

DEBNEYS PRECINCT – STRUCTURE PLAN

Prepared by
Message Consultants
on behalf of
the Department of
Health and Human Services and
the City of Moonee Valley

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The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Moonee Valley City Council (MVCC) has appointed Message Consultants Australia to prepare a Structure Plan for Debneys Precinct, Flemington.

Debney's Precinct is located approximately 3km from the Melbourne CBD, as shown in Figure 1.

It is bounded by Mt Alexander Road (north), Tullamarine Freeway (east), Racecourse Road (south) and Victoria Street (west), and has an area of approximately 16.2ha.

Debneys Precinct consists of the Flemington public housing estate (the 'Flemington estate'), which is owned and managed by DHHS. MVCC owns and manages Debneys Park and the Hopetoun Early Years Centre at 220 Racecourse Road. The park includes the Flemington Community Centre and the Debney Meadow Primary School utilises a portion of the park.

An aerial photograph and the study area is provided in Figure 2 (overleaf).

1.1 Purpose of the Structure Plan

The Structure Plan for Debneys Precinct provides the framework to guide future development and enhancements in the Precinct. It guides the short, medium and long term strategic vision for the precinct to deliver the shared aspirations and needs of DHHS and MVCC. It is intended to be included as a reference document in Council's Municipal Strategic Statement.

In particular, the Structure Plan:

- Provides government agencies, Council, developers and the local community certainty about future development aspirations;
- Manages the way land within the precinct is to be developed;
- Influences planning scheme decisions and permits for new development;
- Identifies physical changes to streetscapes and the public realm; and
- Guides public and private investment.

The Plan is intended to be implemented in 2 stages as a consequence of the dual land ownership of the precinct:

- Stage 1 will be the redevelopment of the Flemington estate by DHHS.
- Stage 2 will be enhancements to the land owned by the City of Moonee Valley.

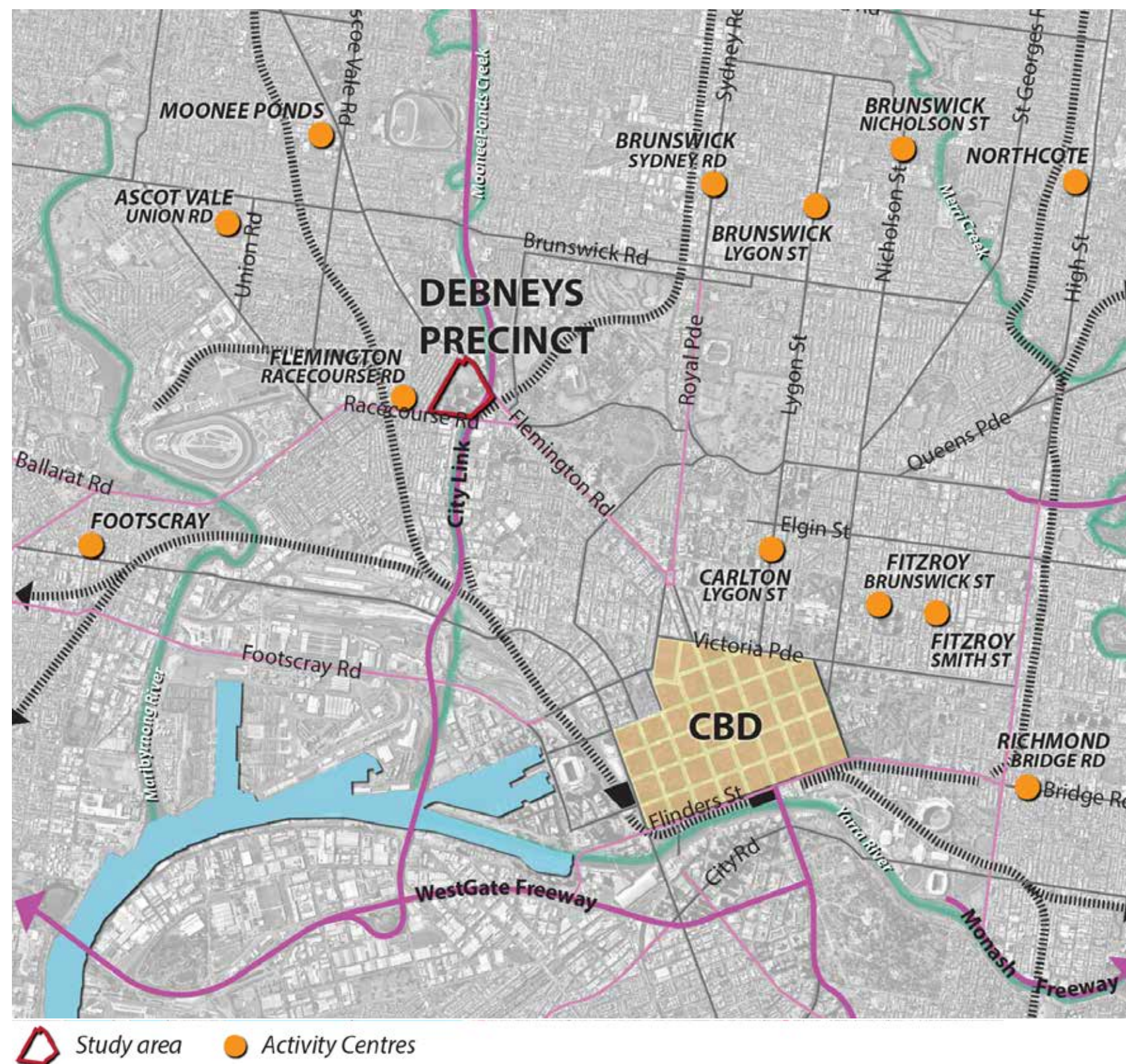


Figure 1: Regional Context of Debneys Precinct

1.2 Background

The Flemington estate consists of 4 high rise towers and several 3-5 storey 'walk-up' buildings fronting Holland Court.

In 2016, the Victorian Government announced the renewal of Flemington estate to improve existing public housing by facilitating improved conditions and to cater for increasing demand for social and public housing through providing additional residential opportunities. This site was identified for renewal due to its proximity to transport, education and health facilities, work opportunities and support services.

The renewal program will involve demolition of the existing walk-up unit blocks centred on Holland Court that were built in the 1960s. The 4 high rise towers, containing a total of 718 dwellings, will remain. New buildings will then be built across the site, which will substantially increase housing density in the form of social and private housing. A new multi-purpose community centre will be provided fronting Racecourse Road to replace the Flemington Community Centre.

The program will also provide improved communal and public open space, pedestrian connections to the surrounding area and opportunities for retail and/or commercial uses in appropriate locations.

The renewal of the Flemington estate is a catalyst for further enhancement of the wider Debnays Precinct.



Figure 2: Aerial photograph

The context of the study area is influenced by 2 principal components:

1. The effect of strategic and statutory planning influences.
2. The effect of immediate physical influences.

2.1 Strategic and Statutory Planning Influences

This section of the report provides an overview of the existing statutory controls that regulate the development in the precinct and proposed strategic planning policy that will guide future planning.

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050: Metropolitan Planning Strategy seeks to make better use of underutilised land that is close to jobs, services and public transport infrastructure. At the local level, Plan Melbourne seeks to enable people to live within 20 minute neighbourhoods by providing residents access to a wide ranges of goods and services.

Debney's Precinct is located at the southeast corner of the City of Moonee Valley. The policies of Moonee Valley are to encourage growth in activity centres and 'moderate' change in the residential hinterland.

In particular, the Vision in Clause 21.03 promotes, "a diverse range of housing that anticipates the needs of existing and future residents, that is built in appropriate locations that supports and improves community health and well-being".

Figure 3 shows the location of the study area in relation to activity centres and employment corridors.

Debneys Park is the major public open space in Flemington. It is classified as a Regional open space in the Moonee Valley Open Space Strategy (2009). The Flemington Community Centre is one of two centres in the municipality and provides a wide range of programs and activities to suit the local community.

The City of Melbourne extends south from Racecourse Road. On the opposite side of the road and Debneys Precinct sits the Arden McCauley Urban Renewal area. The mixed use nature of this area, focussed on North Melbourne and Kensington, is expected to substantially increase its population in the medium term (20,500 people by 2040) (Figure 4). Racecourse Road is designated an 'activity corridor – primary street frontage' and properties with this frontage are intended for mixed use activities. Buildings are to be built to the street and have a 30m preferred maximum building height.

Strategic planning policy exercised by both Moonee Valley and Melbourne City Councils, reflect the complexities of these influences on Debneys Precinct. The effect of the strategic intent is to reflect the existing planning controls and those mooted in response to strategic policy.

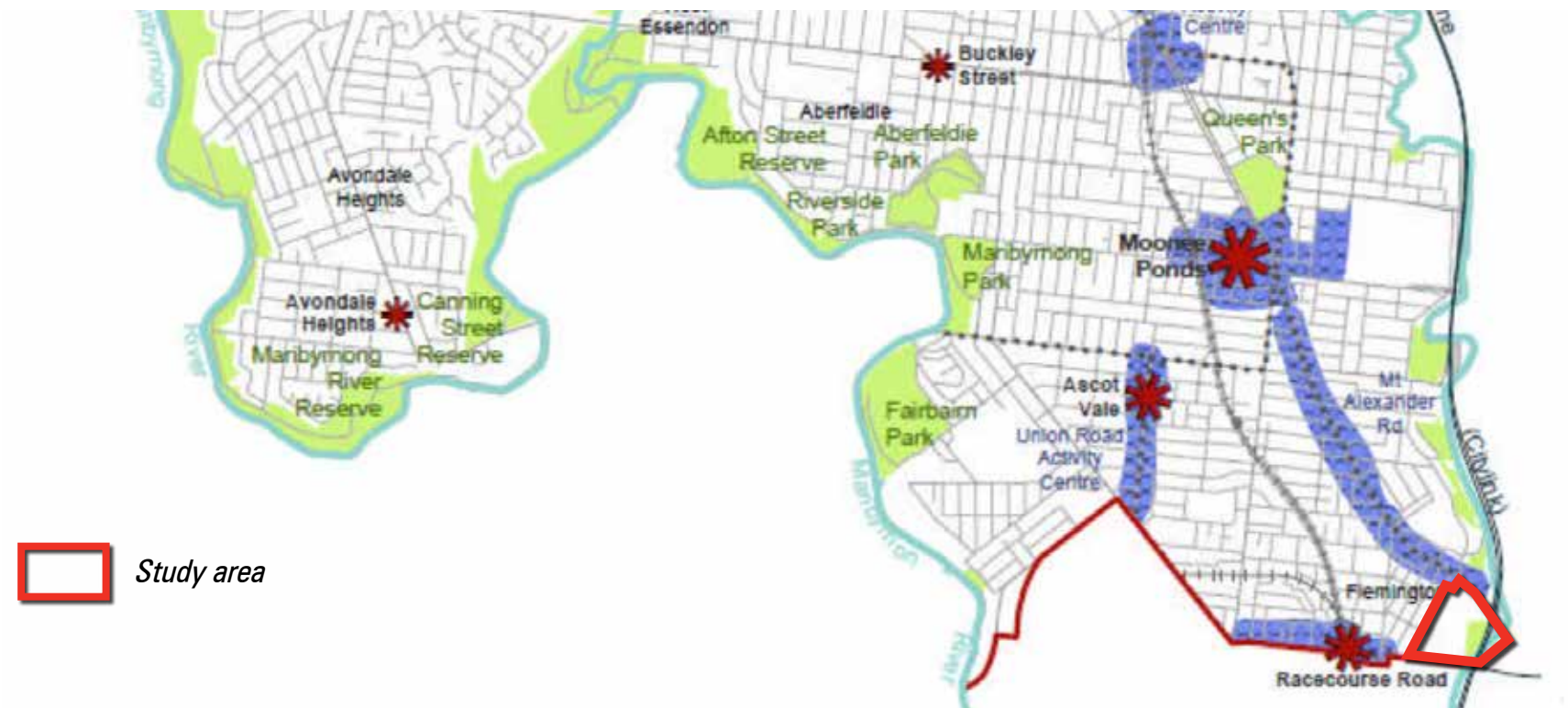


Figure 3: Strategic Framework Plan, Moonee Valley Planning Scheme (extract)



Figure 4: Long-term Land Use Strategy plan, Arden Macaulay Structure Plan (extract)

Existing Planning Controls

Debneys Precinct is affected by the provisions of the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme. The current zoning of the Precinct is shown in the diagram below and consists of:

- **General Residential Zone – Schedule 1** ‘General Residential Areas’ (GRZ) applies to the Flemington estate, Hopetoun Early Years Centre and a small portion of Debneys Park fronting Victoria Street.
- **Public Use Zone – Schedule 2 (Education)** (PUZ2) relates to Debney Meadows Primary School and was applied incorrectly to the Flemington estate.
- **Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ)** applies to the remainder of Debneys Park.

The Mt Alexander Road frontage of Debneys Park is affected by Design and Development Overlay – Schedule 3 (Mt Alexander Road Corridor) (DDO3), whilst its eastern boundary is affected by the CityLink Project Overlay (CLPO).

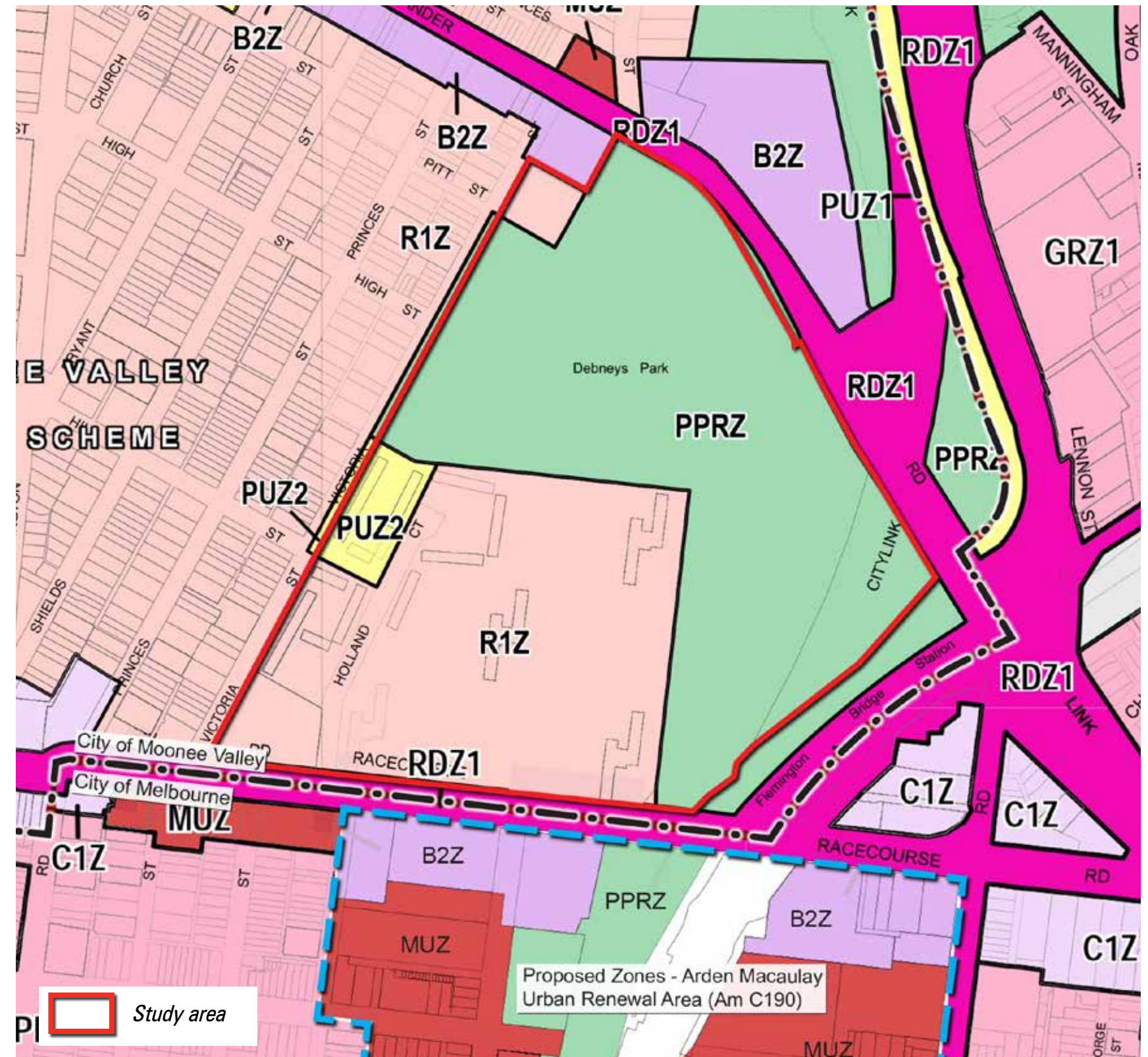


Figure 5: Existing zoning

2.2 Physical Influences

This section of the report provides an overview of the existing and future physical attributes of the locality that provide context to development of Debneys Precinct.

The immediate context of the precinct is primarily influenced by:

- The **land uses and built form** on and adjacent to the precinct;
- The transport **circulation** networks around and within the precinct; and
- The **landscape and open space** within the precinct.

Essentially, Debneys Precinct sits as a 'fulcrum' balancing:

- A large green open space area serving the community;
- Proximity to public transport and the freeway network;
- Physical and visual separation from surrounding areas by the elevated Tullamarine Freeway and Upfield Railway Line, and Racecourse and Mt Alexander Roads;
- Immediate adjacency to a neighbouring municipality's intention to substantially increase population and built form (Arden Macaulay Urban Renewal Area);
- Abuttal to residential neighbourhoods where existing patterns of development and occupation make substantial change difficult;
- Intersection of key cycle routes, being the Capital City Trail, Moonee Ponds Creek Trail and routes along Racecourse and Mt Alexander Roads;
- Proximity to Melbourne CBD and several higher order activity centres;
- Proximity to one of Melbourne's pre-eminent public open spaces, Royal Park; and
- Interface with Moonee Ponds Creek, which is being progressively rehabilitated to improve its environmental qualities.

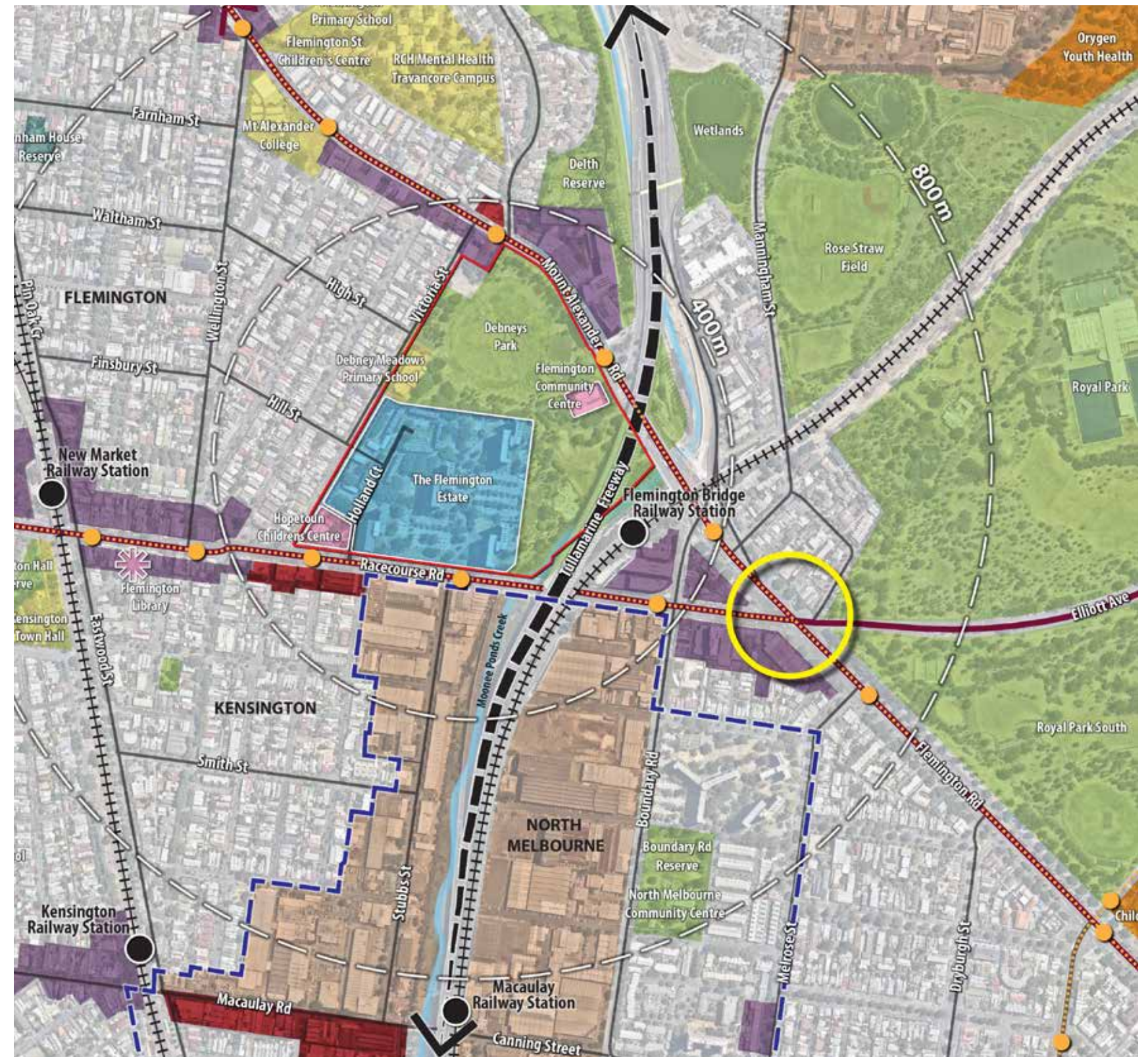
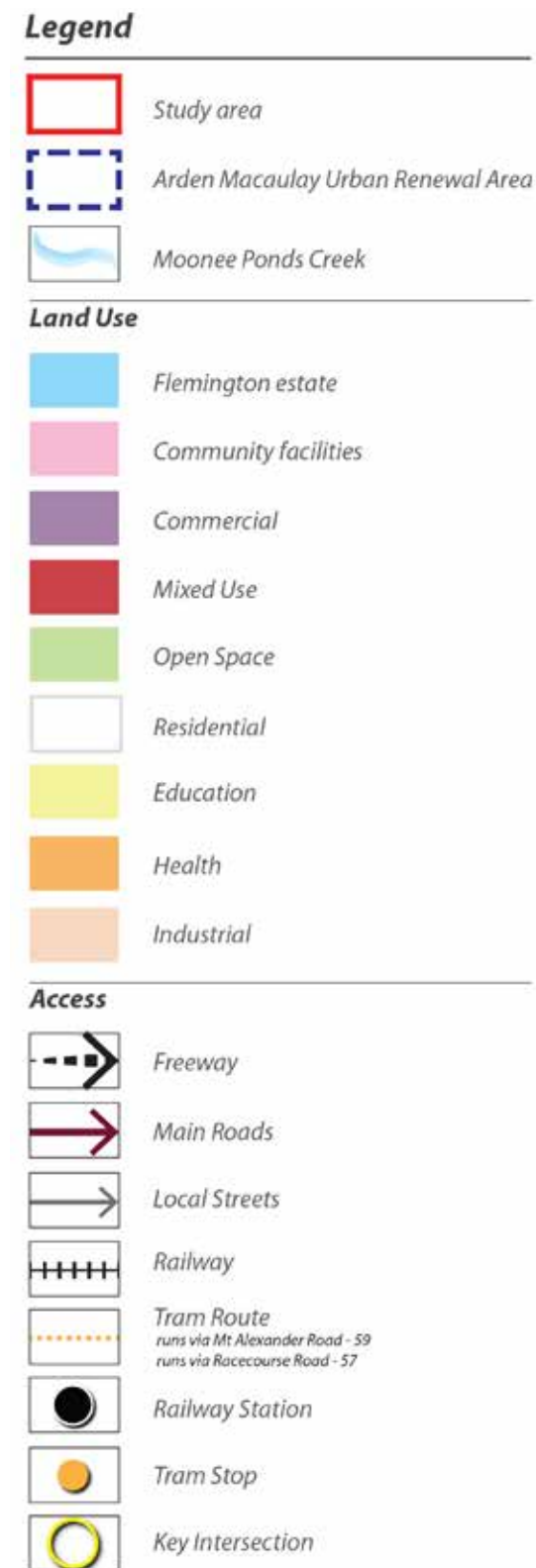


Figure 6: Debneys Precinct physical influences

Land Use and Built Form

Debneys Precinct is essentially enclosed by main roads to the north and south, the elevated Tullamarine Freeway and Upfield Railway Line to the east and the low-scale established residential area west of Victoria Street. This condition is illustrated in Figure 7.

While these roads serve to connect the precinct to the wider community, they are also, in various ways barriers to integration.

In this respect the precinct itself experiences a sense of cohesive isolation. It is an 'island' where redevelopment should seek to reinforce the existing sense of community.

The surrounding area is characterised by a range of land uses and varied built form. The area to the north, south and west of the site currently comprises predominantly low and medium scale residential, commercial and mixed use development with towers mainly within the Flemington estate and more recently Mt Alexander Road.

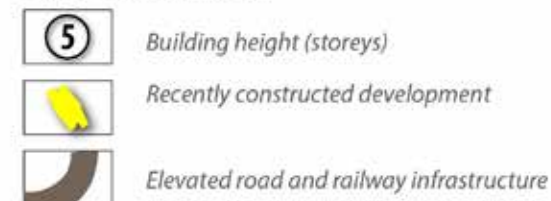
Legend



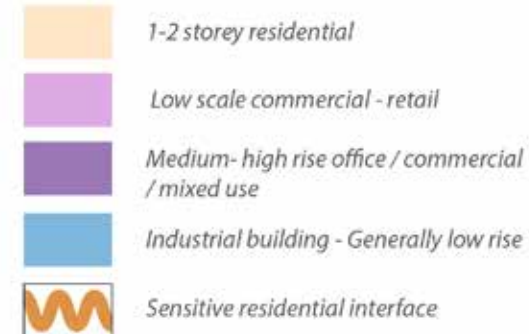
Structure Plan Built Form



Built Form Character



Built Form By Land Use



Built Form Controls

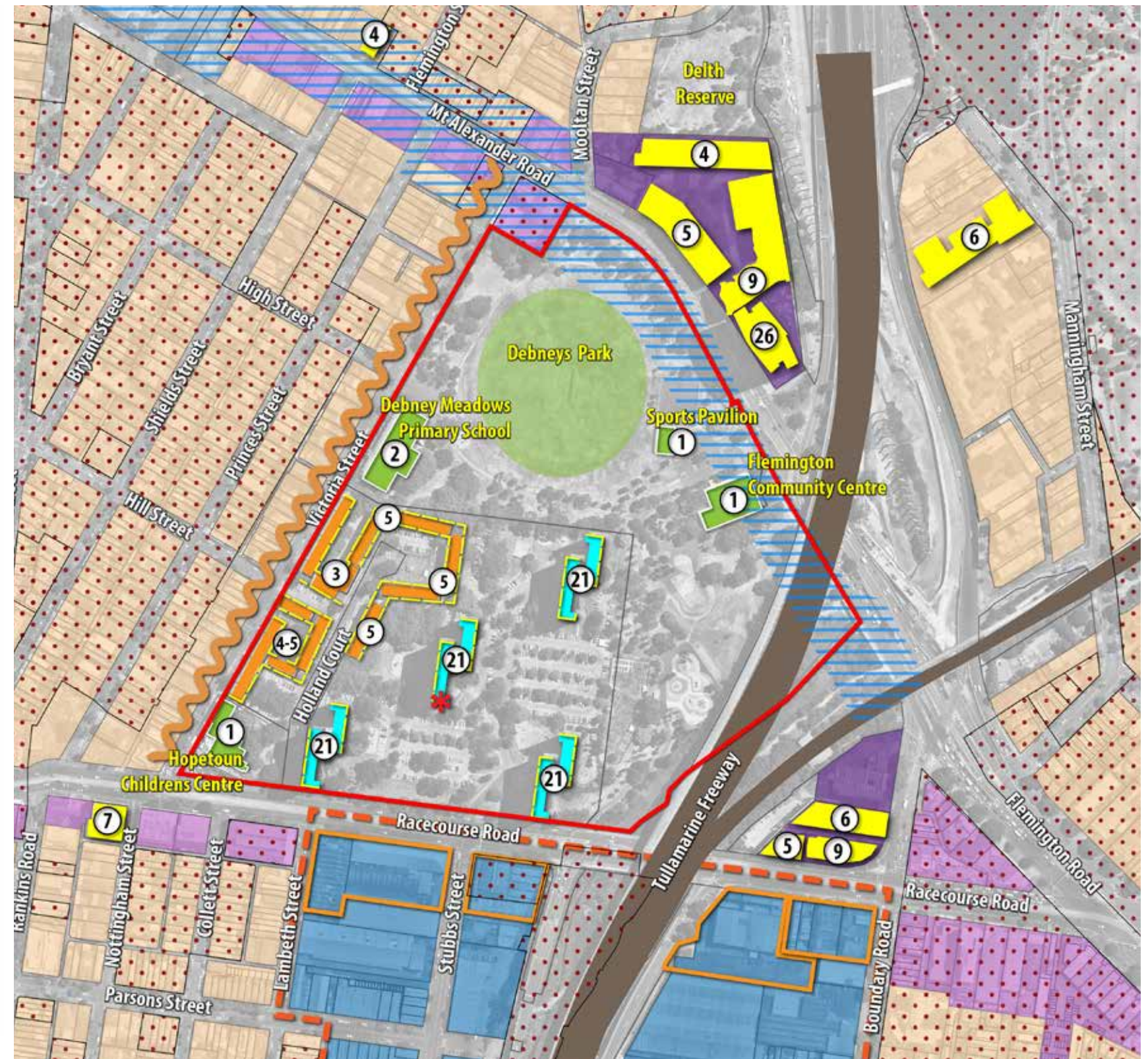
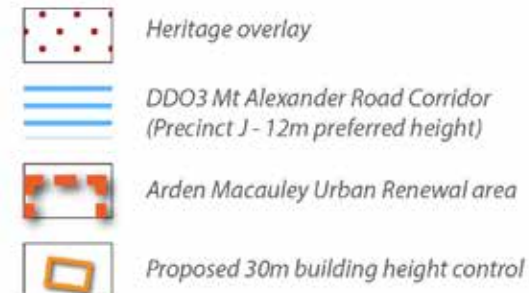


Figure 7: Land use and built form analysis

Circulation













Debneys Precinct has frontages to Mt Alexander Road to the north and Racecourse Road to the south, which both include tram routes. These roads also provide access to the Tullamarine Freeway that runs along the eastern side of the precinct. The Upfield Railway Line is also located to the east, with the Flemington Bridge Railway Station immediately adjacent to the precinct. This public transport and road network provides high accessibility of the precinct to the Melbourne CBD and several higher order activity centres.

A network of local streets connect the precinct with the surrounding community, particularly to the west, north and south.

The precinct has direct access to the Capital City Trail and Moonee Ponds Creek Trail to the east and cycle routes along Racecourse and Mt Alexander Roads. A series of pedestrian and cycle paths traverse the precinct, which provide access to open space and community facilities, as well as cycle routes and public transport stops. The commercial area of the Racecourse Road Activity Centre is also easily accessible 100m to the west.

The influence of these transport circulation networks is shown in Figure 8.

Legend

-  Study area
-  Railway station
-  Railway line
-  Tram route and stop
-  Major circulation artery
-  Key local street connecting to the site
-  Internal road + carparking area
-  Signalised intersection
-  Cycle route
-  Pedestrian pathway
-  Barrier to access
-  Key destination

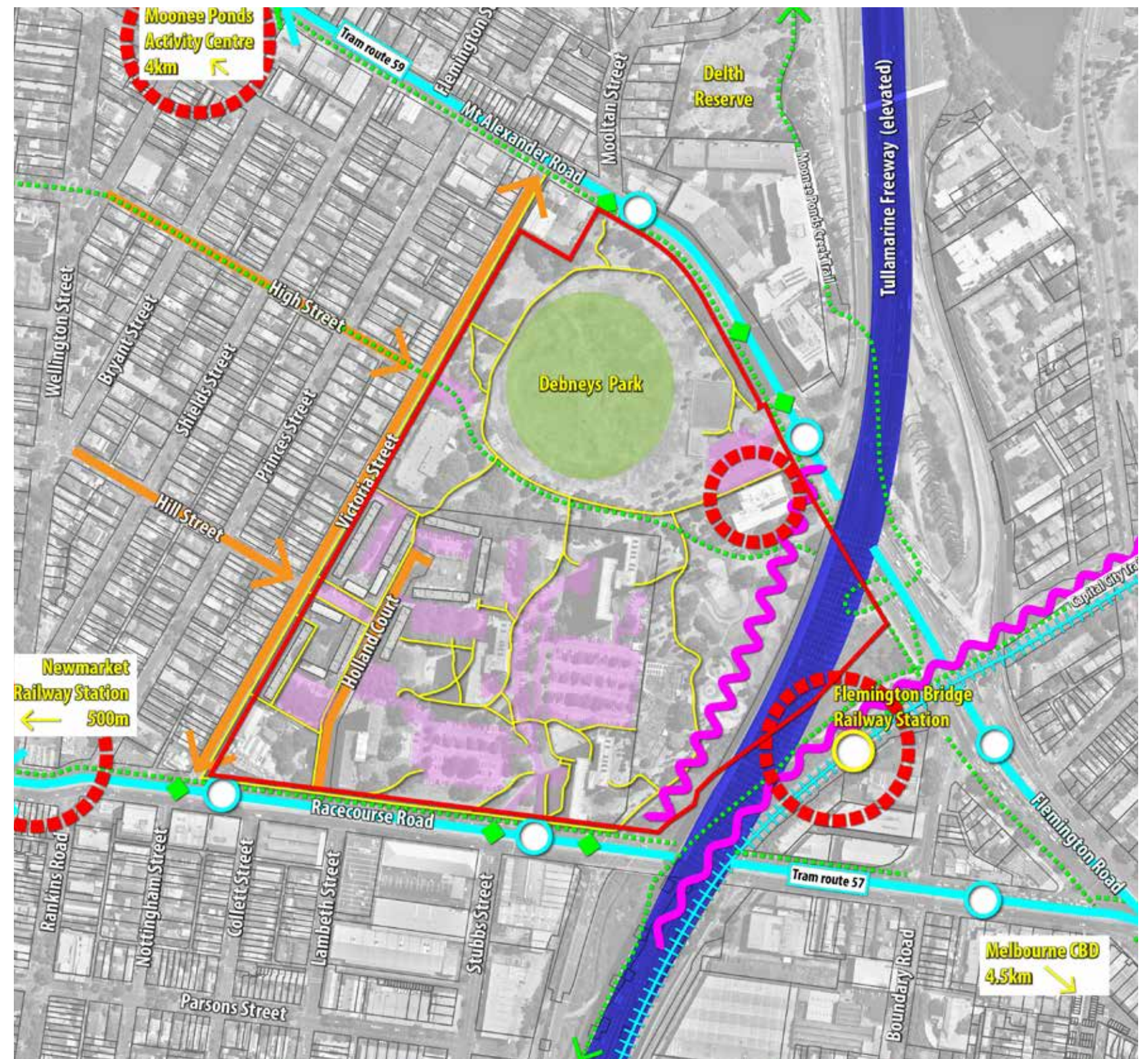


Figure 8: Circulation analysis

Landscape and Open Space

Debneys Precinct provides a green 'break' in the surrounding road and rail infrastructure and expansive land uses. This condition is illustrated in Figure 9.

Debneys Park forms nearly 60% of the Precinct, where the expanses of grass and clusters of mature trees provide an 'oasis' to the surrounding residential area. The park provides a direct connection to Moonee Ponds Creek, a sliver of open space flowing through this part of Melbourne.

The layout of Flemington Estate has allowed for buildings to be interspersed by communal open space areas and contain numerous mature trees. The vegetation extending through the site contributes to the greenery and visual amenity of the local area.

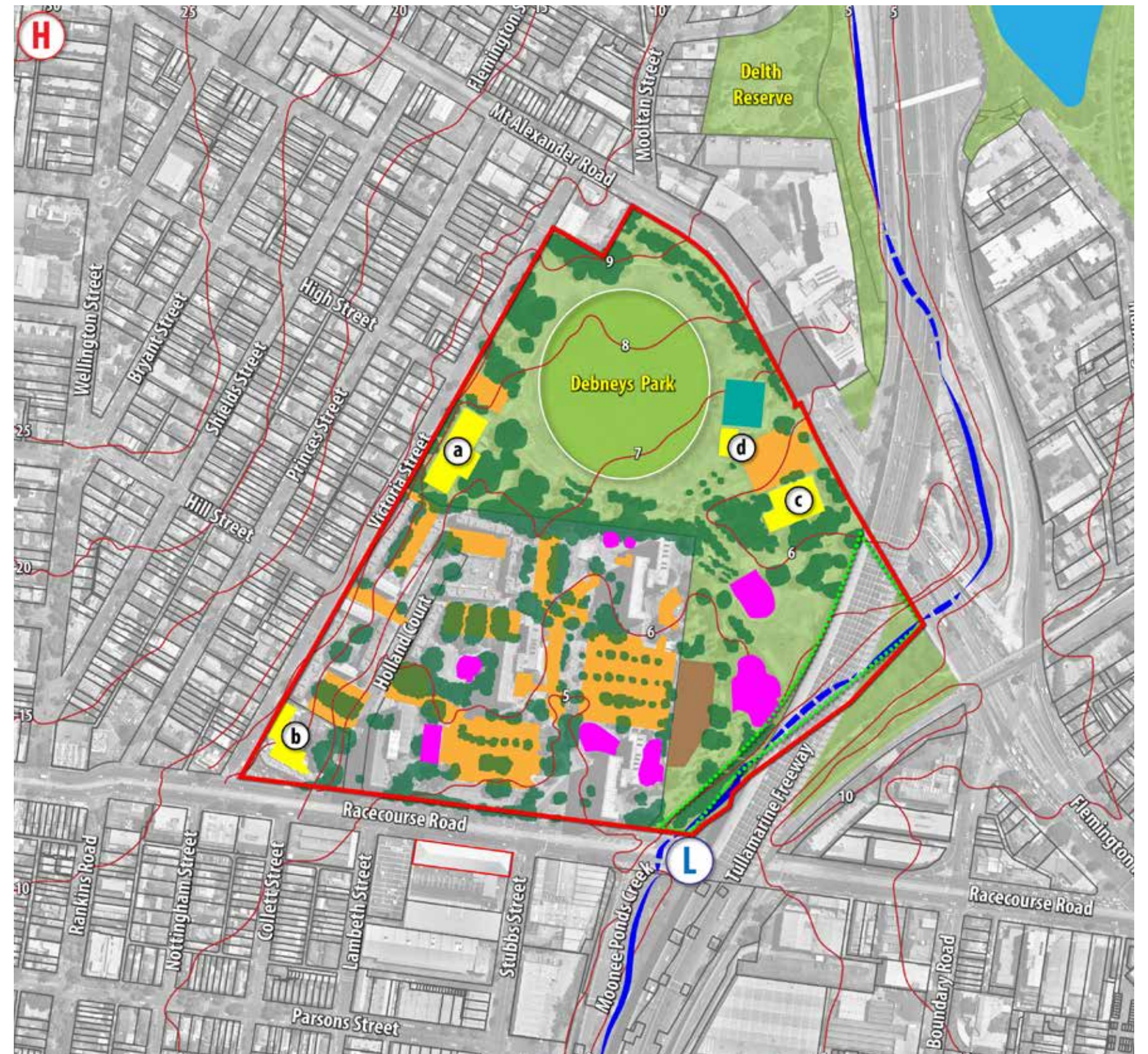
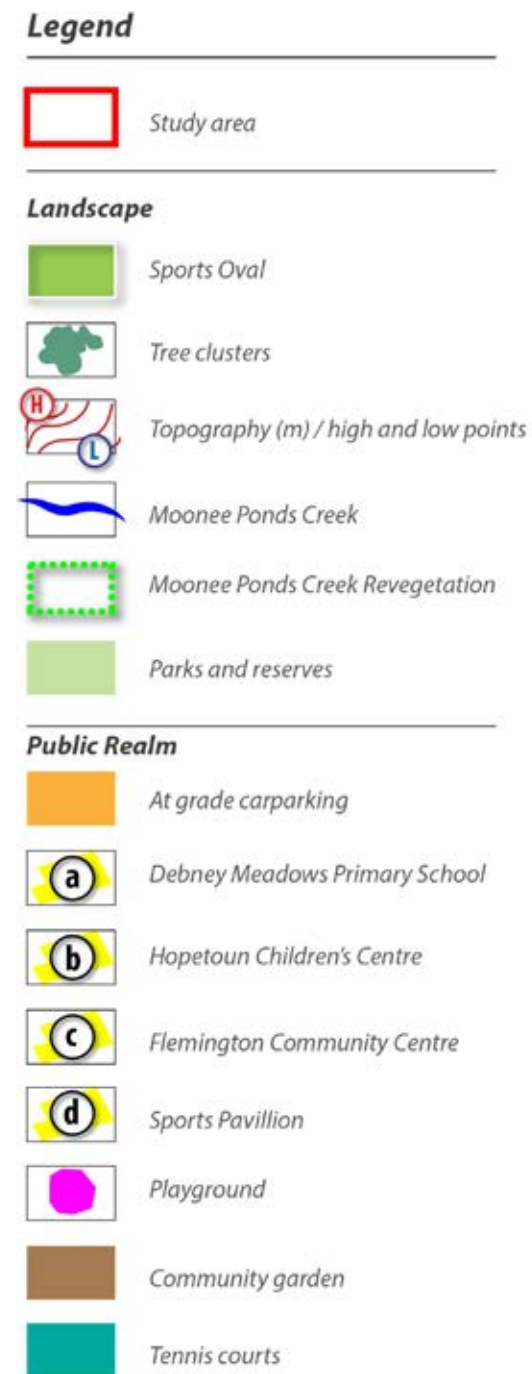


Figure 9: Landscape and open space analysis

The opportunities and constraints that influence development of Debneys Precinct are illustrated in Figure 9.

Legend



Study area

Opportunities



Replicate grid street pattern in internal roads and pedestrian connections



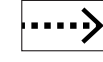
Co-locate community facilities



Access to public transport



Proximity to activity centres



Access to key cycle routes



Environmental and amenity value of Moonee Ponds Creek



Amenity and recreation value of Debneys Park



Integration with Arden-Macaulay Urban Renewal Area



Frontage to main road corridors

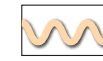


Large on-site car parking areas

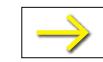


Taller buildings in local area act as reference point for new buildings

Constraints



Sensitive interface with low scale residential area



Existing vehicle access points to Racecourse Road



Limited additional traffic capacity on Victoria Street



Pedestrian connection to Flemington Bridge Railway Station



Existing residential towers to be retained



Existing trees of medium-high retention value



Noise and visual impacts of Tullamarine Freeway



City Link Project Overlay

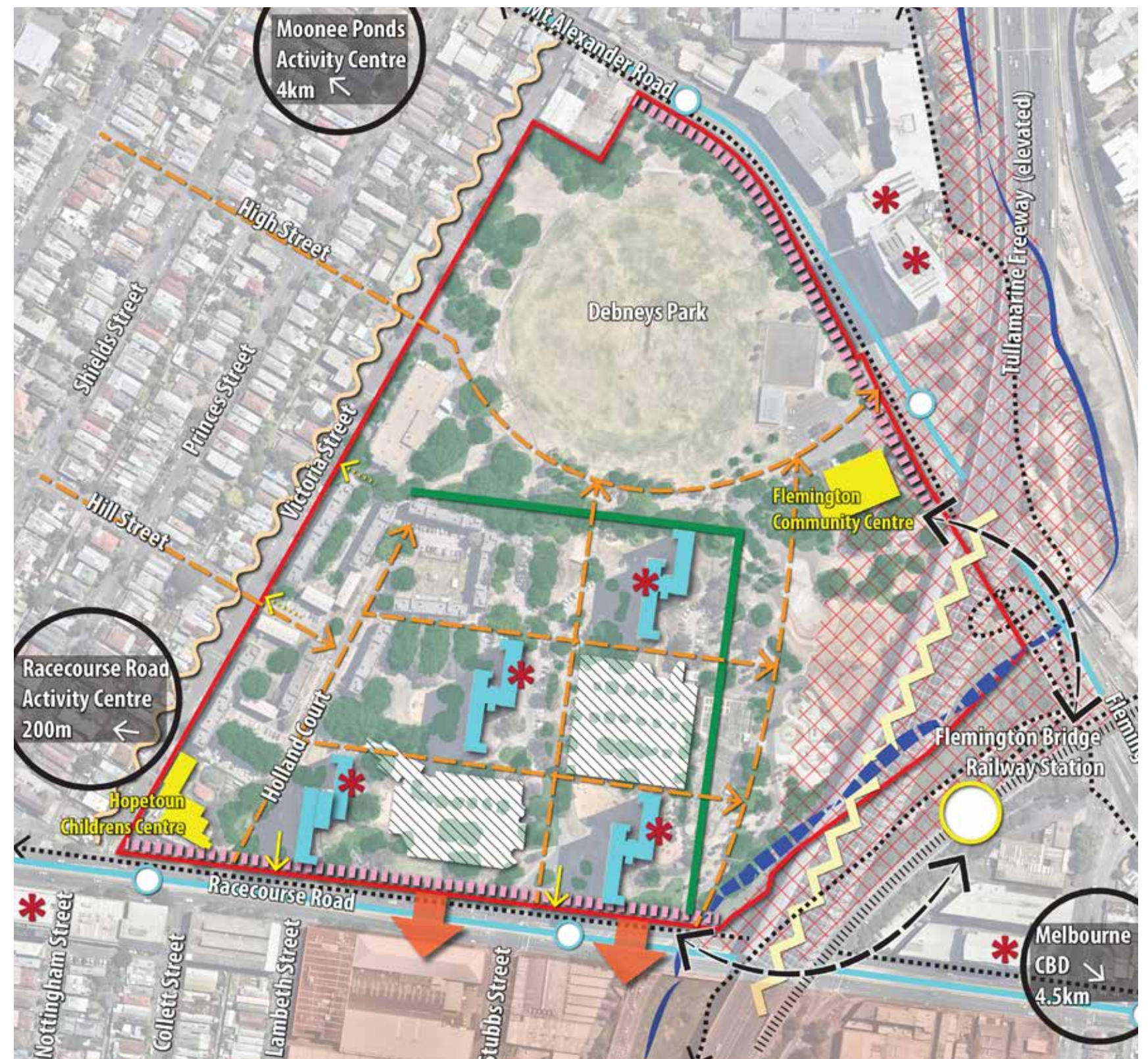


Figure 9: Opportunities and Constraints

The following principles guide future planning and development in Debneys Precinct.

Land use and Built Form

1. To provide for housing diversity and service the long term housing needs of the wider community.
2. To create a community hub serving the neighbourhood, including co-located community facilities.
3. To integrate Flemington estate with the surrounding community through built form, circulation and activities.
4. To efficiently utilise the land to achieve beneficial urban design and community outcomes.
5. To provide a human scaled building edge to all public streets.
6. To activate the interface of Flemington estate with Debneys Park.
7. To improve safety and security through passive surveillance or public / communal areas.
8. To minimise amenity impacts on the surrounding residential area, particularly the opposite side of Victoria Street.
9. To provide for a variety of non-residential land uses to meet the needs of the local community.
10. To integrate with the Arden-Macaulay Urban Renewal Area to the south.
11. To enhance the southern gateway to the Mt Alexander Road corridor and the Racecourse Road Activity Centre.

Circulation

1. To enhance connections to Racecourse Road Activity Centre.
2. To improve pedestrian connections to Flemington Bridge Railway Station.
3. To improve the efficiency of on-site car parking within the precinct.
4. To improve bicycle connections within and adjoining the precinct.

Landscape and Open Space

1. To minimise the loss of trees in Flemington estate through maximising building heights.
2. To improve the interface with Moonee Ponds Creek.
3. To enhance the public realm within Flemington estate.
4. To enhance the use and amenity of Debneys Park to serve the long term needs of the community.

The Framework Plan guiding future development and enhancements in Debneys Precinct is provided as Figure 10.

Refer to Section 6 for strategic directions applying to Stage 1 (Flemington Estate) and Stage 2 (Council Land).

Legend

- Study area
- STAGE 1
- STAGE 2

Land Use and Built Form

- 12-16 Storeys Area for new building/s and car parking showing indicative heights (storeys)
- Communal open space around existing towers
- ✱ Existing convenience shop

Circulation

- Primary vehicle access (Existing signalised intersection)
- Primary vehicle access (left-in / left-out intersection)
- Internal roads
- Pedestrian connections
- Off-road shared path
- Improved pedestrian connection

Landscape and Open Space

- Indicative location of new community centre (relocated from Debneys Park)
- ✱ Potential location of new open space



Figure 10: Framework Plan

The following strategic directions will assist in achieving the strategic outcomes for Debneys Precinct. They have been derived in response to the analysis of the site context and the identified opportunities and constraints of the study area. Directions apply to each stage of the Structure Plan and have been organised under the following headings:

- Built form and land use;
- Circulation; and
- Landscape and open space.

6.1 Stage 1: Flemington Estate

Redevelopment of Flemington estate to provide a mix of social and private housing will include the following key directions:

Built form and Land Use

- Retain the 4 existing residential towers.
- Provide new buildings at the locations and heights shown on the Framework Plan
- Provide a new multi-purpose community centre fronting Racecourse Road that enables co-location of community facilities.
- Encourage retail and/or commercial uses fronting Racecourse Road.
- Provide active frontages to Victoria Street, Racecourse Road, Debneys Park, internal roads, communal open space areas and internal connections.
- Investigate short-term ways to activate the ground level of the existing residential towers.
- Retain and investigate enhancements to the existing convenience shop.

Circulation

- Provide an internal road network and pedestrian connections throughout the site, as shown on the Framework Plan
- Provide an off-road cycle path along the Racecourse Road frontage (in consultation with VicRoads).
- Investigate improvements to the safety and function of the Holland Court intersection (in consultation with VicRoads).

Landscape and Open Space

- Retain existing trees of medium-high retention value or replace with trees that provide equivalent amenity value to residents and the public realm.
- Provide a new 1,000sqm open space area, generally located as shown on the Framework Plan.
- Provide indoor and outdoor communal open spaces that provide recreation facilities and gathering places for resident groups, including teenagers, elderly and different cultural groups.
- Provide street trees along the east side of Victoria Street.

Planning Controls

Amend the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme as follows:

- Rezone Flemington estate from General Residential Zone – Schedule 1 (GRZ1) and Public Use Zone – Schedule 2 (Education) (PUZ2) to Mixed Use Zone – Schedule 3 (MUZ3);
- Apply a Development Plan Overlay – Schedule 8 (DPO8) to Flemington estate;

- Apply a Parking Overlay – Schedule 1 (PO1) to Flemington estate;
- Rezone the portion of Debneys Park utilised by Debney Meadows Primary School from Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) to Public Use Zone – Schedule 2 (Education) (PUZ6); and
- Add the Minister for Planning as responsible authority over Flemington estate (Schedule to Clause 61.01).

6.2 Stage 2: Council Land

Planning for enhancement to the land owned by MVCC, being Debneys Park and Hopetoun Early Years Centre, will be undertaken by Council in consultation with DHHS and other key agencies. Preliminary directions include:

Built form and Land Use

- Seek ways to enhance the Flemington Community Garden and Flemington Men's Shed, whilst maintaining connection to Flemington estate.
- Investigate a potential mixed use development on land not required to meet existing or future community needs.

Circulation

- Expand the pathway system around Debneys Park to create a walking / jogging / exercise circuit.
- Advocate for improved pedestrian connections to Flemington Bridge Railway Station from Racecourse and Mt Alexander Roads (in consultation with Public Transport Victoria).
- Improve the off-road cycle path connection to the Capital City Trail and to the east along Racecourse Road (in consultation with Public Transport Victoria / VicRoads).

- Enhance pedestrian and cycle connections between Debneys Park and Flemington estate and the residential area on the opposite side of Victoria Street.
- Enhance the Racecourse Road entry to the park through improved sight lines to the main portion of the park.

Landscape and Open Space

- Prepare a master plan for Debneys Park to meet anticipated sport and recreation needs of the community, including:
 - Enhanced recreation facilities and gathering places for local residents, such as public toilets, BBQ shelters, seating areas and playgrounds, and particularly to address the needs of groups such as teenagers, the elderly and different cultural groups;
 - Additional trees in the eastern portion of Debneys Park to improve shade of play areas and enhance noise / visual buffering to the Tullamarine Freeway;
 - Reconfigured sports playing field to include cricket / AFL oval and soccer pitches;
 - A new sports pavilion; and
 - New multi-purpose playing courts to meet informal sporting needs of the local community (e.g. tennis, netball and basketball).
- Enhance the appearance of the Racecourse Road entry to Holland Court, including provision of street trees.
- Contribute to improvement in environmental quality of Moonee Ponds Creek by aligning with the master plan for Moonee Ponds Creek (when completed) and use of sustainability and water reuse measures in Debneys Park (in consultation with Melbourne Water).

Planning Controls

- Apply appropriate zoning to Council-owned land that reflects strategic directions.

