

3. TOWNSHIP POLICY AREAS POLICY AREAS

3.01 Regional Overview - Township Policy Areas

Townships and urban areas comprise about three percent of the Region's area, although they house most of its residents. While the rural and public land areas of the Region are often the main attractions for visitors, the township areas generally provide the necessary infrastructure for their physical needs, as well as for the needs of residents.

The Region's major populated areas are adjacent to its western boundary, and include Lilydale, the predominantly metropolitan urban areas of Chirnside Park, Mooroolbark and Kilsyth and the residential corridor between Upper Ferntree Gully and Belgrave. Other residential concentrations occur in separate townships, such as Healesville, Yarra Glen, Woori Yallock, Yarra Junction, Warburton and Monbulk.

Without sensitive planning, the demands for residential land threaten some of the special characteristics which make the Region so attractive. For this reason, State planning policy for the Region specifically identifies the need for limiting the extent of urban development and to contain such development to a scale and type compatible with the conservation of natural resources and residential amenity.

It also stipulates that: *"Any net increase in the total provision for residential development in the Policy Area shall be contained within the aims of this Policy. There shall be no net increase in the total provision for residential development in the Dandenong Ranges; and no significant increase in the Yarra Valley and the southern foothills beyond that provided for in proposals approved or exhibited at the date of adoption of this Policy"*.

The Regional Strategy Plan specifies that there will be only limited township expansion. The Region, however must provide opportunities for the enhancement of living for existing communities, and must ensure that facilities and services are available and appropriate to the nature of the communities and to their location on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne.

Township policies have been developed to ensure efficient use of the existing infrastructure such as roads, railways, sewerage, water supply systems and human services. The policies will also assist to conserve the Region's natural resources, protect the amenity of the Region's residents and provide opportunities for a variety of lifestyles.

Melbourne 2030 Urban Growth Boundary

The State Government's strategy for metropolitan Melbourne, "*Melbourne 2030*" was released on the 8 October 2002. The Strategy contains directions and policies that apply an Urban Growth Boundary to metropolitan Melbourne and to a number of rural townships, including urban areas within the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges region, to prevent the encroachment of urban development into Green Wedge areas.

Within the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges region, the Urban Growth Boundary generally conforms to the Township Policy Areas in the Upper Yarra Valley

and Dandenong Ranges Regional Strategy Plan. The Urban Growth Boundary also includes established areas that have the urban characteristics of Township Policy Areas but have not previously been included within such policy areas.

Township Policy Areas

3.02 Overview

These policy areas are clearly urban in character. Many possess a wide range of facilities, infrastructure and community services typical of townships. While many of the characteristics of the area are special, in that they are located in the Upper Yarra Valley and the Dandenong Ranges, the general character is that of a built environment.

Parts of the Township Policy Areas have other elements which suggest the need for particular care, to address unique circumstances, such as lack of infrastructure services or environmental limitations to development. Other areas may possess a high standard of residential amenity, Sites of Natural or Cultural Significance or be areas with high landscape qualities, substantial remnant tree cover or excessive slopes or are floodprone.

For those parts of the Region within the direct influence of the metropolitan area, there are considerations which need to be addressed through policies that reflect that influence. This is most apparent in the western parts of Mooroolbark, Kilsyth and Chirnside Park.

The extent and location of **Township Policy Areas** (shown as Township A and Township B) are shown on **Map Series 1**. Although shown on the Maps, the distinction between these policy areas is no longer applied in the Regional Strategy Plan policies.

Township Policy Areas include all land shown in the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme as being within the Urban Growth Boundary.

Township Policy Areas

3.03 Regional Goals

The regional goals for Township Policy Areas are to:

- maintain and enhance the character and environmental quality of townships, protect sites of significance, and control development where land is subject to environmental constraints or cannot be satisfactorily serviced;
- ensure that planning meets community needs, and to provide opportunities for a variety of lifestyles;
- ensure that urban development is contained within the designated Township Policy Areas;
- ensure that where appropriate the utilisation of existing physical and human services is efficient and that provision of new services is adequate and appropriate.

3.04 Primary Purpose

The primary purpose of the Township Policy Areas is to:

- contain development within identified areas;
- ensure that new development in townships is compatible with the special characteristics of these areas; and
- ensure that any development takes into account environmental and servicing constraints and the need to maintain the quality of life of residents.

In areas not identified as having environmental or infrastructure constraints, provision can be made for a diversity of development, including a more varied housing stock.

3.05 Regional Objectives

Regional objectives for Township Policy Areas are to:

- allow a broad range of urban land uses, including residential, industrial, retail, commercial, institutional and public purposes, in larger townships in a manner which is compatible with the environment;
- restrict development on land that is subject to environmental constraints and which cannot be satisfactorily serviced, and to ensure that where reticulated sewerage is not available, sites are capable of on-site treatment and disposal of all wastewaters generated;
- facilitate the development of strong communities adequately provided with an appropriate range of services in settings conducive to the attainment of quality lifestyles;
- allow for the provision of a diversity of residential accommodation in suitable areas and according to appropriate performance standards;
- ensure efficient utilisation of existing reticulated and community services;
- maintain environmental quality, residential amenity and to promote good township design; and
- protect Sites of Natural and Cultural Significance.

3.06 Nature of development

Planning authorities may provide for a diverse range of housing, of varying densities and lot sizes in a range of locations throughout the Township Policy Areas.

This may be achieved by allowing for a range of lot sizes and multi-unit development in appropriate township locations, where township design criteria and housing density provisions can be applied to protect residential amenity and where efficient use of township infrastructure can be made.

3.07 Policies for development in Township Policy Areas

Within Township Policy Areas the following development policies must be applied:

- The privacy, health, safety, amenity and convenience of residents must be assured.
- Development in those parts of Township Policy Areas that have identified high environmental, landscape or 'natural' values and/or residential amenity, or which are subject to infrastructure or development constraints (such as excessive

slopes, landslip/instability problems, flood prone, fire hazards or the like) must be protected from inappropriate residential or other urban development.

- Within these areas development must generally be limited to only one dwelling per lot, except for units for dependent/aged persons or the number of houses would not exceed the density of development allowed through subdivision provisions for the zone within which the land is situated.
- Minimum lot size for subdivision should be established on the basis of a size which could be expected to contain development in a manner compatible with the landscape character and environment of the locality, and which, in the absence of reticulated sewerage, would be capable of on-site treatment and disposal of all waste waters generated on that site.
- Any special features of historical, architectural, cultural or other significance should be identified and measures implemented to maintain and protect them.
- Measures should be implemented to ensure the retention of remnant vegetation, particularly indigenous vegetation and vegetation identified as being a Site of Natural Significance.
- There should be promotion of good townscape design.
- The environmental capacity of the land to properly accommodate uses and development is not exceeded

3.08 Minimisation of adverse impacts of development on the environment

Development in Township Policy Areas must be precluded where the impact would result in significant damage to important environmental features. Any adverse environmental impact caused by the development of any land must be minimised by encouraging:

- building designs which are compatible with the physical characteristics of the site and the surrounding area;
- protection of features such as buildings, trees, streetscapes, watercourses and areas of native and exotic vegetation which are important in the maintenance of the township character of the area;
- protection of areas of critical landscape sensitivity, including ridgelines and escarpments, and
- conservation and protection of Sites of Natural and Cultural Significance.

3.09 Lots suitable for construction of buildings

Except as provided for by a Study Area provision, the construction of a building in a Township Policy Area may be allowed on any lot, provided:

- it is connected to reticulated sewerage or is capable of adequately treating and retaining all domestic wastewater within the boundaries of the lot; and
- that any house or building requiring utility services is able to be provided with such services in a manner that will not have an adverse impact on the environment or landscape of the area.

3.10 Construction of buildings on lots with steep slopes

The construction of a building must generally be confined to land which contains a slope of less than 20%. Where slopes are over 20% information must be provided to enable the minimisation of soil erosion, the protection or enhancement of landscape character and the avoidance of land instability, and to ensure that access to the building is located appropriately.

3.11 Control of buildings on land subject to environmental hazards

The development of land subject to environmental hazards, including land instability, high fire risk and flooding, must be strictly controlled, and may be allowed only where it has been demonstrated that the building can be constructed in a manner that would not create danger to life and property, be of risk to the health and well being of the community or cause any significant environmental damage.

3.13 Maintenance of landscape character

The landscape character of Township Policy Areas must be maintained and enhanced and all use and development must aim to protect important landscape features or viewpoints, and must consider factors such as site characteristics, views and visibility, vegetation retention and establishment, design, siting, site works and fire protection.

Any use or development of land within a landscape "classified" or "recorded" by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), must be carried out in a manner that is compatible with the protection, maintenance and where possible, enhancement of the landscape character of these areas. Where appropriate, advice should be sought from the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) when assessing proposed uses and developments in "classified" or "recorded" landscapes.

3.14 Subdivision management for Township Policy Areas - Regional Objectives

The regional objectives for subdivision of land within Township Policy Areas are to:

- Ensure that all subdivision is compatible with the special features and character of the Township Policy Areas.
- Provide a range of lot sizes which allow for the creation of diverse and interesting township areas and to improve housing choice.
- Maintain environmental and landscape qualities and residential amenity.
- Adequately control subdivision of land which is subject to environmental constraints and/or which cannot be adequately serviced.
- Ensure the efficient utilisation of existing hydraulic and human services and the adequate provision of new services.
- Protect Sites of Natural Significance and/or Sites of Cultural Significance.
- Ensure that subdivision is of a scale and in locations which will not generate traffic demands that would lower environmental amenity in the locality or in the Region.

3.14 Subdivision Policies

Subdivision, and the provision of utility services and works associated with subdivision, must achieve compatibility with the physical and landscape characteristics of the site/area, and must be carried out in a manner whereby:

- Each lot created will contain a development envelope which: wholly contains a slope less than 20%; is not affected by a floodplain management area, and can reasonably and safely be used for controlled and limited development, taking into account the risk of land instability.
- Each lot created is able to be connected to reticulated sewerage facilities, or where reticulated sewerage is not available, is capable of accommodating a satisfactory method of wastewater treatment and effluent disposal, which will ensure that the effluent can be contained within the curtilage of the lot (in compliance with requirements of the relevant State Environment Protection Policy).
- Significant natural features, such as watercourses, fern gullies, rock outcrops and remnant native vegetation, will be protected in the design and development of any subdivision.
- A satisfactory program for the preservation and planting of native vegetation is incorporated in any new subdivision proposal, to ensure that development is not detrimental to the landscape character of the area.
- The subdivision is carried out in a manner which protects residential neighbourhoods from through or heavy vehicular traffic.
- The provision of electricity, telephone or other telecommunication lines, for both reticulation within the area to be subdivided and for the supply to each lot, must, be underground, as a condition of subdivision.

3.15 Subdivision in the Puffing Billy Railway Primary Scenic Corridor

Subdivision in the Puffing Billy Railway Primary Scenic Corridor must be prohibited except:

- to allow for the subdivision of an approved building, as provided for by the Subdivision Act 1989;
- for a resubdivision where no additional lots will be created and there is no increase in the number of houses that may be constructed; or
- where the subdivision is in accordance with a restructure program for a Special Study Area.

3.16 Design of new township and residential areas

The design of subdivisions, roads, facilities and utility services in newly developing areas, within Township Policy Areas, must provide for the maintenance of environmental values and must optimise the quality of life, safety and convenience of future residents.

Where substantial new subdivision and development is proposed in existing Township Policy Areas, planning authorities are encouraged to develop and implement a 'local structure plan', which should include:

- the location of major land uses, such as residential areas, commercial centres, schools and major areas of public open space;
- a hierarchy of access ways (for motor vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles) with clear distinctions between each type of access, based on function, physical and environmental characteristics of the area, amenity, safety, convenience and traffic volumes;
- an integrated roading access network linking lots to commercial and community centres, open space, schools and other facilities;
- the location of utility services in a manner that recognises the importance of remnant vegetation and other natural features, particularly within road reserves, including the location of shared utility trenches and the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and other services supply and reticulation;
- lots that have areas and dimensions which take into account the need for a variety of lot sizes, private open space, energy conservation, setbacks from roads, room for landscaping, and adequate building separation, and
- making maximum use of existing fully serviced areas.

3.17 Expansion of Healesville and Yarra Junction Townships

The further expansion of the Healesville and Yarra Junction Townships may only occur when it has been demonstrated:

- that there is a need for further urban development in these areas;
- that the expansion areas, and the boundaries of land to be protected, are properly mapped, and that the means by which such protection will be achieved is detailed;
- how the management of the ecological integrity of the area, including weed control, fire protection, drainage, and prevention of pollution of watercourses will be achieved;
- how the retention of the areas of significant remnant vegetation will be achieved, including establishment of linkages to surrounding areas of vegetation; the establishment of substantial areas of tree canopy over service corridors and roads; and details of the means by which these linkages are to be maintained or achieved;
- how all proposed development will be provided with reticulated sewerage and other essential services, such as water, roads, drainage and power (requiring that all electricity and telephone services are provided by the means of underground cables), including details of the location, kind, nature and timing of such;;
- how development will be made compatible with the protection and maintenance of the integrity of any Sites of Natural Significance, and of other native vegetation within and adjoining these areas, including the need to control (where necessary) the keeping of domestic pets; and

- that social and community matters including provision of services are addressed, and the means of delivering the services are identified.

3.18 Other policies applying to Township Policy Areas

In addition to the policies contained within this chapter, Township Policy Areas may also be affected by policies applying to:

- Public Land
- Management of Sites of Natural Significance and of Native Vegetation
- Management of Sites of Cultural Significance
- Puffing Billy Railway Scenic Corridor
- Floodplain Management Areas; Special Study Areas
- Human Services
- Commercial Centres
- Manufacturing and Industry
- Extractive industry, Mining & Soil Removal
- Recreation and Tourism
- Water Resources
- Service Networks
- Transport
- Fire Management;
- Schedule One - State Planning Policies for the Region
- Schedule Five - List of Environmental Weeds for the Upper Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Region
- Schedule Six - Exemptions to the policies or provisions under the Regional Strategy Plan.