



Bairnsdale Growth Strategy

Building a Better Bairnsdale

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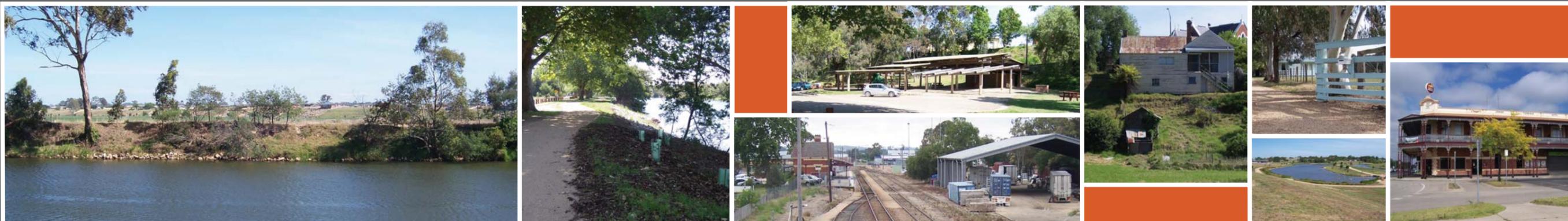
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Introduction



The purpose of the Bairnsdale Growth Strategy is to provide clear direction for the Shire of East Gippsland ('Council') and local community with regards to the sustainable growth and development of Bairnsdale over the next 20 years.

The Strategy specifically provides:

- An overview of the strategic role and function of Bairnsdale;
- A snapshot of the key strategic drivers affecting the city; and
- A vision for "Building a Better Bairnsdale" and associated overarching objectives.

In doing so, the Strategy provides a series of directions in relation to:

- Managing residential, commercial and industrial growth;
- Promoting housing diversity;
- Creating accessible communities;
- Planning local activity centres;
- Improving leisure and recreation facilities;
- Creating social capital with enhanced community facilities;
- Promoting economic well-being;
- Regenerating East Bairnsdale;
- Revitalising Bairnsdale's CBD;
- Conserving the rural hinterland;
- Protecting agricultural assets;
- Protecting the Mitchell River environs;
- Enhancing landscape quality throughout the city and surrounding areas;
- Preserving cultural heritage, including assets of indigenous and early European significance;
- Developing a sustainable transport network; and
- Providing green infrastructure.

In advancing the above directions, the aim of the Strategy is to create sustainable communities. In this regard, the strategies are supported by an implementation plan, which will be developed at a later date.

It is noted that the Strategy (Volume 1) is supported by, and can be read in conjunction with, the technical material provided in the Background Report (Volume 2).



The Role and Function of Bairnsdale



Bairnsdale acts as the main service centre and “civic heart” of East Gippsland. In addition to providing a range of daily service needs for local residents, the city accommodates a number of higher-order facilities and services of regional significance. Key existing roles in this regard include providing:

- A relatively full range of retail and commercial facilities, service industries and food processing plants, health and community services, sporting and recreational facilities and tertiary education;
- A focus for business within the Shire;
- A centre for public sector administration, including key Commonwealth and State agencies; and
- A regional public transportation hub.

This Strategy seeks to support these existing functions, whilst also encouraging and enhancing the following additional roles for the city:

- A centre for sub-regional cultural facilities, tourism servicing and major events;
- An increased range of tertiary education and vocational training services;
- A broader industrial base with an emphasis on competitive advantages and linkages to existing industries
- A major public transport interchange (road-rail) for both passenger and freight;
- A revitalised city centre; and
- A stronger relationship with it’s natural riverside setting.

In considering the future role and function of the city, it is important to consider Bairnsdale in the context of its relationship to other centres in the region. In this regard, Bairnsdale both compliments and competes with a number of other key centres, including Sale, Traralgon and Morwell. Bairnsdale also plays an important role in providing employment and services to the residents of surrounding towns.



Primary Strategic Drivers



The following primary strategic drivers of change will actively influence the shape and role of Bairnsdale over the short to long term.

- Bairnsdale is the regional service centre of East Gippsland providing a core role in the provision of education, recreation, employment and retail opportunities for the broader municipal population. The reinforcement of this role through growth that is managed and secures investment and development opportunities of a regional scale is imperative. The Strategy seeks to reinforce this role by providing opportunities for growth through a re-structured Central Business District (CBD) and the nomination of priority employment and growth areas.
- Bairnsdale currently has a significant supply of residentially zoned land which will be taken up over the next 15-20 years. The Strategy will act as a tool to manage this growth ensuring an appropriate supply of zoned land is available to respond to market demand. The Strategy provides for staged priority rezonings over the medium term within the defined town boundary, which will enable the release of multiple development fronts to improve overall supply and affordability in the residential market.
- The role of small towns near Bairnsdale in supporting its residential growth pressure needs to be factored into the supply requirements of the Strategy i.e. Paynesville, Lakes Entrance, Nicholson, Johnsonville, Swan Reach and Lindenow. These areas provide a substantial dormitory working and learning population for Bairnsdale as well as lifestyle opportunities in close proximity to Bairnsdale. These areas will absorb some of the residential demand generated by the growing Bairnsdale population.
- The economic profile of Bairnsdale is defined by jobs in construction, manufacturing, service industry, health, education and retail workers. The local economy has strengths in food production and processing with key firms such as Patties and Vegco providing significant employment opportunities in town. Opportunities to diversify and add value to the economic base through industry attraction, training and filling supply chain gaps are promoted through the Strategy to strengthen the employment role of Bairnsdale as a regional centre. New employment opportunities will not only enhance the local economy but will also provide opportunities to retain young, skilled, workers who are currently moving out of the area for employment..

- The Bairnsdale community is reasonably well served with community and recreation assets. Opportunities for rationalisation of some of the active open space areas have been identified a key recreation issue. Services and support for the aged and low income earners is also a key area of focus for community infrastructure. The integration of East Bairnsdale will be an important in improving the sustainability of the community into the future. New residential areas will be required to provide passive open space and local convenience retailing to support the local residents and realise the development of sustainable neighbourhoods.
- Bairnsdale has an ageing population that requires a diverse range of services and facilities to meet changing social and physical needs. This extends beyond responsive health and medical services, to broader social and access elements which are support a strong community. The Strategy provides recommendations for both hard and soft infrastructure to respond appropriately to this change including appropriate and well located housing; improved footpaths; community bus; integrated health services; improved community / library facilities etc.
- The natural environment in Bairnsdale is an important asset that will require careful management. A key aspect of future growth is its ability to embrace these assets and create environmental relief to the built and urban environment as well as responding to the community's desire to protect the environment. Balanced against the demand for growth and development, this is a vital issue that will shape the strategic land use response.

- Improving the overall accessibility for walking, cycling and cars in Bairnsdale is another important focus of the Strategy, particularly in order to remedy the current barriers to accessibility in the CBD. General structural changes to the CBD and location of land uses will be required to support any potential increase in pedestrian movements. Opportunities to explore an alternative truck route around the southern edge of town, through the industrial area, are also suggested as a way to separate heavy vehicle traffic from general commuter traffic and pedestrians. As part of this, some re-thinking of car parking to better manage supply and demand will be needed.
- The Bairnsdale CBD functions as generally two core precincts north and south of Main Street. The Strategy seeks to maximise development opportunities on both sides of the Main Street, to create clear anchors and destinations that encourage better movement and integration of the city centre. Longer term re-development of the existing Dahlsens site on Dalmahoy Street, surplus VicTrack land and the railway line represent key development opportunities to re-energise the southern part of the CBD.



The Vision: 'Building a Better Bairnsdale'





Summary of Key Strategies



In order to respond to the objectives of 'Building a Better Bairnsdale', a series of guiding strategies are advanced in the balance of this document. These can be summarised as follows:

1. The Strategy **establishes a town boundary within which to manage growth**. The focus for development inside the boundary is the designated north-east and west residential growth areas. These precincts will allow for substantial growth in a well-planned and integrated manner near primary activity nodes. The north-east growth area will be supported by a consolidated employment node, while the west growth area will be supported by education and community infrastructure.
2. The Strategy **seeks to revitalise the CBD** through a re-structure of the centre layout, including the rethinking of the Nicholson Street mall; opportunities for consolidation of activities through investment into the southern part of the CBD around key sites such as the land east of the railway station and the hardware store site on Dalmahoy Street (if vacated); and improvements to overall permeability and access including a proposal for an alternative truck route at the edge of town.
3. The Strategy **seeks to establish and confirm a retail hierarchy** for Bairnsdale that is anchored by a strong CBD, and supported by specialised centres, neighbourhood level centres and convenience centres. It is proposed that Bairnsdale will contain two specialised centres: a community focussed specialised centre in the form of the BARC activity spine, and an employment focussed specialised centre in the form of the consolidated north-east employment area anchored by Patties and the proposed Dahlsens homemakers centre. The neighbourhood centres are larger centres that serve the local residential area and passing traffic and will generally contain a supermarket function. The local level centres will serve the daily needs function including medical facilities.
4. The Strategy **identifies opportunities for economic development and employment growth** in Bairnsdale. The designation of employment areas, with specific industry foci including food processing, service industry and health & community services, reflects opportunities for significant growth in these industries in the future within a certain land use framework:
 - The protection of opportunities for future growth is sought by preventing encroachment of non-industrial uses.
 - The provision of options for expansion of community and associated services in the BARC activity spine.
 - The provision of additional floorspace for commercial and retail sector growth in the CBD over time.
5. The Strategy **establishes a framework for improvements in community infrastructure and cohesion**. This includes significant urban renewal opportunities in east Bairnsdale supported by residential masterplans, consolidation of neighbourhood dwelling facilities with a local level centre, and overall improvements in permeability and circulation through structural modifications to the road network and development configuration. The strategy also provides for a new learning centre at the Council offices with the existing library acting as a municipal shopfront in its central CBD location; expanded and connected community infrastructure within the BARC activity spine; and opportunities for better integration of residential areas and community segments through overall design improvements.
6. The Strategy **provides for better utilisation and provision of recreation activities** including consideration of the future aquatic needs/requirements for the retention of the outdoor pool facility; the rationalisation of the East Bairnsdale oval; and the facilitation of a multi use facility in Lucknow.
7. The Strategy **seeks to protect and enhance the environmental assets** of Bairnsdale through strategies that avoid encroachment and development impact on key sensitive environmental assets associated with the Mitchell River and the Macleod Morass.
8. The Strategy **seeks to celebrate the heritage assets** of town, in particular the management of European heritage buildings and a variety of forms of aboriginal cultural heritage spaces such as a re-thinking of appropriate use of Howitt Park.
9. The Strategy **creates opportunities to improve sustainable transport modes** in Bairnsdale through upgraded services and network span and improvements to the walking & cycling networks, in particular the provision of footpaths in residential areas and the completion of a walking circuit along the river.
10. The Strategy **provides an implementation schedule that will guide the prioritisation of project delivery** and funding to ensure the vision and objectives are realised in the future.



Managing Growth



6.1 Overview

The key element of this strategy is to develop a framework within which decision making can be undertaken that will ensure the overall facilitation and management of growth in Bairnsdale.

While settlement and growth have evolved over time in a more informal manner in Bairnsdale, it is considered that an appropriate and sustainable land use future must be established based on clear directions that provide parameters for growth.

The benefits of managing growth include:

- Create certainty over the future layout and shape of the city.
- Concentrate growth in particular directions.
- Control sprawl particularly toward sensitive environmental areas.
- Provide clear direction for development funding and investment.
- Direct renewal and revitalisation within an integrated and well thought out framework.
- Protect rural values and ensure ongoing use.
- Cost effective infrastructure provision.

In the absence of this direction, there is a risk that Bairnsdale will evolve in an ad hoc manner resulting in:

- Pressure for the ongoing outward expansion that fragments the overall fabric of core residential and commercial areas and impacts on capacity of physical infrastructure.
- Linear town extensions that create continuous commercial fronts seeking to maximise highway exposure whilst compromising amenity, entry experience and efforts to deliver consolidated commercial nodes in town.
- The further erosion of the CBD as commercial uses decentralise by locating in un-planned 'out of centre' locations.
- The creation of disconnected urban settlements with limited access to services, retail and community infrastructure.
- Settlement patterns and a town structure that cannot be adequately serviced by public transport, or navigated by walking or cycling.
- The creation of self contained "satellite" communities on the city periphery, fragmenting the role and relationship of the urban core.
- Pressure for the development of quality rural land for urban purposes.
- Continuing disadvantage due to poor access to community infrastructure, services, recreation, and affordable housing options.
- The continuation of incompatible development interfaces where residential amenity is impacted by land use, traffic and environmental externalities.

As a regional centre, the growth of Bairnsdale will be influenced by both internal and external drivers. These drivers are discussed below.

Internal drivers of growth

Internal drivers that will influence growth relate to:

- The needs of the resident population;
- The changing demographic;
- The role and function of the CBD; and,
- The impact that this has on land supply and demand.

Having regard to the above, it is forecast that the population of Bairnsdale will grow to more than 15,000 people by 2031. This population is forecast to age at a rate greater than the Victorian average and as such will require diversity in housing types and a strengthened base of core health and community services to meet their ongoing needs. The housing profile of Bairnsdale will need to respond by providing opportunities to age in place of independent or assisted care living in central and non CBD based locations proximate to key services.

The housing profile will also be required to respond to the needs of young adults and families seeking to remain in Bairnsdale for employment and lifestyle reasons who may currently be experiencing limits in their housing choices as a result of house and rental price, supply and type of housing offer. As such, the growth strategy must identify appropriate opportunities to deliver housing diversity in appropriate locations.

External drivers of growth

External drivers that will influence growth relate to:

- The housing profile of Bairnsdale will need to respond to the changing needs of the regional and State population;
- The role of nearby small towns in absorbing population growth i.e. Paynesville, Lakes Entrance, Nicholson, Johnsonville, Swan Reach and Lindenow;
- The regional economic development and lifestyle profile of the city and the role this plays in attracting and retaining new investment and population;
- New economic opportunities that come with regional growth in Victoria and the attraction of new skills to the area; and
- External funding opportunities to enhance community infrastructure, which will be improved by having a strategic framework for growth.

Bairnsdale plays a key role in attracting rural residents and residents of surrounding towns due to the provision of services, education and employment in the city. This pull factor needs to be accounted for in the growth profile for Bairnsdale, factoring in a percentage of growth greater than the anticipated population growth based on Census data trends.

The role surrounding small towns as residential extensions to Bairnsdale will also influence the land supply requirements contained in the growth strategy. Due to their proximity, coupled with their amenity and lifestyle qualities, these small towns provide a level of residential diversity that is not currently experienced in Bairnsdale. This will be attractive to existing and new residents and will influence how the city grows over time.

The ability to strengthen and grow both the economic base in Bairnsdale and the education and training capacity will be another key factor in dictating growth and subsequent land supply requirements. The location of local jobs and education will also influence housing location for many people and must be factored into growth scenarios.



The location and provision of community services will also act as a pull factor for positive population growth, particularly amongst the ageing population. The need to live close to services will drive new trends in housing supply in Bairnsdale, and the strategy must facilitate this through recognition of appropriate locations for growth and re-development.

Implementation of the growth strategy will need to respond to these drivers of growth by facilitating development, infrastructure and services in the right locations.

Land supply scenario and influence on growth

Residential land supply

Currently, Bairnsdale contains 197ha of vacant residential zoned land. Based on current take up rates and a yield of 7.6 dwellings per hectare, the analysis underpinning this strategy has identified that in total Bairnsdale currently has a 14 year supply of vacant residential zoned land. This does not include current re-zoning requests.

It is understood that due to long lead times for development, the desire for multiple development fronts and the pressure for short term housing supply based on demographic trends, Council support an increase in residential zoned land beyond this 15 year supply. While the strategy supports the position of Council it is considered that to appropriately manage growth, direction is required as to guide the location of this land and the proportionate rezoning of this land over time. To this end, the growth strategy has established an appropriate framework for decision making as contained in the strategies that follow.

Industrial / business land supply

In total, Bairnsdale contains a 93ha supply of vacant industrial land. This land is primarily located to the south and south-west of town, with some vacant land also located in east Bairnsdale.

The land to the south and south-west is well contained and accessible, and is generally well separated from high amenity uses such as residential. This area supports a mix of low job density, intensive industrial uses, as well as some of Bairnsdale's core food manufacturing industry. This location has been mooted for a potential future inter-modal interchange due to the proximity of vacant land to the railway line and highway.

The land to the north east of town is defined at present by Patties, which is a high job density food manufacturer. This operation is proposed to expand in the short term and will continue to be an employment anchor in this area. The establishment of a new homemakers centre near Patties, will create a more diverse employment base for this location. This move may also create the impetus for investment and interest in land on the south side of Princes Highway which is currently occupied by fragmented industrial activities and under utilised sites. The balance of the east Bairnsdale industrial land is occupied by under utilised and very low job density users.

It is important that existing industrial land is able to meet the needs of new and expanding industries, rather than seeking more land. This will require land to be used more efficiently and developed to suit different types of industrial uses.

The same applies to the supply of business and commercial land. There are several opportunities for future commercial floorspace to be accommodated within the existing CBD area. The establishment of professional services near the Council offices has created an anchor for commercial office activities at the edge of the CBD, the growth of which is expected to continue in the future given the limited availability of purpose built commercial sites in town at present. The growth strategy has carefully considered these factors when determining an appropriate hierarchy for the growth of commercial and industrial land.

6.2 Objectives

- Ensure that growth is contained within an established town boundary.
- Ensure adequate and appropriately located supply of land to deliver sustainable growth.
- Ensure that land provided for residential growth is responsive to demographic and population trends and is supplied in a timely manner.
- Encourage multiple residential development fronts, even if this results in a quantum in excess of a 15 year supply.
- Manage traffic and vehicle movements within the overall growth framework.
- Land identified for growth must be serviceable.
- Ensure that supply meets demand.

6.3 Strategies

Establish a town boundary to limit growth

To manage the future growth of Bairnsdale within sustainable settlement patterns, a town boundary has been established and will apply to:

- The railway line in the west;
- Phillips Lane in the east;
- The northern boundary of the proposed Brookfield Lakes estate at Doyles Road in the north;
- The Racecourse in the south.

The town boundary is based on the following principles:

- Containing the city to a manageable and definable size given the forecast population and demographic profile.
- Responding to the natural and physical entry features to town to maintain a clear transition between the rural and urban environment.
- Ensuring growth occurs in areas that can be easily serviced.
- Consolidating residential and economic development growth and increasing walkable catchments to local jobs.
- Directing residential growth in a manner that doesn't compromise the overall integrity of established industrial areas.
- Limiting inappropriate ribbon development that impacts on the function and structure of town.
- Protecting environmental amenity.

The town boundary effectively defines three residential development growth fronts, each of which is discussed below:

a. *Northern Bairnsdale:*

The north Bairnsdale growth front is essentially the northern extension of the Eastwood Estate to goose gully, for high amenity residential lots supported by a local activity centre and passive open space.

The town boundary provides for the natural growth of residential areas to the north of this Estate in an integrated and sustainable manner.

This growth front is designated for standard residential development however diversity in lot size is encouraged to ensure a mix of housing and residents in this area.

At the northern edge of this growth front larger lots are encouraged to respond to the quality of the land, the availability of views and to soften the built form profile due to the topography in this area. These lots will create a transition to rural residential lots and rural land to the north.

The provision of pedestrian networks and open space links to assist in north-south movements through the area and into town are a key component of delivering a sustainable neighbourhood outcome in this growth front.

b. *North-Eastern Bairnsdale:*

The north-east Bairnsdale growth front includes the development of the combined area east of Great Alpine Road to Phillips Lane, south of Lanes Road and north of the flood plain in East Bairnsdale, for a consolidated residential outcome providing for housing diversity near a significant new employment node.

The town boundary aims to focus new residential development into the north-east growth front. From the current East Bairnsdale community, to the larger rural living lots to the north, the opportunity exists for significant growth over time to be facilitated through careful planning.

This growth front will contain a consolidated employment area focussed around Patties, the new homemakers centre site and the industrial land south of Princes Highway. These individual employers will not only benefit from a re-thinking of how this area can work as a consolidated node in terms of business relationships and land use synergies, but also due to the critical mass that will be generated to support the local jobs and business growth.

Undoubtedly this growth front contains challenges, including fragmented land ownership; potential drainage issues in the northern portion; interface management issues around the industrial / employment node; and the ongoing need for public housing provision in the southern area. However, these challenges can be overcome through careful planning and design. As such, this area has been embraced as a focus of this strategy. Subsequent chapters of this document contain specific actions and recommendations that provide solutions to each of these challenges.

c. *Western Bairnsdale:*

The west Bairnsdale residential growth front is a greenfield growth front east of Calvert Road that will create a new neighbourhood supported by schools, jobs and local convenience retailing.

This growth front is extensive and contains zoned land that can provide for medium-long term housing supply near key social infrastructure and jobs.

This growth front is contained to the east of Calvert Road, to maintain a separation from large industrial activities to the west and to maintain opportunities for walking and cycling links to key services at the western end of town, including the hospital.

This growth front will be required to provide convenience level retailing to support the daily needs of new residents.

The town boundary also effectively defines the direction of economic development and investment as follows:

- *North-eastern growth area:* As identified above, a consolidated employment node is proposed in the north-east growth front focussed around Patties, the future homemakers centre site and the industrial land south of the Princes Highway.

This node responds to the emerging land use complexion of this area based on recent planning decisions. This node will provide for the revitalisation and re-use of redundant land on the south side of the Princes Highway, creating opportunities for comparative service industry, peripheral retail or employment activities to consolidate in this area.

The town boundary establishes a firm edge to this node and will inform the design and operation of this area over time. Importantly, the town boundary will avoid a situation of ad hoc and continuous linear development extending east beyond Phillips Lane. This outcome would be difficult to manage from a land use perspective; could undermine the established west Bairnsdale employment area and re-investment into the core north-east Bairnsdale industrial area; would create amenity and presentation issues particularly due to surrounding rural land uses; and would generally compromise the vision for a consolidated north east growth area that focuses employment uses centrally to the residential growth front.

- *CBD:* The town boundary seeks to strengthen the retail and commercial focus of the CBD by clearly establishing a hierarchy of uses and limiting opportunities for retail and office fragmentation at the edges of town.

- *South Bairnsdale:* The south Bairnsdale employment front will act to consolidate the industrial role of land south and south-west of Bairnsdale and protect the ongoing operation and expansion of these businesses in the future.

There is a significant amount of vacant, flat, good quality industrial land in this area. This land is largely self contained and has minimal interface with high amenity uses such as residential. The area is well located near the key entry point to the city and key access routes (and future transport routes as identified in this Strategy).

The town boundary seeks to protect the ongoing integrity and operation of industry in this area by restricting residential encroachment at the edges, and maintaining flexibility for further expansion south if and when this is required.

The town boundary will play an important role in facilitating investment and economic development by creating certainty about the future of growth in this area and setting clear parameters in regard to encroachment of non-compatible land uses in the future.



- *West Bairnsdale*: The west Bairnsdale employment area will maintain the role for linear highway based commercial and retail development at the western entrance to town.

The railway line is recommended as the western boundary. This entry to the city has a clear commercial character however this is softened by the natural landscape, setbacks and width of the road cross-section.

The town boundary limits westward expansion of commercial or industrial uses, ensuring that there is not a 'creep' of highway frontage commercial even further along the Princes Highway. The town boundary contains these uses to the east of the railway line, avoiding fragmented linear development further west and unnecessary sprawl at the expense of the efficient use of currently zoned land and land identified for strategic growth.

This will limit negative impacts on the consolidated form of town and the approach to centralising key employment and commercial uses as much as possible. It will also alleviate any potential risks of creating substantial employment footprints on isolated sites, which may over time seek further expansion for viability and business development that could impact on opportunities being more appropriately located in the identified core employment growth areas. Recommendations regarding the presentation of these commercial uses are contained in subsequent chapters.

Given the current supply of vacant industrial land in the south and north-east employment areas; and, the focus for retention and consolidation of retail and commercial uses including professional services and offices in the CBD, it is considered that there are no reasonable arguments for an extension of town west of the railway line.

Carefully manage the timing and release of residential land within the town boundary

A 15 year supply of zoned residential land currently exists within Bairnsdale. The application of a town boundary will allow for residential development on currently un-zoned land beyond this 15 year supply.

The growth strategy proposes preferred development fronts and growth areas within the town boundary, however does not seek to rezone land in these areas in the short term seeking to maintain the 15 year supply of zoned land.

To manage decision making around future land release within the town boundary, it is recommended that over time land be rezoned based on the following criteria:

- Delivery and maintenance of the overall vision and objectives of the strategy.
 - Applications for development and rezoning of land must support the Strategy's vision and objectives.
 - Applications for greenfield residential development must respond to the expressed direction for growth area development contained in the vision and objectives.
 - Applications for infill development and consolidation must respond to the expressed direction regarding the focus for growth area development contained in the vision and objectives.
 - Applications that do not support the vision and objectives should not be considered by Council.

- Assessment of land availability and location, including ability to integrate with existing residential areas.
 - Applications for residential development must be located on land within the established town boundary.
 - Applications that integrate with existing residential areas, or areas being currently subdivided, will be preferred over applications on land fragmented from existing or emerging residential extension areas.
 - Applications for residential development must articulate a design response that clearly integrates with surrounding residential areas.
 - Applications that do not share an existing residential interface, but are proximate to an interface, must provide for future integration through street layout and open space networks.
- Serviceability of land and overall land capability.
 - Applications for residential development should be prioritised in areas that are serviced or can be easily serviced.
 - In identified growth areas, necessary upgrades to service infrastructure should be programmed to come online as soon as possible.
 - Land zoned for residential use should be utilised ahead of rezoning other land.
- Environmental constraints.
 - Land within the established town boundary that is constrained by environmental factors such as flooding, should only be prioritised if an appropriate solution can be easily engineered.
 - Appropriate level assessments of native vegetation will be required ahead of any development approvals.
 - Appropriate level cultural heritage assessments will be required ahead of any development approvals.

- Proximity to health and community services, retail, education and recreation.
 - Land within the established town boundary that is near these services should be prioritised in the short to medium term ahead of more remote land.
 - Applications for development on land that is not near existing services, but proposes to provide such services, can be considered in the short term to medium term.
- Proximity to employment.
 - Land located near existing employment opportunities, including the CBD, the BARC activity spine, the north-east commercial node, and the highway west service industry precinct, should be prioritised in the short to medium term.
 - Land outside of the CBD must clearly articulate a design that will allow for ease of access and permeability to localised employment opportunities by walking, cycling and public transport.
- Timing of land release.
 - Multiple development fronts should be favoured to avoid negative implications associated with land banking.
 - Land release must be cognisant of the overall supply scenario in the area, and the timing and development intentions of adjacent land owners.
 - The timing of land release must be sequenced in a manner that ensures integrated development outcomes and efficient provision of infrastructure.
 - The timing of release of land must be cognisant of ensuring competition and multiple development fronts in the market.

Establish an edge of city truck bypass

An important element to managing growth in Bairnsdale is to provide for efficient and convenient out of town truck movements. Currently, trucks travel through the centre of the city creating significant traffic, pedestrian safety issues and amenity impacts such as noise. The growth strategy proposes to establish an alternative route through the south of the Bairnsdale employment area to divert trucks around town during business hours when high vehicle and pedestrian activity occurs in the CBD. This strategy is detailed further in the following chapter on 'Moving Bairnsdale'.

Protect environmental assets

Managed growth will also act to protect Bairnsdale's environmental assets and avoid encroachment into key, in tact, rural areas. The Strategy proposes to contain residential development within the proposed town boundary to avoid unnecessary incursions into sensitive environs. Further detail of how this will be managed is contained in the Green Belt & River Corridor Section of the Strategy.



Promoting Housing Diversity



7.1 Overview

Housing diversity is a cornerstone of creating sustainable communities supported by State Government policies. Achieving diversity in housing types aims to increase the mix of people attracted to live in a community. This mix of people helps to build social capital, encouraging more sustainable communities by avoiding homogeneity and encouraging distinctive neighbourhood character. This difference and mix, driven by the type of housing offered, seeks to establish a unique and identifiable sense of place in communities and reduce barriers or housing based prejudice that can be seen in areas where homogenous housing and communities establish.

A key element of this principle is providing a mix of lot sizes in a neighbourhood that can accommodate a variety of housing sizes and types. This naturally encourages a diverse base of people to move into these neighbourhoods, from families, to single couples with no children, elderly people living by themselves, and students.

This diversity also has an effect on broadening the supply and mix of house types, hence creating greater equity in the range of house prices. This improves overall affordability; the greater the mix of housing, and supply, the greater the opportunity for people of varying incomes to be able to purchase houses.

Housing diversity also ensures that core services and infrastructure are accessible to as wide a range of resident segments as possible.

Medium density housing and infill development

The residential stock in Bairnsdale is characteristic of a large Regional Centre, with the traditional core supporting low density, single detached dwellings on large suburban lots, and the peripheral area supporting larger lot, low density and rural living type housing opportunities.

There is some medium density infill development in the established city core that seems to be generally serving retirees or older adults within the special needs market. This infill development is generally located near the BARC facility and close to specialised medical and health facilities. Other infill development is limited despite the various housing needs of the population.

To provide a greater mix of housing in Bairnsdale, medium density housing and infill development are encouraged in key locations including:

- South CBD: Opportunities for infill development exist on vacant sites in this area, as well as part of re-use or re-development of sites that may become available for development, and underutilised land proximate to community services south of the railway line. Actions to facilitate this infill development are contained in the CBD Strategy.
- Surplus land around the train station: There is a considerable amount of surplus or underutilised land around the train station which provides opportunities for infill development. Opportunities exist for the re-development of the Office of Housing lots west of the station; potential development of surplus VicTrack land; and development of the site immediately east of the station (McLeod Street). All of these sites should be considered for well designed, medium density residential development, including multi level apartment style buildings where possible.
- BARC and surrounds: As part of the overall master-planning process for the BARC site opportunities for infill residential development should be considered by DET. This would increase housing supply in close proximity to education, recreation and health facilities and would be a suitable option for student accommodation or housing that supports the community uses on site. Development on this site would be required to be of a high architectural quality and be well integrated with the site, maximising its natural assets, without compromising the ongoing use of any of the current facilities. In addition, opportunities for the re-development of lots proximate to BARC for medium density housing is encouraged to compliment the proposed activity node in this area as identified within the 'creating local centres' strategy.
- River interface: Where possible, opportunities to open up the frontage to the river for housing (at the top of the embankment, outside the flood prone land), should be facilitated. At present, there are limited examples of housing on the CBD side of the river actually fronting the river and taking advantage of the views and amenity. While re-development opportunities may be limited, these should be facilitated where possible to increase the offer of housing in the city. It is appreciated that this type of housing may not be affordable to the average purchaser, however it will meet a need in the current housing offer in Bairnsdale for the higher end market and potentially the rental market if these sites are pursued for investment purposes.

Diversity in growth areas

Housing diversity is integral for the sustainable development of Bairnsdale's growth areas. To date, the balance of new residential development has occurred in the north of Bairnsdale around the Eastwood Estate. This area has evolved with standard residential lots which to date has had a preponderance for attracting "the same type of families into the same type of housing". While these neighbourhoods will thrive in the future, the assets and opportunities that are afforded to these residents will not be accessible to a broad cross-section of the Bairnsdale community as many people can't afford to buy into this market or equally the current housing offer doesn't meet their individual needs. Providing diversity in lot size and housing offer will increase the mix of new house prices in the area, and hence will provide opportunities for a wider variety of people to move into this area.

A committed development plan applies to the north Bairnsdale area. The proposed layout of which is informed by the ability to delivery of particular lot sizes. As such, Council has limited influence on the housing diversity in this area through future subdivision stages. However, given the age of the development plans and the changes in the planning policy framework over this time, Council and the developers are encouraged to review the development plan to seek improvements to the layout, lot size and yield.. Future development plans for land to the north of this area should be based on the principles of housing diversity.

In terms of the north-east growth area, enhancing housing diversity as a means of creating a greater mix of residents is vital. The north-east growth area is a large development front that is divided north south by the Princes Highway and associated industrial area. Land to the south (East Bairnsdale) is generally defined by public housing and more affordable housing stock, except at the river frontage where the more valuable traditional homes are located.

The analysis has identified that there are firmly established negative perceptions associated with this area as a result of the layout and concentration of public housing in this area. That said, this housing market is important to Bairnsdale and responds to a clear need of a segment of the population.



As opportunities for the re-distribution of this housing throughout the balance of Bairnsdale are limited, it is proposed that a full scale social and physical Urban Renewal program be embarked upon to open up this area through a revised street layout and a greater offer of housing types to increase the mix of people living in this part of the growth area.

The aspirations of people living in this area to upgrade to an alternate form of housing within their established community is currently not provided for. This situation needs to be remedied through greater housing offer and mix. The "Creating a better East Bairnsdale" strategy articulates the need for greater housing diversity in this growth area and identifies key recommendations to deliver this outcome through full scale urban renewal program in the southern part of the growth.

The northern part of this growth area is currently occupied by a mix of lot types including standard density residential around Lucknow and larger, rural residential lots to the north-east. Opportunities to create housing diversity through the future development of the rural living lots is encouraged to increase the overall housing offer in the growth area; to assist with the integration of neighbourhoods to the south, and west; and to increase the critical mass of people around the proposed north-east employment node.

The west Bairnsdale growth area is located in a new Greenfield area proximate to schools and local employment. To increase the critical mass around these key activity nodes and to respond to the diverse housing needs of families and the working population who will be attracted to this growth area, housing diversity and variable density is proposed for this area. Development will need to be located and designed to respond to the natural and physical constraints in this area. Development to the west will be limited to the proposed town boundary (Refer to the Growth Options Strategy).

Ageing in place

Housing diversity aims to respond as much to the needs of residents entering the housing market for the first time in growth areas, as to the needs of older residents re-thinking their living arrangements. At present, opportunities to downsize from the traditional family home into a unit or smaller house in town, near key services, are limited. This situation should be addressed through a specific project and policy statement prepared by Council to direct and facilitate development of housing and support services to enable the community to age in place. Strategies to this effect are contained below.

It is important for older residents to be provided the opportunity to 'age in place' in order for them to maintain established social, recreation and medical networks, which help to improve overall quality of life. For many, the limited supply of smaller independent or assisted care housing types in town is forcing people to remain in houses that no longer suit their needs and are located a distance from town. As such, opportunities for increasing the offer of medium density housing and assisted care facilities is important as part of the overall housing mix.

The role of the district housing market

The goal of creating housing diversity is to deliver greater choice for residents. The housing offer in Paynesville and other surrounding towns has access to an amenity and lifestyle that is different to Bairnsdale but is a core element of its regional attractiveness. In addition, the housing offer in these areas is of a different quality, owing to the size of the towns and their overall amenity. The lifestyle offered in these towns is attractive to new residents as well as to existing Bairnsdale residents seeking to re-think or upgrade their housing options.

The analysis identifies that people are choosing to live in say Paynesville for these reasons however continue to rely on Bairnsdale for employment, education, health and recreation. Hence, there is a need for greater recognition of the role of these towns in contributing to the Bairnsdale housing offer, and being considered in its overall land supply scenario. On this basis it is recommended that the land supply in these towns should be included in consideration of re-zonings and supply for future residential development and land release in Bairnsdale.

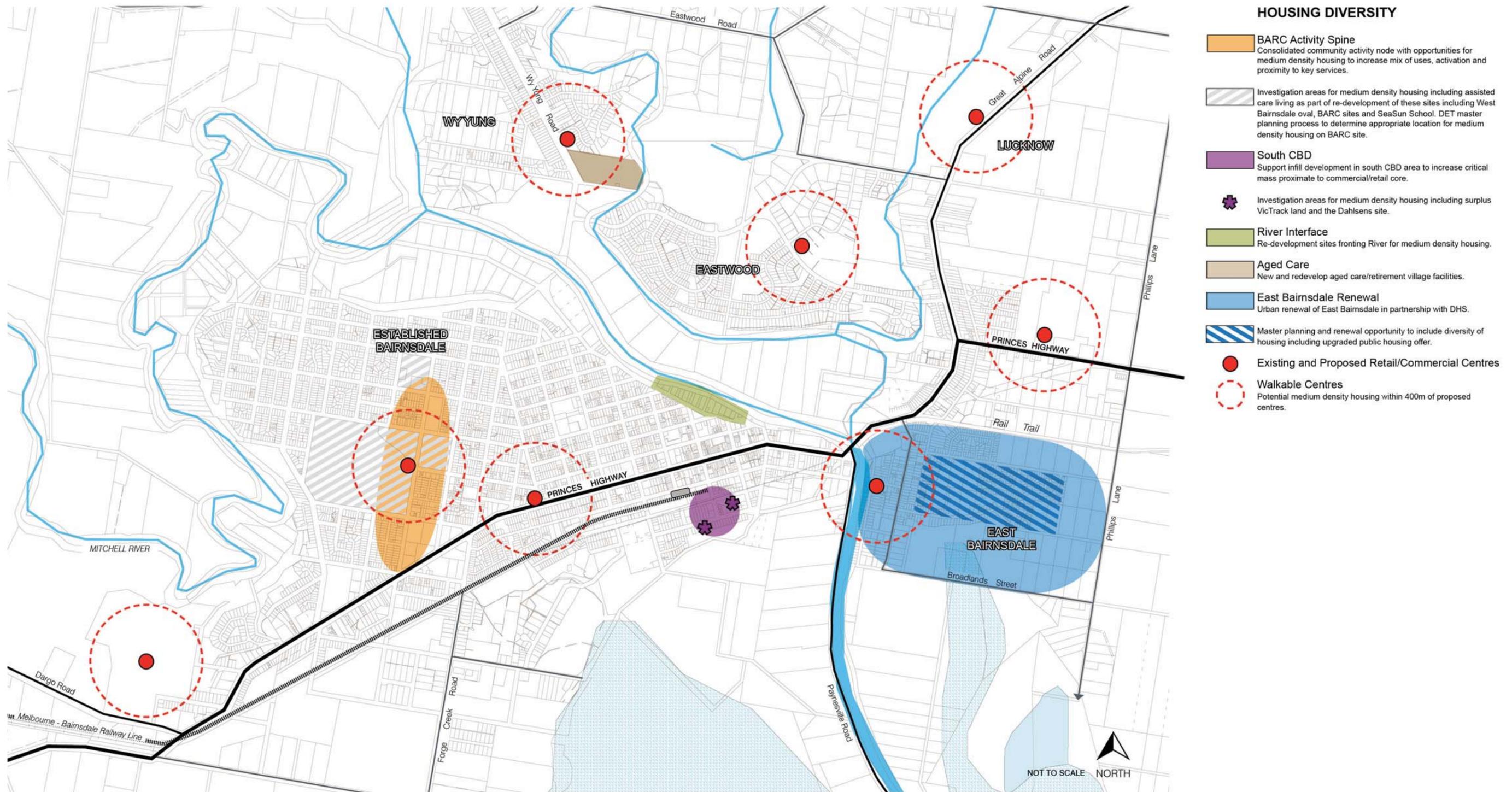
7.2 Objectives

- Encourage a mix of housing types and lot sizes near the CBD to meet the needs of the changing population
- Encourage housing for older people and families with special needs close to services and core infrastructure
- Encourage a range of visitor accommodation types for short term visitors and long term (seasonal) workers
- Factor housing opportunities in Paynesville into the growth of Bairnsdale.
- Encourage evolution of housing stock to meet the needs of a changing population.

7.3 Strategies

- Focus infill development and medium density opportunities into the established city area, in particular in the south CBD area; around the train station; as part of the BARC activity spine; and along the river interface where possible.
- In partnership with DHS, undertake a full social and physical urban renewal program in East Bairnsdale to re-think the subdivision layout and assess opportunities for housing renewal and upgrades.
- Accept Paynesville as a residential "extension" to the Bairnsdale housing market and part of the overall land supply scenario when considering re-zoning applications in Bairnsdale.
- Apply a DPO to land in the west growth area to include design, layout and density requirements to achieve overall housing diversity in this Greenfield area.
- Apply a DPO to land in the northern portion of the north-east growth area to include design, layout and density requirements to achieve overall housing diversity in this area.
- Re-visit existing development plans in north Bairnsdale to ensure that they reflect current planning policy in regard to housing diversity as required by Clause 56.
- Consolidate the Clifton Village in WyYung with additional housing on adjacent vacant land, including an increase in services; or identify appropriate sites for re-location closer to CBD.
- Encourage the development of housing for retired people in various formats to suit lifestyle, financial and mobility needs. Retirement villages, or similar housing arrangements, should be located in accord with the following criteria:
 - Near community and health services.
 - Within walking distance of a local shop.
 - On, or within walking distance to, a bus route.
- Undertake a study to determine the specific needs of the ageing population and their housing and lifestyle preferences. Use this information, and the above recommendations, to inform a local policy to implement criteria and preferred locations for retirement villages in Bairnsdale.
- Investigate opportunities for the potential location of a 'one stop health shop' or a new aged care residential development, near key medical and recreation facilities.

Figure 2 > Housing Diversity Plan



Creating Accessible Communities



8.1 Overview

The principles of accessible communities seek to maximise the opportunities of the resident population by increasing reasonable walking distance accessibility to key services and infrastructure. The principle aims to focus neighbourhood design in a way that shops, open space and community facilities are centrally located in neighbourhoods connected via easily accessible road and open space networks. By designing a neighbourhood on these principles communities can develop sustainable transport patterns and habits. Accessible communities are generally based on an informal grid structure that avoids the use of cul-de-sacs, increasing pedestrian permeability and direct access for all residents.

Core established residential area

Generally, the core established part of town provides for ease of walkability to key services particularly in areas around the CBD, swimming pool and the BARC facility. While there is evidence of many people walking in these neighbourhoods, the lack of provision of footpaths in many parts of the core area may reduce the walkability for some residents, including the elderly, people with special needs, mothers with prams and children.

The generous road cross section in established streets provides a clear opportunity to introduce footpaths in these areas without negatively impacting on overall traffic movement, parking or street character.

Along the proposed BARC activity spine (refer to Local Centres Strategy), a directional pedestrian network will be required to assist improved navigation and safety between the hospital, BARC, schools and other community based services along this spine. This will improve the overall access to these activities by either walking or cycling.

Improving pedestrian connections to the train station at the southern end of town is also a key element of this strategy. Opportunities for greater 'way finding' through signage, lighting, and landscaping, will assist to improve legibility to the station from the core CBD area.

North Bairnsdale

The new residential subdivisions to the north of town have generally been designed following the principles of a walkable community. The integration between existing and future development fronts where multiple land ownership exists is something that will need to be planned for. Creating pedestrian networks that are integrated to enhance accessibility is important, particularly in terms of connecting to the future retail nodes, areas of passive recreation and the river.

East Bairnsdale

Due to the subdivision design and road layout of this area, the southern residential section of the area (East Bairnsdale) currently experiences poor levels of access and permeability. This has resulted in a situation where housing has become compartmentalised from the balance of town, creating clearly defined pockets of difference defined by housing type and tenancy. Owing to the road layout, and the high proportion of cul-de-sacs, the actual walkable catchment to the local shops, tennis courts, playing fields and community services are limited to most residents. In addition, the ability to walk into town to access the higher order services is made difficult due to the lack of east-west connections, particularly across the Mitchell River.

A number of options are available to improve overall walkability in this area. Firstly, a residential masterplan should be prepared for the vacant residential zoned land in East Bairnsdale around Lucknow Street. This masterplan should focus on providing an integrated street network that creates better access into and through the neighbourhood, focusing on connections to key services and recreation, including the local convenience retailing on Robb Street. The masterplan should aim to utilise a grid network of local streets and shared paths to improve east-west and north-south movements via car, walking and cycling.

Secondly, the restructure of the established residential area is required through strategic spot purchases at the end of court bowls to break down the cul-de-sac arrangement and create a more permeable grid network. This initiative relies on DPCD Urban Renewal funding and is unlikely to proceed in the absence of this. (Further detail is provided in the Strategy Plan 'Creating a better East Bairnsdale').

Finally, opportunities to create a new east-west pedestrian link across the river should be explored to improve permeability. This may include consideration of a bridge that links the rail trail to town, either through the retention and upgrade of the current rail bridge or a cantilever on the existing road bridge; or the creation of a new bridge further south along the river that connects Mary Street and the skate park on the west bank increasing the overall through movements from a destination and recreation perspective. These options will require significant capital expenditure and consideration of such should be undertaken in partnership with VicRoads and DPCD as part of the overall Urban Renewal project for East Bairnsdale.

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Review existing development plans

A number of approved development plans are currently being rolled out across Bairnsdale. Some of these plans are relatively old, having been prepared prior to the inclusion of the “sustainable neighbourhoods” residential subdivision provisions (ie. Clause 56) of the Planning Scheme. Where possible, developers are encouraged to review future stages of their development plans to ensure that new subdivisions are achieving best practice design outcomes and providing opportunities for greater diversity in housing.

North-East Growth Area

Unlike the other proposed growth fronts, the north-east growth area is a new greenfield area that will be subject to a new planning process. To deliver a sustainable neighbourhood outcome on this site, this growth area is to be designed in accord with the principle of walkable catchments as specified in Clause 56 of the Planning Scheme. To ensure walkability is delivered, the Strategy recommends the application of relevant planning controls so that individual land developers deliver neighbourhoods that have an integrated rather than an insular focus, ensuring that the location of services and open space is based on a broad view of residential catchment extending beyond an individual land owner’s interests.

The planning of this area will also need to take account of the objective of promoting expansion of employment activity to the south around Patties and will therefore need to avoid conflict with non-residential uses.

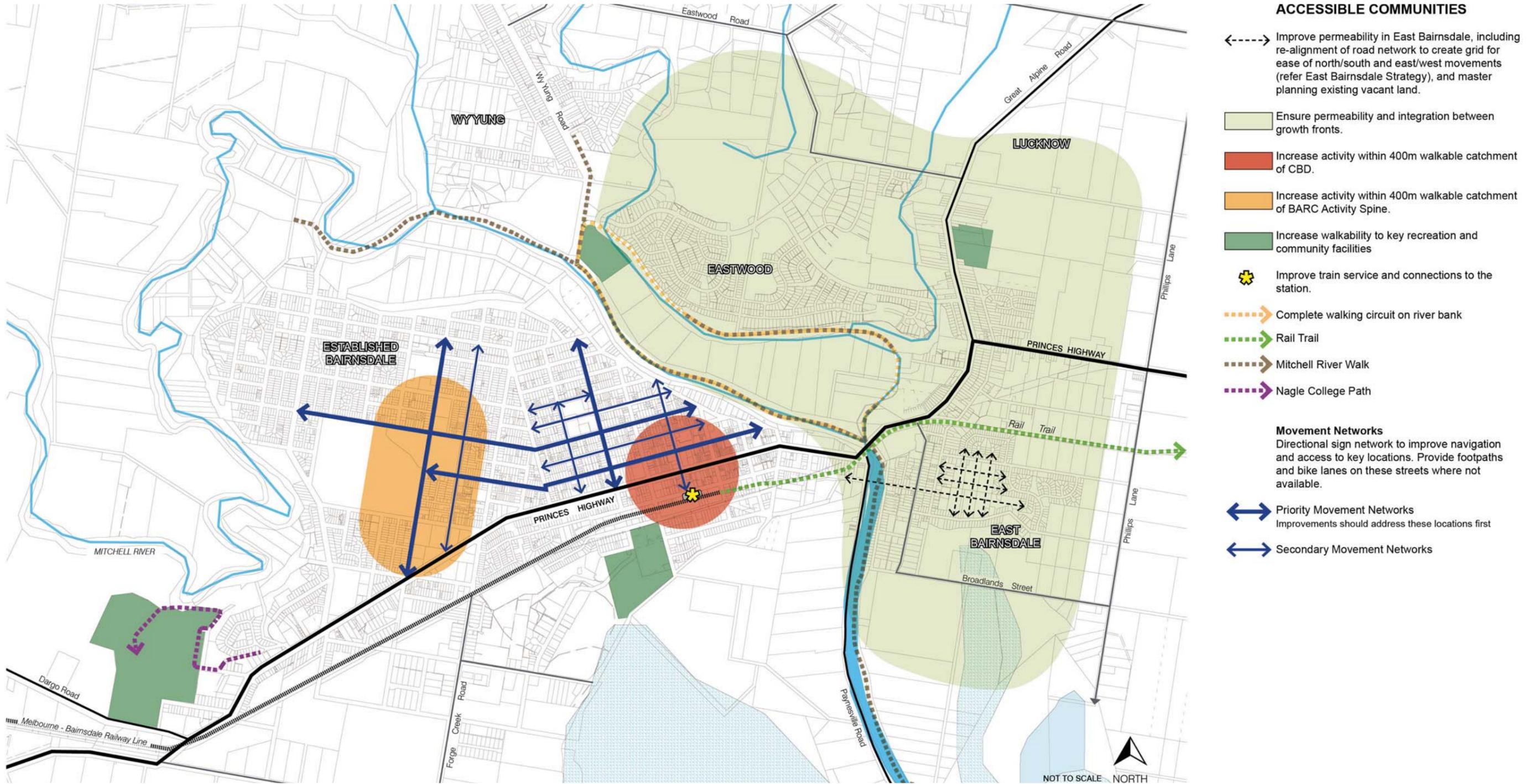
8.2 Objectives

- Encourage development of neighbourhoods which provide services, recreation and public transport within easy walking distance of most residents.
- Ensure the delivery of integrated and sustainable neighbourhoods in the growth areas.
- Enhance the pedestrian network in the existing developed area to provide convenience and safe pedestrian / cycle routes between major destinations.

8.3 Strategies

- Seek Urban Renewal funding from DPCD to undertake spot purchases and road network re-alignments in East Bairnsdale. Investigate a Public Acquisition Overlay to manage this process.
- Apply DPO to vacant land on Lucknow Street in East Bairnsdale to require a masterplan to be prepared for this area prior to any planning applications of approvals being issued.
- Re-visit approved development plans to ensure roll out of new communities are delivering best practice residential outcomes in terms of walkability.
- Apply a DPO to west Bairnsdale growth area requiring development plans to be prepared for areas of minimum 40ha to ensure an integrated and considered design outcome.
- In partnership with VicRoads, consider options for a pedestrian bridge across the river near the current road / rail bridge alignment. This may include upgrades to the existing bridge crossing.
- In partnership with VicRoads and DPCD, undertake a feasibility to develop options for a pedestrian bridge connecting the skate park with Mary Street in East Bairnsdale.
- Prepare an ‘access plan’ which identifies and prioritises key improvements to the existing pedestrian / cycle network.

Figure 3 > Accessible Communities Plan



Planning Local Activity Centres



9.1 Overview

The provision of local activity centres is an essential ingredient to deliver sustainable neighbourhood outcomes for both residential and employment neighbourhoods outside of the CBD. The principle of local activity centres is to provide centrally located centres that serve the core residential or employment catchment, allowing for convenience and daily needs retailing without having to travel into town. This is particularly important in some of the dispersed employment areas where there is a need for food, drink and top up facilities for day to day business operation.

Currently, outside of the CBD, there are limited local activity centres in Bairnsdale's residential and employment areas. The opportunities to provide a number of dispersed centres to meet the daily needs of the resident communities in the north-east growth areas and to the west; and the employment communities to the west and south are significant and are encouraged through this Strategy.

BARC activity spine

The BARC activity spine is discussed in detail in the Social Capital Section of this strategy. Essentially the BARC activity spine is a node of activity that extends north and south from the BARC site which includes employment activities to the south such as the service industry, hospital and Government Departments; and community and education facilities to the north. This area is currently not within a local activity centre and the people working, living and visiting this area rely on the CBD for daily needs retail including picking up their lunch.

To anchor this area, it is recommended that consideration should be given to the location of a new local centre on McKean Street. This centre will add to the complexion of land uses in and around the BARC site, and would serve a 'during and after hours' market given the mix of uses in this area.

It is recommended that this centre should be located in a highly accessible location. Options for the location of the centre could include:

- the surplus land on the BARC site near the road frontage to the aquatic facility;
- re-development of the West Bairnsdale oval site on the east side of McKean Street, opposite BARC; or
- re-development of the SeaSun School site, or land north of this, proximate to the health facilities.

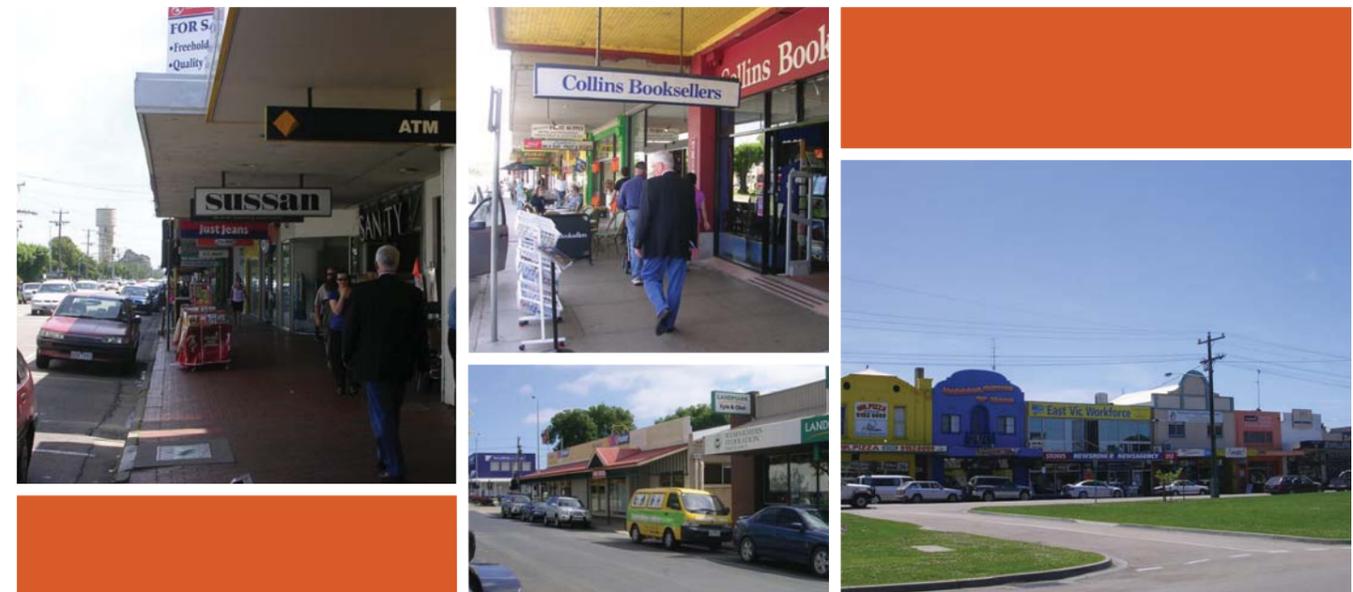
The preferred site should maximise convenient and walkable access for residents; integration with surrounding uses; and deliver a scale of activities that is commensurate with the catchment needs.

West Bairnsdale growth area

A local convenience centre will be required in the west Bairnsdale growth front to serve the newly establishing community. Due to the proximity to schools in this area, it is considered that the trip generating potential of this centre could be greater than those centres located in other neighbourhoods in the east and north of town. As such, it is assumed that a lot of these trips would be generated from beyond a walkable catchment. The role of this centre will need to be further defined based on timing and release of land in the residential area. Flexibility should be provided for this centre to grow with the catchment without impacting on the viability of the CBD based retail through the creation of a satellite type function.

South-west employment area

The south-west employment area is currently not serviced by a local centre. Given the job density in this area and the distance to the CBD, it is proposed that a small centre should be provided for workers to provide food and meet the 'top up' needs of businesses. This centre should be well located to serve the local worker population.



North-east employment area

The north-east employment area is anchored by Patties; however will evolve in complexion in the future with the establishment of the homemaker centre. The opportunity to consolidate this employment node with a quality convenience centre that is well located to serve the needs of the working population is important to assist in delivering the vision for this area. This node will be a high job density employment area that requires a local centre to be incorporated either as part of the new homemaker centre or on an alternative site adjacent to Patties. This centre could be located on the northern side of Princes Highway, if possible, where the critical mass of workers are; to be highly accessible and to be designed in a way that avoids perceptions of “exclusivity” to one industry or employer.

Closure of the tourist park to the west of Patties will be required to facilitate orderly expansion of this employment area and to prevent increased land use conflict as the employment area develops.

North-East Bairnsdale growth area

The north-east growth area will require convenience retail within walkable distance of its residents. It is considered that the future convenience centre at Eastwood Estate and Brookfield Lakes will support residents in the northern part of this growth area. It is considered that a small centre or corner shop in the northern part of the north-east growth area would not be viable given the proximity of more substantial retail floorspace. As such, it considered undesirable to promote a centre in this location.

The convenience offer in the southern part of the growth area will be required to expand to respond to residents needs. It is proposed that this convenience offer will expand and consolidate with an upgraded neighbourhood house. The retail component of this centre should be limited to 500sqm of retail floorspace.

9.2 Objectives

- Provide local activity centres in new and existing residential areas to support the daily convenience needs of the community.
- Provide local activity centres in key employment areas to serve the daily convenience needs of the working community.
- Locate all local centres centrally to their intended catchment, on walking and cycling networks where possible.

9.3 Strategies

- Provide a neighbourhood centres in the BARC activity spine of maximum 1,000sqm of retail floorspace to should serve the daily needs requirements of residents, workers and visitors to this area. A small supermarket of up to 500sqm would be supported as part of the retail mix in this centre.
- Provide a local convenience centres in the west Bairnsdale growth area of maximum 500sqm of retail floorspace to should serve the daily needs requirements of residents. Land should be provided on this site to enable future potential growth of this centre as appropriate based on an economic impact assessment of the retail catchment when nearly full development.
- Provide a local activity centre in the south-west employment area to serve the needs of the worker population. This centre should have a food / café focus. This centre should have a maximum floorspace of 500sqm.
- Provide a local activity centre in the north-east employment area on the north side of Princes Highway to serve the needs of the worker population. This centre should have a maximum floorspace of 1,000sqm.
- In partnership with DPCD, explore opportunities for the expansion and possible relocation of the centre in East Bairnsdale. This centre should be expanded to accommodate a consolidated neighbourhood house. This centre should have a maximum floorspace of 500sqm.
- An economic impact assessment will be required to be provided with all applications for new centres to confirm the appropriate size and type of facilities provided in each centre.

Figure 4 > Local Centres Plan (Retail and Commercial Hierarchy)



Improving Recreation and Leisure Facilities



10.1 Overview

Improving recreation facilities, in terms of expanding current provision and re-thinking opportunities for multi function use of existing facilities, aims to both facilitate the overall participation in active recreation in Bairnsdale and assist in building community.

The need to plan for healthy and active communities is a concept that has increased in currency over the past decade with the Heart Foundation establishing “healthy by design” guidelines to inform the design of cities and spaces to enhance overall opportunities for recreation and more active lifestyles. These principles are supported by the Strategy which encourages urban design to improve opportunities for walking and observing the natural environment, to improve overall well being.

The Strategy recognises the range of recreation opportunities in town and seeks to provide optimal facilities for organised sports with a preference for multi-functional spaces that can serve a number of sporting and leisure needs. Opportunities for creating space for cultural activities are also supported through the strategy as a means of fostering individual expression and social interaction in the community.

Aquatic facilities

Currently Bairnsdale is serviced by two aquatic facilities. The outdoor swimming pool is only operational seasonally and is run at a significant cost to Council due to the age of the facility. The indoor facility is available all year round and is well utilised and caters for short course swimming, aqua therapy and group exercise.

Due to costs and utilisation, the ongoing future of the outdoor pool is considered unviable. This land is owned by the Crown and should be considered for re-use for alternative recreation or public uses. The opportunity to establish a new facility at the BARC should be pursued.

Consolidation of sporting ovals

The analysis identified that there is an over-supply of ovals in Bairnsdale.

The Bairnsdale Oval is the Level 1 facility in Bairnsdale. This facility is well utilised however requires some upgrading. The Wy Yung oval is located in the flood plain and is currently well utilised. The Lucknow Oval is currently well utilised and is proposed for a multi-purpose facility which will expand its recreation focus. The West Bairnsdale Oval is well located near schools however is not fully utilised.

Multipurpose facility

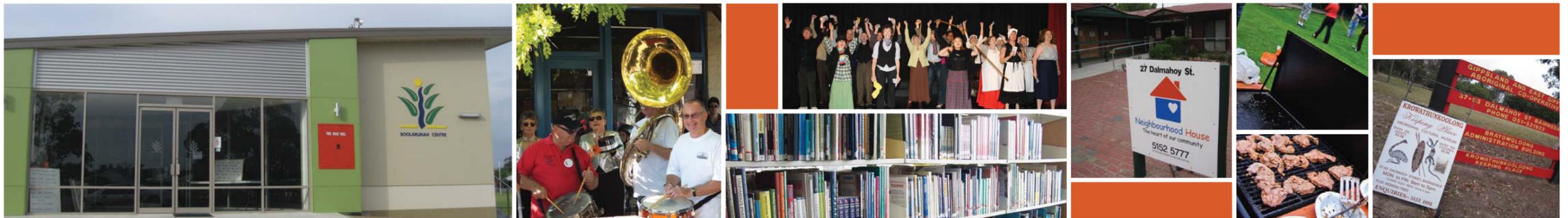
The development of a new multipurpose facility has been approved in Lucknow. This facility will accommodate groups for table tennis and squash. Given the quality of facilities available to other sporting clubs in the city, it is recommended that options to expand the user base of this facility should be considered to meet the needs of existing clubs. Recreation such as volleyball, gymnastics and gymnasium facilities should be considered at this site. This important opportunity is given due to the location of the new facility near the north and north-east Bairnsdale growth areas. This will provide an opportunity to increase overall access to formal recreation and increase participation generally.



Figure 5 > Improved Recreation and Leisure Facilities Plan



Creating Social Capital



11.1 Overview

The social capital principle relates to the provision of infrastructure to encourage community connections, build social interaction and enhance the overall experience of place.

Community infrastructure can strengthen communities by providing spaces where people can mix and meet; by facilitating activities that allow people to come together and participate; and by providing spaces for community events.

Community infrastructure also promotes participation in public life through social, educational, sport and recreation activities and programs that generate networks and foster a sense of community belonging.

BARC activity spine

The BARC community activity spine is a key element of the strategy plan. This spine is identified in the Strategy plan overleaf, and extends from the Bairnsdale Hospital to the Sea Sun School in the north. This spine includes a diverse range of community, health, recreation and education uses. Currently, these activities are disconnected by virtue of geography, land ownership and form, however functionally the connection and synergy between these uses and their user groups is very strong.

It is recommended that this spine, and its connectivity, be strengthened through the following strategies:

- A well signed and lit strategic pedestrian network linking these sites, including a formal shared path network for safe walking and cycling to these facilities.
- A landscape improvement plan to compliment the strategic pedestrian network and create visual cues to assist with navigation to community infrastructure along the spine.
- A public transport plan to determine the location of bus stops at key strategic sites within the spine.
- A local convenience centre located on or around the BARC site to assist in creating a day / night time anchor for the spine. This retail area will serve the local residential catchment, as well as the core users of and workers at the activities along this spine.
- A consolidated service hub to provide a range of community services at a single site, creating ease in access for uses of multiple services including a one stop health shop. The consolidation of services is particularly important when considering the needs of the ageing population and the ability to minimise trips and make them more efficient. It is recommended that the consolidated service hub be co-located with the local convenience centre in order to create an integrated activity focus if possible. Alternative sites include the re-use of the Sea Sun School if Council are able to take over the lease on this site.

- Integrated planning with the DET and Council regarding the education hub and any changes to the siting and design of education or recreation facilities to ensure they compliment, not undermine, the delivery of the activity spine.
- Integrated planning with DET and Council to ensure retention of recreation co-location opportunities that allow public user groups access to school/BARC recreation facilities. The flexible use of this space will ensure community use of this space in formal and informal ways that assist to activate the proposed activity spine.
- Opportunities to facilitate medium density housing along the spine to increase critical mass and activate the spine across the day enhancing overall safety for users. Medium density housing should be supported on the BARC site if redundant land is identified as part of the masterplanning process. This is not uncommon however would require DET to sell the land to be developed by a private sector interest. The improved capital value of the site as a result of residential development would assist the delivery of other improvements to the site.

Consolidated neighbourhood house

A neighbourhood house is currently provided in East Bairnsdale. The neighbourhood house is located in a residential building, not a purpose built facility and is surrounded by residential uses. The location of the neighbourhood house is not easily accessible due to the road network in this area. Any upgrade of this facility in this location is not supported by DHS.

On this basis it is recommended that a purpose built consolidated neighbourhood level community node should be developed on McEacharn Street, near the active recreation area. It is understood that significant funding is available through DHS to undertake renewal of East Bairnsdale. It is recommended that some of this funding be utilised for the purchase of land to accommodate this facility. Selection criteria for this site should include the following:

- The site should be located on a key local street to ensure that it is highly accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.
- The site should, if possible, be located at the confluence of a cross street to improve access and permeability with the balance of the neighbourhood, as well as to identify the neighbourhood house as a community focal point
- The site should be located near other community infrastructure including active and passive open space, shops, and public transport where possible.
- The site should be designed to maximise views, amenity and solar orientation.
- The site should have active street frontages and an inviting public domain.
- The site should be large enough to provide flexibility for future expansion if possible.



Potential options to for accommodating this site and meeting the selection criteria are summarised as follows (for further detail please refer to the East Bairnsdale section):

- Develop a centrally located centre in the new masterplanned site.
- Purchase land adjacent to the existing convenience shop to enable the integration of the proposed facility in this location.
- If the land adjacent to this shop is unavailable, opportunities to purchase houses further north near the tennis club should be pursued. This option could include the purchase of the convenience shop and its relocation into a fully integrated community level facility.

Regeneration of public housing

The growth strategy acknowledges the need for housing diversity in Bairnsdale to support the needs of the resident population. East Bairnsdale is currently the prime location for public housing in the city. The consolidation of this housing form, versus its distribution throughout the city is a traditional factor that cannot be reversed.

While there is an opportunity to re-distribute this housing and more equitably integrate new housing stock, it is considered that given its proximity to town and the supply of serviced vacant residential land, East Bairnsdale is a good location for the retention of this consolidated housing form.

Regardless, this area should be the subject of an overall public housing re-generation program whereby housing stock is gradually upgraded and diversified over time. As part of this, the road network should be revised, through the spot purchase of houses at the end of court bowls, to create a grid based street pattern which will achieve greater permeability and movement and therefore assisting in breaking down areas for anti-social behaviour.

Masterplanned communities

From a community planning perspective, there is clear strategic merit in masterplanning new neighbourhoods where possible to improve overall amenity, diversity and integration with established areas. For East Bairnsdale, there is a clear opportunity to achieve a net community benefit through the masterplanning of vacant residential land in the heart of its residential area. A series of adjacent land parcels fronting Lucknow Street to the south and Crooke Street to the south, of approximately 25 hectares in total are currently zoned and either vacant or underutilised.

These parcels of land represent one of the last opportunities for significant growth in East Bairnsdale. The development of this land needs to be managed through an appropriate planning process that ensures the delivery of a permeable street network, supported by well designed and located passive open space, and variable lot sizes to deliver housing diversity.

It is recommended that a Development Plan Overlay be applied to this land to manage this process, and that the land be purchased by DHS as part of their urban renewal funding to assist in the delivery of desired outcomes on this site. These recommendations would firstly; ensure the integrated planning and design of these sites and secondly; provide the capital to deliver the desired subdivision outcome in the short to medium term.

The growth strategy discourages this site being left to be independently developed due to the key strategic benefits that could be generated from an integrated response for overall social cohesion and renewal.

Key structural recommendations to assist in delivering a well designed outcome on this site are contained in the East Bairnsdale Strategy Plan.

Upgraded library facilities

The growth strategy recognises the need to determine an appropriate future location for the library to allow it to expand. Currently the library is located in a heritage building which has limits on its potential for upgrading. The facility is no longer deemed appropriate to provide the library services required for a regional level facility. An application for funding of the library at the Council corporate centre site has been submitted.

Site selection should be based on the following criteria:

- Central, highly visible CBD or near-CBD location.
- Street frontage on the ground floor
- Flexible site to accommodate future expansion - 'knowledge hub'
- Potential for an outdoor area to be attached to the library
- Proximate to public transport (400-500 metres with a minimal gradient), local schools and educational facilities
- Priority pedestrian access which is safe and attractive
- Accessible for community buses and mobile libraries
- Access to convenient and safe car parking, particularly for less mobile library users

Re-use of the current library site should be considered for an alternative civic use given the history of this site and location within the CBD.

Performing arts space

There is interest in the development of a performing arts facility to be located in Bairnsdale to compliment the role of the town as a Regional Centre of East Gippsland. A feasibility study is currently being undertaken by Council to assess need and land requirements. The outcomes of this feasibility will be included into the final strategy once it becomes available. A facility like this should be located centrally to the CBD to ensure overall accessibility.

Improve neighbourhood integration

It is recommended that in order to achieve greater social cohesion between established and emerging areas, pedestrian networks and links should be completed and improved. This will encourage greater integration between residents from different neighbourhoods as they journey to their destinations. These improvements are equally valid in connecting growth areas with the established CBD, as they are connecting East Bairnsdale with the core area.

11.2 Objectives

- Encourage consolidated community infrastructure.
- Create linkages between growth areas and CBD based community infrastructure.
- Provide facilities and services that are flexible and adaptable to the needs of the ageing population.
- Promote neighbourhood renewal and uplift of East Bairnsdale.
- Provide opportunities for growth of the local library.

11.3 Strategies

- Establish BARC community activity spine
- Neighbourhood level community services node in Eastwood Estate.
- Develop a neighbourhood level community node in East Bairnsdale in partnership with DHS.
- Council to apply a DPO to the land in East Bairnsdale identified for masterplanning, and undertake development plan in partnership with DHS.
- Facilitate re-generation of public housing in partnership with DHS.
- Council to undertake an audit of needs for library and feasibility of site options.
- Establish a strategic network of pedestrian linkages including the following projects:
 - Complete the eastern link of the Eastwood Estate path.
 - Complete the lake circuit on the northern bank to connect the southern network.
 - Consider options for improved pedestrian connections from East Bairnsdale to the CBD..



Promoting Economic Well-Being



12.1 Population-driven economic growth

Bairnsdale's future population provides a resource that will have a major influence on the future health of the local economy. The key characteristics of the population that are of most importance are summarised as follows:

- Inward migration of older residents to Bairnsdale from regional areas will create stronger demand for services, especially personal and health services.
- The limited growth in younger age groups and outward migration of 18 – 25yr olds creates a gap in the demographic structure and workforce profile that can generate skills shortages, and will create a reliance on the inward migration of skilled employees.
- The ageing population erodes average household income, expenditure, labour force.
- The limited tertiary education opportunities within Bairnsdale are resulting in a loss of young people who are attracted to metropolitan areas for education, thus leaving Bairnsdale's economy, at least temporarily (noting a trend for 'returnees' in their 30's and beyond).
- The importance of the 'satellite' communities in Paynesville, Metung, Lakes Entrance, Bruthen, Lindenow, etc which use Bairnsdale as their main retail and service centre, and as a location for employment. The characteristics and growth of these satellite towns will all have a compounding effect on the demands and role of the Bairnsdale economy.

There are a number of opportunities presented by the current and project population profile of both Bairnsdale and the broader region, which can be harnessed and used to guide growth and diversification of the Bairnsdale economy. These include:

- Recognising the role Bairnsdale plays within the broader region and planning for the enhancement of Bairnsdale's role as the regional service centre for Victoria's east.
- Opportunities to provide more diverse housing opportunities (ie. urban renewal) near the town centre to accommodate both an aging population and relocation of a younger demographic from metropolitan areas, more comfortable with an urban living environment.
- Using population growth to stimulate provision of additional and diversified education and training opportunities around the concept of an education hub and the sharing of physical and teaching resources between institutions.
- Using population growth to attract and grow health and allied health services, making this a strong sector for both employment and service provision for the region.
- Using the lifestyle 'pull' of the region to attract skilled professionals and home-based professionals to relocate to Bairnsdale.
- Enhancing the role of service-based industries in the local economy.

Economic prosperity in Bairnsdale will be driven in part by support for growth in services to support the changing needs of the population, by attracting new residents to the area with skills and disposable income to support economic growth, and the development of new enterprises that obtain leverage from the area's competitive advantages.

12.1.1 Objectives

- Encourage diversification of the service industry sector / market by identifying and promoting opportunities for new service industries;
- Reinforce Bairnsdale's role as a key retail and service centre in the region through marketing, appropriate planning, and appropriate industry attraction.
- Work with State and Federal government and other providers to plan and provide innovative regional level facilities in Bairnsdale appropriate for the demographic profile and projected growth of the region – particularly in the health, allied health, education, and training sectors.
- Use amenity, lifestyle appeal, strength of the retail and service sectors and a range of other incentives to attract and retain skilled employees in Bairnsdale.
- Place particular emphasis on attracting and retaining employees in industries where Bairnsdale has a current or potential future competitive advantage and in sectors where skill shortages exist.
- Further develop the healthcare and community services sector to support the ageing population and act as an attractor for inward migration of families and people of working age.
- Develop specific investment attraction activities to profile the opportunities and demand for new businesses, focusing on industries aligned to the region's strength, competitive advantages and lifestyle appeal.

12.1.2 Strategies

- Improve and market the image of Bairnsdale as an urban tree-change location whilst also providing career opportunities.
- Support development of medium density housing within the existing township to diversify the housing offer for workers in close proximity to employment areas.
- Focus on capacity building, up-skilling of the 'workforce', and identification of 'value-adding' projects.
- Support establishment of an education hub in Bairnsdale with a key role of supporting the innovative delivery of education and training to meet the needs of key local industry sectors.
- Identify opportunities to develop creative industries based on the lifestyle, arts, food, and the natural environment as an economic attractor/generator.
- Identify potential community scale business opportunities and improvements to local service delivery.
- Continue to support the marketing of East Gippsland to potential investors, residents and visitors.
- Develop and implement an ongoing and coordinated advocacy program that promotes a wider understanding of, and greater support for the issues that impact upon sustainable economic growth in East Gippsland.
- Focus on attraction of gaps in supply chains for critical food manufacturing and logistics industries.
- Support enhanced vocational training linked to manufacturing, construction, engineering and agribusiness.
- Promote growth in the professional service sector to provide a platform for continued industry attraction.
- Support continued growth of the personal services sector to support the aging and increasing population base of Bairnsdale and provide alternate career pathways for youth and spouses of in-coming employees.



12.2 Sectoral needs

Industry sectors within Bairnsdale and the greater East Gippsland region provide the foundation for future growth and employment generation. In terms of developing and retaining comparative business advantages, it is necessary to firstly understand the backbone of the East Gippsland regional economy.

Manufacturing is the largest sector by output within East Gippsland, followed by construction; forestry agriculture and fishing; retail trade; and property and business services. Importantly construction was the fastest growing sector by output (2006 data) and transport and logistics the fastest growing by percentage growth. All of these sectors are important to the Bairnsdale economy either by their physical presence in the town, or by their reliance on goods, services, training and staff supplied from Bairnsdale.

As generators of employment; retail trade; health and community services; agriculture fishing and forestry; education and manufacturing collectively generate almost 50% of the region's jobs.

Strategies developed to support industry sector growth, should therefore respect and build upon the region's existing strengths and the opportunities arising from these strengths. Similarly industry attraction should be strategically built upon core strengths and opportunities rather than pursuit of industries not necessarily aligned to or able to complement the existing business base.

The other opportunities that should be drawn upon to define competitive advantage and the areas for industry growth, retention and attraction are the business inputs. For Bairnsdale some of the industry input strengths are:

- Proximity of the region's workforce.
- Existing transport and logistics networks and services.
- Access to raw materials including fresh produce, timber and seafood.
- Clustering of education and training services in Bairnsdale.
- Available and relatively cheap industrial land.

Manufacturing sector

Manufacturing is a traditional and key industrial sector within Bairnsdale. Whilst traditionally based around construction, wholesale trade and infrastructure services, there has been a general trend towards specialisation in manufacturing, and outsourcing of non-core activities. As such, there are opportunities for emerging specialised businesses to take up supplier roles for larger businesses.

Opportunities for manufacturing expansion are supported in the north-east employment area. Clustering of activities in this area is intended to create business synergy and maximise value adding opportunities and overall investment.

Opportunities also exist to attract new manufacturing services to Bairnsdale to support other key sectors and to meet supply gaps (food packaging etc). Specific research and detailed industry attraction strategies will be required to ensure that effort is directed to attracting high value manufacturing to Bairnsdale that will add value to the existing economy and will have sufficient demand and support infrastructure to ensure that targeted businesses are viable and able to operate. Such strategies would need to be linked to the more general strategies for marketing the region and to education and training strategies, as well as to infrastructure provision plans.

Food processing sector

Food processing is one of the major industrial sectors operating within Bairnsdale. When the suppliers to the food manufacturing industry and the services to the industry are included, this cluster accounts for 25% or more of jobs in the town.

A significant opportunity exists to enhance the contribution of the food processing sector through the establishment of a food 'cluster' and the growth of industries that support or add value to the food processing sector.

Food processing industries also need to be protected from the encroachment of incompatible land uses such as residential development.

The food processing industry uses advanced manufacturing processes; other industries are not at the same level of technology, process control, etc. Currently, there are limited local knowledge-sharing opportunities in Bairnsdale as well as a skills shortage within the food processing industry, particularly with regards to highly skilled workers in specialised areas.

The Strategy supports facilitation of economic development initiatives and education and training options to support the ongoing growth of this sector.

The Strategy supports the growth of this industry and seeks to direct this activity to the south-west industrial area to maximise synergies with other industry, access recycled water in this area, and maximise access while containing truck movements where possible within the western edge of town away from more sensitive uses.

Tourism sector

Tourism is a limited economic sector within Bairnsdale and the city is not recognised as a tourist destination. There are some opportunities to develop a stronger tourism focus in the town itself, but more importantly to ensure that Bairnsdale can operate as a hub for tourism activity in the wider region.

The key issues affecting tourism within the township are summarised as follows:

- There is a limited range of tourist accommodation offered in Bairnsdale.
- Bairnsdale turns its back onto, instead of celebrating its assets on the Mitchell River.
- The town centre is congested, which creates difficulties for tourists to stop for information, snacks, or to break the journey.

Despite the above issues, there are some opportunities to expand the role of tourism in the local economy. The three key areas are as follows:

- The Mitchell River, Bairnsdale Port and surrounding natural areas provide opportunities for tourism activities and events (e.g nature-based tourism, fun runs, canoeing, fairs, world's longest lunch, etc).
- There are opportunities for developing Bairnsdale's role as a service centre for tourism products in the wider region and for servicing tourism needs as a service centre.
- There are opportunities for Bairnsdale to grow its role as a tourism and hospitality training centre.

The Strategy recognises that the comparative natural assets of other towns in the region may impact on the growth of the tourist sector in Bairnsdale per se, however Bairnsdale has the scope to reinforce its role as the tourist hub / "set off" point.

In this role, Bairnsdale can provide key tourist information facilities; cafes/restaurants for short stay trips on the river; expanded camping and caravan facilities to provide overnight, short stay accommodation; and potentially water based or recreational activities (e.g. cycling) that connect to the other major tourist destinations in the region i.e. boat cruises to Paynesville, etc.

Finally research shows that most new residents or investors in regional areas have some prior association with the region – often as visitors. Tourism and the servicing of visitors throughout the region therefore has a critical role to play to support the attraction of new residents and investment into the region and specifically to Bairnsdale. Therefore whilst tourism isn't a core industry sector in its own right for Bairnsdale, it is an essential sector to acknowledge and service as it has a dual role to play in growing the regional economy directly and indirectly.

Health care and community services

Bairnsdale is East Gippsland's regional centre for healthcare and community services, with healthcare being the second largest industry sector in Bairnsdale. At present, healthcare and community services accounts for some 1,075 jobs in Bairnsdale with potential for significant further growth.

Increased centralisation of healthcare will grow employment in this sector of the Bairnsdale economy in the future. Furthermore, there are opportunities to provide for retirement living to further bolster employment opportunities. Permits have been granted for retirement villages, however, there has been limited provision of such services to date, with most facilities being located outside the core of the town. Future suitable locations should be safe, secure, and preferably urban with good connectivity to shops and other services.

The establishment of retirement or lifestyle villages at the periphery of the urban area, with poor connection to services and facilities, should be avoided.

There is also potential for growth in aged-care services. As the population continues to grow, there will be increased demand for staff to provide aged-care services. Expanded opportunities for education and training in health related services should be encouraged for Bairnsdale, in order to upgrade skills and retain workers.

Research conducted by various government agencies highlights many skill gaps and opportunities for future employment growth in the health and allied health sectors, throughout East Gippsland. The Health sector will therefore continue to be one of the region's most significant employment sectors, with Bairnsdale being the location for much of this growth. Links should therefore be developed between the health and education sectors, to support the growth of the health sector.

Transport and logistics

Transport and logistics is one of the fastest growing sectors (by percentage increase) in the region and plays a vital role as both an industry sector in its own right and as an industry (and lifestyle) input. Passenger rail and bus services will continue to be an important component of Bairnsdale's accessibility and is a major counter to feelings of isolation. Given the aging population and the need to attract working aged population to the region, to stimulate economic growth, the need for intra and inter-regional linkages, a focus on both the placement and regularity of passenger transport is important from both community and economic wellbeing perspectives.

The movement and storage of freight is similarly important to the region and every effort needs to be made to ensure that plans for Bairnsdale, recognise and respond to the need to ensure on-going ease of freight movement. This includes both land for storage and warehousing and the construction and maintenance of freight movement corridors and interchanges.



Building and construction

Until recently building and construction was the fastest growing industry in the region, by output. The global economic downturn has had some impact on the continued growth of this sector; however it remains one of the backbones of the local economy.

Availability of land has to some extent been addressed for this sector in the Manufacturing sector overview, however there are other aspects to growing or at least retaining this sector at its current size that need to be considered and fostered where possible. This includes issues such as:

- Ensuring that there is training and apprenticeship support to encourage new entrants into the industry;
- Encouraging buy local / using local contractors where ever possible in designing and building public infrastructure; and
- Advocating on behalf of the sector to ensure that they have a competitive chance of obtaining major contracts within the region.

Finally, the inter-relationship between growth in this sector and growth of the economy and residential base generally. By supporting strategies that will grow the economy and allow for continued property and residential growth throughout East Gippsland, the local building and construction sector will continue to thrive.

Lifestyle industries / business and professional services

Bairnsdale and the region generally has a high proportion of managers and professionals (over 30% of workforce); lifestyle and professional services sectors are a critical component of Bairnsdale's future as they:

- Create the amenity and ambience that will attract additional investment and work-force relocation (especially white collar and specialised skills).
- Require little specialised land allocation or infrastructure.
- Can operate from home-bases with good communications infrastructure (home based business is the fastest growing 'sector' across Australia).
- Attract life-stylers with high disposable income who choose to work remotely from the region for lifestyle reasons.

This sector is often motivated to relocate for personal rather than professional reasons and an attractive lifestyle and lifestyle inputs (housing diversity, physical amenity, availability of suitable, health, education, training and retail services etc). Marketing of the region as a lifestyle location and focusing on the liveability of the region will therefore be an important consideration for growing this sector.

Supportive home-based business policies, good IT infrastructure, and amenity improvement / retention will also be important considerations for growing this sector.

Refer to Section 12.5 on marketing the region for more detail on the requirements to attract and retain lifestyle and professional services to the region.

Creative industries

Whilst perhaps not large in yield or employee numbers, creative industries provide an important sectoral mix for Bairnsdale. These provide alternate uses to the traditional manufacturing and raw materials processing that were for so many years critical elements of the local economy. The training arm at Forestech and other locations have to some extent recognised the role of furniture making and wood artistry in the region's renaissance. Creative hubs have begun to be developed throughout East Gippsland in places such as Nowa Nowa that Bairnsdale could support via training, goods and service supply.

Creative industries and infrastructure such as galleries and performance spaces also assist in attracting vitally needed businesses and skills to the region generally and as such have a significant role to play as both a place creator and an industry in their own right.

Consideration of creative industries and spaces should therefore take a broader outlook about creating an appealing locality for business and investment growth generally.

Education and training

Education is the region's fourth largest sector in its own right as well as being a critical input into community wellbeing and the ability to source and train employees locally. As such education and training is a vital foundation for any economic wellbeing strategy. The focus on the establishment of an education hub for Bairnsdale is therefore a significant support strategy for growth in this sector as this will provide the physical space and partnerships to facilitate innovation and cross-pathways between providers.

The role of industry to advise and participate in the planning for future education and training opportunities should also be given a high priority, as this will ensure training is relevant to the needs of the region's employers.

The need for education planning to go beyond the physical infrastructure and to cross between providers is also stressed, with the partnerships formed by East Gippsland TAFE and others providing a significant base for innovation and delivery mechanisms that will counter the region's educational isolation. Such innovation and partnerships should be encouraged and supported wherever possible.

12.2.1 Objectives

- To encourage the uptake, development and redevelopment of vacant and underutilised industrial land within East and South Bairnsdale.
- To address flooding and drainage issues currently constraining existing and potential industrial land.
- To minimise the impact of additional heavy vehicle movements on the amenity of the township.
- To further strengthen the manufacturing industry in Bairnsdale.
- To grow and further diversify the food processing industry within Bairnsdale.
- To capitalise on opportunities for emerging specialised businesses to take up supplier roles for larger businesses in Bairnsdale.
- To improve and grow local suppliers' networks and services to the food processing industry to create a strong and nationally recognised food processing cluster, and reduce the risk of major food processors leaving Bairnsdale.
- To promote a greater research focus within Bairnsdale to support the food growing and processing industry.
- To develop a stronger role for Bairnsdale in servicing the regional tourism industry.
- To ensure healthcare and community services continues to be a key employment sector for Bairnsdale.

12.2.2 Strategies

- Implement the following strategic actions as identified by, and adapted from the East Gippsland Economic Development Strategic Plan (East Gippsland Shire Council and Regional Development Victoria, July 2008):
 - Foster increased manufacturing industry networking to facilitate the identification of cross-supply and/or value chain development opportunities;
 - Develop, and implement, land use strategies to foster increased capacity for industrial activity in Bairnsdale, Lindenow, Lakes Entrance, Orbost, Paynesville and Mallacoota;
 - Identify key infrastructure improvements and/or extensions necessary to support industry growth in key locations;
 - Pursue the development of an inter-modal freight exchange facility in Bairnsdale as recommended in the Gippsland Regional Transport Strategy (GRTS).
 - Establish an East Gippsland Shire Council (EGSC) cross-functional "Investment Facilitation Workgroup" that is deployed to facilitate the realisation of significant investment opportunities in East Gippsland, especially Bairnsdale.
 - Support the development and implementation of an appropriate Business Plan for the East Gippsland Regional Business and Tourism Association (EGRBTA) that will foster industry leadership and promote the benefits of the Association to East Gippsland (including Bairnsdale) industry and businesses.
 - Continue to support a differential rating system to support the funding and implementation of economic development activities, with a focus on pro-active investment attraction and business development strategies.
 - Develop and implement a Business Mentoring Program.

- Work in partnership with service providers and the EGRBTA to:
 - Promote the benefits of new generation information communication technology (ICT) for businesses in Bairnsdale.
 - Identify opportunities to improve community and commercial access to mobile telecommunications and high speed broadband throughout East Gippsland, especially Bairnsdale.
 - Develop an increased capacity for long stay car parks in Bairnsdale.
- Encourage marketing approaches, incentives and private-public partnerships to attract new industry to Bairnsdale.
- Identify gaps in the local provision of specialised businesses suitable as start-ups.
- Establish networks to reach potential entrepreneurs at all levels (ie. state, national and international).
- Improve linkages between growers, manufacturers and suppliers in the food industry, as well as local schools and education institutions (for instance, encourage the provision of one-year industry internships that involve placement at several businesses in the industry).
- Investigate opportunities for establishing a food laboratory in Bairnsdale.
- Improve networks around volunteers on farms (e.g. WWOOF, HelpX, etc) to include commercial farms and expand opportunities for such volunteers to remain as workers in the region.
- Investigate opportunities for establishing emerging suppliers, identifying the gaps and opportunities.
- Investigate the opportunity for a food processing precinct with facilities suitable for smaller scale industry suppliers.
- Investigate and implement initiatives to both attract and retain highly skilled workers in the food processing industry to relocate and settle in Bairnsdale.
- Encourage more travellers to stop within Bairnsdale by providing directional signage for the renovated Port of Bairnsdale, signage for tourist parking and the like.
- Develop an iconic visitor information centre in the Main Street.



12.3 Retail hierarchy

Retailing is one of the largest commercial sectors within the Bairnsdale economy. The following key issues describe the current state of retailing in Bairnsdale:

- The provision of retail floor space in Bairnsdale, whilst substantial, is comparatively lower than other regional centres.
- That is, Bairnsdale comprises 38,000m² compared with 60,000m² at Sale, whereas retail employment in Bairnsdale constitutes 1,230 jobs, compared with 1,190 in Sale.
- There is an opportunity to expand retail provision in Bairnsdale, particularly homemaker (bulky type retailing).
- Retail in the town centre is congested.
- Locations north of the Main Street trade well, however, locations south of the Main Street are less desirable and more trades-focused.
- Development applications tend to be piecemeal and site specific.
- Dahlsens (a significant employer in Bairnsdale) plans to relocate to a new site at eastern perimeter of town. Establishing a homemaker centre for Dahlsens at the new site, with room for other trade suppliers businesses, will increase employment and provide redevelopment opportunities on both the existing and new sites.
- There is a lack of central focus to the CBD area and, apart from the green space provided by the Main Street gardens, no quality civic space to attract public activity.
- There is the potential for unmanaged commercial growth in outlying locations to undermine the role of the CBD.
- There is a lack of cultural facilities to add value to the CBD as a lifestyle focus for Bairnsdale.

As the regional service centre for East Gippsland, it is necessary to establish and protect a clear retail hierarchy in Bairnsdale to ensure appropriate levels of investment; to focus economic development opportunities; and to avoid dilution via competition from other centres or the gradual dispersal of retail and commercial activity to the fringes of the urban area (refer to Table 1: Retail hierarchy overleaf).

CBD

The retail hierarchy for Bairnsdale will be anchored by the CBD. The CBD will perform an ongoing function as the primary retail destination, supported by higher order retail including full line supermarkets and discount department stores. In the event that a department store was seeking to re-establish in Bairnsdale, the CBD would be the priority location. This higher order retail will be supported by a continued and expanded specialty retail offer that provides for diversity across the market segments and attempts to limit escape expenditure for these items. The CBD re-structure proposed in the CBD Strategy will create a framework for reinvestment and revitalisation of the CBD, re-establishing its role in the retail hierarchy of the town and the region.

Specialised centres

The CBD will be supported by two specialised centres. One of the specialised centres will have an employment activity focus while the other will have a education, health and community activity focus.

The employment focussed specialised centre will be located in the northeast growth area around Patties and the new Dahlsens site. This centre will focus on the consolidation of high job density activities central to the north-east growth area. The centre will provide for the expansion of Patties, the establishment of the Dahlsens home maker centre, as well as a revitalised service industry and bulky goods node on the south side of Lakes Entrance Road. This specialised centre will also contain a 1,000sqm retail offer that will add to the vibrancy of the centre and provide an opportunity for the genuine integration of employees and community within this node. This centre will be contained between Phillips Lane (the west edge of to the town boundary) and Omeo Road.

Streetscape improvements, including a strong tree planting theme particularly at the western entry to this centre, will be required to assist in softening the built form and improving the overall amenity of this centre.

Opportunities for development fronting service roads should be considered, to ensure ease of access, positive design response to the street, and avoid a streetscape dominated by at grade car parking.

The community led specialised centre will be focussed around the BARC activity spine and will contain a mix of community, recreation, education and health related activities. The designation of this spine as a specialised centre will allow for further prioritised investment into complimentary activities in this area including a retail offer, expanded recreation uses, aged care and supported health facilities, and medium-density housing to consolidate the mixed use focus of this centre.

The centre will support a retail offer in the order of 1,000sqm. Options for the location of this centre are discussed in the Sustainable Neighbourhoods section of this Strategy. This centre will extend from the Government offices north to the Sea Sun School site. Development in this centre should maximise frontage and exposure to the street however can be designed to respond to the established fine grain residential character of the street. Landscaping will be required at the frontage to all new developments for consistency in the existing streetscape experience.

Neighbourhood centres

Sitting the tier below the specialised centres in the Bairnsdale retail hierarchy will be a series of Neighbourhood centres. The Neighbourhood centres will be sized to serve the broader neighbourhood and some passing trade and will generally support a supermarket function and where possible will include child care and medical facilities.

Neighbourhood centres will be located in north Bairnsdale in Eastwood Estate and the future Brookfield Lakes Estate, as well as the north-east employment area. Neighbourhood centres should be centrally located on a collector road to provide for ease of access. Where possible, the centres should be street based with car parking to the rear. The centres should incorporate strong landscaping, good lighting and seating, and bicycle parking.

Local centres

Local centres will serve more the daily convenience needs of residents and will support between 300sqm–500sqm of retail floorspace and will be located in the northern and southern neighbourhoods in the north-east growth area; in the new west Bairnsdale growth area; and in the southwest industrial area to support the local convenience needs of workers in this area.

The local centres should be located centrally to the walkable catchment of these neighbourhoods and should be located at the intersection of key local streets where possible to improve overall accessibility. These centres should be incorporated with a pocket park where possible to improve overall amenity and reinforce the location as a community focus and meeting place.

Table 1 > Retail hierarchy

CENTRE	ROLE	USES	FLOORSPACE	LOCATION
CBD	Highest order retail & commercial focus for Bairnsdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Department store – Discount department store – Full line supermarkets – Specialty retail – Library & civic uses – Health and Medical uses – Recreation 	TBD	CBD
Specialised centre (employment)	Provide for consolidation of high job density activities in mixed use environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Industry / manufacturing – Service industry – Bulky goods retailing – Supermarket / retail 	TBD Supermarket / retail up to 1,000sqm of retail floorspace	North-east growth area
Specialised centre (community)	Provide focus for consolidated community uses in a mixed use environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Health / medical related uses – Recreation (indoor / outdoor) – Medium density housing – Community uses – Retail 	TBD Supermarket / retail up to 1,000sqm of retail floorspace	BARC activity spine
Neighbourhood centre	Serve the general retail needs of the broader neighbourhood and some passing trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Supermarket (not full line) – Child care – Medical facilities 	>1,000sqm retail floorspace with 500sqm of supermarket.	North Bairnsdale
Local centre	Serve more the daily convenience needs of residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Convenience retailing / shop 	Can support between 300sqm–500sqm of retail floorspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The northern and southern neighbourhoods in the north-east growth area. – The new west Bairnsdale growth area. – The south-west industrial area to support the local convenience needs of workers in this area.



Commercial hierarchy

The commercial hierarchy for Bairnsdale provides a land use framework within which employment activities can be directed. The hierarchy seeks to establish clearly defined nodes of activity, to ensure the strategic location of commercial uses that avoid unnecessary replication and competition across town.

The focus of the commercial hierarchy is the CBD. The CBD is the priority location for office and commercial uses, particularly in and around the Civic Centre to create synergy between civic and other professional services in purpose built facilities. Opportunities for re-development of the underutilised or redundant Civic facilities to open up locations to private sector commercial uses is supported by the Strategy, as is the redevelopment of surplus Office of Housing and Victrack land in this area. Outside of the core retailing functions, the Strategy recognises and supports the continuation of showroom related commercial activities along the western entry to town. This provides an opportunity for the consolidation of these large commercial activities in a high exposure environment.

The focus at the western edge should continue to relate to car, boat and machinery sales into the future. More general bulky goods retailing should be supported in the north-east employment area around Lakes Entrance Road and the Dahlsens homemaker centre, providing for the consolidation of the comparative retailing offer. This is the priority location for bulky goods retailing.

12.3.1 Objectives

- Strengthen the regional retail role of Bairnsdale.
- Accommodate commercial, industrial and retail growth within the established town boundary.
- Consolidate core retail and service focus in the CBD.
- Provide a mix of retail and commercial offers across Bairnsdale.

12.3.2 Strategies

- Implement the retail hierarchy as contained in Table 1;
- Reinforce highway related sales focus at western entrance to town. Ensure appropriate design that prioritises high quality, indoor showrooms; avoids front of lot car parking; and is contained within a well landscaped setting;
- Direct bulky goods retailing to the north-east employment area;
- Introduce design guidelines for commercial development that provide for quality buildings with zero setbacks to ensure rear of lot car parking; strong vegetation and landscape themes; positive built form relationships with adjoining commercial / industrial activities; and provide service roads on the Princes Highway where possible to manage accessibility and amenity.
- Improve connectivity between the Bairnsdale Railway Station and town centre by encouraging retail and commercial office developments to establish along connecting streets (Refer to CBD Strategy).
- Improve the landscape image of the highway commercial strip extending along the western end of the Princes Highway;

12.4 Industry inputs

An important consideration in any economic development strategy is the infrastructure and services that support or are inputs into the local economy. These include availability of hard and soft infrastructure, land availability and suitability, labour supply and education and training. Following this is a discussion of the inputs required to support the growth of the local economy and associated objectives and strategies.

Industrial land

There is a substantial amount of industrial land within Bairnsdale, both currently utilised and vacant, that provides a critical input into the continued growth of the local economy

The industrial land stock is currently 295.4 hectares), predominantly in the East Bairnsdale block (on the Princes Highway) and South Bairnsdale block (on Forge Creek Road and Bosworth Street). The utilisation rate for industrial land, however, appears to be relatively low. Some of this land is also constrained for future development and/or expansion. A total of 36% of zoned land stock is vacant by area, 22% is vacant by lot. Vacancies are mainly in South Bairnsdale and back lots (ie. south, backing onto Railway reserve) of East Bairnsdale. Some industrial land is affected by flooding issues and lack of drainage which requires mitigation.

The Strategy supports the protection of existing industrial areas and providing for future expansion primarily in the south-west industrial area. This area is separated from sensitive uses that have the potential to impact on the ongoing viability and operation of manufacturing uses. The need to maintain this separation is vital in preserving opportunities for growth in this sector. The proposed alternate truck route through this precinct (see CBD Strategy) ensures ongoing accessibility to this area, maintaining the competitive edge of this location within Bairnsdale as a priority area for investment.

Land in the southern portion of the east Bairnsdale block (McMillan Street) is under-utilised and has a generally poor image and amenity, although it contains some industrial uses that are important to the local economy. In the long-term this area has the potential to evolve into a much higher-amenity industrial/business park centre, linked to the growth of the employment node to the north. Efforts should be made to preserve the option of redeveloping this area through the attraction of a high-profile industrial/business park use with high visibility and a presence on the highway.

Availability of essential infrastructure

In order to facilitate industrial growth and increased economic activity in Bairnsdale, it is essential that planning occurs to ensure that adequate infrastructure is planned, or in place, to provide for the establishment of new industries and growth of existing ones.

The Council should work with infrastructure providers to ensure that areas identified in the Strategy for future growth and/or intensification of economic activity can be provided with the necessary level of infrastructure services.

In particular, water supply, sewerage and drainage services must be planned to provide sufficient capacity to support the industry types envisaged. Depending on the type of industry, the provision of suitable energy capacity and telecommunications services are also important.

Labour supply

One of Bairnsdale's competitive advantages is the relative stability of its labour force, reducing the cost imposed of hiring and retraining for many businesses. However there are also certain sectors that find it difficult to attract and retain scarce skills. Skills in scarce supply throughout the region include many professional services such as legal and accounting services; specialised civil and construction engineering skills, specialised food manufacturing skills and personal sector skills across the areas of health, allied health, childcare, hairdressing and retail.

Industry is beginning to address this through the development of specialist clusters and through work with local skills and training agencies such as GELLEN, East Gippsland TAFE and the secondary school sector. However there is a need to continue both the development of localised training services to 'locally grow' the required skills, and collaborative effort to position the region as an area of career opportunity within the current skill-gap sectors.



Education and training

The proposed Bairnsdale Education Hub provides an opportunity not only for a modernisation of the buildings and facilities at the existing site, but also for the creation of seamless education pathways linked to current and future industry need / work opportunities. The Education Hub will in part begin to address this and many of the education providers are taking innovative and proactive action to engage with and respond to the needs of industry, however this will continue to be an area of focus and priority if Bairnsdale's economy is to continue to grow – especially in areas of specialisation that are not driven by population growth.

The quality of education and training provision has the ability to act as an attractor for industries and individuals considering relocation. Recent Regional Development Victoria research shows the importance of educational choice and local availability in influencing relocation decisions.

Availability of business supplies and services

Professional services

There is a reasonable supply of professional services in Bairnsdale and that is a bonus, but there needs to be an assessment for whether they are they able to meet a growing economy's needs. Professional services are seen as an area of skill shortage and it is difficult for some of the bigger firms to attract anything but graduates who are difficult to retain in the area once they have reached a certain level of industry experience.

Supply chain materials / resources

One of the Bairnsdale's areas real strength is its bountiful supply of raw materials for the food manufacturing and agribusiness sectors. Timber supply is also plentiful, though value-adding of this resource has diminished in the last decade. It is apparent that more opportunities exist for the value-adding of locally grown and caught foods including horticultural produce, meat and seafood. Research carried out by the Shire investigating supply chain gaps needs to be used to develop strategies for developing critical links in the supply chain.

12.4.1 Objectives

- Encourage better utilisation of existing zoned vacant and under-utilised industrial land, particularly in the East Bairnsdale and South Bairnsdale areas.
- Ensure an adequate supply of skilled labour to meet industry needs.
- Identify supply chain gaps for local industry and establish strategies to facilitate the filling of these gaps.

12.4.2 Strategies

- Identify available industrial land and create a 'prospectus' for future development, identifying desirable industry types.
- Ensure that non-industrial uses likely to impact on industrial activity are either relocated or discouraged from encroaching on industrial areas.
- Identify key infrastructure improvements and/or extensions necessary to support industry growth in key locations.
- Support the development of the Bairnsdale Education Hub as a mechanism for improving training opportunities for local industry.
- Carry out a 'skills audit' in the Bairnsdale region and identify key target area for attracting and developing needed skills.

12.5 Growing Bairnsdale's economy

Growing Bairnsdale and the region's economy is not just about the provision of hard infrastructure, town design and land-supply. There are many intangibles that also need to be considered and addressed, including the policy framework, perceptions of the region and collaboration. Often these are in fact easier to address than the physical inputs and requirements, but are not given the same priority and resources.

Supporting policies

There is a need for both local and State planning policies to support appropriate economic development and, just as importantly, to discourage action that will weaken the local economy's strengths or create adverse impacts on local amenity. 'Economic development' does not mean that any development should be supported in any location because of its perceived inherent investment or employment value, but rather where it complements existing industry strengths, fills vital gaps, or is located so as to provide synergies, ensure cost-effective infrastructure provision and preserve the amenity values that are so important in attracting new residents and investors to the area.

In this respect, future Planning Scheme reviews should focus on identifying the key industry types and locations that are to be encouraged and require strategic justification for new developments based on their contribution to these strengths. Updating of the Municipal Strategic Statement as a result of the adoption of this strategy should provide sufficient strategic guidance to ensure that the key recommendations in relation to industrial and commercial growth are able to guide future planning decisions as to the preferred locations for growth.

Marketing and positioning the region

Many of the decisions about future investment in and relocation to the region will be largely influenced by the perception of the region. For this reason a strong marketing program such as the one being developed by East Gippsland Marketing is an important element of any economic development strategy. Industries looking to decentralise or establish in regional areas will choose locations based on a range of factors and it is essential that the strengths of the East Gippsland, and Bairnsdale in particular, are marketed to potential investors.

Business collaboration and inter-sphere cooperation

A strong business community is one that is able to work together on issues of mutual interest and to recognise that, even in a competitive environment, business growth and the attraction of new economic opportunities is good for overall economic well-being. The Council has a limited role in this area, but should work with local businesses to encourage networking, dissemination of information and collective identification of economic needs to support business growth.

12.5.1 Objectives

- Ensure that local policies provide appropriate guidance on economic development opportunities.
- Continue to support the marketing of the East Gippsland region to potential investors, based on the strengths of the region.
- Encourage collaboration across business and industry.

12.5.2 Strategies

- Review Planning Scheme provisions to incorporate the broad recommendations of this Strategy.
- Require appropriate strategic justification of new development projects to ensure that they complement the economic strengths of the Bairnsdale region and do not weaken the economic base or lead to development in inappropriate locations.
- Promote business networking and partnerships to build synergies, identify barriers to economic growth and pursue opportunities for collective action.



Regenerating East Bairnsdale



13.1 Overview

The East Bairnsdale community has become socially polarised over time from the balance of town, partly owing to the high proportion of public housing, which in 2006 comprised approximately 26% of the housing stock in East Bairnsdale (ABS, 2006). The area is also disadvantaged by geography and topography owing to its location on the eastern side of the Mitchell River, proximity to industrial land and proportion of encumbered land.

The Strategy seeks to provide real opportunities to provide for greater integration and sustainability in East Bairnsdale through a program of physical and social urban renewal. As part of this, the Strategy importantly seeks to recognise East Bairnsdale as an integrated part of the north-east growth area rather than a suburb in isolation. The Strategy considers East Bairnsdale from this broader strategic perspective and includes all land east of the Great Alpine Road, extending north to Lanes Road, east to Phillips Lane and south to Broadlands Street. This recognises the role of the north-east growth area as a significant anchor for residential and commercial growth.

Opportunities for consolidating and enhancing the residential community within East Bairnsdale are significant, particularly owing to its proximity to the CBD, compared to other recently developed residential areas.

Urban structure

The urban structure and layout of East Bairnsdale is defined by a road layout that is car orientated. The streets are wide and impermeable owing to the lack of grid and preference for cul-de-sac based road network which also limits integration with established areas. The streets do not generally contain footpaths and where they do exist, they are provided in low amenity with limited landscaping hence no shade or shelter. Distances to essential services are not walkable and generally East Bairnsdale residents must drive to the CBD for most of their daily needs.

The lots in East Bairnsdale are large and consistently sized with very little diversity in housing stock. Garages and carports dominate the streetscape. Utility services dominate the landscape (overhead powerlines and sewerage and water infrastructure with road reserves and open spaces).

Overall the urban structure, as well as established perceptions about this area, have created a suburb where a sense of place and opportunities for creating community are lacking. The Strategy seeks to remedy this through opportunities for urban renewal and structural changes including re-creation of the grid network. It is considered that East Bairnsdale has the potential to be highly accessible, and with key strategic connections, can be transformed into a highly desirable location for new growth.

Urban renewal

The role of the State government in the creation of a “new community” for East Bairnsdale is crucial. With approximately 26% of the housing stock being publicly owned the State government has the ability to take the lead in facilitating urban renewal and gentrification of East Bairnsdale.

Key opportunities for renewal include physical changes to the road network as well master planning of current vacant land parcels. As a minimum, a road connection from the suburb of East Bairnsdale north, across the rail trail and through the industrial area to the Princes Highway is necessary to provide an additional entrance to the suburb of East Bairnsdale

In terms of master planning, the large vacant parcel of land at the centre of East Bairnsdale has affected the connectivity of the suburb. The earlier development of East Bairnsdale features a traditional grid pattern layout, however, the newer area, to the east, is defined by cul-de-sacs. Despite earlier thinking, this style of urban design has been discredited as it does not provide access and amenity for residents. As has been pursued in places such as Shepparton recently, it is recommended that through urban renewal funding, DHS undertake spot purchases of houses at the end of cul-de-sacs in strategic locations to facilitate the creation of a through road network and improve accessibility and amenity for residents.

The Strategy recommends that a master plan be developed for the large vacant parcel in East Bairnsdale that incorporates a grid street network. The East Bairnsdale Plan provides a conceptual road layout pattern that should be considered in the master planning of this site.

The development of this vacant parcel of land will require the assistance of Council to create a sustainable development.

Community focal points

Within the suburb of East Bairnsdale a milk bar exists near the entrance to the suburb on McEacharn Street and a community centre is located on the opposite side of the suburb, approximately 1.2 walkable kilometres away, on Lucknow Street. These two uses would appear to be the only community focal points within the suburb. The fragmentation of these two uses is detrimental to the creation of a “heart” for the community. It is considered that the consolidation of these two uses to a central location within the core walkable catchment would help facilitate the creation of a community focus for East Bairnsdale. The Strategy recommends the following options for establishing this community focus:

- Explore opportunities to master plan the vacant residential land in the centre of East Bairnsdale to include a community based facility. This site is ideally placed in the core of the suburb and, with proposed structural changes, would provide a highly accessible and desirable location for such a use. It is acknowledged that as this land is privately owned, development of this land may not occur in the near future without assistance through a public partnership.
- In the absence of this partnership, other options for the location of a community focal point in East Bairnsdale will require investigation. This may include the relocation of the community centre McEacharn Street proximate to the milk bar and the recreation facilities to create an integrated mixed use urban node.
- A community focal point will also be developed at the corner of the Princes Highway and Phillips Lane, the site of the proposed hardware store development. Key opportunities exist to develop pedestrian and cycle links to this site utilising the land set aside for the Princes Highway deviation and from Lucknow east, above the existing Patties site, once residential development is extended further into this area. These opportunities provide for the integration of the residential and employment communities to this consolidated site.
- The creation of a community focal point will be required in the northern section of the north-east growth area when development is extended further to the north east. The Strategy proposes a Local Activity Centre, with a maximum floor area of 500m², be established in the northern section of this area.



Walkability

East Bairnsdale is extremely dependant on the car for accessibility. This mode of transport creates barriers to informal integration and community building, removing daily chance meetings on the street by neighbours and visitors. The benefits of increasing the level of walking and cycling throughout East Bairnsdale can lead to a higher quality of life for residents, healthier lifestyle, more opportunities to socialise with other members of the community resulting in increases in social capital and the generation of a more friendly suburb overall. Pedestrianisation also provides more freedom and independence to children, elderly and the poor as it removes the reliance on the car for accessibility to essential services.

As such, the Strategy seeks to create strategic pedestrian connections within East Bairnsdale and to the wider community of Bairnsdale.

The creation of strategic pedestrian connections from the suburb of East Bairnsdale to other areas can also facilitate in savings to residents who presently drive their children to school. Pedestrian links enables children to walk and cycle to and from school.

The East Bairnsdale Plan illustrates the pedestrian connections proposed including:

- A pedestrian and cyclist link across the Mitchell River to improve east-west integration.
- West to east pedestrian links through the suburb of East Bairnsdale and in particular from McEacharn Street to Macrae Street. This will require the acquisition of land.
- A link through the land set aside for the Princes Highway deviation to provide pedestrian and cycle access from the CBD to the proposed hardware store development.
- A link from the suburb of East Bairnsdale north, through the industrial land, to the land set aside for the Princes Highway deviation. This will then facilitate a pedestrian link to the proposed hardware store development. This will require the acquisition of land.
- A link north from the land set aside for the Princes Highway deviation to the Princes Highway and extending further north to Lanes Road.

Integration

The existing interfaces within East Bairnsdale are an issue that must be addressed to facilitate a “new community”. The interface between the residential zone in East Bairnsdale and the industrial zone to the north, beyond the rail trail, requires careful planning. It is recommended that to minimise off-site amenity impacts, and to protect the ongoing rights of industry, that a landscape buffer should be established and absorbed in part on both industrial and residential land. The industrial land should absorb the larger portion of this buffer, while the vacant residential land to the south should also incorporate a buffer treatment at its boundary. This could be managed through the application of a DDO.

The employment area along the Princes Highway also requires careful planning to ensure that existing businesses are protected from encroaching residential development. As such, a DDO is also recommended on vacant residential land that has an interface with business along the Princes Highway.

13.2 Objectives

- Encourage the development of neighbourhoods which promote the creation of a sense of community through pedestrianisation, connectivity, mixed use activity centres and buffer zones between sensitive uses.
- Encourage connectivity between neighbourhoods.
- Encourage waster sensitive urban design techniques in new residential development.
- Encourage the urban renewal and gentrification of East Bairnsdale.
- Ensure the delivery of integrated and sustainable neighbourhoods in the growth areas.

13.3 Strategies

- Council to work with DHS and the local community to develop community pride programs and community engagement processes.
- Council to apply for Urban Renewal funding from DVC and work with DHS to undertake spot purchases and road network re-alignments in East Bairnsdale.
- Apply DPO to vacant land in East Bairnsdale to require a master plan to be prepared for this area prior to any planning applications of approvals being issued.
- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a pedestrian connection over the Mitchell River in addition to the existing road bridge.
- Develop and implement street tree planting guidelines for East Bairnsdale.
- Construct footpaths in East Bairnsdale as recommended in the East Bairnsdale Plan.
- Develop policy for the implementation of buffer zones where an interface exists with sensitive uses.

Figure 6 > Regenerating East Bairnsdale



- ### EAST BAIRNSDALE STRATEGY PLAN
- Key Future Activity Centre
 - A Development Plan Overlay should be incorporated over this urban growth area. Infrastructure study required prior to rezoning to a residential zone.
 - 1 Future development should include provision for a Local Activity Centre with a maximum floor area of 500 sq.m.
 - Existing areas of public open space. Provide pedestrian connectivity between open space and East Bairnsdale where possible.
 - Proposed Dahlsens development
 - Require new industrial development to incorporate buffers within their property boundaries. See inset.
 - New road connection to and from the suburb of East Bairnsdale
 - Land zoned Residential 1. Development should not turn its back on the rail trail.
 - 2 Existing community centre is not centralised. Future community facilities should be located in the centre of the large vacant residential parcel.
 - Vacant land. Development Plan Overlay recommended. Centre should comprise of mixed land use development where diversity is encouraged. The vision for future development of this area should be one where all functions are provided within compatible and pleasant walking distance. Therefore, reducing the need for residents to commute to Bairnsdale for day-to-day needs.
 - Land subject to inundation. Unsuitable for development.
- NOTE** Implement a program of capital works improvements for East Bairnsdale. Streetscape works and public urban renewal will encourage residents to carry out renewal projects on their own property and also provide a level of confidence that East Bairnsdale is not forgotten.
- Construct new footpaths to provide better pedestrian connectivity around East Bairnsdale.
 - Investigate feasibility of constructing a boardwalk along river with a footbridge to create a pedestrian / cycle circuit.
 - Investigate pedestrian / cycle link across the river at this point to provide greater connectivity between Bairnsdale and East Bairnsdale.
 - ✳ Relocate the community centre to this precinct. Promote a node of mixed uses and density around the precinct.
 - Council and VicRoads should determine if land is required for the realignment of the Princess Highway. This land is creating polarisation whereby the distribution of low socio economic families are located to the south.
 - ↔ Recommended road layout for vacant land in East Bairnsdale.
 - ↔ Potential future link across Mitchell River.
 - Future urban growth area



Revitalising The CBD



14.1 Overview

The Bairnsdale CBD is a mixed land use feature of regional significance. For a substantial visitor and country population, as well as persons living within the city, it is the central meeting place; a place of service and work; a rest point; a place of recreation and vitality. It is the embodiment of the country town, the primary focus of the community; a multifaceted place that must serve many functions.

The CBD is a highly defined space, contained by the floodplain of the Mitchell River on three boundaries. Growth might reasonably occur only in the context of further consolidation or expansion towards the west.

The CBD has developed a poor relationship to the northern river environs, with limited linkages and a failure to effectively capture the panoramic views to the north. There is a real opportunity to enhance and strengthen this association, particularly if recreational opportunities associated with the river are nurtured.

The highway has been a divisive element; deterring the free flow of centre users and reinforcing a two-fold structure of convenience and conventional retail to the north and service and commerce to the south. The wisdom of maintaining and reinforcing this division should be challenged by this work. Despite this division, the CBD is highly accessible and legible being based on a clearly evident grid of local streets.

The underlying subdivision and tenure pattern of land within and around the CBD is highly fragmented into a series of relatively small and narrow allotments. This poses a significant constraint on the acquisition and assembly of larger sites to accommodate the bigger floor plate requirements of the emerging retail “big box” and “homemaker” style sectors.

Approaching from the west, the sense of arrival at the CBD is strongly conveyed by the church spire and water tower.

The commercial function of the CBD is complemented by a mix of uses which have established along the Princes Highway corridor; extending from the entrance to the city in the south-west (Dargo Road) into the CBD area.

Challenges to the structure and role of the CBD

While the emergence of Bairnsdale has been witness to an ever-increasing agglomeration of commercial activities with frontage to the highway and a major focus of education and community services around the axis of McKean Street, the CBD has retained its primacy as the business and commercial centre of urban Bairnsdale.

The maintenance of this land use structure is currently being challenged. As discussed earlier in this report, there is a proposal and planning scheme amendment under consideration to resite the existing large hardware and building supplies store from its current site in Dalmahoy Street to land with highway frontage at the eastern edge of Bairnsdale. The proposal embodies a substantial area of restricted retail and commercial floor space. In a similar vein, the proposal to establish a business park on land to the west of the intersection of the railway and the highway at the western entrance into Bairnsdale to enable the resiting of the local newspaper printing business, challenges the established role, primacy and structure of the CBD.

The proposal for relocation marks a potentially positive and significant investment for East Bairnsdale, but it poses equally significant consequences for the CBD. The Dalmahoy Street hardware store has been a major anchor business at the southern boundary of the centre, around which a number of smaller, complementary businesses have established. The CBD, south of the highway, has a strong commercial based dominance of uses and the loss of the store could potentially have a disruptive impact on the area’s role and function.

At a time when country towns, right along the Latrobe Valley and into Gippsland, are responding to the emergence of trends towards larger floor area “homemaker style” retailing in locations remote from the traditional town centre, Bairnsdale faces such a challenge with this proposal. On the face of it, the establishment of such an “out of town retail centre” is inconsistent with the intent of activity centre and retail planning policy as detailed in Sections 12 and 17 of the planning scheme. On the other hand, it is difficult to identify a location in or at the edge of the CBD that can offer the exposure or space for such land use.

The issues raised by the above circumstances create a context in which it is open to consider strategies that seek to remove or reduce the established division and separate roles of the CBD, north and south of the highway. In addition to the above site, there are substantial areas of land, particularly along the axis of the existing and former rail-line, that present an opportunity to restructure and provide a new focus and role for the southern part of the CBD.

Recreation and entertainment

A pertinent observation arising from consultation is the relative absence of recreation and entertainment facilities in and around the CBD. This report comments upon – and makes recommendations about – the use of public space to provide attractions and informal recreation utilising the median and the association between the CBD and the environs of the Mitchell River. Beyond that, however, it is appropriate to explore options to introduce active and passive indoor recreation opportunities (such as a variety of ball games, rock climbing and other activities that would benefit from an expansive area that can be used throughout the year) in to or proximate to the centre for the benefit of visitors and residents of Bairnsdale.



Housing opportunities

The diversification of the housing stock and the need to respond to the needs of the emerging aging sector, with reduced mobility that looks for low maintenance accommodation proximate to a full range of retail and personal services, are matters to be considered in the context of the development of the emerging CBD. There are large areas of land, particularly to the south of the highway, that are candidates for redevelopment and that could combine a high level of amenity with a capacity to make a positive contribution to the housing stock and function of the CBD. The economic and social wellbeing and vitality of the CBD will be enhanced by its capacity to attract and support a variety of household needs and groups who see and receive real benefit from a choice to walk to the services they need.

Built form and development

Bairnsdale's CBD retains a human scale in its spatial extent (it remains compact and walkable) and in the height and setting of built form. There is a sense of consistency in the prevailing single and two storey built form.

This consistency of character is complemented by a select number of outstanding buildings, some of heritage and cultural significance that are found throughout the CBD.

The core area is distinguished from the fringe business areas by the greater reliance on residential building stock and layout in the latter case. In the core areas, the strong themes are buildings with a relative high site coverage and development to the property boundary. When such developments are complemented with active, transparent frontages (as often found in shops, restaurants and cafes) at ground floor level, they add to the vitality of the centre and provide passive surveillance opportunities. Keeping in mind the low scale of the CBD, providing a mix of commercial and residential uses at the second storey would further contribute to activity and safety within the centre and ensure that it is used at varying hours of the day.

Opportunities for more intense and higher built form are most suitably confined to areas where their presence will not impose on the main street experience. Thus in streetscapes of consistent one and two storey built form, 3-5 metre setbacks from property boundaries and the face of buildings would be appropriate for additional floors.

The most recent development of the Kmart and Aldi complex, on the north east corner of Nicholson Street and Pyke Street, marks a substantial and inappropriate deviation from the traditional form of town centre development. In this case the buildings have been substantially setback and the foreground set aside for parking. This manner of site development should not be permitted to form a precedent for similar style development elsewhere in the CBD.

Access, traffic and movement

The framework for effective access and movement around the CBD is provided by the highly legible grid network of streets, but the performance of the network and traffic / transport based issues are matters to be addressed by this CBD plan.

Heavy vehicle movement

The Princes Highway is also the central spine of the CBD. While to its advantage it brings visitors to the region and also to the heart of the city it also carries a considerable volume of heavy vehicles with considerable impact in terms of noise, disruption, intrusion, impact upon the amenity of the CBD and the perceived safe use of the centre. A solution which retained the former benefit but removes the latter impact is sought. While an overall bypass is talked about it is neither feasible or viable in the life of this plan. Thus a lower order localised network that carries heavy vehicle movement around the CBD is a concept worthy of fuller consideration.

Oversized vehicles

An allied consideration is the accommodation of large visitor coaches and visitors vehicles with boats and trailers. The obvious attraction for these visitors is the retail core north of the highway, but there are negligible opportunities to park these oversize vehicles. It becomes equally, if not more tempting, to move on to a location where suitable parking is available with consequential impacts on the retail and visitor economy.

Use of the station and its environs

The station is located relatively remotely from the main attractions of the CBD and the most advantageous access ways between them are not self evident. The station is the end of the line and the arrival /departure point for two regional services per day as well as various VLine bus services. It is notable generator of local and visitor traffic and yet its operation and location do not take the best advantage of integrating its function with the balance of the centre. There are vast areas of surplus land surrounding the station, particularly since the closure of the line east of the station. Be it in its own right or in conjunction with the operation of the station there are a number of ways that this land might be used to address some of the issues presented by the CBD.

Parking

CBD parking is usually a subject for debate and criticism. There never seems to be enough in the right location for some members of the community and users of the CBD. As a result of a series of informal surveys and observations regarding parking and user behaviour in the CBD we tend to draw the following conclusions are drawn.

- Typical of country towns and regional cities the on street, kerbside and centre median parking is heavily used and seemingly constantly occupied particularly in the retail core but also along Macleod Street.
- Some of the off street car parks such as around Spotlight are well used, and fully occupied from early in the morning but it appears a proportion of the demand is staff working in the CBD, placing greater priority upon their convenience than the access of their customers.
- The more remote and yet conveniently located parks such as the K-Mart and Aldi car park will be only 50-60% occupied while the car parks in the next block are at 90-100% full.

The circulation between and access to the short term car parks north of the highway is disjointed and ill conceived and a considerable body of vehicle movement through the shopping streets is vehicles trying to move between car parks looking for that most convenient space. Car parks north of the highway have also tended to be intrusive, located sited and conceived, probably unwittingly, so that they disrupt retail frontage, create conflict points with the main pedestrian movement, or occupy a prominent location, such as the outlook over the Mitchell River flood plain where a better and more effective use of land is warranted.

The parking “problem” will not be “solved” by acquiring more land in and around the retail core or by the costly investment in a multi-storey car park, in a location where the returns on such an investment are questionable. Not only do such solutions tend to further fragment and remove retail and community land but also the car becomes even more dominant, in the one location where the pedestrian should be the priority and where their comfortable and safe movement should be the focus.

There are management and land availability options, particularly to the south of the highway, (explored in the next section of this report) that can serve to strengthen the overall performance of the centre as well as make the most effective and sustainable use of CBD land and resources.



Pedestrian movement and conflict

The potential for conflict between pedestrians, use and enjoyment of the centre and vehicles is increased by poor resolution of circulation issues, poorly sited or managed crossings and disruptive traffic movements. While there is scope for detailed design improvements to the pedestrian space and greater attention to the needs and circulation of the disabled there are two issues that warrant particular direction by this report.

The first is the role and future function of Nicholson Street. Directly or indirectly most of the major / larger retailers are located along or have access off its access (e.g. Safeway / Coles / Target / K-Mart / Aldi as well as a series of smaller stores). It also serves as an access to most of the retail core car parks. This arrangement has inherent conflict that warrants direction as to whether greater priority should be placed upon safe pedestrian movement or vehicle circulation.

The role and function of Nicholson Street is further complicated by two features, the part pedestrianisation of the street in front of Safeway and the disruptive and potentially dangerous conflict between the use of the Safeway loading dock and the operation of the street for a range of other purposes. While the treed pedestrian space is a welcome relief and rest point in the centre of the city, it appears to create as many problems as it solves. It is a small and confined space with one side fully occupied by the relatively inactive frontage of the supermarket. Each end of the mall / street functions as a cul-de-sac and car park, in which circulating vehicles become highly disruptive. The problem is significantly compounded on the west end of the mall when that space also serves as the manoeuvring areas for semi-trailers accessing the Safeway loading dock and an access way to the Spotlight car park. The potential for congestion, conflict and danger is a frequent daily event and unsustainable. In the absence of alternative loading arrangements there is a strong argument to encourage the resiting of the Safeway supermarket to address the long term benefit of the centre as a safer and less disrupted retail core.

At the same time it is necessary to seriously challenge the retention of the partial mall given its allied problems. Options to be considered are removal, extension or resiting.

Landscapes, streetscapes and recreation

Bairnsdale is among a select family of regional towns and cities that are strongly characterised and remembered for their central medians as an entrance statement of the city and as a recreational resource available to the community.

Analysis suggests a range of opportunities to further enhance the contribution and use of this space including:

- The removal of the numerous mid block vehicle circulation points along its course. Rather than being divided into 9 parts between Pyke Street and Wood Street there is a strong case to reduce to this to three parts with circulation only provided at the intersection of the highway with Pyke / Service / Bailey and Wood Streets.
- Pedestrian movement along the corridor of the median is disjointed and haphazard. A safe connected route would make the space more attractive to use.
- The use of the space appears to be an agglomeration of ideas over an extended period of time. The place for public art through out Bairnsdale has been raised on a number of occasions in consultation. The median presents an opportunity to showcase that art as a theme and attraction to visitor to the city.

Beyond the median the analysis of streetscape and landscape identifies the following issues and opportunities.

- Opportunities to strengthen the continuity of retail and active street frontage
- Opportunities to introduce and strengthen street tree planting into each of the main streets of the CBD to provide greater visual recognition and character association to the space as well as amenity and environmental benefits.
- Opportunities to strengthen the principal and secondary view corridors and vistas around the CBD
- Opportunities to enjoy the views over and the spaces adjacent to the Mitchell River including a review of the land and road space to the rear of the court and the gallery which offers the real prospect of enhanced recreational space while linking with important public uses

14.2 Objectives and strategies

14.2.1 Reinforce the role and functions of the CBD

The Economic Well-being section of this Strategy has drawn attention to the existing role of Bairnsdale as one among a select few, higher order centres in the Latrobe Valley and Gippsland region. Its importance is distinguished by the breadth of retail, commercial, administrative, community, health and educational services.

The regional community will be most effectively served by concentrating, integrating and further consolidating the range of higher order services in these larger towns and cities so that accessibility, synergies between uses and convenience are maximised.

It follows that a primary objective for the Bairnsdale CBD should be:

- To encourage and enable the further development and diversification of uses in the Bairnsdale Central Business District as the principal activity centre of the city and the municipality.

This report details a strategy to establish a network of “sustainable neighbourhoods” throughout Bairnsdale as a location for the delivery of small, local and convenient service. The report also supports the establishment of a homemaker / big box retail centre at Bairnsdale East.

These strategy initiatives do not detract from a policy imperative that places a priority upon reinforcing and building upon the distinctive and special role of the CBD as the pre-eminent mixed-use activity centre in the region.

Such a policy objective has implications for the whole Shire and challenges Council and other public agencies to review their own activities in so far as the centralisation or decentralisation of their services are concerned. Put simply the functionality and role of Bairnsdale will be enhanced and the regional community better served if the city and its CBD are targeted and developed as the preferred location for administrative, cultural, recreation and community services in East Gippsland. Leadership by public agencies has the potential to strongly influence private investment decisions in the region.

Objectives

- Reinforce the role and functions of the Bairnsdale CBD as the primary activity centre of East Gippsland and the city’.
- Establish the broadest range of uses necessary to support a diverse and vibrant CBD
- Promote the encouragement of the higher order role of the CBD and limit the capacity of lower order centres to compete or compromise that role.
- The structure, facilities, form and management of the CBD should enhance its attractiveness as a place to visit and as the main activity centre of the city.

Strategies

The following strategies are recommended as a package of initiatives that would contribute to the attainment of the above objective and principles.

- Encourage and enable a more diverse range and choice of retail, commercial, service, administrative, recreational, entertainment and governance functions, complemented by more intense and diverse housing opportunities.
- Encourage and enable new investment and restructuring of the CBD south of Main Street so that it integrates with and enhances its contribution to the overall functionality and attraction of the activity centre,
- Enhance the functionality, operation and amenity of the environs of Nicholson Street, Service Street and Bailey Street, north of the Main Road, as part of the retail core,
- Improve vehicle, pedestrian and cycle circulation around the CBD, including provision for the redirection of heavy vehicles away from the heart of the activity centre.
- Adopt a car parking strategy that supports the balanced development and restructure of the CBD and addresses current car parking issues to the north of Main Street
- Enhance the linkages and relationship between the CBD and the Mitchell River Environs
- Enhance the utilisation and contribution of the centre median as a recreation and community space that is a distinguishing characteristic of Bairnsdale CBD.

Action plans to achieve these strategies are presented and discussed below.

14.2.2 Enhance the composition and role of the CBD

Objectives

- Encourage and enable a more diverse range and choice of retail, commercial, service, administrative, recreational, entertainment and governance functions, complemented by more intense and diverse housing opportunities and facilities to support community activity.

The Strategy advances a preferred land use composition and layout for the CBD based on the perceived future role of each of the precincts (Action Plan 1). The plan is intended as a guideline and within its framework there will be existing or future uses that are not entirely consistent with the suggested primary purpose but which complement and have synergies with the purpose of the precinct.

The following principles apply:

- The centre should remain compact, easy to walk around and not so expansive that the use of the car is the more attractive choice to complete multiple purposes for visiting the CBD. A priority should be placed upon the consolidation of development rather than the expansive use of land.
- A primary purpose should be identified for the development of each block and precinct though this should not be used to frustrate the establishment of secondary uses that can complement and diversify the level community and business activity in the locality and centre.
- The CBD is distinctive in its ability to offer and absorb quite diverse and different higher density housing opportunities. This point of difference should be the basis of a major initiative during the life of the plan to promote and facilitate a growth in housing on sites at the periphery of the CBD and as part of developments within the centre.
- Promote Bairnsdale as the administrative centre of East Gippsland by concentrating and integrating services of all levels of government within the Central Activities District. Where opportunities arise to relocate services currently provided along the highway, outside the CBD, or in other towns in the region or to establish new services, the strongest location preference should be the CBD.
- The tourism focus of the region and the visitor servicing role of the city should be evident in the CBD with facilities to support visitors to the region.
- The CBD is a “Main Street” experience, evident by the layout and design of the centre with shops and business fronting and actively addressing the pedestrian spaces and circulation areas. Future development should reinforce that experience.
- Car parking should not be a dominant user of land in the heart of the CBD. Its role is to serve the operation of business. The higher priority should be upon the collocation and tight association between complementary uses and activities that have strong synergies.



Strategies

The future use and development of land for CBD purposes should be contained within the defined boundary of the CBD (Action Plan 1).

- A stronger presence of retail and commercial uses along the alignment of Service Street is encouraged as part of a strategy to reinforce this street as a north-south access across the highway.
- A greater concentration and diversity of housing opportunities north west of Francis and Pyke Streets and at the southern periphery of the CBD, to the south of Dalmahoy Street should be encouraged in policy and decision making.
- A greater mix of uses is sought within developments with a genuine attempt to introduce upper level apartments and shop top housing throughout the CBD.
- Encourage further entertainment and recreation uses in the southern part of the CBD around Macleod Street and Dalmahoy Street.
- No further extension of CBD uses and functions to the west and north west of the defined boundary should be supported.

The plan foreshadows the likely relocation of the large hardware store from Dalmahoy Street to East Bairnsdale and the establishment of a trade supplies and homemaker centre as part of that initiative which may entail the relocation of some of the complementary uses from the south east corner of the centre.

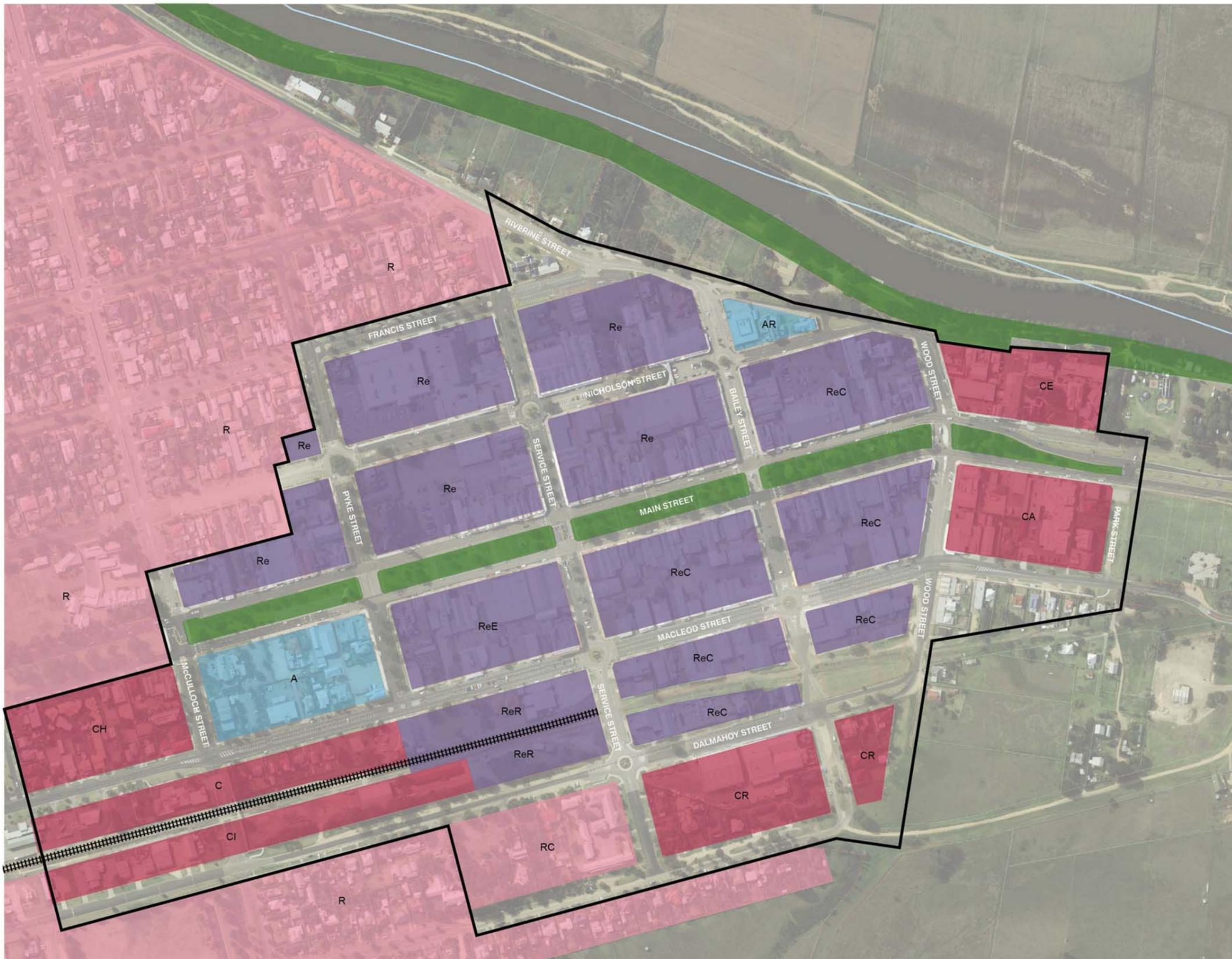
On balance it is acknowledged that the CBD as it has established, with its constraints of subdivision, tenure and patterns of development does not present the land or the highway location where an investment and project of the size and composition of a homemaker centre could be reasonably established. Nor is this composition of uses appropriate in the midst of an industrial area. The hardware store and other nominated activities are land extensive uses that gain advantage and serve the community more effectively by collocation in prominent locations.

For Bairnsdale as a whole to maintain its relative role and function as a higher order service centre to the immediate region it is essential that it provide the opportunity for this type of complex to be established outside the CBD. Frustrating the relocation of the hardware store would be unlikely to result in the other homemaker services and facilities establishing in the CBD. This report notes East Bairnsdale will be significantly enhanced by this investment and the relocation of uses will create opportunities to attract and encourage a range of other retail, recreation and residential uses that would further complement the CBD.

To give effect to this strategy it is recommended that the following actions be undertaken.

- The CBD Plan be referenced into the planning scheme as the relevant land use and development plan to guide CBD growth and restructure.
- The zoning plan be amended as shown in the CBD Plan to remove reference to the mixed use zone in the south east edge of the CBD.
- The zoning of the CBD be reviewed in its totality when the foreshadowed Activity Centre Zone is introduced into the Victorian Planning Provisions.
- Council join with VicTrack and the owners of the hardware site in Dalmahoy Street to determine the extent of surplus land and how that land might be brought forward to enable some of the outcomes and concepts advanced in this strategy for the CBD to be realised.

Figure 7 > CBD Action Plan 1



PREDOMINANT LAND USES

-  CBD Boundary
-  R Residential
-  RC Residential/Education/Community
-  Re Retail
-  ReC Retail/Commercial
-  ReR Retail/Rail
-  ReE Retail/Entertainment
-  C Commercial
-  CI Commercial/Industrial
-  CA Commercial/Administration
-  CH Commercial/Health
-  CE Commercial/Education
-  CR Commercial/Residential
-  Recreation
-  A Administration
-  AR Administration/Recreation



14.2.3 Investment and restructure in the southern part of the CBD

Objectives

- Encourage and enable new investment and restructuring of the CBD south of Main Street so that it integrates with and enhances its contribution to the overall functionality and attraction of the activity centre.

The following principles should apply:

- The CBD will be better served and the land more effectively used if the divisive impacts of the highway are minimised.
- The grid pattern of streets within the CBD provides a suitable framework and choices to encourage complementary development, either side of the highway.
- The south-side of the highway offers the greater opportunities to address some of the shortcomings experienced on the north-side of the highway.
- Primary uses on the south-side of the highway including the railway station, administrative and health uses and retailing opportunities should be more effectively, safely and conveniently integrated with the retail core.
- The impending uncertain future use of the hardware store site on Dalmahoy Street (discussed above) and the substantial areas of unused or under-utilised land along and around the rail corridor should be reviewed with a view to establishing new attractions and anchor activities south of the highway.

Strategies

Action Plan 2 is arguably the main change strategy for the CBD as it seeks to progressively encourage a reorientation and balancing of the CBD from the current perception and division of roles between areas north and south of the highway. It seeks to capitalise on the redevelopment and land opportunities south of the highway to provide access to a broader range of services, better facilities and car parking as well as provide solutions to a range of issues north of the highway which are constrained by the limited areas for expansion.

At the core of Action Plan 2 is the recognition and development of Service Street as a central movement and land use spine linking the areas and opportunities south of the highway with the retail role on the north side of the highway.

Fundamentally the concept provides the opportunity to enhance the linkages and relationships between the river; the existing retail core; the use and enjoyment of the centre median; the transport operations of the station environs; the opportunities for a considerable body of additional car parking; the larger redevelopment sites and opportunities to the south of the CBD and the areas where more intense residential redevelopment should be achieved. In time the realisation of this concept would draw people and business between both sides of the highway.

It is beyond the authority of this plan to dictate a particular detailed outcome but its role is to advance and explore ideas that would enhance and give effect to the concept and which should form the basis of Council's proactive and regulatory role in furthering the development of the CBD.

Initiatives and ideas worthy of exploration are detailed below.

Treatment of Service Street:

The implementation of the plan as it applies to Service Street foreshadows the design and management of the street-space being enhanced to improve its attraction and use through;

- Tree planting to create an avenue and themed appearance that links the river environs in the north to the southern extreme of Service Street,
- A consistency and distinctive use of materials and finishes to the footpaths,
- The provision of verandas and awnings to provide weather protection and shade.
- The pedestrianisation of Service Street as a mall between the highway and Nicholson Street.
- The design and materials used in the signalised crossing of the highway and Service Street should be reviewed to provide generously for pedestrian space, time and protection and to integrate the finishes with distinctive paving for the Service Street Corridor.

VicTrack land and the station environs:

The large under-utilised land between the station and Service Street and bound by Macleod Street and Dalmahoy Street offers a range of opportunities, subject to negotiation and acceptance by VicTrack as the owner of the land. While a small agglomeration of recent commercial uses and developments have occurred on the land to the immediate east of the station, facing Macleod Street, the majority of the land is uncommitted.

A means of developing a stronger and clearer link between the station and the rest of the centre would be to reposition the station facilities and outlet adjacent to Service Street and integrate it with a retail development of some standing and size, such as a supermarket. The opportunity exists to further develop the location as a transport hub in which V/Line buses, tourist buses and oversized vehicles (boats and caravans) are accommodated on land around the existing station building or to the north of Dalmahoy Street and south of the existing railway building, or both.

With the discontinuance of the railway east of Bairnsdale a series of parcels of land, east of Service Street are available including a mid block parcel between Macleod Street and Dalmahoy Street and a larger one east of Bailey Street. In the case of the former the land would lend itself to car parking for the overall benefit of the centre. Concept plans have been previously prepared suggesting a potential yield of approximately 326 spaces. This car parking could serve both short term needs and development on the "station land" or the long term parking needs of the overall CBD. This is explored in greater detail in Action Plan 5. In the event that there is no development in and around the station, as discussed above, there is a theoretical further capacity of 277 car spaces on VicTrack land.

VicTrack is currently undertaking a State-wide strategic planning review of its substantial land assets. The issues and opportunities raised by this substantial land holding are matters that should be addressed cooperatively through such a strategic land and asset management process with VicTrack, particularly as this strategy for the CBD provides a current and relevant context for decision making.

Dalmahoy Street hardware store land:

The foreshadowed opportunities of the hardware store site and the potential relocation of other uses in the immediate locality have been identified in Action Plan 1.

The future use of the site needs to act as a major anchor for the southern precinct of the CBD and therefore needs to be a major attractor. The potential for relocation of the Safeway supermarket should be investigated, as this would not only provide a major new attraction to the area, but would help to encourage redevelopment of the existing site in Nicholson Street for a finer grain of CBD retail businesses.

Alternatively, the re-utilisation of the existing structure on the site may have potential in a recreation context for indoor sports and similar activities. Such an outcome would complement the education role to the immediate west of Service Street and south of Dalmahoy Street.

Notable recreation and entertainment uses are missing ingredients in the Bairnsdale CBD. With the existing cinema complex located to the north of the station the further consolidation of recreation and entertainment services south of the highway is to be encouraged. This might extend to an arts centre or similar multi-purpose outlet.

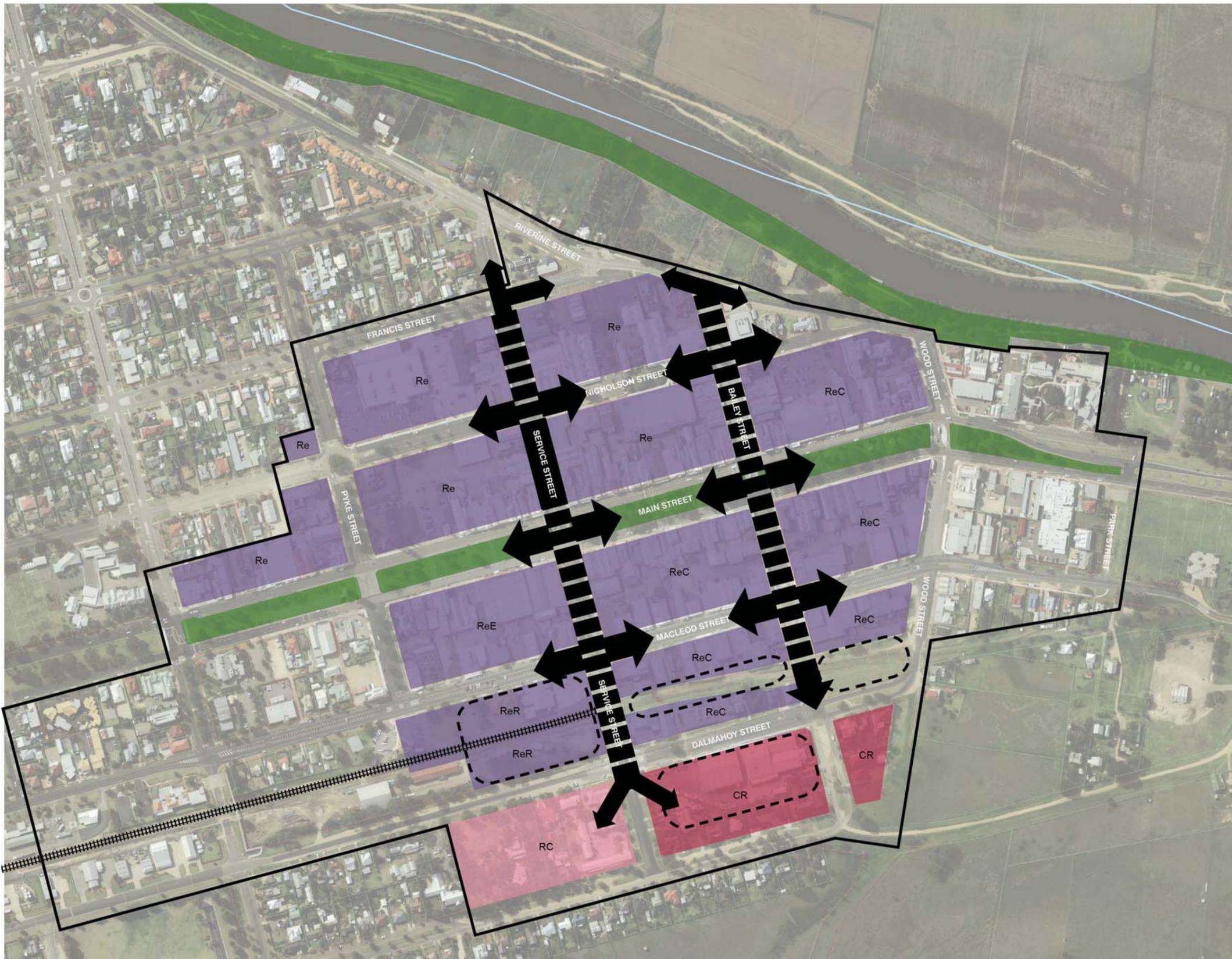
An alternative role for the site, in the event of redevelopment would be higher density residential use. This would complement the location as well as the established context of residential use and development south of Dalmahoy Street.

The highway and the centre median:

The strengthened north-south link of Service Street provides a context to also strengthen the use and enjoyment of the centre median. This is addressed in Action Plan 7 but it is worth noting that a walkway along the consolidated spine of the centre median could radiate east and west from the intersection with Service Street.

The redirection of heavy vehicle movement to the south of the CBD (Action Plan 5) would deliver the greatest benefit to the disruptive and divisive effect of the highway.

Figure 8 > CBD Action Plan 2



CENTRAL SPINE CONCEPT

- CBD Boundary
- Land Use Links
- Enhanced Pedestrian Environment
- Pedestrian Mall
- Opportunity Sites

LAND USES

- R Residential
- RC Residential/Education/Community
- Re Retail
- ReC Retail/Commercial
- ReR Retail/Rail
- ReE Retail/Entertainment
- CR Commercial/Residential
- Recreation



14.2.4 Enhance the retail core

Objectives

- Enhance the functionality, operation and amenity of the environs of Nicholson Street, Service Street and Bailey Street, north of Main Street as part of the retail core.

The following principles should apply:

- The retail core should be an attractive, vibrant, comfortable and safe space to use.
- Opportunities should be provided within the public space of the retail core to rest, meet, observe and experience the vibrancy of the area.
- The layout, design and built forms of the retail core should be conceived to provide weather protection and shade.
- Priority should be placed upon the use and experience of the area by pedestrians.
- The continuity of active retail frontages is an important ingredient in the attraction and use of a retail centre.
- Servicing and the loading / unloading of goods is a fundamental feature in the operation of businesses and suitable provision for its conduct must be integration with other measures proposed for the centre.
- Short term parking should be conveniently located, but the impact of traffic movement through the retail core should be minimised.

The earlier discussion on issues and opportunities has drawn attention to a series of short-comings in the operation and function of Nicholson Street, including disruptive loading and servicing of Safeway; fractured continuity of active retail frontages; access to off street car parks across main pedestrian paths, the poor performance of the mall, congestion and compromised amenity in the street space. Action Plan 3 advances solutions to these issues and in so doing seeks to enhance the safe enjoyment of the retail core.

Strategies

Remove, extend or relocate the mall in Nicholson Street?

The existing mall neither performs well as a pedestrian space or as a solution to parking and circulation issues. The “do nothing” option in this context is unattractive and the broader strategic challenge is whether it should be removed and the street reinstated as a vehicle based street or whether the mall should be extended. A further alternative is to question whether Nicholson Street is the most suitable street for pedestrianisation. Given the earlier recommended Action Plan 2 to enhance the role of Service Street, is its pedestrianisation a more logical and sustainable strategy particularly if it makes a positive and substantial contribution to elevating the integration of the north and south sides of the highway?

If the discussion is confined to the existing circumstances of Nicholson Street then in an idealised situation the preferred outcome would be to have the full extent of Nicholson Street between Service Street and Bailey Street operate as a full mall. With one exception the section of the street is lined with retail frontages; it is at the centre of the CBD and it forms part of an extended retail spine. Pedestrianisation of this space would be a clear and strong expression of the desire to provide the users of the centre with a space for meeting, relaxation and free of potential conflict with vehicles. The width of Nicholson Street and the presence of tree-planting in the centre of the road make the street space particularly conducive to this type of treatment.

In the short to medium term a full mall treatment is not an option – the Nicholson Street access to the Spotlight car park and the need to maintain the access to the loading bay and the rear of properties, at the west of Safeway, prevent any extension to the mall in this direction.

The opportunity to extend the mall to the east, to Bailey Street, is not as constrained although the absence of a rear laneway system means that a form of servicing off the Nicholson Street frontage will need to be protected.

In the immediately foreseeable future the realisation of a full mall treatment must therefore be judged as compromised. This leads to a review of other strategic alternative opportunities.

Pedestrianisation of Service Street between Nicholson Street and the highway?

As an alternative to the mall treatment of Nicholson Street consideration has been given to pedestrianising Service Street between the highway and Nicholson Street.

The features of this plan would be:

- The complete closure of Service Street between Nicholson Street and Main Street
- The removal of all car parking, estimated at 44 spaces
- The design of a pedestrian mall including paving, seating, kiosks and other features as determined appropriate through a full design service
- Limited hours access for servicing although rear access to most properties appears feasible.

The attractions of this option are as follows:-

- It would reinforce and focus greater attention upon the intended significance and role of Service Street in the emerging CBD.
- This section of Service Street is a focus of diverse smaller retail outlets and is part of the primary linking pedestrian network between Nicholson Street shops and the retail outlets on the north side of the highway. As such it experiences constant pedestrian movement.
- It would remove a major vehicle intersection with the highway.
- It would simplify the vehicle circulation network through the retail core as Nicholson Street would be available for through movement.
- A considerable part of the short term on street car parking lost in Service Street could be reinstated in Nicholson Street.
- The project is a smaller but self contained outcome avoiding a number of the compromises arising from the partial closure of Nicholson Street.
- It would provide a justification to review the role and function of the heritage library on the south west corner of Nicholson Street and Service Street and enhance its contribution to the function of the CBD.

It should be anticipated that this proposal would result in a progressive reorganisation of retail uses in Service Street as it becomes a prime location in the CBD.

It is beyond the scope of this report to undertake a detailed assessment of the feasibility and cost of such a project, but it is appropriate to recommend that this initiative be the subject of a detailed feasibility study.

Close access to the Spotlight car park from Nicholson Street?

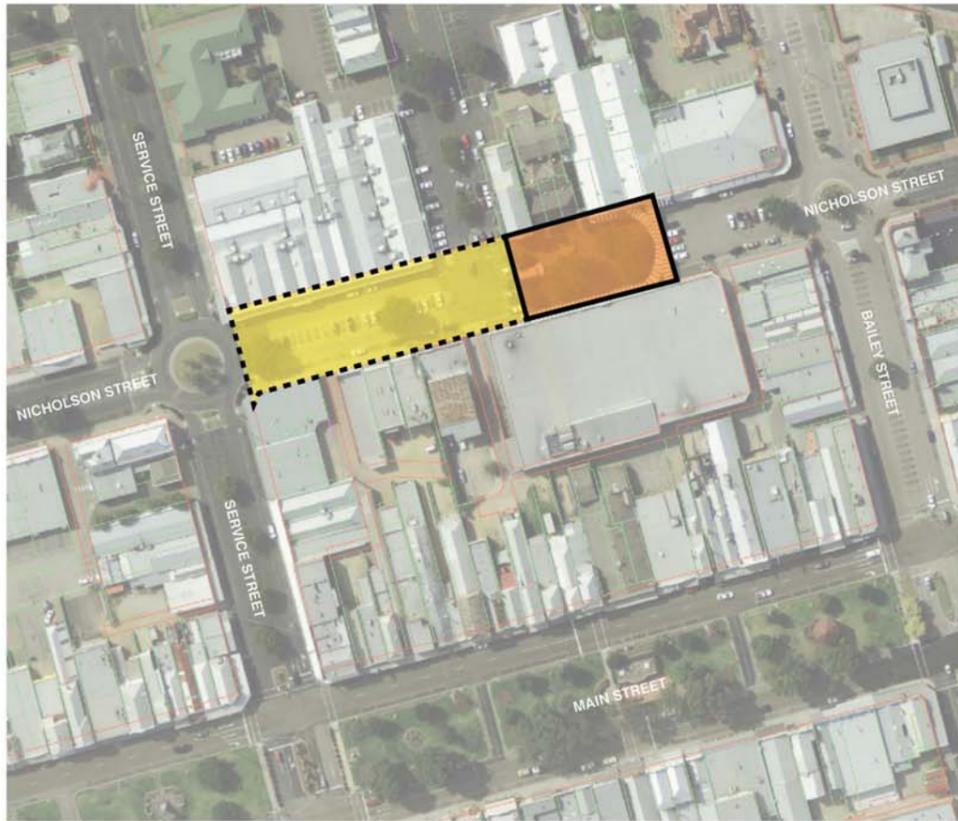
This action is recommended as part of a staged progression towards an improved treatment for Nicholson Street. It is an initiative that should be pursued regardless of whether a mall is retained in Nicholson Street or a new mall is created in Service Street. The benefit that it offers would be a reduction in vehicle circulation and potential conflict with pedestrians in Nicholson Street. It is highly desirable in a retail core that there is a continuity of active retail frontages. With this in mind it is desirable that the car park be removed as it fronts Nicholson Street and that it be replaced by retail based development. If that outcome cannot be achieved a small urban park would be a better resolution than the current situation. This action would result in the loss of approximately 18 car spaces.

Explore longer term options for Safeway?

An impediment to resolving the land use and development issues in the retail core is minimising or eliminating the intrusive effect of regular semi-trailers daily servicing the Safeway supermarket. While that access is relied upon a pedestrianisation of Nicholson Street, west of the existing mall, is not a practical option. In itself the supermarket is not a preferred use to have in the centre of the mall. While it has a glazed frontage it none the less reduces the extent of active frontage. A preferable situation would be a group of diverse retail premises across the same frontage.

It is beyond the scope of this work to direct the relocation of the supermarket but the above issues are matters that need to be discussed with the owners of the land and the operators of the supermarket in an endeavour to identify and implement a better long term outcome for the users of the retail centre. Clearly an option that arises from the recommendations of Action Plan 2 is the potential to resite the supermarket, probably in a larger configuration, to a location south of the highway and proximate to Service Street where immediate access to a dedicated car park would be a major advantage.

Figure 9 > CBD Action Plan 3



OPTION ONE - NICHOLSON WEST -
Extend Mall west to Service Street

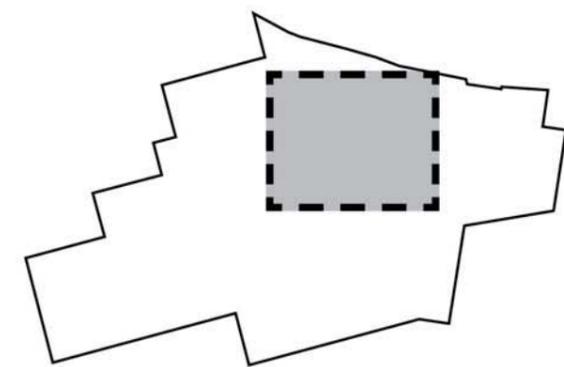


OPTION TWO - NICHOLSON CENTRAL -
Refurbish Mall



MALL OPTIONS

- Mall
- Mall extension
- Mall removal



LOCATION PLAN



14.2.5 Improved circulation

Objectives

- Improve vehicle, pedestrian and cycle circulation around the CBD, providing for the redirection of heavy vehicles away from the heart of the activity centre.

The following principles should apply:

- There should be a clear easy to follow vehicle circulation network around the CBD that provides direct access to major focuses of car parks and reduce the conflict with pedestrians.
- The pedestrian and cycle network should provide an attractive alternative to the use of the car to move to and within the CBD.
- Heavy vehicles should be directed out of the heart of the CBD and redirected to a location where they will reinforce the location of industrial activity and reduce the impact upon sensitive uses.

Strategies

Passenger vehicle circulation:

Action Plan 4 illustrates the preferred vehicle circulation route around the CBD for passenger cars and similar vehicles to access and move between off street parking areas. The plan advances a longer term outcome based on the ultimate replacement of the Nicholson Street Mall with a pedestrianisation of Service Street. The objective of this plan is to implement a preferred route that provides for an efficient movement between the highway to off street car parks and minimises haphazard circulation and potential conflicts. The route should be defined and reinforced through the use of a consistent street tree planting regime, clear signage, signalisation of the intersection of Pike Street and Bailey Street, prioritisation of the route and direction markers to off street car parks.

Management of heavy vehicles:

A complete bypass of Bairnsdale is not envisaged by VicRoads nor on one view desirable, given the potential impact on visitation. Bairnsdale is an attractive break of journey in the trip along the Latrobe Valley and into East Gippsland being located approximately 3.5 hours east of Melbourne.

As noted previously the principal detrimental impact of the highway is the volume and impact of large truck traffic through the heart of the city. An alternative truck route round the CBD is desirable.

A series of options have been explored as part of earlier work and through workshops conducted during the course of the project. Other than the status quo, the only strategic choice would be a route to the south of the CBD. Topographical conditions as well as the concentration of uses and nature of the local road network prevent a northern option being feasible.

A route that relies on Bosworth Road; passing adjacent to the salesyards; to the south of the southern residential fringe of the CBD and uses Wood Street to connect back to the highway is the most attractive option. It is not without its complications and some considerable cost including a small bridge crossing of the creek, to the north of the Morass, and a need for the creation of an elevated road pavement, along and within the floodplain. In this location the road would be separated from the residential areas to the immediate north but there is likely to be some noise and amenity impacts.

An alternative to reliance upon Wood Street would be an extension of the road to the Mitchell River road bridge, but its consequences would be considerably greater cost and engineering complications in the floodplain.

The need for a truck by pass has been a matter of regular comment during this project and appears held as a high priority with benefits to all users of the centre.

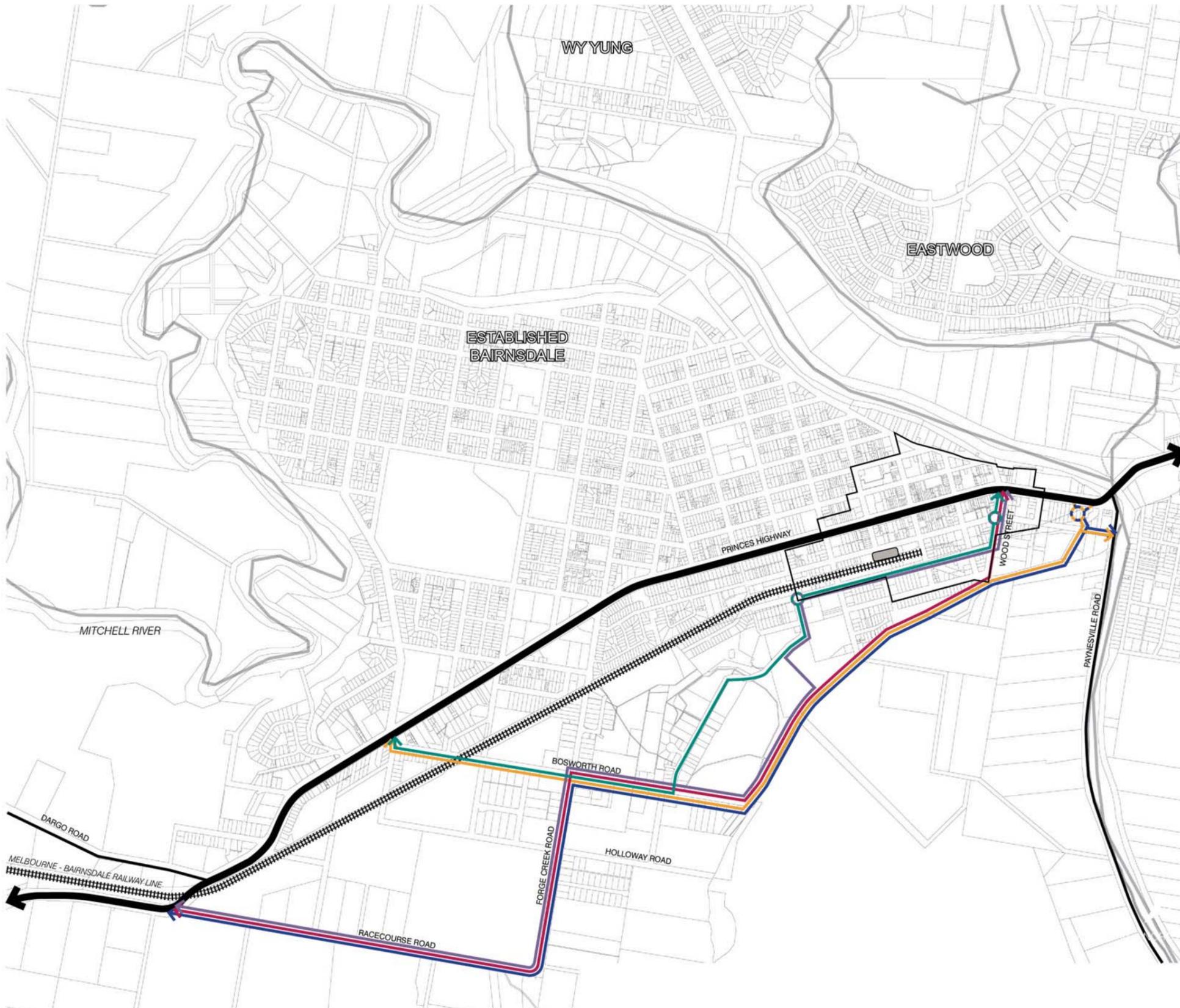
The design, costing and securing of funding for such a project may take a considerable period of time and yet a solution in the short term would mark a considerable step forward for the enhancement of the CBD.

A short term option would rely upon the existing road network including Grant Street, to the west of the Salesyards, Dalmahoy Road and Wood Street. This would expose approximately 8 dwellings on the south side of Dalmahoy Road to the heavy vehicle traffic.

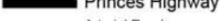
An option to protect residential amenity under both the long and short term scenarios might be that such a route could provide a "bypass" during the day but trucks could continue to use the highway during the night so that evening and night amenity of the southern residential areas is protected.

It is beyond the scope of this study to fully evaluate the viability and feasibility of the preferred option but a clear recommendation is that such a feasibility study be undertaken.

Figure 10 > CBD Action Plan 4



BYPASS OPTIONS

-  Proposed Bypass Route - Option One
As outlined in the Bairnsdale Heavy Vehicle Study - Draft Report August 2002.
-  Proposed Bypass Route - Option Two
As outlined in the Bairnsdale Heavy Vehicle Study - Draft Report August 2002.
-  Proposed Bypass Route - Option Three
As outlined in the Bairnsdale Heavy Vehicle Study - Draft Report August 2002.
-  Proposed Bypass Route - Option Four
-  Proposed Bypass Route - Option Five
-  Princes Highway
Arterial Road
-  Railway Line
-  CBD Boundary



14.2.6 Car park strategy

Objectives

- Provide a car parking strategy that supports the balanced development and restructure of the CBD and addresses current car parking issues to the north of Main Street.

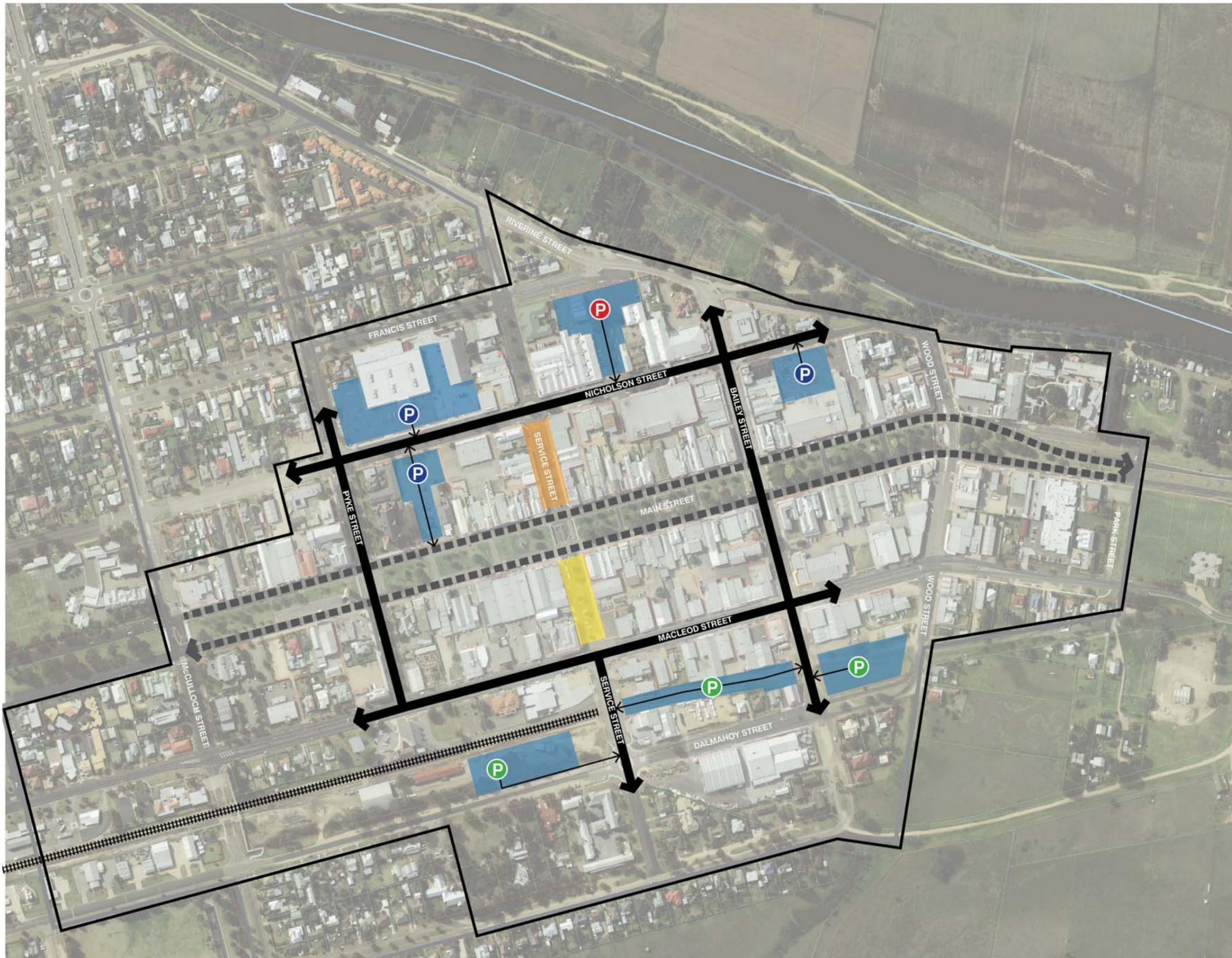
The preferred parking strategy for public land and major off street private car parks for the CBD, should apply the following principles:

- The removal of business and residential building stock to provide additional off street car parking should be avoided as this will dissipate the consolidation and fragment the structure of the CBD, increasing the dominance of the car in a principally pedestrian space.
- Insure the efficient and highest utilisation of the body of available short term parking spaces through effective enforcement.
- Parking in and around the retail core should give priority to short term parking needs (maximum 2 hours).
- A body of short term parking should be available and proximate to the businesses south of the highway
- The opportunity for staff working in evenings and at night to park close to their place of employment should be provided.
- Longer term parking (in excess of 2 hours) should be strongly discouraged in the retail core.
- An ample supply of long term parking proximate and convenient to the business area should be provided.
- The amenity of adjacent residential streets should be protected.
- Specific provision should be made for coaches and vehicles pulling trailers.

Features of the recommended parking strategy:

- The loss of approximately 44 spaces in Service Street and 18 spaces from the Spotlight car park.
- The addition of approximately 20 spaces in Nicholson Street
- Short term management of all on and off street car parks in and around the retail core north of Main Street.
- Regular and consistent monitoring and enforcement of the parking restrictions in the retail core and short-term spaces south of the highway.
- The creation of 326 long term spaces in new car parks on former VicTrack land between Service Street and Wood Street.
- Coach and extended vehicle parking located in the centre median and adjacent to the station.
- Additional kerb side angle parking in Dalmahoy Street.

Figure 11 > Action Plan 5



- IMPROVED CIRCULATION**
- CBD Boundary
 - Mall
 - Pedestrian Priority
 - Primary Regional Circulation Routes
 - Primary CBD Circulation Routes
 - Existing Major Car Parks
 - Proposed Major Car Parks
 - Improved Major Car Park
Car park access to Nicholson Street to be limited
 - Link
Between parking and primary circulation routes



14.2.7 Strengthen the relationship to the river environs

Objectives

- Enhance the linkages and relationship between the CBD and the Mitchell River environs.

Action Plan 5 advances a series of recommendations that would enhance the relationship between the CBD and the Mitchell River environs.

The constraints on the realisation of opportunities have been:

- The considerable grade separation between the CBD and the banks of the river,
- The divisive effect of Riverine Street along the escarpment to the river,
- Private ownership and management of the land between Riverine Street and the river,
- Absence of clearly defined pedestrian and cycle routes to and between the CBD and the river,
- The predominant use of the land adjacent to the CBD for parking and traffic circulation functions,
- The orientation of some of the adjacent building stock away from the river,
- The shielding of the panoramic views to the north and the river environs by unmanaged tree and shrub growth.

The opportunities presented by this action plan are as follows:

- The river environs represent a major resource in terms of active and passive recreational opportunities immediately adjacent to the CBD with potential to be enjoyed more fully by visitors and residents.
- The river environs should form a sought after part of the CBD experience.
- Stronger movement and visual linkages between the CBD and the river should be established.

Strategies

- The acquisition of land and the construction of a stair / pathway directly between the CBD and the river.
- The creation of an incorporated viewing platform.
- Designated pedestrian and cycle routes to and along the river bank from the CBD.
- A managed pedestrian crossing point of Riverine Street near the Spotlight car park.
- The encouragement of residential development opportunities along the northern edge of the Spotlight car park,
- The closure of Riverine Street, east of Bailey Street and to the north of the Post Office and the gallery, including the loss of approximately 10 car spaces and the creation of an outdoor open space terrace with viewing platform and outlook over the river floodplain.
- The redevelopment of the Post Office site to provide a more active use that takes advantage of the riverside location.
- The establishment of river based activity (boating or the like) along the banks of the river.

Figure 12a > CBD Action Plan 6



RIVER ENVIRONS MASTER PLAN

LEGEND					
	Lawn/Grass		Feature Paving Type 1		Granitic Gravel
	Garden Bed		Feature Paving Type 2		Seating
	Street Trees		Feature Paving Type 3		Jetty/Platform
	Existing Vegetation		Concrete Footpath		Building
	Proposed Vegetation				



INDICATIVE OBSERVATION PLATFORM



INDICATIVE FEATURE PAVING TREATMENTS

RIVER ENVIRONS MASTER PLAN

The River Environs is an important resource for active and passive recreational opportunities. This concept aims to improve the physical and visual connections between the Mitchell River and the CBD and to activate the riverfront.

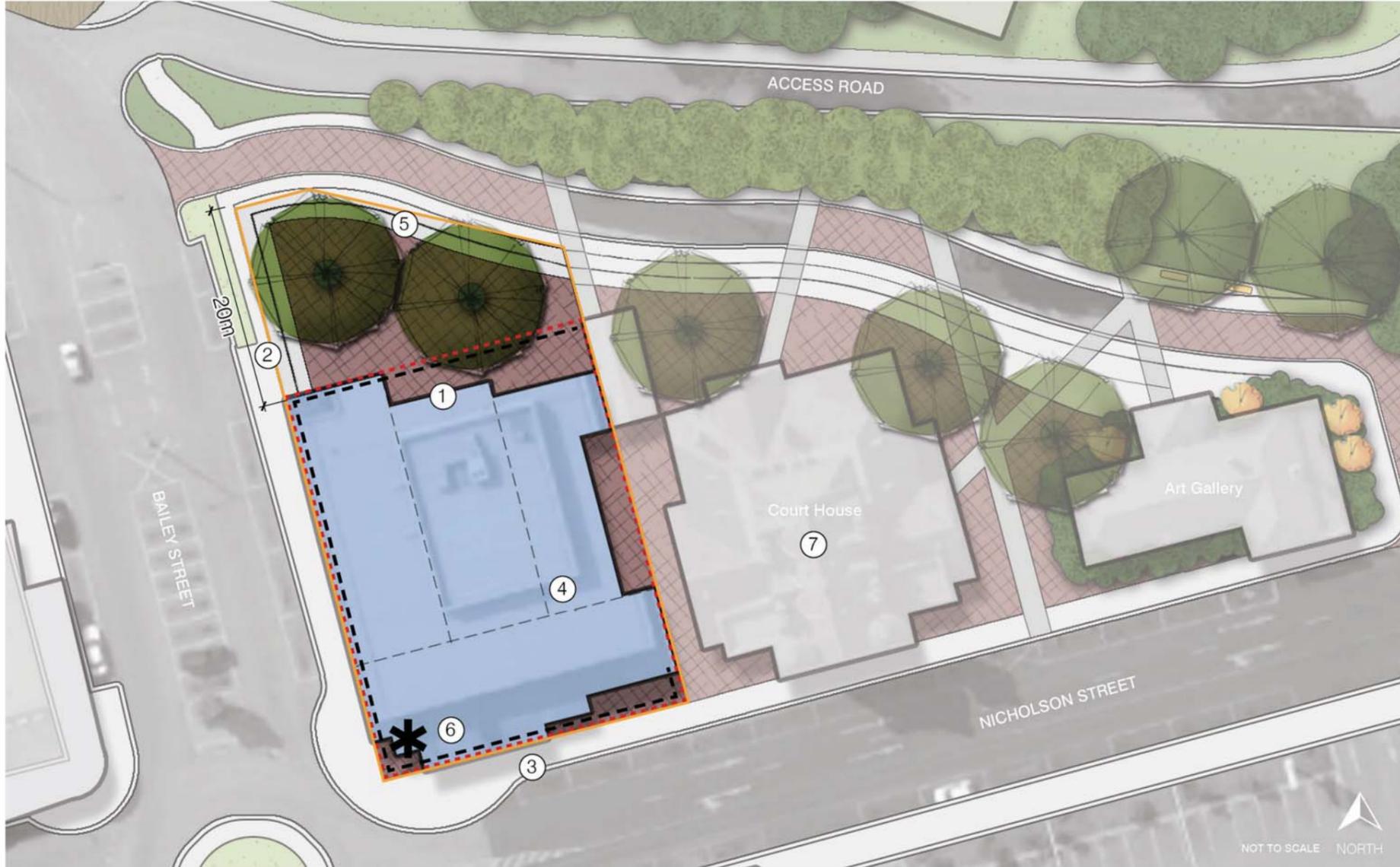
KEY FEATURES

Key features of the concept plan include:

- ① Removable bollards allow for emergency access only.
- ② A pedestrian path to provide access between the Court House and Art Gallery
- ③ Closure of part of Riverine Road to improve the continuity of open space.
- ④ Feature paving treatments that emphasise the pedestrian dominated character of the space and allows for community festivals/art displays/markets/cafe.
- ⑤ Stairs that manage the existing level change while providing a point of interest and an alternative seating opportunity.
- ⑥ Proposed native/indigenous shrub and tree planting to restrict unsightly views of the pavilion roof
- ⑦ Retention of the existing pavilion
- ⑧ Potential removal of shrubs along the escarpment to open up views to the Mitchell River and associated jetty. Removal is dependant on an arboricultural assessment to ensure no significant vegetation is removed
- ⑨ Soft landscape treatments to screen the unsightly Post Office service area
- ⑩ An observation platform to indicate the termination of Bailey Street and allows for views of the Mitchell River. The platform will include seating and a safety rail and will link to the pedestrian path network
- ⑪ Grassed area for passive recreational activities and to allow community functions to spread out along this interface
- ⑫ Retention of existing significant vegetation
- ⑬ An upgraded pedestrian path providing all weather access to the riverfront
- ⑭ A designated pedestrian path along the edge of the riverfront access road. Path should allow for disabled access if feasible
- ⑮ Activation of the river frontage along Riverine Road. The Court House and Gallery will be encouraged to provide for access and uses along the river frontage. Uses could include café's, art displays etc. Such uses would create a vibrant and exciting pedestrian environment
- ⑯ The existing use limits the opportunity for redevelopment. While its existing use as a post office compliments the adjacent land uses and encourages activity, its built form is poorly integrated within the precinct and does not adequately address the Mitchell River. If the option to redevelop the site does arise, the opportunity to strengthen the precinct and the frontage to the river should be considered. Figure 12b provides a concept for the potential redevelopment of this site.



Figure 12b > CBD Action Plan 6



RIVER ENVIRONS - POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT OF POST OFFICE SITE

RIVER ENVIRONS - POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT OF THE POST OFFICE SITE

The current use of this site as a post office means that the opportunity for redevelopment is limited. This concept looks at the option to redevelop this site if the opportunity does arise. The concept aims to strengthen the function of the precinct and improve physical and visual connections with the Mitchell River.

KEY FEATURES

Key features of the concept plan include:

- ① Activation of the river frontage along Riverine Road. Proposed built form should address the Mitchell River and encourage activity along this edge. Potential for 2 - 3 storey built form. Uses should compliment and strengthen the role of this precinct as the focus for administrative and recreation uses. Uses could include community, retail (with the potential for shop top housing), cafes/restaurants and administrative uses.
- ② Proposed setback from northern title boundary allows for passive surveillance opportunities and provides the opportunity for activities from adjacent buildings to 'spill out' and animate this frontage.
- ③ Zero setback from southern and western title boundary provides consistency with adjacent built form setbacks.
- ④ Proposed tenancy boundaries are indicative only and illustrate one way in which this large lot maybe divided to provide for a number of smaller activities. These smaller tenancies are consistent with the fine grain form found elsewhere in the CBD.
- ⑤ A consistent approach to landscaping along Riverine Road to integrate the site and improve the continuity of open space along this edge.
- ⑥ Prominent corner site. Proposed built form should articulate the corner, be iconic; provide visual connection to the Mitchell River and respond sensitively to the adjacent heritage buildings. Potential for 3-storey built form adjacent to the south-west portion of the site.
- ⑦ Proposed built form should respond sensitively to the adjacent heritage buildings.

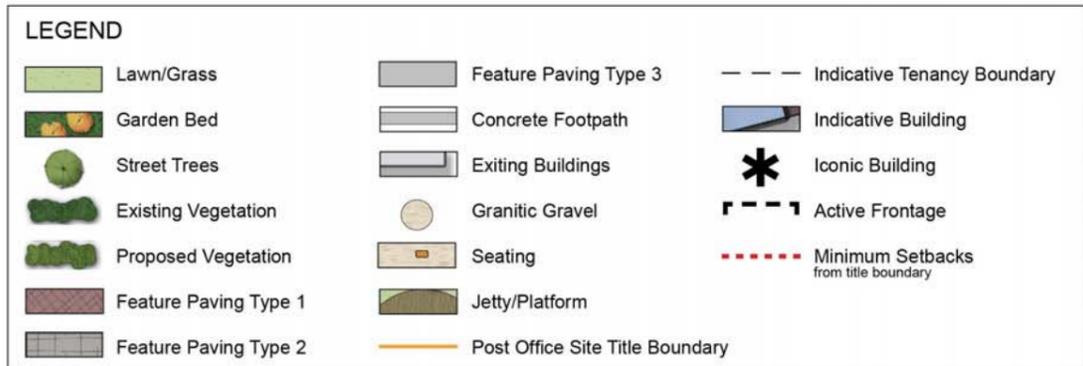
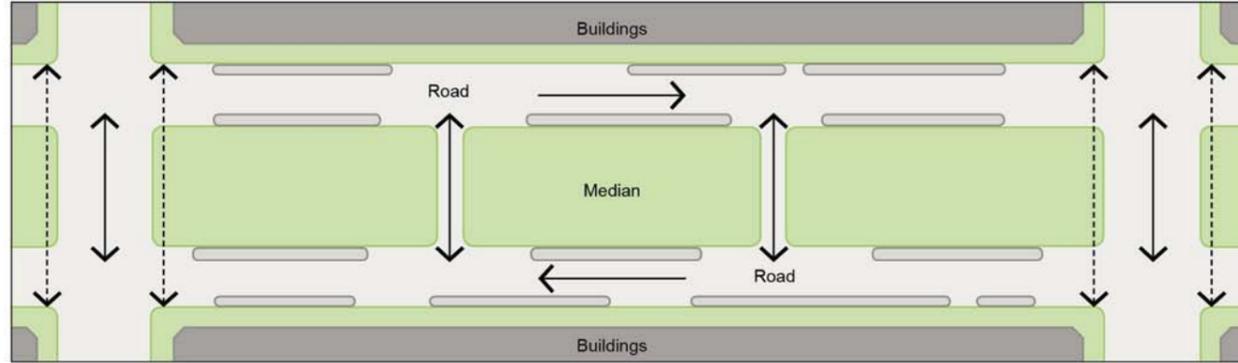
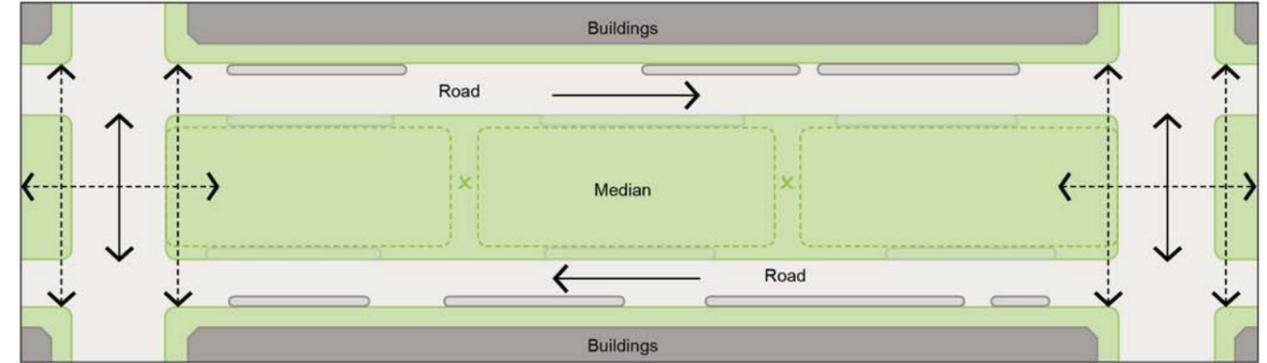




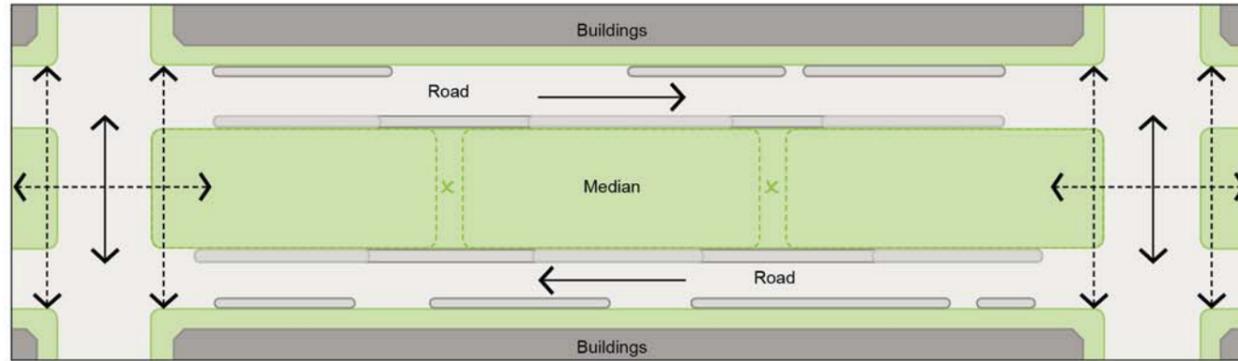
Figure 13a > Action Plan 7



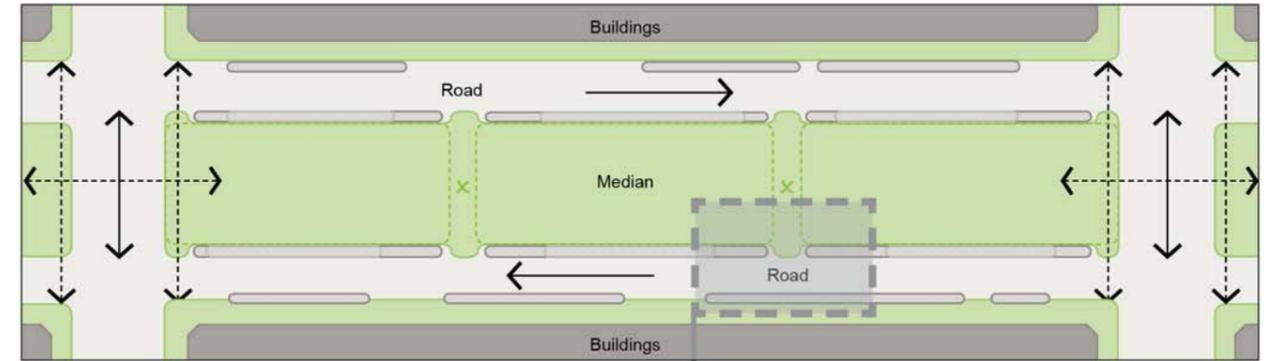
EXISTING CONDITIONS



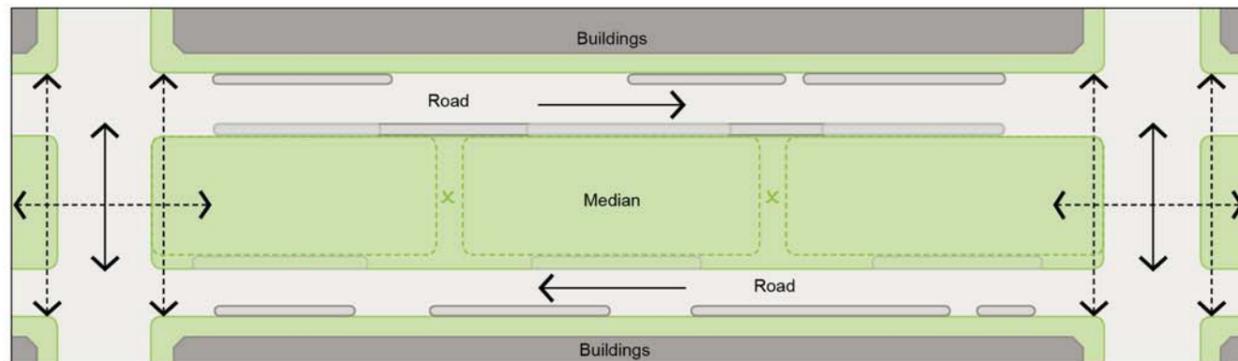
OPTION TWO B - REMOVE MEDIAN BREAKS AND PARALLEL PARKING (BOTH EDGES)



OPTION ONE - REMOVE MEDIAN BREAKS

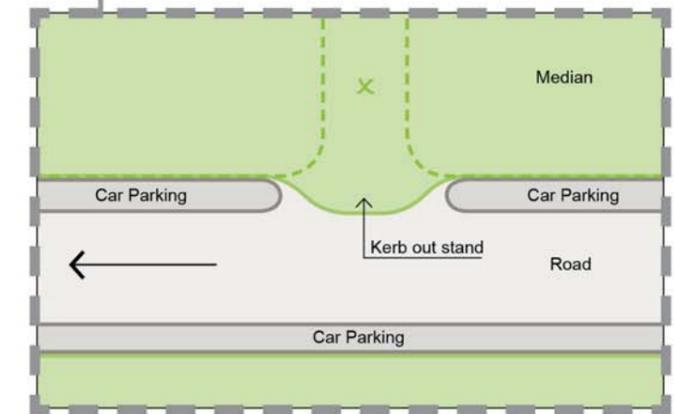


OPTION THREE - REMOVE MEDIAN BREAKS



OPTION TWO A - REMOVE MEDIAN BREAKS AND PARALLEL PARKING (SOUTHERN EDGE ONLY)

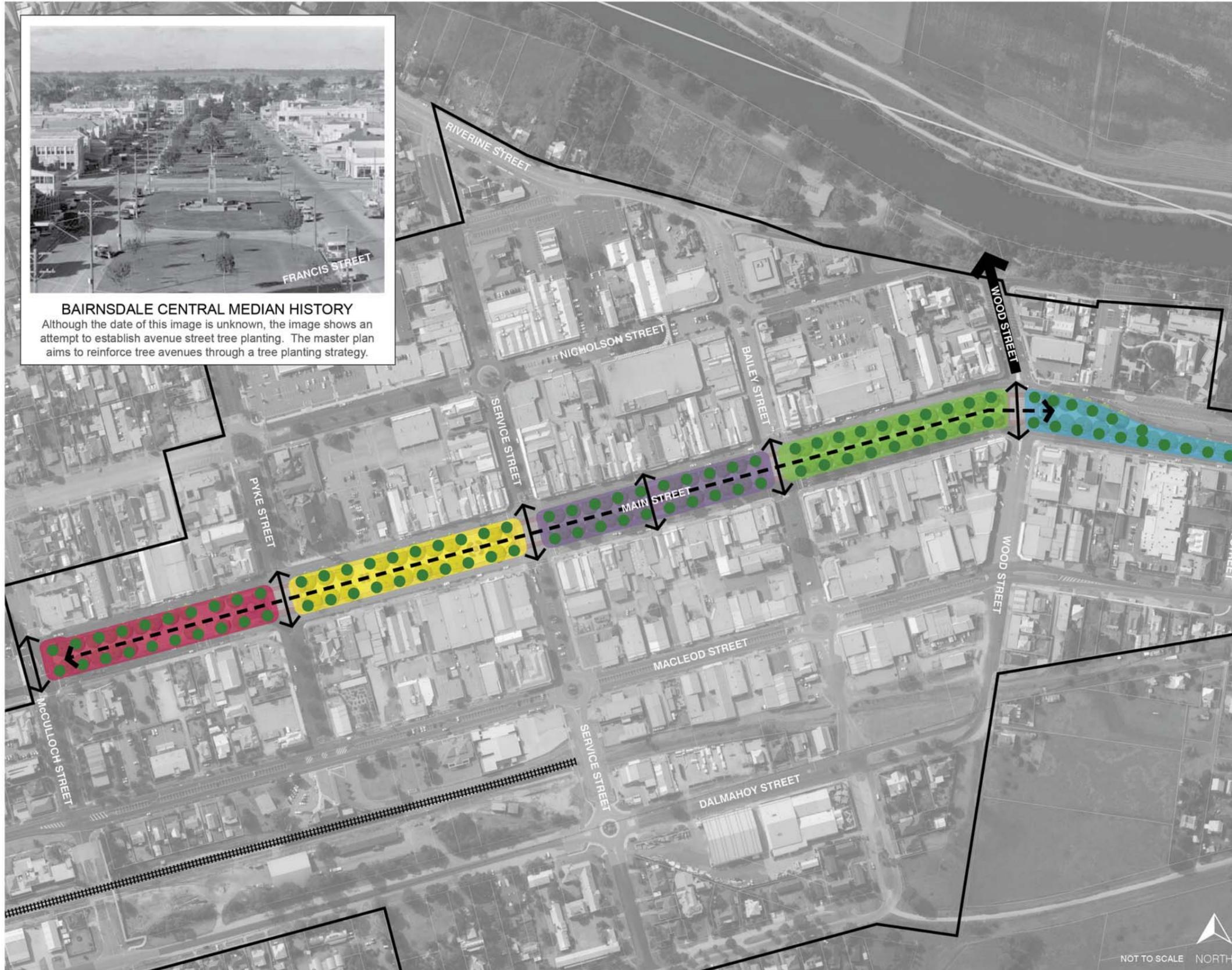
- LEGEND**
- Nature Strip/Median
 - Car Parking
 - Vehicular Circulation
 - Pedestrian Circulation
 - Trees (indicative only)
 - Existing Median
 - Existing Car Parking



OPTION THREE - KERB OUT STAND ENLARGEMENT
Indicative only. Subject to



Figure 13b > Action Plan 7



MASTER PLAN

The master plan provides an overall vision for the development of the central median. The master plan sets out many key actions that are continued throughout the median providing a sense of consistency and visual cohesion and strengthening the character of Bairnsdale.

PRECINCTS

The median has been classified into precincts according to the different functions they will provide. This will inform the appropriate location of facilities including bins, tables, seats, footpaths, tree planting, drinking fountains, bike rails etc as well as the character of the space.

- Passive Precinct One
Refer to concept plan for further information
- Passive Precinct Two
Refer to concept plan for further information
- Event/Active Precinct
Refer to concept plan for further information
- Heritage Precinct
Refer to concept plan for further information
- Tourist Precinct
Refer to concept plan for further information

KEY FEATURES

Key features of the master plan include:

Paving treatments marking the junction of intersecting roads and emphasizing the pedestrian dominated character of the intersection. Signalized crossings allow for safe pedestrian connections along the median corridor. Subject to VicRoads approval the paving treatment might extend across the Princes Highway.

NOTE Relocation of existing 'rose gardens' to create a point of interest at key intersecting roads.

Recommendation for the development of a strategy for tree planting within the median. The strategy should reinforce the existing avenue tree planting here as well as identify an appropriate species for replacement trees that is consistent with the character and scale of the streetscape.

NOTE The 'openness' of the median. Limited shrub and ground cover planting allows for passive surveillance and recreational opportunities.

NOTE Refer to Action Plan 7-Median Options for alternative treatments to parking along the median.

A continuous pedestrian and bicycle network along the median edge provides all weather access throughout the median corridor and to potential parking and intersection crossings. Location indicative only.

NOT TO SCALE NORTH

Figure 13c > Action Plan 7



PASSIVE PRECINCT ONE CONCEPT PLAN

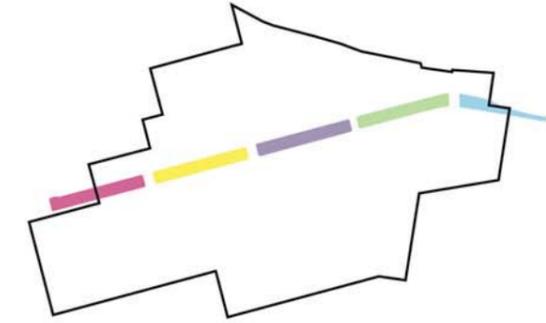
PASSIVE PRECINCT ONE

Located to between Woods and Park Street, Passive Precinct One marks the eastern entry of the CBD and will provide for low order passive recreational activities.

KEY FEATURES

Key features of the concept plan include:

- 1 Artwork to strengthen the entry statement to the east of the CBD and signify connections to the riverfront
 - 2 Limited seating under canopy trees
- NOTE Large expanses of grass to accommodate passive recreational activities



LOCATION PLAN



PASSIVE PRECINCT TWO CONCEPT PLAN

PASSIVE PRECINCT TWO

Passive Precinct Two is located between Wood Street and Bailey Street and will provide for passive recreational activities.

KEY FEATURES

Key features of the concept plan include:

- 1 Seating under canopy trees to provide for a range of climatic conditions
 - 2 Picnic benches for larger/family groups
 - 3 Retention of existing building
- NOTE Large expanses of grass to accommodate various passive recreational activities

NOTE

EXISTING TREES
Trees have been identified through an aerial photograph only, and have not been assessed for species, size, structure, habitat or 'value'. Existing trees that have ecological, arboricultural or heritage significance will be retained. The intent is that overtime a formal avenue of trees can be achieved.



PASSIVE USES



LEGEND		
	Lawn/Grass	
	Garden Bed	
	Street Trees	
	Artwork/Memorial	



Figure 13d > Action Plan 7



ACTIVE PRECINCT CONCEPT PLAN



HERITAGE PRECINCT CONCEPT PLAN

LEGEND					
	Lawn/Grass		Feature Paving Type 1		Granitic Gravel
	Garden Bed		Feature Paving Type 2		Seating
	Street Trees		Shared Pathway		Plaza
	Artwork/Memorial		Building		Pedestrian Link

ACTIVE/EVENT PRECINCT

The active precinct is located between Bailey Street and Service Street - two vibrant streets within the CBD. A focal point of the median, this precinct will provide for active recreational activities and community events.

KEY FEATURES

Key features of the concept plan include:

- ① Seating and picnic facilities located in close proximity to toilets
- ② Mid block pedestrian crossings between the active edge of the highway and the median. Kerb out stands and paving treatments will improve the visibility of the pedestrian crossing
- ③ Potential relocation of the existing toilet block (note the feasibility of relocating the toilet block is dependant upon the location of existing services and the cost). The existing toilets are sunken, impacting on pedestrian circulation and passive surveillance opportunities. Proposed toilets would be at grade allowing for disabled access
- ④ A vibrant urban plaza. Paving treatments will link the plaza and proposed mid block pedestrian crossings, while a Bosque of deciduous trees will provide seasonal interest and public amenity
- ⑤ A large open space for community events and functions or as a location for temporary art displays
- ⑥ Retention of the existing historic rotunda and drinking fountain

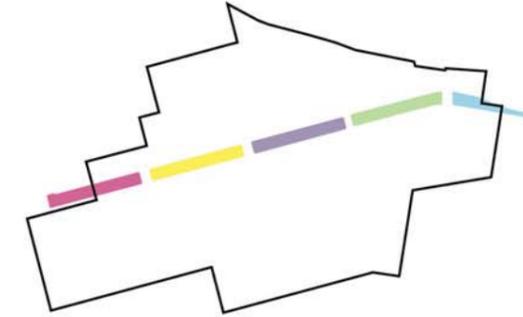
HERITAGE PRECINCT

The Heritage Precinct is located between Service Street and Pyke Street and currently includes the World War 1 War Memorial. To compliment the memorial and strengthen the character of this space, the precinct will provide the location for cultural heritage within the median.

KEY FEATURES

Key features of the concept plan include:

- ① Seating facilities for passive recreational activities
- ② The relocation of the South African War Memorial from the Active Precinct between Bailey Street and Service Street
- ③ Formal pedestrian path provided to both the World War 1 War Memorial and the South African War Memorial, allowing for disabled access
- ④ Low shrub/ground cover planting surrounding the memorials to reinforce the formal character of these features and to soften the pavement edges
- ⑤ Breaks in street tree planting to frame views of the memorials and act as visual cues to passing motorists



LOCATION PLAN



PUBLIC PLAZAS



Figure 13e > Action Plan 7



TOURIST PRECINCT CONCEPT PLAN

LEGEND					
	Lawn/Grass		Feature Paving Type 1		Granitic Gravel
	Garden Bed		Feature Paving Type 2		Seating
	Street Trees		Shared Pathway		Water Tower Proposed Information Centre
	Artwork/Memorial		Building		Pedestrian Link

INDICATIVE HARDSCAPE MATERIALS

Hard landscape materials have been chosen that will reflect the local context and character of Bairnsdale. Paving treatments are used predominately around intersections, as a focal point within the median and to provide pedestrian access. Street furniture is used throughout the median to provide public amenity. All hardscape materials throughout the median will be consistent to strengthen the character of the space



INDICATIVE SOFT LANDSCAPE

The soft landscape will consist of a predominately street tree planting and low shrubs/ground covers. Street trees will be planted in a formal 'avenue arrangement' along the edge of the median and will be appropriate to the scale of the street and surrounding built form. Low shrubs/ground covers are predominately located at the corner of intersections allowing views across the intersection. Predominately exotic trees will reinforce the urban and historic character of the median, while native, low maintenance species requiring very little irrigation should be considered within planting beds.



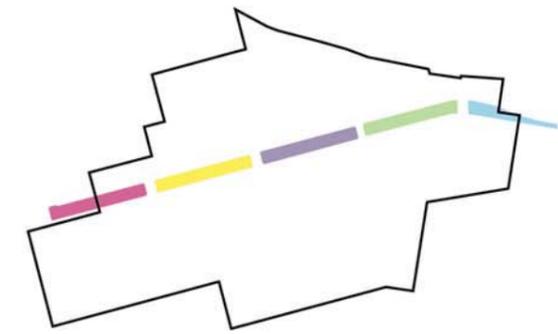
TOURIST PRECINCT

The Tourist Precinct marks the western entry of the CBD and is located between Service Street and McCulloch Street. It will provide the location for tourist related activities and will include an information centre.

KEY FEATURES

Key features of the concept plan include:

- 1 An information centre that utilizes the existing water tower. The water tower provides a location that is highly visible and accessible from both the east and west. The centre will strengthen the role of the water tower as an entry statement and will activate this segment of the median
- 2 Trailer and car parking provided in close proximity to the information centre to accommodate tourists, making this precinct an easy and attractive place to stop. Parking will be accessible to vehicles moving east to west along the highway. Detailed design of the parking should be done in consultation with a traffic engineer
- 3 A vibrant urban plaza which will function as a point of interest and activity around the information centre
- 4 Limited seating and picnic facilities providing for tourists who want to remain in close proximity to their vehicle/trailer/caravan



LOCATION PLAN

INDICATIVE ART WORKS

There is the opportunity to incorporate artwork as part of the median landscape, promoting a sense of community pride and to strengthen the role of the median as a community space. Two locations for permanent artwork are identified on the plan including the water tower and to the east of Wood Street.

INDICATIVE WOOD STREET ART WORK



Inspiration: community, organic, water, tall/dominant



Conserving The Rural Hinterland



15.1 Overview

The topography around Bairnsdale is variable, ranging from estuarine environments along the Mitchell River, McLeod Morass, a deep freshwater marsh and the elevated terrain above the river and floodplain, on which the city is predominantly located. This topography has produced a diverse range of habitats.

Federal and State legislation protects areas of environmental significance, including specific types of vegetation and habitats. In addition, local government policies and strategies provide an integrated approach to land management and recognise the requirements of various acts and strategies when planning for urban settlement.

In addition, local policies place significant emphasis on protecting both life and assets from the adverse effects of climatic conditions. In particular, the threats associated with wildfire, flooding and rising sea levels (relevant for coastal areas) are taken into account during the planning process.

The East Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy provides an integrated approach to land management which all agencies must have regard to in their decision making.

Vegetation and habitat quality

Native Vegetation is protected under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. In Victoria, there are approximately 300 Ecological Vegetation Classes or EVC's.

Bairnsdale and its surrounds is a highly modified environment owing to historical agricultural uses and settlement activities within the city. As such, vegetation has been extensively modified and cleared.

Remnant EVC's are limited to within the city and the surrounding hinterland and they occur on both public and private land.

As a result of the extensive vegetation clearing in the Bairnsdale area, remaining remnant EVC's are generally recognised as being vulnerable or endangered. An EVC of particular importance is the Gippsland Red Gum Grassy Woodland and associated Native Grassland, which is listed as critically endangered under the EPBC act.

Other important vegetation includes significant roadside vegetation that is present along most roadways in the northern portions of the city. These roadsides are generally well protected by Planning Scheme overlays however there is scope to improve the protection for roadside vegetation.

Numerous agencies are involved in managing ecological communities within the surrounding area including the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Parks Victoria, East Gippsland Water, The Department of Sustainability and Environment, East Gippsland Shire Council and private landholders. It is therefore critical that a co-ordinated approach to land management is implemented to ensure the long term viability of ecological communities within the surrounding area.

Wetlands and river environs

The city of Bairnsdale is located within an area of significant environmental value, located several kilometres inland from the mouth of the Mitchell River and adjacent to two significant wetlands that form part of the larger Gippsland Lakes Ramsar site. The Mitchell River and Clifton Creek provide a significant resource to the city, supplying its water, as well as providing a habitat linkage and natural bio-corridor that connects the lower reaches of the Mitchell River and the Gippsland Lakes to significant habitat to the north.

The two wetlands adjacent to Bairnsdale; Lake King and the McLeod Morass form part of the internationally significant Gippsland Lakes Ramsar site. These wetlands provide important habitats for a range of migratory bird species. McLeod's Morass also serves an important waste disposal function, with the Bairnsdale Treatment Plant located within and adjacent to the wetland. Its location adjacent to the Bairnsdale industrial area has the potential to significantly degrade the wetland.

Impact of environmental conditions on urban development

Flooding of the Mitchell River and Clifton Creek is a common occurrence in Bairnsdale. Flooding presents a significant threat to people living on and adjacent to the Mitchell River floodplain both through inundation and also by erosion. The extent of flooding potential is not fully understood therefore it is critical that the extent of flood liability be examined.

The Mitchell River exhibits evidence of erosion in flood periods. Receding floodwaters have the potential to further scour and erode floodplain banks increasing the risk of damage to property associated with erosion and landslip.

Wildfire also poses a significant threat. Although extensively cleared within and around Bairnsdale, there is significant indigenous vegetation along the river and roadsides with larger remnants to the north of the city.

An emerging challenge in coastal locations is dealing with the threat of sea level rise. The recent Victorian Coastal Strategy has identified the need to plan for a sea level rise of 0.8 metres by 2100. A recent ministerial direction (Ministerial Direction 13) has put in place requirements for the rezoning of land adjacent to the coast or within 1 kilometre of the coast and at an elevation of less than 5m AHD to assess the risk associated with sea level rise.

Extensive research is currently being undertaken in regards to the threat posed by rising sea level for the Gippsland Lakes. It is important that the threat posed from climate change is appropriately recognised and appropriate planning provisions incorporated into the planning scheme once information becomes available.

It is critical that risk associated with environmental events is appropriately managed and the risk to persons and property is minimised.



15.2 Objectives

- Protect environmentally sensitive areas from inappropriate uses and development which have the potential to degrade the natural or cultural value of environmental assets.
- Protect development from the adverse impacts associated with flooding, erosion, fire etc.
- Encourage a net gain in the quantity and quality of indigenous habitat in and around Bairnsdale.
- Prevent any loss of endangered ecological communities within Bairnsdale and the surrounding hinterland.
- Reduce the impact of the built environment on areas of environmental significance.
- Improve habitat connectivity and linkages between important habitat areas.
- Protect culturally significant places and objects, including indigenous and non-indigenous cultural heritage, from inappropriate development.
- Improve awareness of environmental issues and encourage stewardship for the environment in the Bairnsdale community.
- Protect and value mature trees within Bairnsdale and surrounds.

15.3 Strategies

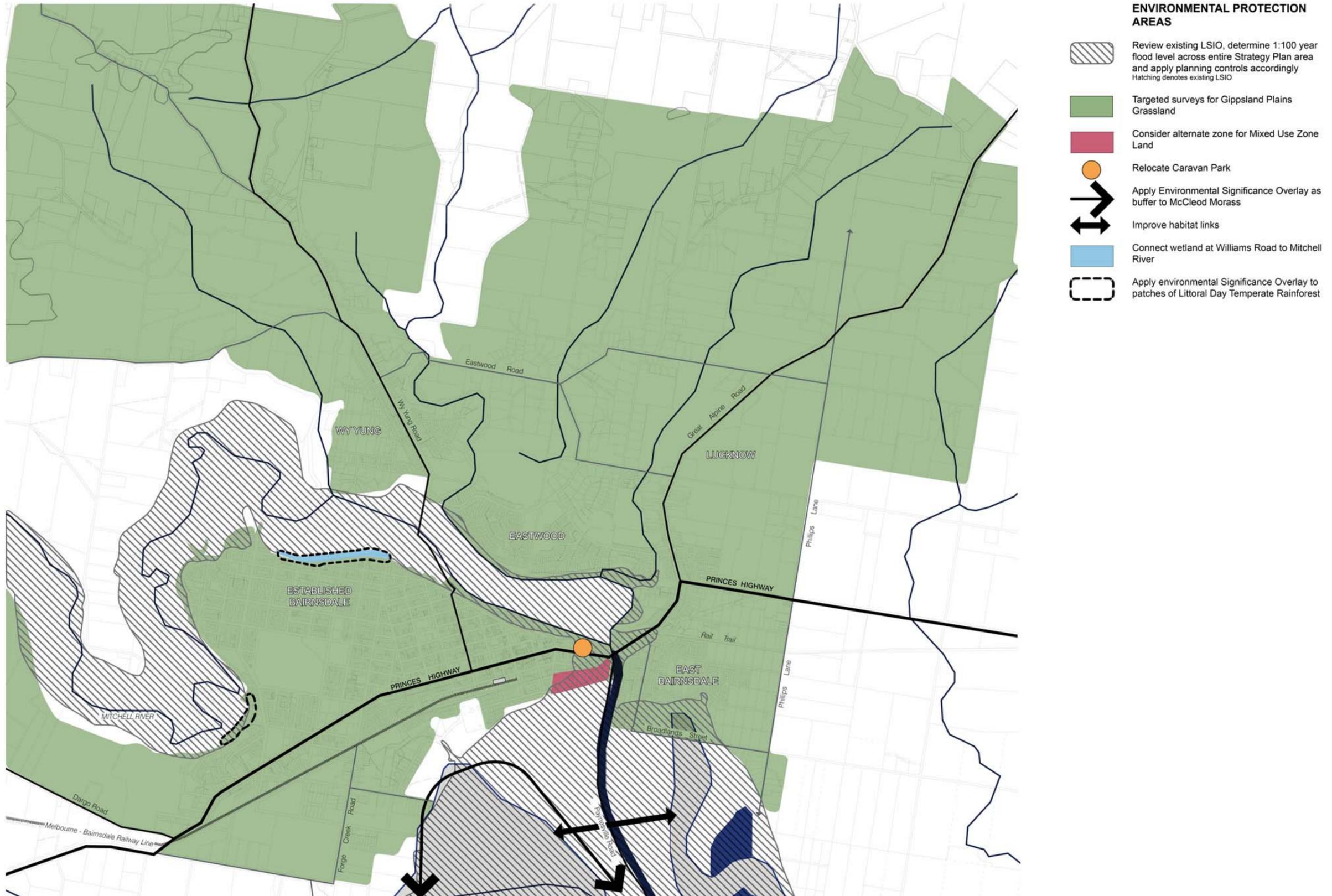
- In conjunction with the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority undertake a study of Bairnsdale to identify the 1:100 year flood level and incorporate into the Planning Scheme.
- Consider alternative zones for land included within the Mixed Use Zone adjacent to Mitchell River due to high potential for flooding.
- Consider relocation of the existing caravan park to land less susceptible to flooding.
- In conjunction with the CFA investigate requirements for a Wildfire Management Overlay to parts of Bairnsdale.
- In conjunction with the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Federal Department of Environment and Heritage undertake targeted surveys to identify and map Gippsland Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Grassland communities.
- Apply an Environmental Significance Overlay where appropriate to patches of Littoral Dry Temperate Rainforest along the banks of the Mitchell River and Clifton Creek particularly those patches to the north of Williams Parade and to the west of Calvert Street.

- Develop management plans to protect significant stands of Red Gums along the Mitchell River and surrounding rural hinterland through the application of a Vegetation Protection Overlay.
- Explore and promote the concept of an urban forest; the planting of trees in urban environments in public open space, to create a greener, more sustainable city.
- Facilitate habitat improvement on private land with emphasis on improving connectivity between isolated habitat remnants on larger rural residential land holdings to the north of Bairnsdale and between Lake King, McLeod Morass and the Mitchell River.
- In conjunction with local Landcare groups explore non regulatory mechanisms to assist landholders to manage environmental conditions on their properties.
- In conjunction with VicRoads identify significant roadside vegetation particularly Gippsland Red Gum Grassy Woodland.
- Explore opportunities for bio-corridors on unused VicRoads land and rail reservations.
- Develop a range of detailed indigenous planting guides for developers and residents to assist with indigenous plant selection.

- Consider removal of provisions in the ESO requiring planning approval for the removal of environmental weed species subject to requirements that erosion control and replanting is implemented.



Figure 14 > Environmental Protection Areas



Protecting Agricultural Assets



16.1 Overview

Agriculture and associated industries are significant employers in and around Bairnsdale. There are a high proportion of people employed directly in farming or through secondary industries such as packing agricultural produce.

The *East Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy* identifies that agriculture occupies approximately 18% of East Gippsland's land mass. Due to the topography, high quality agricultural land tends to be located along river valleys and plateaus.

Agriculture is economically important to East Gippsland contributing approximately \$142 million, in 2004, to East Gippsland's economy. Australian Bureau of Statistics data reveals that the Bairnsdale SLA contributes significantly to the local economy with a total value of agriculture in 2001 of \$11.2 million. Horticultural crops were worth approximately \$5.3 million, livestock slaughtered was worth approximately \$4.2 million and animal products were worth \$1.7 million.

The cultural value of agriculture to the region is well documented through the Regional Catchment Strategy, the Municipal Strategic Statement and various other strategies. It is recognised that the region produces approximately 20% of the State's vegetable crop and has enabled significant value-adding industries to establish in Bairnsdale particularly vegetable packing which provides significant employment in the region.

Given the economic and cultural significance of agriculture to Bairnsdale, and secondary industries it supports, it is important that high quality agricultural land is protected from inappropriate development to ensure that this resource is maintained.

Land capability

The Study of soils in the Bairnsdale and Dargo Plains (East Gippsland Landcare Network, 2005) reveals that most soil formations in and around Bairnsdale are suitable for some form of agriculture. In most cases the soils are suitable for grazing, particularly to the east and west of town, with some requiring fertilizer application and irrigation.

This Report identifies that soils to the north of town and in the alluvial floodplain of the Mitchell River are particularly suitable for horticultural production or cropping. The most significant constraint associated with agriculture in the alluvial plain is the risk associated with the Mitchell River flooding.

Similar to many agricultural areas within Victoria, access to reliable water for irrigation is also a major constraint.

Urban growth pressure

A consequence of the expansion of any city is incursions into rural land. In some cases this change occurs incrementally, while in others, such as through large estate development, this change can occur rapidly.

Recent development of Eastwood Estate to the north of the city, has seen a large tract of land consumed for urban development. Bairnsdale has also historically been the subject of significant rural residential subdivision, particularly to the north of town. Although rural residential development is an important resource, the fragmentation of land and subsequent focus on rural living can lead to the loss of valued agricultural land. In some cases the increase in habitation of rural areas can lead to conflicts between farming enterprises and rural residents such as utility requirements and impacts upon amenity from crop spraying.

Education and training

Bairnsdale is the largest centre in East Gippsland. Bairnsdale contains the East Gippsland TAFE which offers a number of courses into agricultural enterprises. This provides a significant opportunity to demonstrate sustainable agricultural techniques and provide for ongoing education and training to ensure the maintenance and protection of these assets.

16.2 Objectives

- Promote sustainable agricultural enterprise as a significant economic activity in the region.
- Encourage innovative and emerging agricultural enterprises to establish in the hinterland around Bairnsdale, including intensive agricultural, horticultural and aquaculture enterprises that minimise adverse impacts on the environment.
- Protect high quality agricultural land from land fragmentation and inappropriate development.
- Minimise land use conflicts between agricultural enterprise and residential uses through careful settlement planning and land management.

16.3 Strategies

- Discourage urban expansion into areas of high agricultural significance.
- Discourage rural residential development in proximity to active farms and intensive agricultural operations.
- Maintain the Farming Zone in rural areas outside of the city to promote the use of land for agriculture.
- Encourage diversification and development of sustainable agricultural enterprises and industries in agricultural industries including encouragement of emerging agricultural industries.
- Encourage tourism opportunities associated with agriculture that are commensurate to the scale of agricultural industry.
- Ensure that any rural tourism uses:
 - are supplementary to the major agricultural use of a site
 - achieve a functional nexus between agricultural activities and tourism opportunities is demonstrated
 - achieve access to tourist facilities be provided via all-weather roads
 - are provided with appropriate on site parking and all parking is sited and screened to avoid adverse impacts on the landscape values of the area
- Investigate mechanisms to facilitate pest, plant and animal control with individual land holders.
- In conjunction with local TAFE colleges and agricultural associations investigate potential to develop and demonstrate sustainable agricultural enterprises within proximity to the city.



Protecting The Mitchell River Environs



17.1 Overview

The Mitchell River is by far the most significant environmental feature of Bairnsdale. The river combined with Clifton Creek provide a physical barrier to settlement growth, separating the north and south of the city. Despite this, the Mitchell River provides important recreational value to the city with a network of walking tracks established around the river and the backwater.

More importantly, the Mitchell River provides the city water supply, which is extracted further upstream, and provides an important habitat corridor for both in-stream biota and biota that utilises riparian habitat. The East Gippsland River Health Strategy, 2005-2010 (2006) provides the following assessment of the Mitchell River:

The Mitchell River (Mitchell Basin Reaches 4-7) has been specifically identified in the VRHS as an iconic river for Victoria, one of two jewels in the Victorian crown. This is due to the river having a high level of conservation value, a high level of natural flows, being a relative intact river system and for the significance for larger systems (the Gippsland Lakes).

The river strategy covers the river from Paynesville to near the junction of the Mitchell and Wentworth Rivers. Due to the heavy population base and extensive utilisation of the river for a range of activities, the river environs are subject to a number of threats. Management of the river banks is extensively varied with significant lengths of the river forming the boundary of rural properties. There are also significant stretches of public land located within the city compounding management issues associated with the river.

It was observed that in many parts of the river, stock access was allowed to the river bank, causing erosion of the river bank. The Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 38 already recognises stock access as a concern, and other non regulatory mechanisms should be considered to encourage landholders to minimise access to the river bank.

Additionally the river banks in some instances have been extensively cleared of riparian vegetation. Vegetation contributes to the stabilisation of the banks and provides habitat opportunities for biota that utilise the riparian fringe. Whilst there is evidence of significant work undertaken on the river, there are substantial opportunities to improve the overall health and condition of the river banks.

Erosion is not just a problem related to stock access to the river. Fluctuations in flow of the river have significant potential to scour the banks of the river particularly during peak flow events. It has been advised that during flooding events there are some restrictions to flow as a result of infrastructure development. In particular, concerns have arisen into some development retarding the flow of water which can increase peak discharge rates causing additional erosion downstream.

Another critical threat to health of the river environs is the presence of woody weed species. Of particular note is the presence of Poplars and Willow Trees. The River Health Strategy notes these are priority weeds that out-compete native flora. The ability of these species to spread by broken twigs and branches and suckering is a significant threat to the health of the Mitchell River and treating this problem requires a consistent management approach across land tenure.

The Mitchell River is managed by the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. The Authority works in partnership with the community, government, businesses and other stakeholders to assist in sustainable planning and management of the waterway.

17.2 Objectives

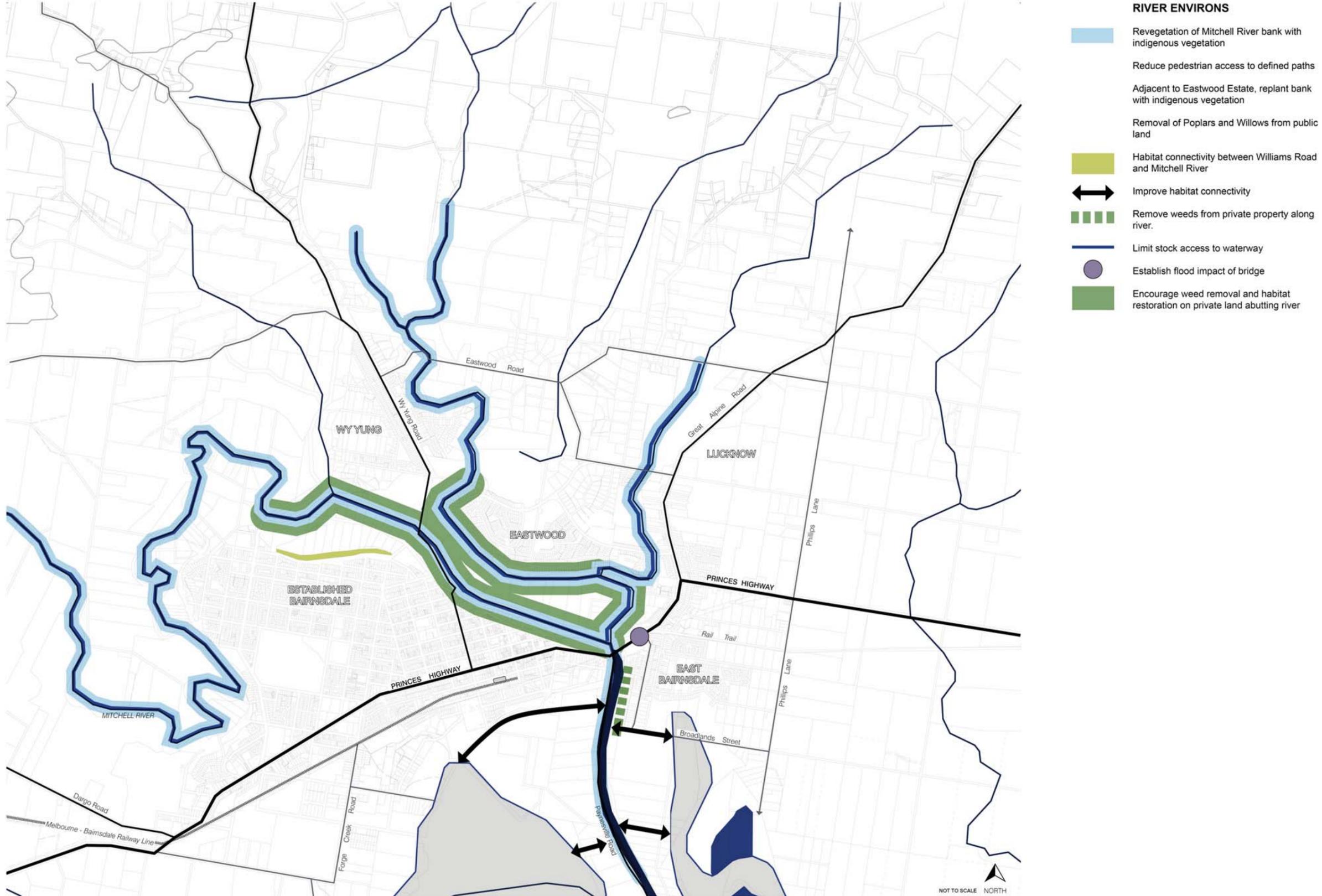
- Improve the health and condition of the Mitchell River and Mitchell River Backwater environs through targeted weed control, habitat restoration and environmental management.
- Revegetate the banks of the Mitchell River and Clifton Creek with indigenous species to improve habitat along the river.
- Improve the recreational role of the Mitchell River creating a showpiece attraction for the city.
- Reduce the risk associated to development from flooding and erosion events along the Mitchell River.
- Work cooperatively with the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority to enhance the waterway.

17.3 Strategies

- Continue riparian vegetation restoration and replanting to the north and south of the Mitchell River with indigenous species adjacent to the Mitchell River between Paynesville Road Wy Yung Road.
- Reduce pedestrian access to the river bank to defined locations along the Mitchell River through planting and suitable fencing.
- Improve riparian habitat along Clifton Creek south of the Eastwood Estate, through replanting of indigenous vegetation.
- Continue removal of weed species including willow trees and poplars from public land adjacent to the river between the Great Alpine Road and Wy Yung Road.
- Undertake stabilisation works of the northern bank of the Mitchell River between Paynesville Road and Wy Yung Road.
- Develop habitat linkages between the wetland to the north of Williams Parade and the Mitchell River.
- Consider the application of a Design and Development overlay in residential areas adjacent to the Mitchell River and Clifton Creek to minimise the visual intrusion of buildings upon the river environs.
- Undertake targeted removal of environmental weed species and encourage replanting with indigenous vegetation in conjunction with landholders with property abutting the river, in particular along Robb Street.
- Work with landholders to restrict stock access to the bank of the river and backwater particularly on rural land adjacent to the Eastwood Estate.
- Undertake erosion control works adjacent to steep slopes in the vicinity of the Mitchell River and Clifton Creek in particular adjacent to Roseleigh Place and Eastwood Road.
- Develop policy to require that all development adjacent to the edge of flood plains or high points above the river is supported by geotechnical advice that the property is not subject to landslip or erosion.
- Assess the impacts of the Princes Highway Bridge on storm and flooding events in conjunction with VicRoads.
- Undertake targeted removal of weeds along the Mitchell River banks in conjunction with landholders.



Figure 15 > Protecting the Mitchell River Environs





Enhancing Landscape Quality



18.1 Overview

The landscape around Bairnsdale varies significantly. To the east and west of the city the landscape is relatively flat comprising of open pasture interspersed with tree rows along boundaries. To the north of town the landscape is more varied, with an undulating landscape with fragmented patches of indigenous vegetation.

To the south, the landscape is significantly different comprising of flood plains and low lying land that drains into Jones Bay and McLeod Morass. The MSS already recognises the National Trust Classification of this landscape. Although this landscape is heavily constrained by flood potential, the application of a significant landscape overlay should be considered to ensure that any buildings that are developed are compatible with this landscape context.

The Mitchell River floodplain between Bairnsdale and areas to the north is an important feature of the city. This area has been left relatively undeveloped and generally comprises open pasture with vegetation flanking the Mitchell River. There is a significant network of walking tracks available which provides people an opportunity to enjoy these areas.

Within the city, there has been extensive population pressures to the edges of the floodplain. From these elevated locations, significant views are available over the river and the floodplains. In some cases this has led to buildings dominating the landscape around the river. Given the scenic and recreational value of this landscape a sympathetic approach to dwelling design and landscaping is required to minimise visual intrusion on the river.

There are several important cultural landscape elements in the landscape within and surrounding Bairnsdale. Planted Eucalypts in the central median strip leading into Bairnsdale from the west, a significant willow row along Wy Yung Road to the northern entrance of Bairnsdale and Plane trees adjacent to the Mitchell River are all significant cultural elements of the landscape. In the case of the Willow Tree Rows and Plane Trees, these rows are located within Environmental Significance Overlays.

18.2 Objective

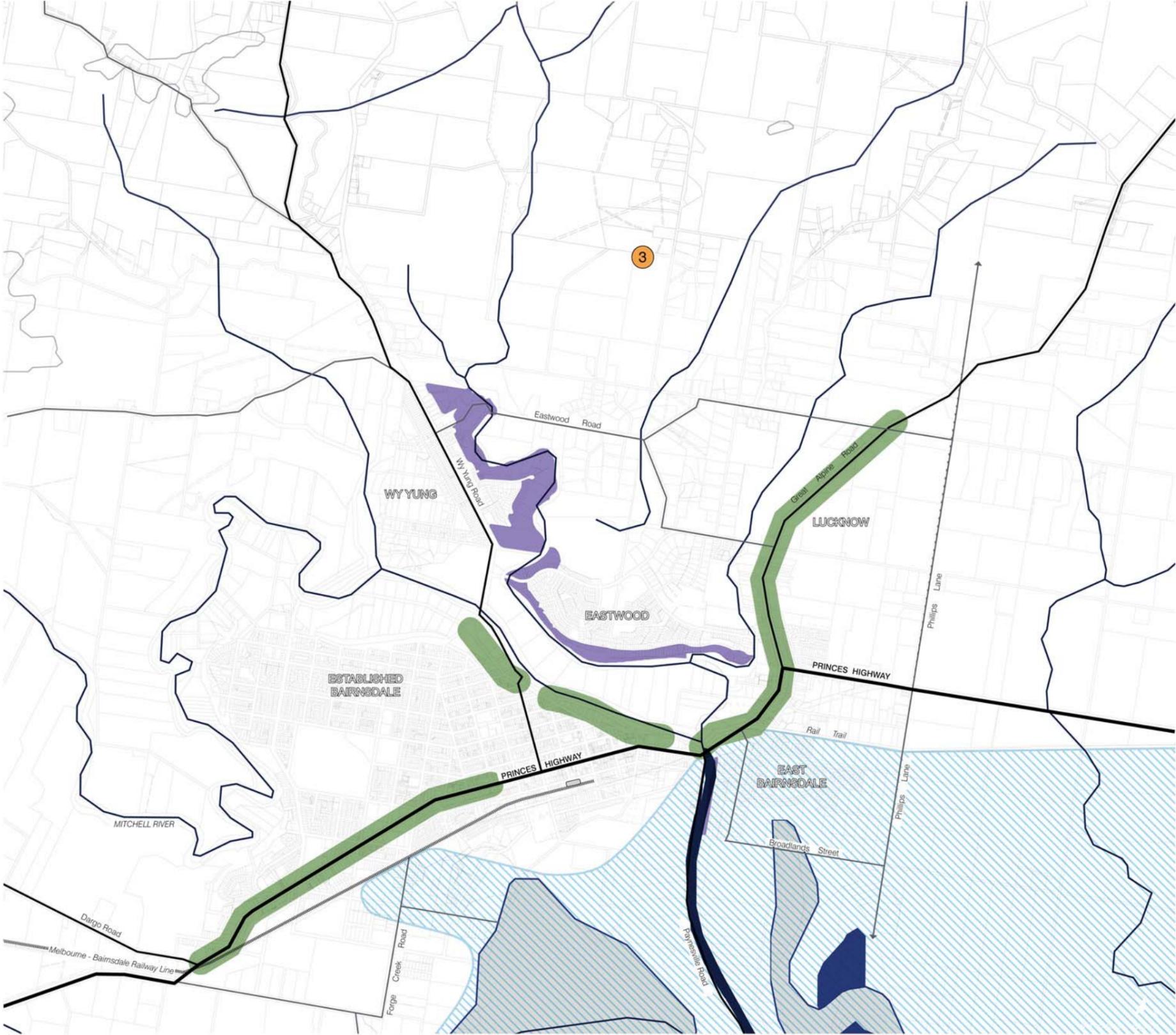
- Ensure that development in areas of landscape significance appropriately responds to landscape values.

18.3 Strategies

- Consider application of a Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule or amending Schedule 1 to the Vegetation Protection Overlay to recognise and protect these important cultural elements in the landscape including:
 - Spotted gums along the Princes Highway between Bairnsdale Park and the Princes Highway and Great Alpine Road intersection
 - Spotted gums and planted Eucalypts between the Princes Highway and Bairnsdale-Melbourne rail intersection and the Princes Hwy and Goold Street intersection
- Consider planning tools such as Design and Development Overlays in residential areas proximate to the Mitchell River and Mitchell River Backwater with requirements to ensure that development adjacent to these sensitive landscapes appropriately respond to the environmental and landscape characteristics of the floodplain. Controls should incorporate objectives to minimise impacts on views to the Mitchell River and Clifton Creek and ensuring that appropriate landscaping that supplements the riparian vegetation occurs.
- Amend local policy at Clause 22.07 to include siting and design objectives for dwellings in rural areas.
- Complete planning for the National Trust Landscape to the south of town by applying a Significant Landscape Overlay as identified in Clause 21.05.
- Consider application of an Environmental Significance Overlay around McLeod Morass to ensure that all development adjacent to McLeod Morass suitably addresses this sensitive interface and ensures development does not affect the wetland through emissions or effluent to the Morass.



Figure 16 > Enhancing Landscape Quality



- ENHANCING LANDSCAPE QUALITY**
- Protect significant tree lines
 - Consider DDO's in areas adjacent to Mitchell River
 - 3 Develop policy to discourage development on ridge lines
 - Incorporate SLO area identified as significant in Clause 21.05



Preserving Cultural Heritage



19.1 Overview

Cultural heritage

Prior to European settlement of the area, the traditional land owners; the Gunai/Kurnai people occupied a significant part of East Gippsland, including the region around Bairnsdale. The traditional lands of the Gunai Kurnai extended from near Wilsons Promontory in the west, to Omeo in the north and close to Orbost in the east. There is significant evidence of aboriginal occupation of the land by virtue of scarred trees and artefact scatters found throughout the region.

The State and Local Planning Policy Framework recognise the need to identify and conserve places and objects of indigenous and non-indigenous cultural heritage significance. In 2006 the introduction of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 increased the level of protection of sites and objects of aboriginal cultural heritage significance by requiring significant developments to address matters of indigenous cultural heritage significance.

Although this legislation ensures larger developments consider impacts on cultural heritage, there are a range of smaller developments that are exempt from requirements to address cultural heritage significance. Bairnsdale's location within proximity of significant water bodies combined with evidence of aboriginal occupation of the area, leads to a high likelihood that a significant number of cultural heritage sites and objects are likely to occur. Aboriginal cultural heritage material is a non-renewable resource and it is essential that cultural heritage sites are protected.

Specific locations of cultural heritage sites

The location of individual heritage sites is extremely sensitive to the aboriginal people of Victoria. The biggest threat to aboriginal cultural sites is human activity. Aboriginal cultural heritage sites are susceptible to impacts associated with development and can also be the subject of vandalism. To minimise disturbance of these sites, information is not generally made publicly available.

The location of Bairnsdale provided valuable resources to the indigenous people who inhabited the area and there is significant evidence of aboriginal occupation in the area. One particular example is the Canoe Tree in Howitt Park and other scarred trees.

In developing new estates, it is important that aboriginal cultural heritage material is respected and appropriately incorporated into the open space network or left in-situ where possible. Representatives of the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) should be involved in the early stages of development to ensure that aboriginal cultural heritage is appropriately protected within new development.

European heritage

A significant number of heritage buildings and places have remained intact in Bairnsdale. Some notable places include the Bairnsdale train station, court house, main street gardens and band rotunda and several churches, Hotels and older buildings along the Princes Highway.

A significant trend with historic buildings is adaptive re-use for a range of purposes. Alterations of heritage buildings should be sympathetic to heritage elements and avoid detrimental impacts to the cultural value of these places. Additionally it is essential that the built form adjacent to heritage places is respectful and does not dominate or obscure the fabric of heritage significance.

19.2 Objectives

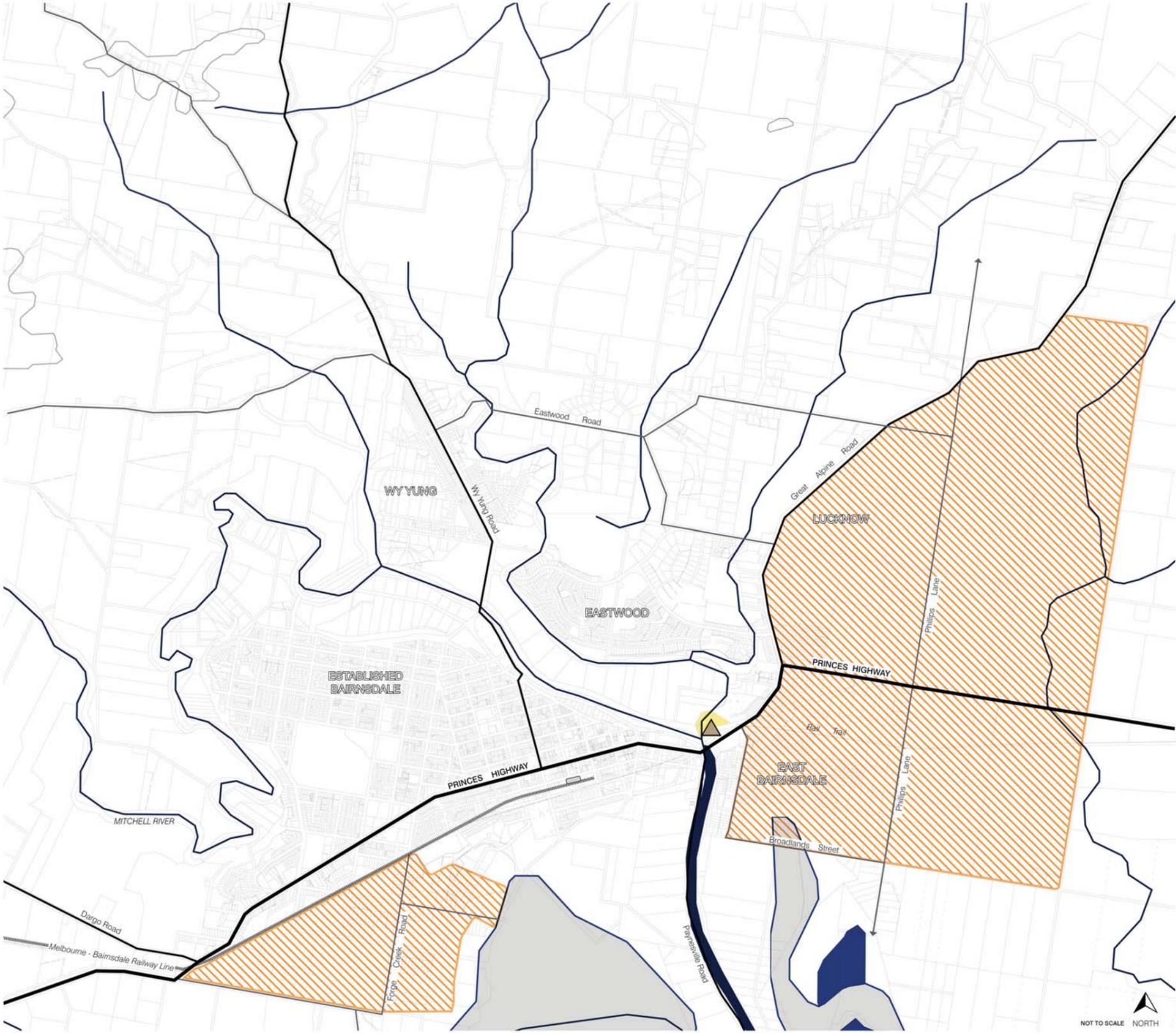
- Recognise and protect cultural heritage within the city including indigenous and non-indigenous cultural heritage sites and objects.
- Ensure that development in areas of cultural heritage significance has appropriate regard to cultural heritage values.
- Enhance the value of places of cultural heritage significance.
- Increase awareness amongst the community of issues associated with both indigenous and non-indigenous cultural heritage.

19.3 Strategies

- Update Clause 22.11 of the Planning Scheme to recognise the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and include a policy to ensure that all development applications in culturally sensitive areas not covered by the Federal and State legislation appropriately address aboriginal cultural heritage.
- In conjunction with the aboriginal community, develop a program of educational and interpretive signage throughout the city recognising the original owners and the way in which resources were used.
- Working with the RAP, DSE and the Committee of Management for Howitt Park, Council should promote the need for a management plan for the Howitt Park area (Mitchell river park area near the Bairnsdale Canoe tree) in order to protect and enhance the significant heritage site.
- Investigate the removal of play equipment facilities from Howitt Park to an alternative location (for example, adjacent to the skate park) and incorporate Howitt Park as a central element of a strategic interpretive network.
- Review the East Gippsland Planning Scheme to ensure that all relevant recommendations from previous heritage studies have been incorporated into the Scheme to ensure all buildings and precincts of heritage significance are protected.
- Develop heritage guidelines for the assessment of applications to heritage buildings that can be incorporated into the East Gippsland Planning Scheme.



Figure 17 > Protecting Cultural Heritage



- PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE**
- Require all development to demonstrate consideration is given to cultural heritage sites
 - Develop a Cultural Management Plan for Howitt Park
 - Consider removal of play equipment from Howitt Park and convert Howitt Park to an interpretive park
 - Detailed Cultural Heritage assessment required



Developing A Sustainable Transport Network



20.1 Overview

Travel and movement is generally not an end in itself, but a means of accessing opportunities and services or as a recreational activity. Previous sections of this Growth Strategy have established a framework for sustainable growth for Bairnsdale, outlining concepts for future expansion of the community and identifying the services and amenities which will be required to accommodate this growth. This section sets out the objectives and strategies for access and movement. Much of the transport discussion, including specific objectives and strategies, has been discussed elsewhere in this document, specifically in the section titled, "Revitalising the CBD".

Like many regional cities, Bairnsdale is heavily reliant upon the private vehicle for transport. Existing public transport services are limited in both network coverage and operational timeframes. Whilst the established areas of Bairnsdale are quite flat and therefore conducive to walking and cycling, the existing infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, outside the Bairnsdale CBD, is generally of a poor standard. In many places within established residential areas there are no footpaths.

As Bairnsdale's population ages, there will be a greater proportion of non-drivers living within Bairnsdale and nearby towns, such as Paynesville, Lakes Entrance and Metung. In addition, with the future focus on sustainability and providing healthy, safe and well-connected communities, the importance of adequate walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure is essential.

Cars and car parking

Section 13 discusses options and strategies for Revitalising the CBD. Key transport issues within Bairnsdale's CBD include the dual and conflicting role of the Princes Highway as Bairnsdale's Main Street and the State's principal tourist and freight route through the region. Conflicts arise, particularly during business hours between private passenger vehicles, pedestrians and through freight vehicles.

Other issues include the existing car parking supply, specifically the lack of longer-term parking for CBD workers and the location of intrusive off-street car parks, which disrupt retail frontages and create pedestrian conflicts and potential safety concerns. Informal site inspections indicate that circulating traffic looking for vacant car parking spaces is a major contributor to localised traffic congestion within the CBD.

Another issue is the lack of parking within the CBD for tourist coaches and vehicles towing boats, caravans or trailers. There is some capacity for providing parking for these vehicles adjacent to the train station or as previously suggested in this report outside the visitor centre.

Freight / truck bypass

The Bairnsdale Heavy Vehicle Study (Turnbull Fenner and Earth Tech, 2002) investigated potential locations of a new truck route around Bairnsdale in order to improve amenity and safety on Main Street and the surrounding commercial and residential areas. The report recommended three bypass options. An additional two bypass options have been identified through the consultation undertaken for this work. The options are shown in Action Plan 4 – Improved Circulation

Section 13 of this report discusses Management of Heavy Vehicles and recommends an appropriate longer-term bypass option. As this option will include infrastructure works which may take a considerable time to come to fruition, a recommendation would be to have a short-term option for a bypass which relies upon the existing road network, but still removes heavy vehicles from the key commercial and residential areas.

As described in the Background Analysis Report, there is a signed heavy vehicle bypass route within Bairnsdale. However this predominantly serves to provide a route for high vehicles to access Paynesville, without going under the Mitchell River bridge.

A more appropriate bypass option would deviate from the Highway at Ligar Street, travel south of the railway line, then travel along Dalmahoy Street, then connect back to the Princes Highway via Wood Street. This route should operate on curfew; during the day trucks would use this route and at night (when the commercial/retail centre of Bairnsdale is used less) the Princes Highway would be the designated route. Consideration of traffic management treatments at the intersection of Princes Highway and Wood Street should be given, to facilitate right-turning movement into the Highway.

Public transport

Public transport in Bairnsdale includes three passenger rail services to Melbourne each day (two on Sundays), local bus services and services between Bairnsdale and Canberra, Merimbula/Pambula, Lakes Entrance/Lake Tyers, Sale, Omeo, Paynesville and Buchan. The long-haul coach services operate from Bairnsdale station, while the local bus services terminate in Main Street, near the corner of Bailey Street.

The coverage and operational times of bus services within Bairnsdale and between Bairnsdale and Paynesville are currently being reviewed by the Department of Transport. This study is expected to conclude in late 2009 and its recommendations will then be the subject of funding bids to improve services within the region. The existing service coverage should be broadened to incorporate the new residential growth areas and key employment nodes.

The current bus timetable does not provide adequate service during peak times, making it difficult to use public transport to access work, education, health or other services. In addition, the current location of bus stops does not adequately provide access for education or employment uses or the BARC Activity Spine. After hours and weekend services which are heavily relied upon by non-drivers such as youth, the elderly, disabled passengers or other transport disadvantaged groups are currently inadequate or non-existent.

Not all the existing bus services are Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant, making some disabled users reliant on taxis through the Multi-Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP). While the Government makes exceptions for DDA compliance for regional areas, based on remoteness and financial hardship, there may be some locations identified where disabled users could access public transport services.



While existing passenger rail services are limited and tend to be used for longer-haul trips to Melbourne or other towns within Gippsland, it is difficult to increase services along the Bairnsdale line due to significant (and costly) infrastructure constraints, including the need to construct a bridge over the Avon River, in the existing single track rail line between Moe and Bairnsdale. In the short to medium term, providing coach services between Bairnsdale and Sale and Traralgon, during peak commuting times (for work and education) would be an alternative to increasing train services along the Bairnsdale line.

The accessibility and visibility of the train station on Macleod Street, south of the key commercial and retail centre, could be vastly improved and should potentially incorporate bus stop facilities for local town and inter-town services alongside the existing V/Line coach facilities. The CBD Strategy proposes options to 'open up' the station and establish a more vibrant destination which links into the rest of the CBD, via Service Street.

Community transport

There are a number of organisations within Bairnsdale that offer community-based transport for their services and when not in use, are available for use by other community organisations. Community transport services include health/medical related transport and transport for community groups, including aboriginal groups and disability groups.

School bus services operate for those students living out of town, but students living within Bairnsdale need to rely on public transport and as already stated, there is limited service coverage.

The Let's Get Connected project, funded through the DPCD's Transport Connections Program establishes local partnerships to make better use of existing assets and services such as taxis, school buses, community buses and volunteers to develop innovative approaches to providing transport for people with limited access. The project has been running in East Gippsland since 2003 and has been successful in coordinating services and ensuring more efficient use of existing transport assets.

Taxis

There is one taxi operator within Bairnsdale operating a fleet of 11 taxis, including four wheelchair accessible taxis. The taxi services appear to be adequate for Bairnsdale. In particular the fleet of wheelchair accessible taxis is well utilised for intra-town travel due to the lack of DDA compliant public transport services.

There are opportunities for the Department of Transport and Council to partner with the taxi operator to provide demand-responsive services in the evenings and on weekends when public transport is not available.

Walking and cycling

Bairnsdale is well served by recreational walking and cycling trails. The walking track along the Mitchell River is well utilised for both passive recreation and for commuting into town. The extension of this track to make a 'loop circuit' is required to improve overall accessibility and options for walking.

The infrastructure for pedestrians in both new and established residential areas in Bairnsdale is poor. In many areas there are no footpaths, giving pedestrians the choice of walking on nature strips, the median or sometimes on the road. This is particularly difficult for pedestrians with diminished mobility, parents with prams or children – it is very difficult to drive a mobility scooter or push a pram across rough surfaces, like grass.

Council is currently preparing an Access and Mobility Plan to improve pedestrian networks throughout the city and Shire. In addition, Council is embarking on an urban streets development program, which seeks to upgrade streets through Bairnsdale to improve the standard of amenity.

Chapter 7, Walkable Communities, sets out objectives for ensuring new developments promote opportunities for walking, in particular strategies for increasing the proportion of residents who live within reasonable walking distance of services and are therefore less reliant on the car. The establishment of several local activity centres, including the BARC Activity Spine, should be considered when prioritising construction of pedestrian infrastructure. A well-connected, legible and well-lit network of footpaths and on-road cycling paths should be provided to these Activity Centres.

While much of the topography of Bairnsdale is conducive to walking and cycling, the Mitchell River provides a natural barrier to access between East Bairnsdale and the CBD. Currently there is one road bridge with narrow pedestrian paths, which crosses the River. As discussed in other chapters of this report, a bridge crossing the Mitchell River, for pedestrians and cyclists should be investigated.

While cyclists can access the recreational walking trails for both recreation and commuting, these trails are limited in their coverage and there are many opportunities to improve cycling infrastructure within Bairnsdale. Residential streets in established areas of Bairnsdale are generally very wide and allow room for the establishment of on-road cycling paths.

As for pedestrian networks, a system of on-road cycling paths should be established with priority given to providing access to key nodes, such as the CBD, the train station and bus interchange, the BARC Activity Spine and key employment areas. In addition the construction of on-street bike racks at these nodes, together with a bike storage locker at the train station should be encouraged.

Travel demand management

Another aspect of sustainable transport management is Travel Demand Management of Travel Behaviour Change, where people are encouraged to consider how they travel and how they might either reduce their total number of daily trips or convert some car-based trips to non-motorised modes, such as walking, cycling and public transport. As well as providing the necessary infrastructure to promote this change, Council can also provide education and information to the community which allows them to consider the impacts of their current transport choices.

East Bairnsdale

There are two key transport issues in East Bairnsdale. The first is the lack of connectivity between East Bairnsdale and the adjacent Princes Highway and the Bairnsdale CBD. This is an issue for all modes, but in particular the limited access encourages car use as the distances for walking and cycling are great. The second transport issue is the existing land reservation for realignment of the Princes Highway at the intersection of the Great Alpine Road. VicRoads undertook extensive intersection works some years ago, which have removed the need for the proposed realignment.

20.2 Objectives

- Improve access within Bairnsdale for all modes; in particular access to the CBD and to the proposed local Activity Centres.
- Improve accessibility for East Bairnsdale.
- Promote sustainable travel modes, improve safety and convenience for walking and cycling.
- Separate through freight traffic from local traffic, particularly during business hours.

20.3 Strategies

- Promote greater pedestrian permeability within the CBD with a greater emphasis on the train station and existing Dahlsen's site.
- Reinforce the role of Service Street as the key north-south link within the CBD.
- Improve monitoring and enforcement of parking restrictions in CBD, to encourage turnover and to discourage long-stay parking.
- Investigate options for establishing additional parking adjacent to the train station.
- Establish parking in Main Street for longer vehicles including tourist coaches and cars towing trailers, boats and caravans.
- Work with VicRoads to remove the Public Acquisition Overlay for the road reserve near the corner of Princes Highway and Great Alpine Road.
- Investigate a long-term strategy for constructing a freight bypass to the south of Bairnsdale.
- Develop a short-term option for through freight traffic to be operated on curfew along Ligar, Dalmahoy and Grant Streets.
- Pursue development of an inter-modal freight exchange facility in Bairnsdale as recommended in the Gippsland Regional Transport Strategy (GRTS), exploring both east and west locations.
- Work with the Department of Transport to increase network coverage and operational hours for bus services within Bairnsdale and between Bairnsdale and outlying towns. Ensure that new residential areas are included within public transport routes.

- Work with the Department of Transport to increase the number of rail services along the Bairnsdale rail line. In the short-term, investigate options to provide sprinter coach services between Bairnsdale and Sale and Traralgon.
- Continue the Transport Connections program, promoting the more efficient use of existing community and public transport services and assets.
- Develop criteria for priority of street upgrades as part of urban streets improvement program.
- Provide footpaths in established residential areas, particularly on McKean Street, Day Street, Wallace Street, Pearson Street, Francis Street, Mitchell Street and Turnbull Street.
- Complete the 'walking circuit' on the river bank, south of the Eastwood Estate.
- Provide on-road bike lanes on key streets within and leading to the CBD and other local Activity Centres, including McKean Street, Day Street, Wallace Street, Pearson Street, Francis Street, Mitchell Street and Turnbull Street.
- Provide on-street bike racks within the CBD and at key employment, recreational, education, health and other service nodes.
- Provide a secure bike locker at the train station.
- Develop a well signed and lit strategic pedestrian network linking the sites (along the BARC Activity Spine).
- Strengthen pedestrian links along Service Street, Nicholson Street and Macleod Street.
- Promote travel demand management. Provide community education on travel options and work with employers to support and promote sustainable travel options.



Providing Green Infrastructure



21.1 Overview

The urban nature of Bairnsdale has required the development of a system of infrastructure to service the needs of residents. A number of these assets require the disposal of waste such as stormwater and sewage from urban areas into surrounding environments.

Wastewater treatment

The Bairnsdale Treatment Plant is located adjacent to McLeod Morass, which forms part of a Ramsar listed wetland. This includes several constructed wetlands in the Morass and discharged treated effluent. This discharged water provides an important source of treated water into the Morass and in turn the ecological services provided by the wetland environment further filter treated effluent. Although this has identified benefits for the Morass, the treatment plant must be carefully managed so as to ensure the environmental health of this ecosystem is maintained.

Stormwater

A number of concerns have been identified in the analysis of drainage and pollution sources in relation to receiving environments in and around Bairnsdale. The East Gippsland Urban Stormwater Management Plan (2003) recognises several significant threats from stormwater in Bairnsdale.

These threats include:

- Stormwater run-off from industrial development;
- Stormwater run-off from commercial development ; and
- Stormwater run-off from residential areas and construction activities.

The Urban Stormwater Plan recognises that each of these threats has the potential to degrade the ecological function and intrinsic values of receiving environment, such as the Mitchell River and McLeod Morass. It is therefore critical that the objectives and strategies of this Strategy are compatible with the Urban Stormwater Plan.

Water quality

Bairnsdale is supplied with water directly from the Mitchell River which is extracted approximately 35 kilometres north of the city. A concern has arisen with regards to potable water in the city being utilised for watering of sporting grounds and community gardens. Given the limitations on water extraction from the river, and as water demand increases, it is essential that supplementary water supplies, particularly for garden and sporting facilities, are sought.

21.2 Objectives

- Improve the quality of stormwater and effluent on receiving environments.
- Develop alternative water supplies to reduce the need for use of potable water for garden and sports facility watering.
- Provide new development with appropriate infrastructure that reduces discharge to pre-development levels and minimises peak flow rates during storm periods.
- Significantly improve the quality of water discharges from the Bairnsdale industrial developments.

21.3 Strategies

- Ensure all new developments are designed in accordance with Water Sensitive Urban Design principles.
- Investigate opportunities for water re-use and alternative water supplies for public gardens and sporting grounds in conjunction with East Gippsland Water.
- Update the Industrial Policy at Clause 22.02 to specify that all new developments must demonstrate how they have been designed to minimise off-site stormwater discharge and ensure that any discharge will avoid adverse impact on environmental conditions.
- Implement the recommendations of the Urban Stormwater Management Plan.
- Retrospectively engage industrial land holdings to ensure that appropriate water treatment facilities are installed including grease traps etc.
- Ensure all new drainage and sewerage infrastructure is designed to reduce nutrient inputs into receiving waterways.
- Undertake a detailed review of the capacity of the Bairnsdale Treatment Plant and investigate options for replacement.
- Investigate opportunities for stormwater harvesting for uses such as watering sporting facilities and public gardens.



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Water Transport Resources Energy Buildings Urban Development Agribusiness



Bairnsdale Growth Strategy