into retail and commercial areas beyond normal trading hours, increases the population of urban centres and townships, adds diversity to land uses and makes better use of upper floors.

The amenity of such dwellings requires particular attention to entrances, private outdoor spaces and the potential conflicts with commercial businesses, particularly service areas at the rear of commercial premises.

Development in Residential Zones

Applies to development in the following Zones: R1Z, R2Z, R3Z, MUZ, TZ.

The *Design Guideline sheets* for each of these Types are contained in Volume III.

Residential Development in Activity Centre Hinterlands (Residential Zone)

Multi-unit developments meet demands for housing diversity by providing higher density accommodation close to retail and community facilities and employment opportunities.

Good site planning and building design are essential if new higher-density developments in Residential zoned areas are to contribute positively to their surroundings. Key issues include continuity of character, building siting, layout, massing and design, private outdoor spaces, driveways, car parking and garages, fences and landscaping.

Developments in established residential areas should reinforce the character of the area, be respectful of the amenity and privacy of adjoining properties and retain significant vegetation.

Existing Buildings

Older dwellings often contribute to a valued sense of place and the valued character of an area. Retaining them can help to provide a sense of continuity in areas subject to development change.

Building Height

While redevelopment in activity centre residential hinterlands will often result in an increase in height, it is usually practical and desirable to provide a transition in scale that helps to relate the new building to the scale of its surrounds.

Building Siting & Layout

Consistency of front set back is particularly important in maintaining continuity of character in a street scene. The existence or otherwise of side and rear setbacks can also be important, but is less likely to be able to be maintained in an activity centre residential hinterland in which a policy priority is to intensify the amount of activity.

Building Massing, Design & Materials

Massing, use of materials and other aspects of design can be used to enhance the compatibility of a development with its established surrounds.

Private Open Space, Landscaping & Front Fencing

Landscaping and front boundary treatments are important aspects of ensuring that a development contributes positively to its surrounds. Private open spaces should be designed to maximise their amenity value, and where possible make use of natural features within the site.

Driveways, Car Parking & Garages

Driveways, garages and car ports need to be sited carefully to minimise their impact on the street scene.

Residential Development outside Activity Centre Hinterlands

A Neighbourhood Character Study completed in 2002 analysed and described them, dividing the areas into character precincts organised by location. Because of this previous work, these areas have been excluded from the brief for this project. The Council intends to update the study to take account of developments since 2002, including the introduction of the ResCode suite of tools into the Planning Scheme and the Shire's Housing Strategy.

General Design Issues

Applies to specified Zones.

The *Design Guideline sheets* for each of these Types are contained in Volume III.

Vegetation

Applies to all Zones.

New vegetation, in particular, decorative and garden plantings, should reinforce the dominant landscape character of the area, whether indigenous, exotic or a combination of both. Council can advise on appropriate species of plantings in rural areas.

The need to manage such factors as fire prevention, erosion and invasive plants is paramount but, where appropriate, the capacity of new planting to enhance the visual character of the different landscape areas of the Shire is an important consideration for property owners, particularly in preparing landscape and planting plans for new developments.

The use of indigenous species is favoured generally however it is acknowledged that exotic European species are a feature of some parts of the Shire, such as the Dandenong Ranges.

Urban / Rural Edges & Interfaces

Applies to urban development adjoining the following Zones: LDRZ, RLZ, GWZ, GWAZ, RCZ, FZ; also urban open spaces (eg PPRZ).

The broad landscape character of the Shire can be diminished by the intrusion of new residential or industrial subdivisions which are characteristic of metropolitan fringe areas. The visual distinctiveness of existing towns and villages is a strong feature of the Shire. The particular characteristics of each locality should be reinforced when new development occurs on the edges of towns and villages so that these local characteristics are retained and emphasised. Interfaces with surrounding non-urban landscapes should be designed as an integral part of the pattern of growth.

The main entrance roads to many rural settlements are lined by 'yard-and-shed' type uses that sometimes detract from the attractive relationship between the town and its landscape setting because of the presence of large areas of hard surface, large or industrial-style buildings, and front boundary treatments that include large signs and exclude substantial planting.

The residential areas of rural settlements often gradually merge into the surrounding landscape as the space between buildings increases, allowing for more extensive planting.

Relating to Streamsides / Open Space Corridors

Applies to development adjoining open spaces and reserves (eg PPRZ).

The rear of private properties, particularly in rural-residential areas, frequently present to the public realm of streamsides and open space corridors as unkempt and disorganised. Where these locations are visible to the public, they should respect the character of the public environment and have regard to its local character and visual amenity. The rear of properties are often the most visible to view from public places.

The visual character of stream and open space corridors is an important element of the Shire's landscape character and this should be maintained and enhanced by the nature of abutting buildings, fences and landscaping.

Remnant vegetation, dead trees and fallen timber on road reserves and stream reserves are increasingly important habitats and corridors for native wildlife. They also add to the rustic and natural character of the environment. More intense uses of abutting land and construction of roads and associated infrastructure can reduce the extent of such vegetation.

Fire prevention through fuel reduction has a necessary impact on this vegetation and on-ground material.

Landscape Impact Assessment

Essentially there are four steps in assessing the impact of a development on a landscape (based on Wind Farms and Landscape Values: National Assessment Framework prepared by Planisphere in 2007 for Auswind and ACNT):

- ◆ Assess the landscape values
- ◆ Describe and model the development in the landscape
- ◆ Assess the impacts of the development on landscape values
- ◆ Respond to impacts (eg mitigation)

'Landscape values' can embrace a multitude of meanings, including environmental, historic, cultural and aesthetic. Often the most challenging values to assess are visual and aesthetic responses to a landscape's natural or cultural character. The criteria listed under Significant Views (below) may assist with this.

The 'describe and model' stage is intended to be purely descriptive – not evaluative. In the case of large developments or controversial proposals, it may be helpful to construct a 3D computer model of the development in the terrain. The exercise will be most useful and expeditious if community values (not necessarily just of local people) are explicitly considered in choosing the viewpoints from which the impact of the development will be portrayed.

Significant Views

In a recent project by Planisphere for Parks Victoria (Williamstown Foreshore Landscape and Visual Assessment 2008), the following criteria were developed for defining a significant view.

Composition: The view is 'balanced', both horizontally and vertically – a 'picture postcard' view. The focal point of the view is centred, and elements in the foreground, middle-ground and background are 'equally weighted'. The view may be framed by elements to the viewer's left and right, and technically, such a view is defined as a 'vista'.

Visual Interest: The view contains a variety of contrasting elements that provide interest for the viewer. The view may also contain, or terminate at, a landmark or visual feature.

Rarity: The view is a 'one-off' or rare view and it, or a similar view, is not available nearby or elsewhere. The view itself may also contain a rare element that is not prevalent in other views from within the area.

Tourism Value: The view is popular with tourists and visitors, and is a 'well known' or popular view of note within the area. The view may also be available from a key tourism location or iconic place.

Community Support: The view has been identified by the local community as significant, and is publicly accessible.

Building Siting in Open Landscapes

Applies to urban development in the following Zones: LDRZ, RLZ, GWZ, GWAZ, RCZ, FZ.

Open landscapes – those that are generally flat and untreed – offer a particular challenge because most development is likely to be visible for long distances, even a fence, a sign or a domestic shed.

Development on Rural Ridgelines and Hillsides

Applies to urban development in the following Zones: LDRZ, RLZ, GWZ, GWAZ, RCZ, FZ.

Buildings and their roofs should be below ridge lines so that the natural horizon outline of a hill, ridge or slope is maintained and not interrupted by the profile of a building. It is logical to use the slope of the land where this can assist in the design and function of a building. However, steep slopes which require significant cut-and-fill or the use of supporting posts or stilts should be avoided and a flatter site should be selected.

Siting buildings on prominent wooded hillsides can also be problematical, as fire protection requirements may require clearance of an extensive area around the building. This may completely change the wooded character of the hillside.

Materials & Finishes in Rural Environments

Applies to urban development in the following Zones: LDRZ, RLZ, GWZ, GWAZ, RCZ, FZ.

Colours of external materials should be muted to avoid the building being an intrusive element in the landscape. However, discretion may be applied where a building, by its form or function, should be a visually prominent attribute to its wider setting to reinforce the character of the land use or the setting.



Sustainable Building Design

The Concept of Sustainability

'Sustainability' is a concept that is widely accepted as the major planning challenge of our times, yet the practical implications of pursuing the goal of a more sustainable city are often less widely appreciated or agreed upon.

One of the most popular definitions of sustainable development, from the Brundtland Report *Our Common Future*, states:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainability can be considered in relation to the environment, the economy ('a more sustainable economy'), and communities, social and cultural life. This is often referred to as the Triple Bottom Line, although a fourth element is sometimes added: governance.

The main driver of concerns about sustainability in recent times has been the need to improve environmental sustainability, particularly in relation to carbon emissions. Generally it is important to think about every aspect of sustainability, rather than one aspect only – this has been referred to as 'triple bottom line' (environmental, economic, social / cultural). For example, efforts to achieve greater environmental sustainability are often most effective if they are embedded into the economic system in a manner that can be maintained over the long term – i.e. that is economically sustainable. Equally these efforts may be counter-productive or undesirable if they might jeopardise social sustainability.

A strong sub-theme of the UK Government's recent Stern report is the distinction between 'mitigating' climate change (eg taking steps to reduce carbon emissions), and 'adapting' to the effects of climate change. Both aims need to be considered – sometimes a single initiative will address both of them. Most of the initiatives proposed in this study belong to the first of these – 'mitigation' – because they are aimed at reducing the environmental impact of urban development.

The UK government has recently announced that it intends all new housing to be carbon neutral in ten years time. This goal has been announced in advance of the preparing a plan to show how this will be achieved. Bold initiatives of this kind enable all the other players to marshal their resources towards a common goal – those players including the development industry and Local government.

Really effective action to improve environmental sustainability of buildings essentially requires two levels of action:

- ◆ Top-down policy initiatives, such as carbon pricing, target setting, regulatory change. In the Australian context, the levels of government with the most powers to achieve these outcomes are State and Commonwealth.
- ◆ Bottom-up actions by individuals in the community, businesses and other organisations.

With limited action by the State government, and little or no effective action thus far by the Federal government to set in place appropriate pricing, target setting or regulatory measures, Local government is best placed to encourage, educate and advocate.

Sustainability and Town Planning Policy

Many town planning strategies are directly or indirectly aimed at improving sustainability in all its aspects. For example, Melbourne 2030 aims to make Melbourne a more sustainable city by reducing the land-take of new development, and by structuring the city in ways that reduce the need to drive a private car and make cycling and walking more attractive.

Policy initiatives to create a more sustainable city can take many forms. They can relate to the way a metropolitan area is structured – the disposition and intensity of its land use activity, and the types and dispositions of transport corridors. Similar principles can be applied at the municipal or neighbourhood level. Another category of policy initiative can be directed at the way buildings are designed and constructed, how they are oriented on a lot, their size, the disposition of openings etc. Yet another can relate to the behaviour of people – how much they cycle or walk compared to driving a car; the extent to which they purchase energy efficient household goods; whether they minimise and recycle waste; how much they economise in the use of water, gas and electricity. Still others might encourage retro-fitting of existing building stock with carbon-minimising or water efficient technology or apparatus, such as water tanks or solar panels.

This study has focussed on achieving five *Sustainable Design Imperatives* (see Chapter 1), of which all have some relevance to sustainability, but two are particularly relevant:

- Sustainable Urban Form
- Sustainable Building Design

Sustainable Urban Form is addressed by many of the Design Guidelines proposed throughout this report. This chapter concentrates on *Sustainable Building Design*.

Vision 2020 By Design provides a significant policy opportunity for Council to ensure that new buildings, by their design and siting, have reduced levels of energy use, water consumption and environmental impacts.

The Council's ESD (Environmentally Sustainable Design) Initiatives

Vision 2020 By Design sits within the context of the Council's endeavours across a broad policy front to create a more sustainable city.

Reducing our levels of use of the earth's finite resources is now widely recognised as an essential part of everyday life, and local governments have a pivotal role to play in working with their communities to achieve this objective. State and national governments and their agencies provide considerable information, incentives and legal requirements aimed at reducing the amount of energy and water we use and encouraging the use of renewable sources of energy. The commercial sector provides an ever-growing range of products and services to help property owners meet these emerging community objectives.

This is a trend that will continue and will have a progressively greater impact on the way we live, work and move about.

The Council has addressed environmental management in several ways.

As part of the Environmental Leadership Program, a series of Fact Sheets has been prepared, providing practical advice on such topics as climate change, air quality, consumption of materials and resources, energy, and water.

The Council's Environment Strategy includes policies, objectives and targets relating to climate change, water conservation, sustainable purchasing and consumption, protecting the Shire's natural assets and enhancing its biodiversity. The Strategy includes long-term targets in the areas of Energy, Water and Land Use.

3.2

Proposed ESD Policy & Tools for Yarra Ranges

Proposed ESD Policy

Vision 2020 By Design makes a number of recommendations which are consistent with the Council's Environment Strategy and which focus on making new buildings more environmentally efficient. These recommendations are included in an *ESD Policy* which covers building design, the siting of buildings, the use of water and energy, and new development in established built-up areas.

The provisions included in that Policy complement Design Guidelines in this Study that are aimed at achieving a more sustainable urban form. Consolidation of new development into existing urban centres has many environmental and social benefits. It reduces travel distances, makes public transport more viable, reduces car dependency and supports more energy-efficient modes of travel, makes better use of existing infrastructure, preserves natural vegetation, and adds life and vitality to urban areas.

The proposed *ESD Policy* is described in detail in Appendix B. The Council will need to consider the extent of application of the policy, as applying it to all new buildings in the Shire from the outset will have substantial resource implications. An appropriate first step would be to apply the policy to the categories of development recommended to be subjected to the STEPS, SDS and ESD Management Plan processes described below. Council officers are trained to provide assistance to developers and builders to ensure that new buildings make a positive impact on the reduction of energy and water use.

Sustainable Building Design Tools for Yarra Ranges

This Report recommends that Council adopts and implements the sustainable design program known as STEPS/SDS, applying it to all new buildings.

- ◆ STEPS (Sustainable Tools for Environmental Performance Strategy) apply to residential developments.

- ◆ SDS (Sustainable Design Scorecard) applies to non-residential developments.

This program was pioneered by the Cities of Moreland and Port Phillip in 2005 and is used by a growing number of local governments in Victoria. Should a statewide program be introduced, Council would implement that program.

This Report also recommends that Council requires an *ESD Management Plan* to be prepared for some larger projects.

Regulatory Context

The State government provides policies and guidance to assist developers, builders, businesses and homeowners to reduce their levels energy and water use. In terms of new buildings, the Victorian Building Regulations impose specific requirements for new houses and apartments.

New dwellings and new residential subdivisions are required to meet state-based standards which are applied through the Victorian Building Regulations. These require all new houses and apartments (BCA Class 1 and 2 buildings) to achieve:

- ◆ 5 Star energy rating for building fabric plus water savings measures, and
- ◆ A rainwater tank or a solar hot water service.

The State Government is developing an assessment tool (provisionally entitled "VicBest") to guide the design and environmental performance of new buildings. However, it is not fully developed or adopted (as at June 2007). In the absence of a state-wide policy an increasing number of local governments have adopted their own sustainable development policies.

Moreland / Port Phillip Initiative

Since 2005, the Cities of Moreland and Port Phillip have worked collaboratively to bring their individual sustainable design policies and implementation tools together as a combined package, known as STEPS and SDS Non-residential.

These joint policies are currently regarded as the benchmark for assessing sustainable design within the context of planning permit applications. Other Councils in Melbourne have adopted these policies in order to bring consistency to the ESD policies applied by Councils rather than have different policies applying in each local government area.

STEPS/SDS is a web-based self-administered assessment tool which provides a comprehensive assessment of the environmental performance of a proposed residential or non-residential building and generates a report describing the sustainability performance of that building and how it can be increased to meet a certain minimum standard.

STEPS apply to planning permit applications for:

- Individual residences
- Town houses
- Multi-unit developments
- Residential additions or extensions
- Residential component of a mixed use building.

STEPS covers the five areas of: greenhouse emissions from operating energy, peak energy use, mains water use, stormwater quality impacts, and building material impacts. It also calculates the number of bicycle parking places required and the necessary area for waste recycling services.

For new non-residential buildings the SDS Non-residential component of the tool is used.

Proposal

To ensure that new buildings meet pre-determined performance criteria, it is proposed that Council adopts STEPS/SDS as policy and encourages applicants for planning permits to incorporate ESD features in their buildings through the evaluation of proposed buildings using the STEPS/SDS tool, as below. For larger projects, it is proposed that an *ESD Management Plan* is sought from applicants for planning permits.

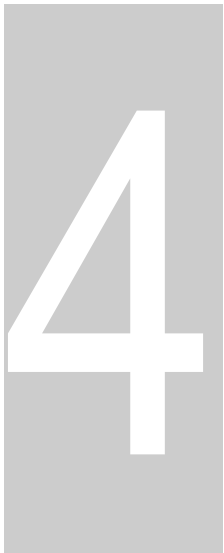
Applicants for Planning Permits are encouraged to provide the following information with their application:

Development	Requirement
New single dwellings or multi-unit developments of up to 10 units	<i>Completed STEPS form</i>
New residential developments of more than 10 dwellings or, in the case of serviced apartments, motels, etc., more than 10 rooms	<i>Completed STEPS form ESD Management Plan</i>
Commercial, industrial, community and mixed use developments with a floor area of up to 1000sq.m	<i>Completed SDS form</i>
Commercial, industrial, community and mixed use developments with a floor area of more than 1000sq.m	<i>Completed SDS form ESD Management Plan</i>

The *ESD Management Plan* would include:

- ◆ evidence that the proposed development meets State government requirements for ESD, and
- ◆ evidence that the proposed development has been assessed against STEPS or SDS as appropriate.

Applicants are encouraged to engage a specialist ESD consultant to prepare their ESD Management Plan.



Implementation

Introduction

Implementation of *Vision 2020 By Design* is founded on six implementation strategies, as foreshadowed in Chapter 1. The six strategies are:

1. Augment the MSS (Municipal Strategic Statement)
2. Revise / Upgrade Planning Scheme Local Policies
3. Upgrade Planning Scheme Overlays
4. Improve Planning Application Processes
5. Raise Community Awareness
6. Improve Council Procedures

The remainder of this chapter is structured around each of the six strategies. Each section contains recommendations to Council and explanatory text.

Changes to the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme

The major planning scheme changes proposed by *Vision 2020 By Design*, which are embodied in the first three implementation strategies, are:

- ◆ Additions to the MSS to embody the high level policies resulting from this study.
- ◆ Additions to and revisions of Local Planning Policy to incorporate the Design Guidelines produced in this study.
- ◆ Review and refinement of Overlay schedules and boundaries – probably as a separate and later stage of work following on from the LPPF Review.

These strategies have been formulated to integrate with the LPPF (Local Planning Policy Framework) Review that the Council is undertaking. The LPPF Review Directions Paper anticipated that *Vision 2020 By Design* would be implemented by the kind of planning scheme changes just described.

The LPPF Review itself is being structured to accommodate the recommendations of this study. [Note that *Vision 2020 By Design* is referred to in the LPPF Review as the *Built Environment Framework*.] The Key Issues being addressed in the LPPF Review are:

- Implementing Vision 2020
- Consolidating Activity Centres
- Directing Housing Development
- Protecting Neighbourhood Character
- Leadership in the Environment
- Improving Green Wedge Management
- Rural Landscape Management
- Design Quality and Sustainable Design
- Locality-Based Planning
- Embedding Regional Strategy Plan Directions
- Operational Experience with New Format Planning Scheme

A number of these topics reiterate built environment issues arising from Vision 2020, or provide a useful context for considering matters to be addressed in *Vision 2020 By Design*.

The LPPF Review Directions Paper proposed actions along the following lines:

- ◆ Rewrite the MSS and Local Planning Policies and prepare and exhibit as an amendment.
- ◆ Implement as a separate planning scheme amendment the zones and overlays arising from the Housing Strategy and Action Plan.
- ◆ Prepare a separate planning scheme amendment to implement Activity Centre Structure Plans, including new policies.
- ◆ Prepare a Green Wedge Management Plan and implement the related policies and controls by means of a separate planning scheme amendment.
- ◆ Incorporate outputs from the Built Environment Framework [i.e. *Vision 2020 By Design*] into relevant sections of the amendments referred to above.

Augment the MSS (Municipal Strategic Statement)

Existing MSS

The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) outlines the vision for the future use and development of Yarra Ranges Shire. A number of objectives set out in the MSS are relevant to *Vision 2020 By Design* including the following. The shaded wordings in particular could either form the basis of augmented sections or be replaced by new material from *Vision 2020 By Design*.

21.05 Townships – Large and Small

- ◆ To encourage a diversity of dwelling types and consolidate residential developments in areas that are not subject to physical constraints
- ◆ To establish sustainable and attractive townships which can support a range of commercial, retail, community and recreational facilities and services.
- ◆ To strengthen the role of Lilydale and Chirnside Park, as the Shire's two major activity centres, in providing integrated clusters of well designed and conveniently located business, employment and housing opportunities.
- ◆ To recognise and protect the distinctive characteristics and environmental features of the residential areas throughout the Shire.
- ◆ To promote proper siting and good design in the construction of all buildings and in the carrying out of works.
- ◆ To maintain the rural setting and compact form of rural townships.
- ◆ To upgrade the character and appearance of major arterial road "gateways" to the rural townships and commercial centres of the Shire.

21.06 Non Urban Areas

- ◆ To maintain and strengthen the agricultural role of the Shire
- ◆ To retain and protect the scenic landscapes, rural and green wedge character and special environmental features of the Shire.
- ◆ To provide for low impact tourist facilities which complement the distinctive rural and green wedge character and natural features of the Shire

21.07 The Environment

- ◆ To protect and conserve the environments of the Shire which are of local, regional, state and national significance.
- ◆ To ensure that the use of the land, the construction of buildings and the carrying out of works are of a type, scale and design which do not adversely impact on the natural environment and take account of physical development constraints.
- ◆ To control development in areas of high wildfire hazard.
- ◆ To prevent inappropriate development in flood prone areas.

Proposed MSS Structure

The following revised MSS structure was proposed in the LPPF Review Directions Paper. Shaded areas indicate sections that could contain material from *Vision 2020 By Design*.

21 MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT

21.01 YARRA RANGES SHIRE PROFILE

21.01-1 The Shire's Landscape in the Metropolitan Context

21.01-2 Landscapes & Urban Forms with the Shire

21.02 VISION FOR THE SHIRE OF YARRA RANGES *(based on V2020)*

To include sections on Natural Environment and Built Environment

21.03 STATE & REGIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

The following sections are likely to cover Key Issues, Objectives, Strategies, Implementation, Further strategic work, Other Actions and Sustainability Principles:

21.04 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

21.05 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

21.06 COMMUNITIES

21.07 ECONOMY

21.07 LOCALITY-BASED ISSUES & OBJECTIVES

Structure to be derived from *Vision 2020 By Design*

21.07-1 Urban Areas (within the Urban Growth Boundary)

21.07-2 Green Wedge Areas (outside the Urban Growth Boundary)

21.07-3 Public Land Areas?

21.08 KEEPING ON TRACK – MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE MSS

Conclusion

Most of the material in chapters 1, 2 and 3 of this report has been written with the explicit intention of forming the basis of changes to the Yarra Ranges MSS. The following recommendation explains how this material might be distributed.

Recommendation

Refer the following to the LPPF Review for inclusion in the MSS:

- ◆ Wording based on *The Shire's Landscape & Urban Form* (Ch2: Significance of the Shire's Landscape and Evolution of the Shire's Urban Fabric), which could lodge in proposed section 21.01.
- ◆ The five *Sustainable Design Imperatives* (Ch1), which could lodge in proposed section 21.02.
- ◆ The Character Type descriptions and Preferred Character Statements in Volume II, which could lodge in proposed section 21.07.
- ◆ The Design Objectives from Volume III, which could lodge in proposed section 21.05, possibly with their descriptive paragraphs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 2

Revise / Upgrade Planning Scheme Local Policies

Existing Local Planning Policies

The existing set of local planning policies relevant to the built environment have a strong focus on different land uses and the management of development within them, and within different landscape types. Almost all of the Shire's local planning policies refer to the character, siting and design of development within different contexts. The shaded references in particular could either form the basis augmented sections or be replaced by new material from *Vision 2020 By Design*.

Clause 22.01 Residential Areas

Sets out objectives and policies relevant to Metropolitan Residential Areas, Foothills Residential Areas and Rural Townships. The areas to which this policy generally applies are excluded from the study area of the *Vision 2020 By Design*, except where a Significant Landscape or Environmental Significance Overlay applies. The policy provides guidance in relation to, among other things, the protection and enhancement of surrounding neighbourhoods, landscapes and the environment.

Clause 22.02 Rural Living Areas

Provides guidance for land use, dwellings and subdivision within the Green Wedge A Zone and the Rural Living Zone where it occurs inside the Urban Growth Boundary. The policy seeks to, among other things, protect the landscape and environmental values of the Mt Dandenong Ridge, and carefully manage development within green wedge land. It also highlights the need to protect the many significant landscapes that are located within Rural Living Areas such as the Dandenong Ranges.

Clause 22.03 Rural Areas

Applies to all land within the Green Wedge Zone, the Rural Conservation Zone and the Rural Zones. The policy outlines the important role of rural areas in the Shire, and provides guidance for different land uses, landscape types, Dwellings and Subdivision. The policy focuses on the retention of rural land uses and the need to protect local amenity, the environment and surrounding landscapes.

Clause 22.04 Commercial Centres

Seeks to, among other things, provide well designed commercial centres, and encourages development that improves the appearance of the built form and open spaces, and enhances the landscape character of the area. It is policy that buildings and works in commercial centres are sited to respond to the environmental and built form character of the

centre and streetscape characteristics. Landscaping is also to be provided to reinforce the **image or identity** of the area.

Clause 22.05 Industrial Areas

Outlines the role of industry in the Shire, and touches on built form issues associated with industrial development. It is policy that industrial uses on main roads or tourist routes are designed to enhance the appearance of the area, and screen planting and landscaping are provided to minimise visual intrusion in rural townships, rural areas or other situations that may be sensitive to nearby industrial activities. The policy encourages buildings and works that are well-designed with siting that complies with the pattern of setbacks in the area and allows sufficient space for landscaping.

The Tourism, Horticultural Structures, and Advertising Signs policies

Briefly address the design and development of buildings and works, with policy statements to ensure that development is compatible with the **landscape or residential character** of the surrounding area.

Clause 22.11 Development in Residential Rural Living and Rural and Green Wedge Areas

Is most relevant to *Vision 2020 By Design*, with a strong focus on landscape character and visual amenity. The policy provides siting and design guidance for development in different land use zones and provides general policy guidance for all development stating that it should not compromise the landscape qualities of the surrounding area, should provide built form consistency, avoid prominent ridgelines, hill tops and other visually exposed sites and should be finished in subdued or non-reflective materials.

22.12 Vegetation Protection

Touches on landscape considerations, stating that the removal of vegetation should not detract from the **landscape character** of the area, should not be removed for the purpose of retaining a view, and where located within a Significant Landscape Overlay, should not detract from the key characteristics identified in the overlay.

Clause 22.11 Development in Residential Rural Living and Rural and Green Wedge Areas

Clause 22.11 includes policies on:

- Building heights and setbacks in R1Z, LDRZ and RLZ
- Landscape character and neighbourhood amenity
- Landscaping and visual amenity
- Provision of utility services
- Protection of waterways
- Dams

These policies address a combination of issues, including urban and landscape character, residential amenity, vegetation protection, environmental issues, drainage, waste disposal, land slip and erosion. Only some of the content is directly relevant to *Vision 2020 By Design*, and of this, much goes into greater detail – for example the specification of heights and setbacks (which, by the way, is not generally countenanced by DPCD). Clause 22.11 is likely to be disaggregated and dispersed in accordance with the proposed Local Planning Policy structure (see below). We suggest that the content of Clause 22.11 be reviewed in the process of preparing the new local policy structure to ensure that everything important finds an appropriate nest in the revised Clause 22.

Vegetation

A planning permit is required for vegetation removal in most parts of the Shire, except for metropolitan residential areas of Lilydale, Mooroolbark, Chirside Park and Kilsyth. More intensive housing development in residential areas has increased the pressure to remove established canopy trees. A study of the tree canopy in the Shire's residential areas has provided the basis for better targeting the permit controls over vegetation removal. The LPPF Review Directions Paper has recommended strengthening and better targeting the Vegetation Policy and controls, mostly as a result of work undertaken in the Environment Strategy.

Proposed Local Planning Policy Structure

The following revised Local Planning Policy structure was proposed in the LPPF Review Directions Paper. Clearly most if not all of these Local Policies could contain material from *Vision 2020 By Design*, but the main vehicle is the *Landscape & Urban Form Policy*.

22 LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

Residential Areas Policy [Housing Strategy / Neighbourhood Character Study]

Non-Residential Uses in Residential Areas Policy (if required) [Housing Strategy]

Activity Centre Policies [Structure Plans - Individual Activity Centre]

Out of Centre / Non-residential Development Policy [All non-res uses on land outside designated ACs]

Green Wedge Policy [Green Wedge Management Plan]

Landscape & Urban Form Policy [Built Environment Framework = *Vision 2020 By Design*]

Rural Conservation Policy [Green Wedge Management Plan]

Environment Policy / Sustainability Policy / Biodiversity Policy [Environmental Strategy]

Advertising Signs Policy

Vegetation Policy

Conclusion

The *Vision 2020 By Design* Design Guidelines and the ESD Policy appear to be best suited to locate in the Local Planning Policies. The Design Guidelines can probably be edited substantially for insertion into the Planning Scheme, as many of the guidelines are common to several situations. While the average citizen or applicant will appreciate being able to obtain a simple brochure containing only guidelines for a particular location, amalgamating this into the Planning Scheme is best done in a way that minimises or eliminates repetition.

The Design Guidelines in Volumes II and III have been expressly structured to relate directly to existing Planning Scheme Zones. The reasons for this are:

- ◆ To enable the Guidelines to be used in the exercise of discretion in decisions on planning applications
- ◆ To ensure that the Guidelines are accessible and 'user-friendly' (Zones are the first point of entry for most Planning Scheme users)

We suggest that the way the Guidelines are incorporated into the LPPs should make this connection explicit.

The *Character Type Design Guidelines* (Volume II) relate to nominated localities, and it is necessary for the user to refer to a map (see Chapter 2). One of the directions being pursued with the LPPF Review is to increase the locality-based emphasis of the Planning Scheme. This component of *Vision 2020 By Design* can provide a significant component of this direction.

The ESD Policy (Appendix B) probably nests best with the Environment Policy / Sustainability Policy / Biodiversity Policy proposed in the LPPF Review.

Recommendation

Refer the following to the LPPF Review for inclusion as Local Planning Policy, probably in the proposed Landscape & Urban Form Policy:

- ◆ The *Character Type Design Guidelines* (Volume II).
- ◆ The *Development Type Design Guidelines* (Volume III).
- ◆ Any part of the *ESD Policy* (Appendix B) not included in the MSS.

Refer the *ESD Policy* (Appendix B) to the LPPF Review for inclusion as Local Planning Policy, probably in the proposed Environment Policy:

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 3

Upgrade Planning Scheme Overlays

Planning Scheme Zones provide a useful entry point into Local Policy on the siting and design of development, as already remarked. At present many if not most forms of development in the Shire require a planning permit, largely as a consequence of the provisions of CI 53. [CI 53, which is unique to the Shire of Yarra Ranges, requires a permit for most forms of development as a means of implementing the Regional Strategy Plan.] A review of CI 53 is proposed and a key aim of the review is to remove the permit requirement in a many instances, particularly for single residential developments.

There are also Overlays across substantial parts of the Shire – the SLO (Significant Landscape Overlay) in particular. These also generally require a permit for development. The boundaries of the SLO are based on the National Trust designations from over 20 years ago. The Schedule provisions of the SLOs are general in nature, and contain insufficient guidance relevant to the exercise of discretion on planning permits. The Council's statutory planners are keen to have the SLO provisions made more prescriptive and explicit. This will require a thorough review of significant landscapes in the Shire, work that is unlikely to be scheduled until after the LPPF Review. The recommended reworking of Clause 22.11 of the LPPF and introduction of guidelines will however provide a much improved basis for development control in the interim.

The LPPF Review has also highlighted inadequacies with CI 53 – its provisions are too sweeping and lacking in specific objectives and decision criteria. CI 53 often duplicates permit requirements established by other controls, particularly overlays. The Council is considering the possibility of replacing aspects of CI 53 with more finely targeted and more effective Overlay provisions, including use of a revised SLO.

So while *Vision 2020 By Design* has provided a categorisation of landscapes in the western one third of the Shire, along with corresponding Local Policy guidelines, the longer term need is to overhaul and upgrade Overlay protection of the significant landscapes.

Within the metropolitan urban area of the Shire, the Council has hitherto made little use of Overlay controls. It is clear to this team that potential exists to consider introduction of Overlays in the following circumstances:

- ◆ To implement the Neighbourhood Character Study (eg use of the Neighbourhood Character Overlay in specified locations)
- ◆ To give effect to built form controls in areas of concentrated change such as Activity Centres, most likely through the DDO (Design & Development Overlay)

The *Vision 2020 By Design* also includes material that could be considered in helping to strengthen Heritage Overlay Schedules, and in constructing Schedules for any other new Overlays under consideration (eg VPO – Vegetation Protection Overlay).

Recommendation

- ◆ Identify in the MSS an intention to review Overlay Schedules (eg Significant Landscape Overlays) with a view to rationalising and improving the effectiveness of controls and policies relating to the built environment.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 4

Improve Planning Application Processes

This study recommends four process initiatives aimed at improving the quality of planning applications in relation to the five *Sustainable Design Imperatives*:

Process Initiative	How Applied	Details
Context & Site Description Form	To be lodged for retail/commercial developments, medium & high density residential developments and shop-top housing/mixed use developments, for endorsement prior to submitting the planning permit application.	Appendix A
STEPS Process	To be followed in association with permit applications for residential developments, including individual dwellings, town houses, multi-unit developments, residential additions or extensions, and the residential component of a mixed use building.	Chapter 3
SDS Process	To be followed in association with permit applications for non-residential developments.	Chapter 3
ESD Management Plan	To be prepared for residential developments of more than 10 units and non-residential uses of more than 1,000m ² , for endorsement at the time of approving the planning permit application.	Chapter 3

The categories of development to which each of these processes would apply are summarised in Diagram 1.3 in Chapter 1. They are based on the study team's understanding of the priority design issues faced by the Council, as outlined in section 1.3.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council:

- ◆ liaises with and then signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Moreland and Port Phillip to formalise an agreement for the use of STEPS/SDS;
- ◆ adopts STEPS/SDS as its primary implementation mechanism to achieve environmentally sustainable design of new buildings;
- ◆ implements a 12 month trial of the STEPS/SDS tool, with the capacity to extend the trial or adopt an alternative tool thereafter;
- ◆ establishes an internal sustainability/statutory/strategic working group to coordinate implementation of the trial;
- ◆ actively promotes the STEPS/SDS tool as Council's preferred method of assessing ESD in planning permit applications;
- ◆ provides training and support for Statutory Planners and Building Staff who have primary contact with developers and builders;
- ◆ provides information, support and incentives for developers to use the tool;
- ◆ applies the tool to new or major upgrades of Council facilities; and
- ◆ becomes an active participant in the Local Government ESD Advocacy Forum.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 5

Raise Community Awareness**Dissemination of the *Vision 2020 By Design* report**

Much of the content of the *Vision 2020 By Design* report is potentially accessible in style and use of illustrations to members of the Yarra Ranges community. The report could be reproduced in whole or in part, perhaps with a special graphic design treatment, for wide distribution in the community.

Guidelines Brochures

The Design Guidelines have been written with a view to including them in the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme, as described above. However they can play a more widespread and more accessible public role if they are published in a form that attracts the interest of a wider community. Material from Volumes II and III can be combined and illustrated in a manner that would make them useful public education tools. The resulting Guideline sheets could be printed and made available at planning enquiry counters and in community facilities around the Shire. They could also be placed on the Council's website.

Appendix D shows an example of the kind of graphic treatment that could be applied to a Guideline sheet.

Workshops / Lectures

The Council could initiate a program of public workshops or lectures on the subject of sustainable design, based on material in the *Vision 2020 By Design* report. These could involve local designers and architects, or some of the better known, leading edge designers from outside the municipality who can bring new perspectives and help raise the sights of local people.

Awards, Competitions

A number of Councils have initiated award schemes for good design. Some have achieved a high public and professional profile, demonstrating the Council's commitment to good design, and helping to raise the bar on design quality generally. Community-based competitions, such as a schools-based 'depict the character of your local community' competition, can help raise general community awareness of the importance of urban and landscape character.

Recommendation

- ◆ Disseminate the *Vision 2020 By Design* report widely in the local community.
- ◆ Make the Design Guidelines available in an attractive brochure format for planning applicants, objectors and others with an interest in the built environment of the Shire.

- ◆ Consider initiating a program of workshops or lectures on good design, and / or a professional good design award scheme, and / or local community-based character depiction competitions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 6

Improve Council Procedures

Design Assessment of Planning Applications

The Council's assessment of the design of planning applications is another area for potential improvement. This applies to the officers who assess applications, and also to those involved in taking the decisions – both officers and Councillors. One possibility is to establish an expert Design Panel to review significant applications. The team's view is that this may not be an ideal solution for the Shire. Design Panels can be useful for very large projects, but for normal applications there is a danger they will add to timelines. It is also hard to find good design professionals who are in touch with current development 'reality' with the time to allocate to a Panel. Above all, there is a danger that a Panel might undermine the confidence of Council staff to make design decisions.

Our preference is that Council introduce some form of training and mentoring system for its development approval staff, as this builds in-house capacity. A parallel but differently focused process could be introduced to improve Councillors' appreciation of the principles of good siting and design.

Recommendation

- ◆ Introduce a design training and mentoring system for Council approvals staff, and make available information sessions for Councillors.

Using *Vision 2020 By Design* in Future Council Studies

Future studies by the Council may benefit from material in *Vision 2020 By Design*, for example, the anticipated Green Wedge Management Plans.

Recommendation

- ◆ Consider making use of *Vision 2020 By Design* findings in future Council planning studies.

Council Works and Building Projects

An important way for Council to set the lead in good design is to do so through its own projects. There are two main ways to pursue this: through the works Council undertakes in the public domain (eg streetscaping; traffic management); and by aiming for excellence in the design of Council building projects like libraries and sports pavilions.

Council works design should contribute to the 'sense of place' themes set out in *Vision 2020 By Design*. Over time the Council could develop a series of Technical Notes covering matters like paving, street furniture and traffic management. In the interim, a working group of officers could review designs to ensure they meet all requirements – not just the direct functional brief.

Design of Council buildings is likely to benefit from improved attention to the design brief. These should explicitly refer to the Guidelines set out in this report, and require a proper context assessment. Design competitions could be used for exceptional sites and projects.

One important aspect of design competitions and PPP (public private partnership) projects is to retain the creativity and design quality of the appointed architect through to the detailed specification phase. This link can be lost when a design concept is handed to a developer or builder to implement before it has been documented into a detailed design.

Recommendation

- ◆ Prepare Technical Notes for the design of Council works in the public domain, prepared with strong urban design input.
- ◆ Ensure that briefs for new Council buildings follow the guidelines and procedures contained in the *Vision 2020 By Design*.
- ◆ Appoint top quality architects to design Council facilities, and set up development processes that maintain continuity of responsibility for the originally appointed design team through to detailed design and specification.

Monitoring / Evaluation

Implementation of *Vision 2020 By Design* should be monitored and the effectiveness of the Guidelines and other initiatives evaluated at regular intervals – say every three years.

Recommendation

- ◆ Establish a simple process for monitoring and evaluating implementation of the *Vision 2020 By Design*.