

Chirnside Park Structure Plan

Issues & Opportunities Paper



Acknowledgement of Country



Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nation peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways. We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region. We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.

Quality Assurance

Chirnside Park Structure Plan

Issues & Opportunities Paper

Prepared for

Yarra Ranges Council

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Glossary of Terms

Accessibility	The ease of reaching destinations. In a highly accessible location, a person, regardless of age, ability or income, can reach many activities or destinations quickly, whereas people in places with low accessibility can reach fewer places in the same amount of time.
Activity Centre	An area that provides for shopping, services, employment, housing, transport and social interaction. Activity Centres are commonly known as town centres.
Amenity	The features of an area, street, or building, that provide facilities and services that contribute to physical or material comfort and benefit and are valued by users. Amenity can be either tangible, such as open space, seating, a swimming pool, or gym; or intangible, such as pleasant views, air quality, or proximity to a local school or supermarket.
Arterial Road / Highway	The principal routes for the movement of people and goods within a road network. They connect major regions, centres of population, major transport terminals and provide principal links across and around cities. Arterial roads are divided into primary and secondary arterial roads. Declared arterial roads generally zoned Transport Zone – Schedule 2.
Articulation	Building articulation is the visual treatment of a façade and its functional relationship with the street, neighbouring properties, and open spaces. Visual articulation of the façade can be achieved through including various elements such as setbacks, balconies, verandas, windows, materials, shade elements, architectural features and colour. Additionally, functional articulation encompasses the treatment of forms concerning scale, proportions, the definition of different areas or functions and address. Overall, articulation helps to make a building's design more understandable and aesthetically pleasing.
Building	A building includes a structure and part of a building or a structure; fences, walls, out-buildings, service installations and other appurtenances of a building.
Blank Wall	A wall which has few or no windows or doors and has no decoration or visual interest.
Deep Soil Zones	Deep soil zones are areas within a development of natural ground with no obstructions above or below. Deep soil zones help promote healthy growth of large trees and allow infiltration of rainwater. They exclude areas on structures (above basements), pools and non-permeable paved areas. For success they should have a minimum dimension of 4.5 metres x 4.5 metres.
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning- The State Government department that manages arterial roads and the public transport network.
ESD	The purpose of Environmentally Sustainable Design is to reduce impacts in the construction and use of buildings on the natural environment, whilst improving the comfort of the inhabitants.
Facade (or 'building facade')	The principal wall of a building that is usually facing the street and visible from the public realm. It is the face of the building and helps inform passers-by about the building and the activities within.
Fine-grain	An urban environment where there are relatively narrow shopfronts (generally less than 10 metres in width) providing for a high level of visual interest, and diverse range of uses and experiences within the street.
Form (or 'built form')	Refers to the three-dimensional character of the building and to the massing, height, street scale and urban density of a building.
Frontage	The frontage is the length of a lot, property or building that directly faces a street, public space, or other accessway. Where a lot is on a corner and addresses more than one street, the front of the lot is generally identified as the shortest boundary that faces a street.
Gateways	Key entry points that mark the transition between different areas, such as neighbourhoods, precincts, or cities. A gateway maybe represented as a structure, built form element, sculptural element or landscaped feature. They help to designate and identify places and access points and should positively contribute to the local character of a place. It is not a physical gate.
High Density Housing	Higher density housing is typically a building of five or more storeys, often containing multiple apartment dwellings, and typically located near activity centres and public transport
Hospitality	Land uses such as restaurants, cafes and hotels that provide food, drink, entertainment and accommodation.

Housing Stress	Housing stress generally refers to a situation where a household is spending a disproportionate amount of its income on housing costs, leaving insufficient funds for other essentials like food, healthcare, transport, and education.
Interface	Where different types of land uses meet or are near each other, and where there may be conflict due to air emissions and noise from a land use detrimentally affecting another.
Laneway	A laneway is a narrow road or lane generally located at the rear of the property. Motor vehicle access is provided along laneways and they are typically used to provide servicing to properties.
Landscape buffer	An area in which landscaping is used to screen or protect amenity to or from the adjacent land or property.
Major road	Major roads and key networks that connect neighbourhoods and link local streets to the arterial road network. Major roads may also provide for on-street carparking, buses, bicycle lanes, as well as verge space for pedestrian paths, infrastructure and landscaping.
Major Activity Centre (MAC)	A Major Activity Centre (MAC) is a designated area identified for significant retail, commercial, residential, employment, transport and community activity. These centres play a critical role in shaping metropolitan Melbourne's growth and ensuring access to services and jobs closer to where people live.
Medium Density Housing	Medium density housing is more than two dwellings on a lot.
Night Time Economy (NTE)	Refers to retail, hospitality and entertainment activity occurring after the conclusion of 'normal' business hours (around 5 or 6pm). Broadly, most NTE activities occur in the hours before midnight, though in some centres there may be a role for activities beyond midnight, extending to 6am.
Open space	Land that provides recreation and leisure benefits and is accessible to the public.
Passive Solar Design	The design and orientation of a building that enables use of sunlight, daylight and outside winds to achieve internal heating, cooling and comfort, reducing the need for energy consumption. This can include the orientation of the building, site orientation, integrated shade and architectural features, floor plan configuration for air cross flows and thermal mass to store heat and cool at different times of year.
Pedestrian Links	A Pedestrian Link is a walkway or public plaza space that is used by pedestrians with no motor vehicle access provided. The Structure Plan identifies Future and Indicative Pedestrian Links.
Permeable / Permeability	The extent to which the urban structure permits, or restricts, movement of people or vehicles through an area, and the capacity of the area network to carry people or vehicles.
Primary Active Frontage	Building frontage which contains uses that promote a high level of activity, visual connection and interaction with the street. This includes shops, cafes and restaurants.
Principal Pedestrian Network	A strategic network of pedestrian routes that encourage walking for transport. A high level of amenity and priority for pedestrians will be provided along a Principal Pedestrian Network.
Retail	Land uses providing for the sale of goods and services to consumers.
Secondary Retail	Retail uses that have limited customer activity.
Shared Zone	A Shared Zone is a road or network of roads where pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles share the roadway. A shared zone provides improved amenity for pedestrians and an improved streetscape.
Street Wall	The wall of a building that is closest the street boundary.
Streetscape	The visual elements of a street, including the road, adjoining buildings, street furniture, trees and open spaces, etc, that combine to form the street's character.
2010 Masterplan	Refer to the Chirnside Park Urban Design Masterplan, 2010
WSUD	Water Sensitive Urban Design - An approach to the planning and design of public spaces such as streets and parks to provide for the treatment of stormwater before it enters waterways.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

The Chirnside Park Major Activity Centre (Activity Centre) is located in Melbourne's east, within the suburb of Chirnside Park. While the wider suburb has a long history, the development of the Activity Centre as a retail and commercial hub largely occurred during the 1970s. Since then, the Activity Centre has evolved to serve a growing population across Chirnside Park, Mooroolbark, Lilydale and surrounding areas. With its strategic location, existing mix of shopping, employment, and recreational facilities, and significant road connections, the Activity Centre is well placed to support future development in the Yarra Ranges.

Over the coming decades, the Activity Centre is expected to support an increase in housing, including a greater diversity of dwelling types to meet changing community needs. Alongside this, there will be growing demand for additional employment, improved infrastructure, expanded community facilities, and more vibrant public spaces that support both residents and the broader region. This growth presents a critical opportunity to guide development in a way that is sustainable, inclusive, and aligned with community aspirations.

The 2006 Chirnside Park Structure Plan (2006 Structure Plan) and [Chirnside Park Urban Design Masterplan, 2010](#) (2010 Masterplan) have provided a strong foundation for planning and development across the Activity Centre, shaping land use outcomes and the delivery of key infrastructure for over 15 years. However, many anticipated development outcomes have not fully materialised, and existing planning controls and directions need to be updated to reflect emerging needs and policy, including State Government policy reforms. A revised Structure Plan is therefore required to respond to current challenges, reflect new policy directions, and set a clear path forward for future investment and change.

Council have engaged Tract Consultants alongside Urban Enterprise and WGA to prepare a revised Structure Plan for Chirnside Park. The revised Structure Plan will provide a framework to guide development within the Activity Centre providing clear direction on land uses, housing, employment, built form, public spaces, community facilities, open space, movement and transport.

The Structure Plan will also aim to:

- Establish a contemporary vision that reflects current community needs, policy directions and future growth opportunities.
- Guide housing growth and increased housing diversity.
- Reinforce the Activity Centre's role as a key retail, employment and service hub.
- Promote sustainable, climate-resilient development.
- Enhance the quality and function of public spaces.
- Improve transport access and movement for all users.
- Identify infrastructure and community facility needs.

Once complete, the Structure Plan will form the basis for strategic decision-making, infrastructure planning and delivery, investment attraction, and updates to the planning scheme, where required.

An Implementation Plan will accompany the Structure Plan, detailing clear actions, responsibilities, priorities and timeframes to deliver on the vision. Together, the Structure Plan and Implementation Plan will ensure the ongoing evolution of the Activity Centre is well managed and remains aligned with community and government expectations.



What is a Structure Plan?

A structure plan is a strategic planning framework that guides the future development of an area, focusing on how growth and development should be managed. It provides a vision for how an area should develop over time, considering various aspects like land use, built environment, and infrastructure. It also identifies strategies and actions to achieve the vision in collaboration with stakeholders, such as private landholders, state government agencies, and the community.

Councils are required to plan for the growth and emerging pressures for community, including its key activity centres. Planning must focus on the future vision, not just the present, and ensure a coordinated path to get there.

1.2 The Study Area

The Study Area for the Chirnside Park Structure Plan focuses on land within the Chirnside Park Activity Centre, located on either side of Maroondah Highway.

The boundary of the Study Area has been defined to capture land uses that are central to the role and function of the Activity Centre, as well as those that have a strong relationship to it. It includes:

- **Commercial areas** that accommodate a concentration of retail, entertainment and service activities along Maroondah Highway.
- **Residential areas** that are either integrated within or immediately adjacent to the Activity Centre, even where limited redevelopment potential currently exists. These are primarily located north of the shopping centre.
- **Public open space and recreation areas** that are or will be functionally linked to the Activity Centre and contribute to its role as a community hub. This includes Belsay Reserve and Kimberley Recreation Reserve.

In addition, the Study Area includes four large undeveloped or underutilised land parcels that represent strategic development opportunities including:

- **Lacola Site** (335 Maroondah Highway).
- **McMullin Site** (325 Manchester Road).
- **Joinland Site** (270 Maroondah Highway).
- **Eastridge** (1 East Ridge Drive - southern portion).

This boundary has been extended from that used in the 2010 Masterplan to include Kimberly Recreation Reserve, better reflecting current patterns of use, connectivity gaps, and relationships with the Activity Centre.

Refer to Figure 1 on the following page.

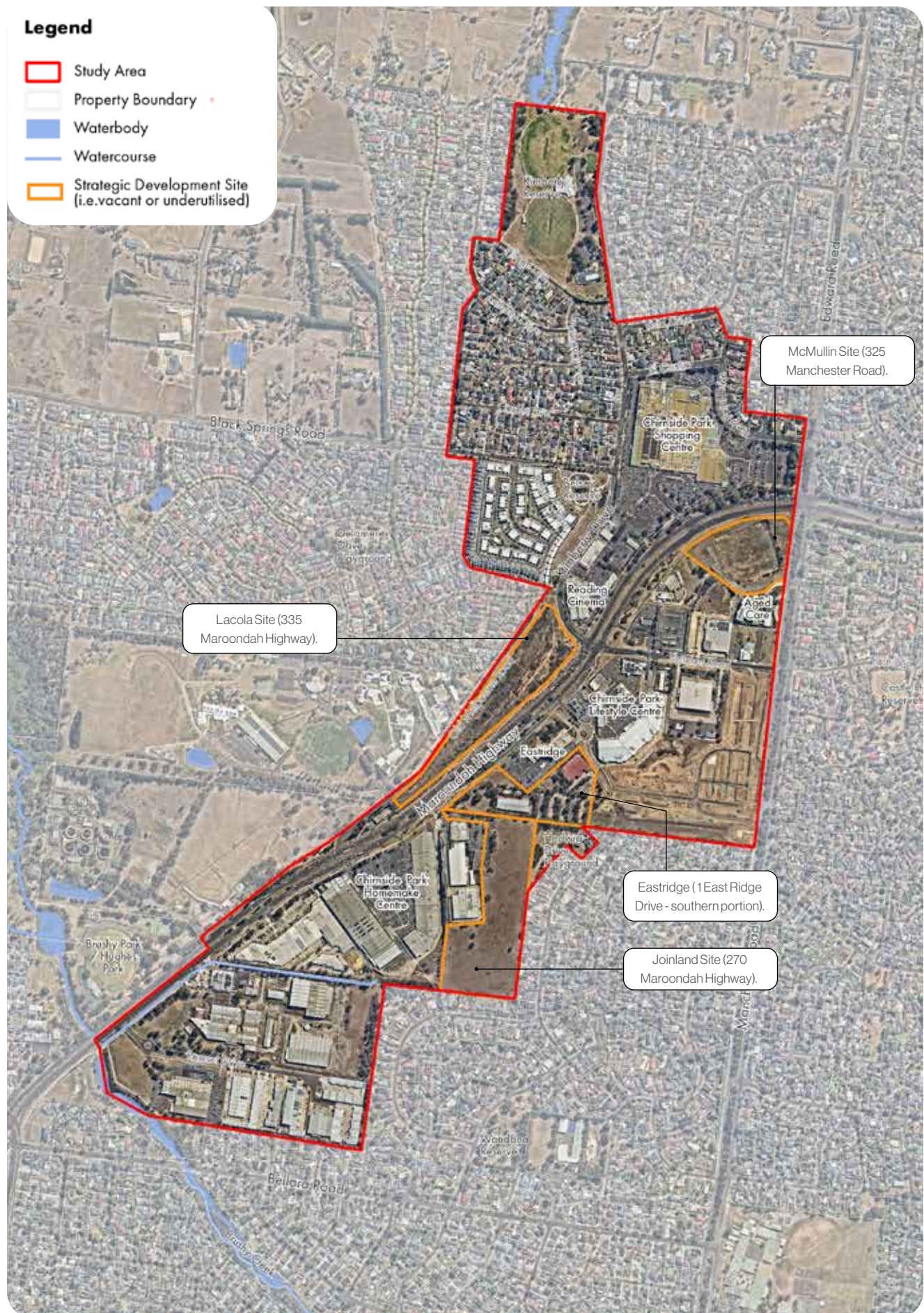


Figure 1. Study Area including Strategic Development Sites

1.3 The Project Process

The Structure Plan will be developed through a collaborative process between Council, specialist consultants, landowners, agency stakeholders and the community. It will be completed over the following stages:

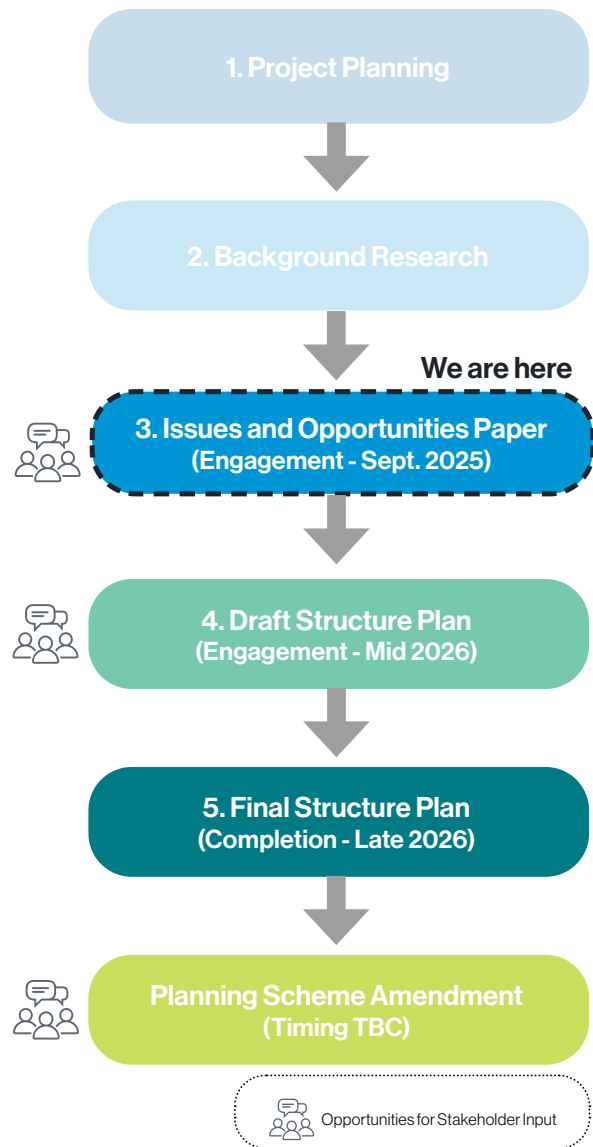


Figure 2. Project Stages

The process is anticipated to take about 12 – 24 months. The project stages, indicative timing and key deliverables are outlined above.

1.3.1 Community and Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation will be undertaken at key stages to ensure the Structure Plan reflects community needs and aspirations. Opportunities for community input will be offered over the following stages of consultation, which are outlined below and align with the project stages:

- **Key Stakeholder Engagement** (Stage 2 - included as part of the background research stage). This stage focused on engaging with key major landowners, government agencies and Council Officers to understand current and planned projects, clarify negotiable and non-negotiable elements, and identify the opportunities, challenges, and constraints influencing future growth and development.
- **Issues and Opportunities Paper** (Stage 3) This stage involves sharing early findings, key issues and opportunities and emerging ideas with the broader community. It is designed to test the initial directions and ideas, validate what has been heard to date, and identify any gaps or new insights. Feedback gathered will inform the development of the draft Structure Plan.
- **Draft Structure Plan** (Stage 4) The draft Structure Plan will be available for public review, providing the community and key stakeholders an opportunity to comment on the proposed vision, strategies, and actions. This stage is essential for ensuring transparency, building support, and refining the Structure Plan based on feedback before it is finalised.

Section 2.5 provides a summary of the feedback received from key stakeholders.

1.4 Negotiables and Non-Negotiables

There are a range of negotiables and non-negotiables that underpin the preparation of the Structure Plan. For the purposes of the Structure Plan, negotiables refer to elements that are under the direct control of, or can be influenced by, Council and the community. Non-negotiables refer to elements that are not under the control of, or cannot be influenced by, Council and the community through this process. These are listed below.

1.4.1 What can be influenced?

- The vision and future directions for the Activity Centre.
- The form of housing on key sites.
- How buildings look, including building heights and setbacks.
- How we respond to environmental, landscape, transport, climate change and water challenges for the Activity Centre.
- Ideas for works such as landscaping or upgrades to streets and other public areas.
- What sort of land uses we want for the Activity Centre and where these should go, eg. residential, commercial, industrial uses.

1.4.2 What can't be influenced?

- The need for Chirnside Park to accommodate population growth. This has been set by the State Government in a *Plan for Victoria*.
- That change will occur to support growth and the needs of the existing and emerging community.
- Population projections, demographic changes and other factual information.
- State Government policy objectives for activity centres and the housing target set for Yarra Ranges.
- Commercial realities and the investment decisions of private landowners.

1.5 The Issues & Opportunities Paper

This Issues & Opportunities Paper (the 'Paper') has been prepared to engage the community and stakeholders in the development of a revised Structure Plan. This Paper introduces potential elements of a shared vision and presents opportunities and ideas designed to encourage discussion about the future of the Activity Centre.

The opportunities presented have been organised under key themes and will help guide the next stage of the structure planning process. These opportunities have emerged from detailed background assessments which include:

- **Chirnside Park Activity Centre Structure Plan Economic Assessment** – Urban Enterprise
- **Chirnside Park Activity Centre Structure Plan Transport Access & Movement Assessment** - WGA
- **Chirnside Park Activity Centre Structure Plan Planning, Urban Design and Landscape Report** - Tract

Key findings from these background assessments have been incorporated throughout this Paper.

1.5.1 Structure of this Paper

This Paper includes the following sections:

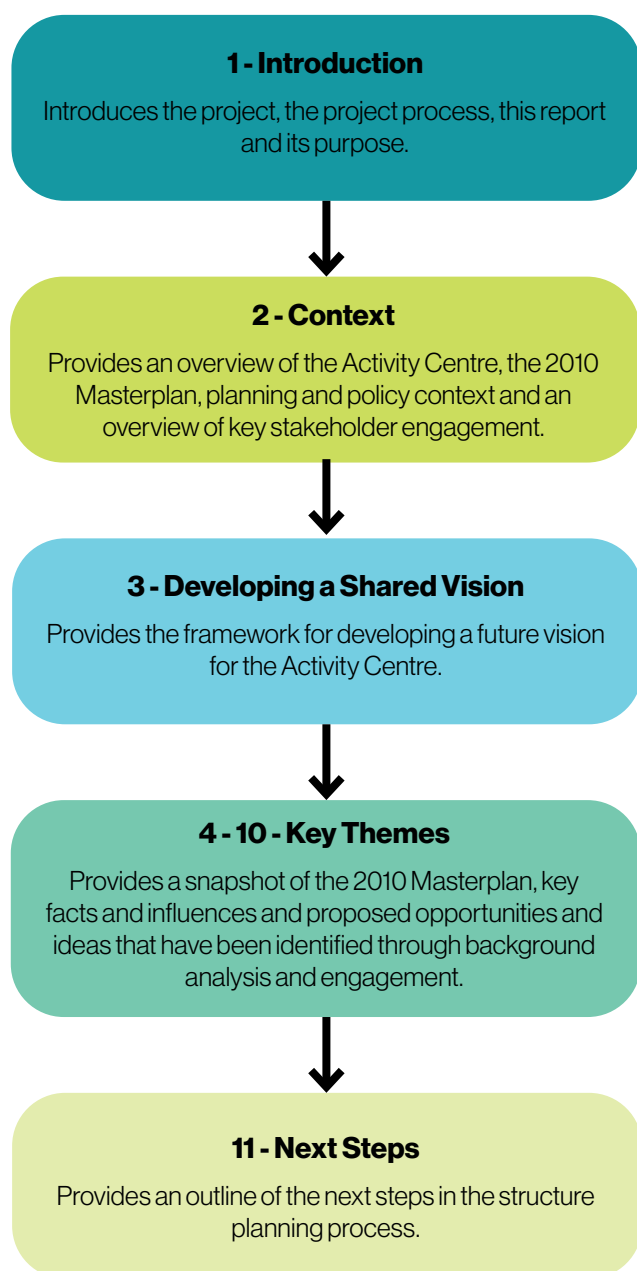


Figure 3. Paper Structure Diagram

1.5.2 Have your Say

This is your opportunity to help shape the future of the Activity Centre by sharing your views and ideas. Sections 5-10 of this Paper includes questions, as demonstrated in the example below, to prompt further discussion and feedback.

Your feedback to these questions will be used to inform the next step in the structure planning process, the development of the draft Structure Plan.

Further details of how you can provide your feedback are provided in Section 11.



Figure 4. Example 'Have Your Say' prompt

2 Context

2.1 Overview of the Activity Centre

Chirnside Park is located approximately 30 kilometres east of Melbourne's CBD, on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne, within the Shire of Yarra Ranges. Strategically positioned along the Maroondah Highway; a key arterial route connecting the eastern suburbs to regional areas; the Activity Centre is both a regional hub and a gateway to the Yarra Valley.

The Activity Centre is focused on the Maroondah Highway corridor and surrounding land, between Manchester Road (east) and Brushy Creek (west). It includes a mix of land uses such as retail, bulky goods, commercial and light industrial activity, as well as residential uses and public open space to the north.

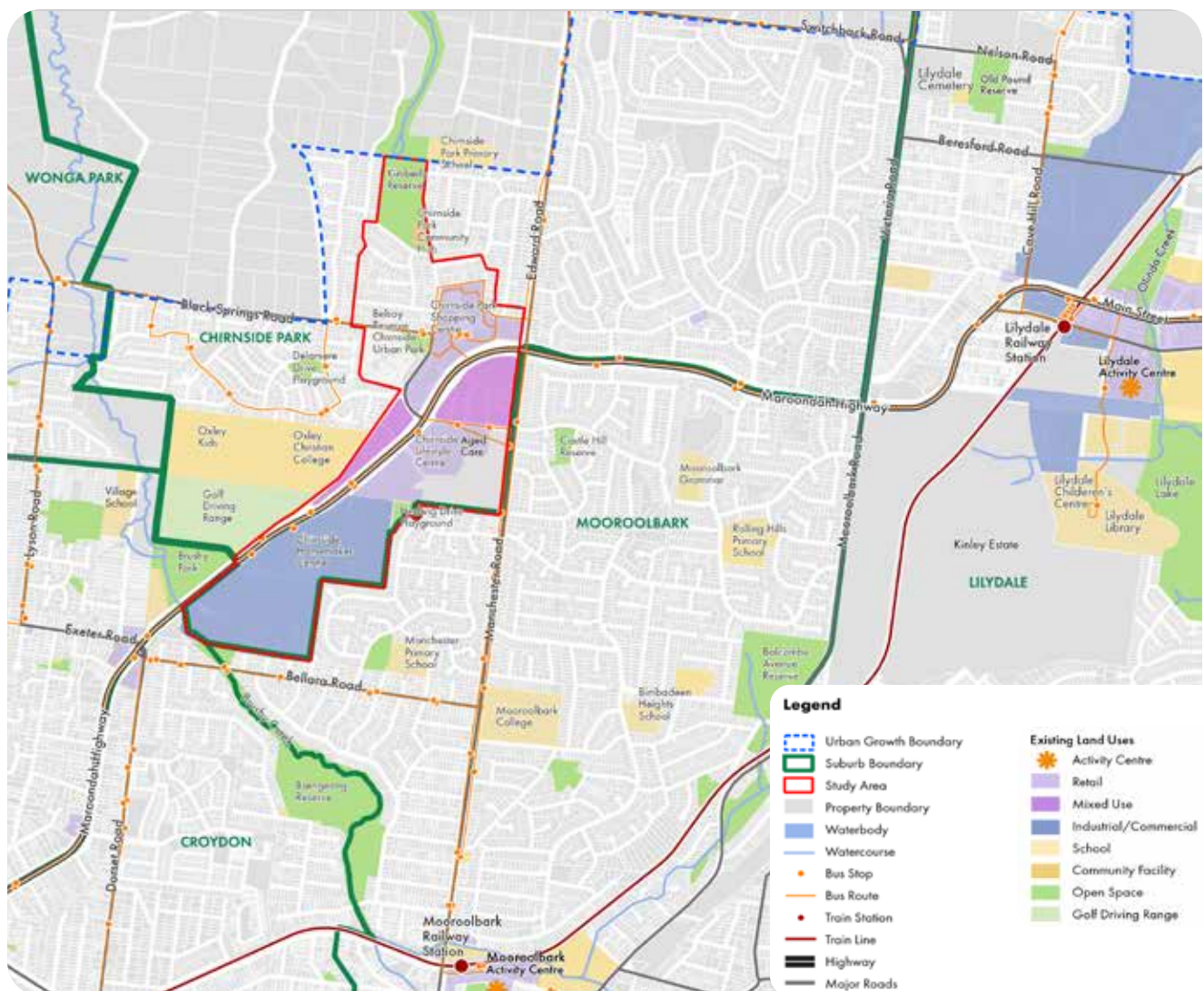


Figure 5. Context Plan

The Activity Centre's built environment reflects its origins as a planned retail precinct, with development characterised by large-format retail, light industrial uses, and low-rise, low-density built form. The Chirside Park Shopping Centre remains a focal point of the Activity Centre, surrounded by commercial and industrial land uses, particularly south of the Highway, where access and exposure to the highway are key attractors. Residential development within the Activity Centre is predominantly detached housing, with medium-density housing emerging near shops, services, and open space.

The Activity Centre also accommodates a range of community, civic and health services, generally concentrated in the area north of Chirside Park Shopping Centre. Open spaces such as Belsay Reserve, the Green Spine, Brushy Creek Corridor and Kimberley Reserve provide valuable landscape, recreational and ecological features within the area.

High traffic volumes on Maroondah Highway, limited crossing points, and a fragmented pedestrian and cycling network create significant challenges for local movement and access. Several large vacant or underutilised sites within the Activity Centre present future opportunities for housing, community infrastructure, mixed use and commercial development and improved public spaces.

Together, these elements provide the Activity Centre with a strong foundation and significant potential for growth. The revised Structure Plan aims to guide this growth in a way that is well considered, sustainable, and aligned with the qualities that make the Activity Centre unique.



Chirside Park Shopping Centre is the focal point of the Study Area

2.2 The 2010 Chirnside Park Urban Design Masterplan

The 2010 Masterplan has guided growth and development across the Activity Centre for over 15 years. It set a vision to guide the Activity Centre's transition from a predominantly retail and industrial centre into a vibrant, mixed-use urban hub. The plan aimed to support more housing, better connections for walking and cycling, improved public spaces, and a town centre where shops, homes, and community services are all well linked.

Figure 8 shows the Activity Centre as it was in 2010. Figure 9 shows the Activity Centre now with key projects and outcomes highlighted.



Figure 6. Chirnside Park Masterplan, 2010 - Key Outcomes

Key projects and outcomes achieved under the 2010 Masterplan include:

- Expansion of the Chirnside Park Shopping Centre, reinforcing the Activity Centre's role as a major regional retail destination.
- Delivery of Chirnside Urban Park (Belsay Reserve), providing a valued green space and community gathering place.
- Development of medium-density housing, including townhouses near the Shopping Centre (Old Colonist Site), contributing to increased housing diversity.
- Establishment of a landscaped Green Spine along Maroondah Highway with a shared path, seating, lighting, and tree planting (limited).
- Rezoning of strategic sites to support development containing a mix of uses and encourage renewal.
- Introduction of a Development Contributions Plan via the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme to fund key public realm improvements.



CHIRNSIDE PARK URBAN DESIGN MASTERPLAN
September 2010



Figure 7.

Chirnside Park Masterplan, 2010 - Front Cover

Key areas where the 2010 Masterplan has faced implementation challenges or limited progress include:

- Limited delivery of mixed-use development and higher-density housing.
- Low market interest in apartment and commercial office development on large development sites.
- Lack of progress on the reconfiguration of Kimberley Drive to provide convenience shopping and act as a pedestrian spine.
- State government decisions on key sites that don't align with the intentions of the 2010 Masterplan.
- Ongoing barriers to pedestrian access, particularly across Maroondah Highway.
- Fragmented development, resulting in a lack of cohesion across the Activity Centre.
- Challenges in implementing desired outcomes through planning applications.

In preparing a revised Structure Plan for the Activity Centre, these outcomes will be reviewed to determine their ongoing relevance and how implementation can be better supported.



Figure 8. Study Area 2010

2.3 Concurrent Projects

Several projects are currently underway or have been planned within the Activity Centre that will be relevant to the development of a revised Structure Plan. These are identified on Figure 10 below.



Figure 10. Study Area - Concurrent Projects

2.4 Planning Context

2.4.1 Background

Chirnside Park was first identified as a Major Activity Centre in *Melbourne 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth*, the State Government's long-term strategic land use plan introduced in 2002 to manage urban growth across metropolitan Melbourne. Under Melbourne 2030, Activity Centres were identified as focal points for retail, commercial activity, community services, employment, and public transport, as well as preferred locations for increased housing growth and diversity.

The 2010 Masterplan, building on the 2006 Structure Plan, aimed to guide the Activity Centre's evolution into a fully integrated Activity Centre aligned with state planning policy through enabling a broader mix of land uses and improving physical connections across Maroondah Highway.

At the time, most land within the current Study Area – aside from Chirnside Park Shopping Centre, the Eastridge site, and northern residential areas – remained zoned for industrial use. This reflected its legacy as a base for large-scale manufacturing and tech-based business parks, many of which had relocated by the early 2000s, leaving much of the land vacant or underused.



Large Format Retail / Bulky Goods

Large format retail (also known as bulky goods retail) refers to big stores that sell large items like furniture, appliances, hardware, or sporting goods. These stores usually need more space with lots of parking.

2.4.2 Implementing the 2010 Urban Design Masterplan

Between 2011 and 2013, the key directions of the 2010 Masterplan were implemented through a series of amendments to the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme to support the Activity Centre's transformation. These include:

- **Vacant and underutilised land in the north of the Activity Centre was rezoned to the Mixed Use Zone**, to allow for a mix of offices, entertainment, shops and housing in line with the 2010 Masterplan.
- **Large format retail developments in the southern part of the Activity Centre**, including the Chirnside Homemaker Centre, Bunnings and Officeworks, were rezoned, reflecting its existing and planned function as a highway based bulky goods precinct.
- **Built form controls were applied to all land** (excluding Eastridge and the residential areas to the north), to guide location-specific development requirements, based on directions in the 2010 Masterplan.
- **An Environmental Audit Overlay** was applied to ex-industrial land where there is a risk of contamination, to ensure further investigations and/or remediation occur before the land can be used and developed for housing or other uses.
- **A new Local Planning Policy, specific to the Chirnside Park Activity Centre**, was introduced to guide decision-making on development in the Activity Centre, in line with the 2010 Masterplan's vision.
- **A Development Contributions Plan** was prepared to enable Council to collect financial contributions towards the delivery of key infrastructure identified in the 2010 Masterplan such as improvements to Belsay Reserve, a shared walking and cycling path along the Green Spine, and a new pedestrian crossing on Kimberley Drive.

One key site at 270 Maroondah Highway (the Joinland site) was identified for housing in the 2010 Masterplan. Although a rezoning application was prepared, it did not go ahead and the site is still zoned for industrial use.

2.4.3 What's changed?

The current planning scheme controls over land within the Study Area remain generally consistent with those introduced as part of implementation of the 2010 Masterplan, with the notable exception of the Eastridge site (248-268 Maroondah Highway).

Planning scheme requirements around environmental sustainability and water sensitive urban design, both of which were encouraged in the 2010 Masterplan, have also been significantly strengthened over the past 5 years with the introduction of new policies and provisions specifying how and when these matters must be addressed in the design of new buildings.



Figure 11. Chirnside Park Activity Centre - 2010 Zone Plan

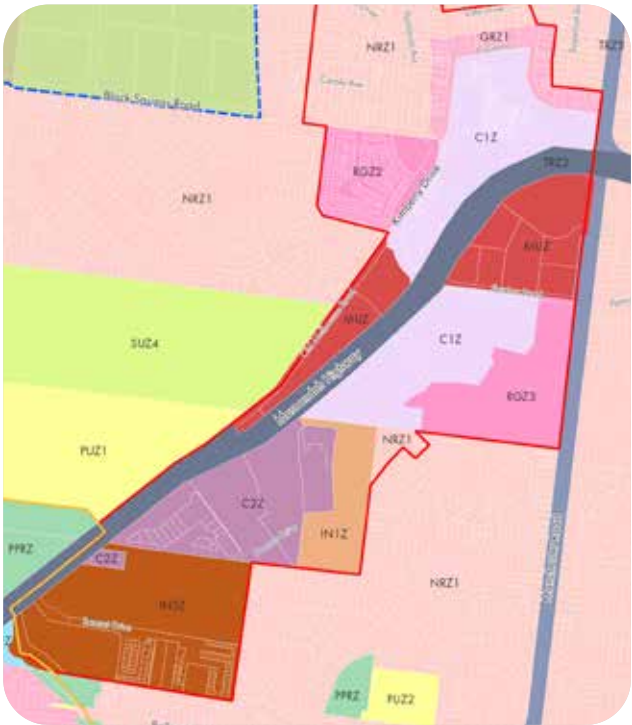


Figure 12. Chirnside Park Activity Centre - 2025 Zone Plan



2.4.4 Key directions moving forward

State and local (Council) planning policy continues to support the Chirnside Park Activity Centre as a focus for private and public sector development and a preferred location for additional and more diverse housing. It is recognised as an Activity Centre in state planning policy, as well as the recently released state planning strategy, Plan for Victoria (PfV).

While state policy has explicitly directed new growth and change to activity centres over the past 20+ years, PfV is much more prescriptive in its expectations through the application of municipal-level housing targets. The housing capacity target for Yarra Range Council is 25,000 new homes to be provided over the next 30 years, the bulk of which is to be located in or around activity centres.

This is generally consistent with the level of growth and overall development capacity identified in the Yarra Ranges [Housing Strategy](#) 2024 adopted by Council, which is largely directed towards vacant and under-utilised land in the Lilydale and Chirnside Park Activity Centres ('strategic redevelopment sites') able to accommodate major residential development, rather than the surrounding established suburban areas.

The Activity Centre's role as a regionally significant commercial centre is also recognised in state level land use policy, with the Melbourne Industrial and Commercial Land Use Plan 2018 (MICLUP) seeking the retention of land in and around Chirnside Park Shopping Centre for retail and complementary services. MICLUP also identifies the industrial area to the south as playing an important local service and employment role, albeit not identified for further expansion.

Finally, the role and significance of Maroondah Highway as both a principal arterial road and priority freight route is recognised across both land use and transport policy, with state planning policy in the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme requiring these key functions to be prioritised in planning decision making, including minimising new access points and/or signals in order to maintain adequate vehicle speeds and traffic flow.

2.4.5 Implications for the New Structure Plan

- The Eastridge site is not subject to specific design requirements or guidance for new built form. While development of the land is largely complete, there is an opportunity for the Structure Plan to address this gap in the planning framework to ensure future decision making on the development of remaining land is integrated with the needs and directions for the Activity Centre as a whole.
- Further investigations, particularly around access options, may need to be undertaken during Structure Plan development to facilitate the future rezoning of the Joinland site.
- Maroondah Highway's role as a primary road and freight route may constrain available options to improve movement and connectivity between the east and west sides of the Activity Centre, particularly in terms of the number and location of new crossing points.
- There is strong policy support for retention of the industrial areas in the south of the Study Area, as well as commercially zoned land within the Activity Centre more broadly. Seeking to change or vary these land uses would require strong economic justification and may not be supported by the State Government.
- Council's [Housing Strategy](#) identifies the vacant strategic development sites as accommodating a significant proportion of planned residential growth for Chirnside Park. This may constrain options to consider other uses on these sites, and will require potential barriers to delivery to be identified and addressed in the Structure Plan to ensure this planned supply of housing can be realised.

2.5 Discussions with Key Stakeholders

During Stage 2 of the project (Background Research), initial discussions were undertaken with key landowners, government agencies and Council officers to understand, discuss and confirm the existing opportunities and issues facing the Activity Centre. Broadly, these discussions identified the following:

- **Key landowners** highlighted opportunities for development on their sites and shared their current and planned projects. Some noted challenges in implementing the outcomes envisaged by the 2010 Masterplan primarily due to changes in market demand and construction costs.
- **Government agencies** noted the importance of integrated infrastructure planning, particularly around transport and water management. Key challenges such as stormwater management, implementation and early engagement with agencies were identified.
- **Council officers** reflected on lessons from the 2010 Masterplan and shared insights on current and upcoming projects. They emphasised the need to address infrastructure gaps, improve public spaces and walking and cycling connections, consider precinct wide stormwater management solutions, and support diverse housing and business growth. Additional feedback from urban forestry and parks maintenance teams pointed to the importance of enhancing tree canopy, streetscape amenity, and park management.
- **Councillors** - Councillors noted that a number of major development applications have been approved over the years, however many have not progressed. The potential for higher-density housing on strategic sites was recognised, along with support for affordable housing initiatives. It was highlighted that while past planning work like the Green Spine has laid groundwork, challenges remain—particularly around improving walkability, securing more open space, and enhancing connectivity.

These discussions have informed the issues and opportunities outlined in this Paper.



The Chirnside Park Structure Plan will be prepared in a collaboration with key stakeholders and the community.

3 Developing a Shared Vision

3.1 Overview

A shared vision is a statement that aims to capture how the Activity Centre should look, feel, and function into the next 20 years and beyond. It provides direction for change and is intended to represent the needs and aspirations of the local community and key stakeholders.

A shared vision for the Activity Centre was outlined in the 2006 Structure Plan and refined as part of the 2010 Masterplan.

As part of preparing a revised Structure Plan for the Activity Centre, it is intended that the vision will be reviewed and updated in collaboration with the local community, key stakeholders, and Council.

As a starting point for discussion, we would like to test what elements of the shared vision are still relevant and determine if there are any other elements that should be included. The question below invites comments that aim to inform an updated vision for the Activity Centre.

The Vision was as follows:

- **A thriving regional centre, comprising a full range of comparison and convenience retailing, entertainment functions, professional services and community facilities.**
- **A distinctive centre which provides an attractive gateway to the Shire of Yarra Ranges;**
- **Having a sense of identity that is distinct from other urban sections of the Maroondah Highway.**
- **A sustainable centre, which builds on its natural context and attributes to minimise long term environmental impacts.**
- **An accessible centre, easy to get to and move around, and with distinctive precincts that are well integrated with each other.**
- **A place to go to meet friends and participate in public life.**
- **An area with complementary residential, commercial and entertainment activities around the shopping centre, which provides added vibrancy to the Activity Centre day and night and makes it a desirable place to live.**
- **Providing convenient and attractive public transport, with reliable access throughout the Shire, the wider metropolitan region and the Yarra Valley.**
- **A friendly and inclusive centre, which provides for people of all ages and levels of mobility and does not marginalise on the basis of social or economic issues.**



1. What is your vision for the Activity Centre – what would you like to see in the future?

4 Key Themes

4.1 Introduction

Chapters 5 - 10 are organised around the key themes of:

- Housing and residential development.
- Business and economic development.
- Environment, sustainability and climate change.
- Urban design, placemaking and built form.
- Transport and movement.
- Community infrastructure.

Each chapter includes a snapshot of the key elements / recommendations from the 2010 Masterplan, key facts and influences, as well as proposed opportunities and ideas that have been identified through background analysis and engagement.



Belsay Reserve playground

5 Housing & Residential Development

5.1 Key Elements of the 2010 Masterplan

The 2010 Masterplan identified the need to provide diverse housing options through the introduction of mixed use and medium- and higher-density development on underutilised and vacant sites within the Activity Centre. It sought to support future population growth and changing community needs through a mix of housing types, including affordable housing and options that enable residents to age in place.

The 2010 Masterplan encouraged higher-density residential development within 400 metres of the 'town centre' and close to public transport, while preserving the character of surrounding low-density residential areas. Key redevelopment sites, including the Lacola, McMullins and Joinland sites were identified for their capacity to accommodate denser housing forms, while respecting topography, views, and the existing character of the Activity Centre.



Aged care provided along Manchester Road.



Affordable Housing

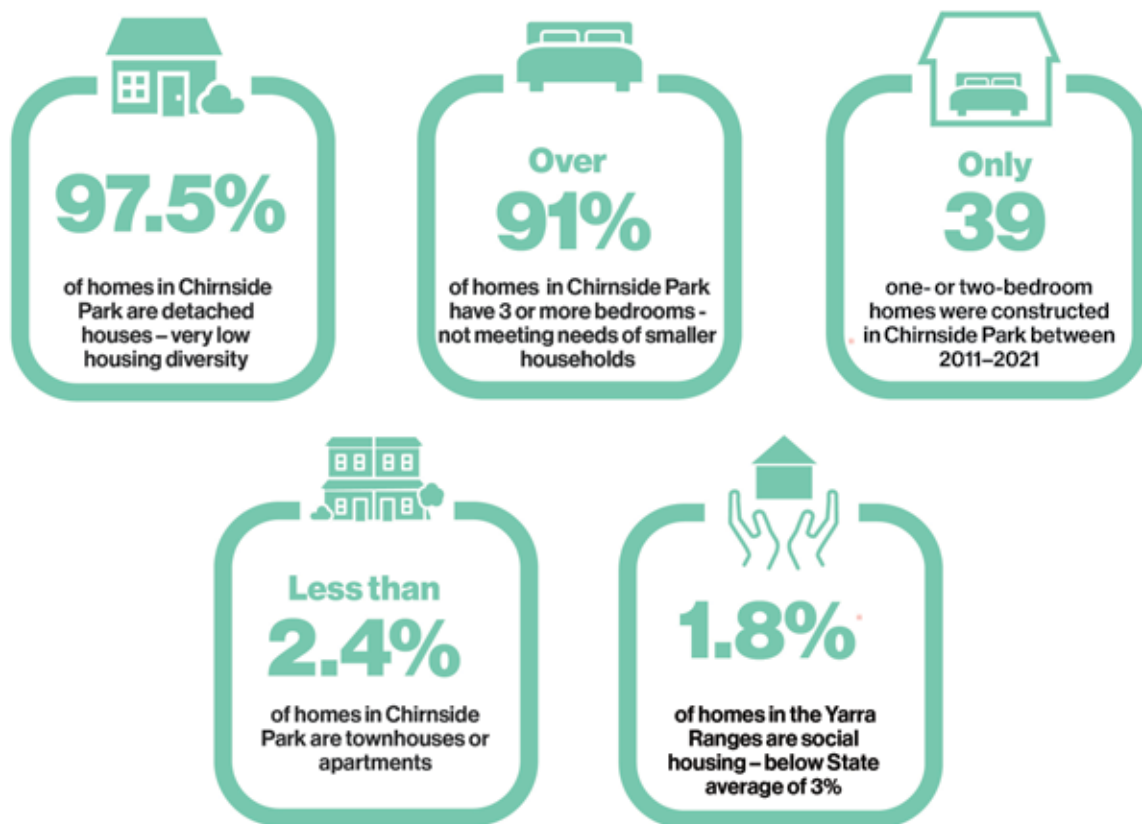
Affordable housing is defined as housing that is appropriate to the housing needs of very low, low and moderate-income households.

Social Housing

Social housing is short and long-term rental housing that is owned and run by the government or not-for-profit agencies. Social housing comprises of public housing and community housing.

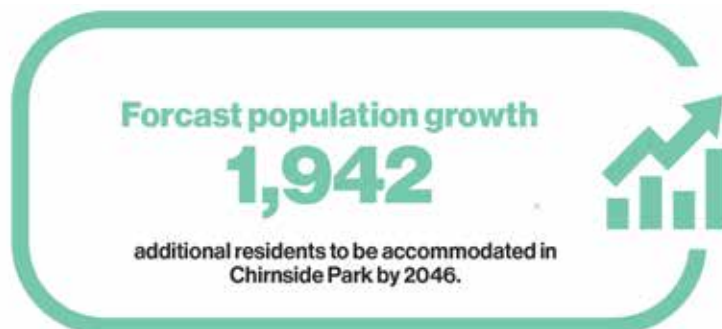
5.2 Key Facts and Influences

Chirnside Park Snapshot



Source: ABS Census 2016–2021.

Future Projections



Source: Chirnside Park Activity Centre Structure Plan Economic Assessment, Urban Enterprise, 2025

Figure 13. Housing and Residential Development Snapshot

Population Growth, Demographics and Housing Need

Chirnside Park's population has grown by approximately 2,700 people since 2011, reaching over 12,000 in 2024¹. This growth has been driven primarily by family households, particularly couples with children aged 0–9 and adults aged 35–49². Incomes have increased by 20–25% over the same period, and Chirnside Park has a higher level of socio-economic advantage compared to Lilydale and Mooroolbark, based on SEIFA indices³.

While educational attainment is improving, it remains below the state average with 23% of local residents holding a bachelors degree or higher (compared with the Victorian average of 29%)⁴. Population forecasts indicate that by 2046, Chirnside Park will have a population of 14,820, which is an additional 1,942 residents⁵. This is expected to generate demand for approximately 44–57 additional dwellings per year⁶, highlighting the need for both additional housing supply and a broader range of housing types to meet changing community needs.

1 ABS TableBuilder, 2016–2021; ABS Census 2016–2021.

2 ABS TableBuilder, 2016–2021; ABS Census 2016–2021.

3 ABS TableBuilder, 2016–2021; ABS Census 2016–2021.

4 ABS Census, 2016–21.

5 ABS Census, 2021; Forecast ID, 2025; Urban Enterprise.

6 Victoria in Future, Forecast ID, Victorian Government, Urban Enterprise.



SEIFA

SEIFA, or Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas, are a set of statistical tools developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) that rank areas in Australia based on their relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage. These indexes are derived from Census data and provide a way to compare the socio-economic conditions of different geographic areas.

Housing Supply, Diversity and Development Trends

Chirnside Park contains approximately 4,380 dwellings, 97.5% of which are detached houses, and over 91% have three or more bedrooms. This reflects a limited diversity in housing stock, particularly in smaller and more affordable dwelling types and means Chirnside Park is less attractive to smaller families, downsizers, singles and couples with no children. Between 2016 and 2021, only 39 one- or two-bedroom homes were constructed. Chirnside Park has a lower proportion of medium and high-density housing, with just 2.4% compared with 20.1% in Lilydale and 16.3% in Kilsyth⁷.

Dwelling building approvals have been limited. Over the past 10 years, the suburb of Chirnside Park averaged just 85 new dwellings annually, mostly detached houses. Within the Activity Centre, only 58 dwellings were approved for construction between 2014 and 2023⁸. This is in addition to the 176 townhouses approved opposite the shopping centre in 2013.

Recent development activity in the Study Area includes the recently completed 144-bed aged care facility at 315 Manchester Road, while construction of the Summerset Village development at Eastridge is underway. This is anticipated to deliver 435 dwellings including independent living units, aged care, apartments, and townhouses. Outside this project, there are no other major residential developments identified within the Study Area.

Kinley Estate (the former Lilydale Quarry), located in nearby Lilydale, is a masterplanned community that is expected to deliver a substantial number of new homes in proximity to Chirnside Park (approximately 3000)⁹. This is anticipated to include a mix of housing types, such as medium-density and more affordable options.

7 ABS Census 2016–2021.

8 ABS Building Approvals, 2015–2025

9 Chirnside Park Activity Centre Structure Plan Economic Assessment, Urban Enterprise, 2025

Development Feasibility

The feasibility of medium and higher-density development is a key barrier to delivery. Apartments in particular, face high construction costs, while local sale prices remain relatively low compared with areas that are closer to inner Melbourne, such as Ringwood and Croydon. This limits profitability and deters private investment.

These challenges are compounded by Chirnside Park's distance from rail infrastructure, lack of high-frequency public transport, complex site conditions, as well as limited connectivity and access to public open spaces.

Townhouses remain more feasible in the short-to-medium term. Their lower construction costs, growing demand, and alignment with the existing residential character make them more viable for developers under current market conditions.

Policy Context and Strategic Direction

Chirnside Park is identified at both state and local levels as a key location for future housing growth, with a strong policy focus on delivering increased housing diversity and density. [Plan for Victoria](#) directs a significant share of new housing to established urban areas, including the Chirnside Park Activity Centre, to better use existing infrastructure and services.

At the local level, the [Yarra Ranges Housing Strategy 2024](#) identifies the Activity Centre as a 'Strategic Development Area', with future growth to be delivered primarily through four remaining development sites. The Strategy highlights a need for more compact and affordable housing options, aged care, and smaller dwellings to address demographic shifts and housing gaps, particularly in the supply of social housing. Complementary strategies such as the Neighbourhood Character Study 2022 guide the scale and form of change, limiting higher densities to strategic development sites, while retaining the low-rise, garden-style character within surrounding residential areas.

Housing Affordability

The Yarra Ranges [Housing Strategy](#) 2024 recognises affordability as a key concern, emphasising the need to diversify housing types to better serve smaller households, renters, and vulnerable populations.

Chirnside Park has high home ownership rates, and a relatively low proportion of rental properties compared to other metropolitan areas in Yarra Ranges. Median house prices increased from \$705,000 in 2018 to approximately \$870,000 in 2023¹⁰, largely driven by strong demand during the COVID-19 Pandemic. While prices are now stabilising, broader economic factors such as interest rates, inflation, and elevated construction costs continue to impact affordability and household incomes. Currently 10.2% mortgage holders and 26.3% of renters in the area are facing housing stress¹¹.

Chirnside Park has the highest current rents, compared to Lilydale and Mooroolbark, with median rents of \$600 per week¹². This is primarily due to the sharp decline in available rental supply which occurred during the COVID-19 Pandemic and has since persisted, with current vacancy rates of 0.74% in Chirnside Park¹³. This has exacerbated affordability pressures within the suburb, especially for low- to moderate-income households.

Social housing provision in Chirnside Park is also notably low, comprising only 1.8% of total housing stock in Yarra Ranges. This is well below the Victorian average of 3%¹⁴. Demand substantially exceeds supply, with over 1,600 applicants on the Victorian Housing Register seeking housing in Yarra Ranges, most of whom require one- or two-bedroom dwellings.

¹⁰ A Guide to Property Values, 2024

¹¹ ABS Census, 2021; Forecast ID, 2025.

¹² Realestate.com, May 2025.

¹³ ABS Census, 2021; Forecast ID, 2025.

¹⁴ ABS Census, 2021; Forecast ID, 2025.

5.3 Key Opportunities for the New Structure Plan

Increase Housing Choice to Reflect a Changing Community

Chirnside Park's population is growing and changing, with more diverse household types, a higher proportion of families with children, and an ageing population seeking to stay in the community. However, the current housing stock is dominated by large, 3-4 bedroom detached houses which may not meet the needs of smaller families or older residents looking to downsize. Broadening the mix and diversity of housing available, such as townhouses, apartments, accessible and adaptable housing for smaller households, would help address this and maximise opportunities for residents to stay close to family and friends and the places they love, as their housing needs change over time.

The Structure Plan could support this through:

- **Identifying appropriate locations for higher housing densities** within the Study Area, providing greater certainty around the scale and location of change planned to occur.
- **Promoting high quality design**, including specific standards and requirements to ensure new medium and high density housing provides suitable levels of amenity and positively contributes to the appearance of the Activity Centre.
- **Identifying and encouraging housing types which should be delivered**, based on current and projected future community needs.
- **Providing specific guidance on retirement villages and aged care facilities**, including appropriate locations and their role within the broader housing mix to be provided in the Activity Centre.



Example of potential higher density housing

A key challenge which will need to be addressed through the preparation of the Structure Plan is ensuring new development provides a suitable transition and interface to surrounding residential areas, which will not experience the same level of change. An example is the strip of properties fronting El Centro, View Point Drive and Kimberley Drive, which both the 2010 Masterplan and Council's [Housing Strategy](#) identify for 'substantial change' (i.e. suitable to accommodate an increased level of housing). Specific guidance on setbacks, building heights, landscaping, and other design elements near boundaries with existing residential development may need to be developed to ensure these interfaces are appropriately treated.



New development provides a suitable transition and interface to surrounding residential areas such as along El Centro.

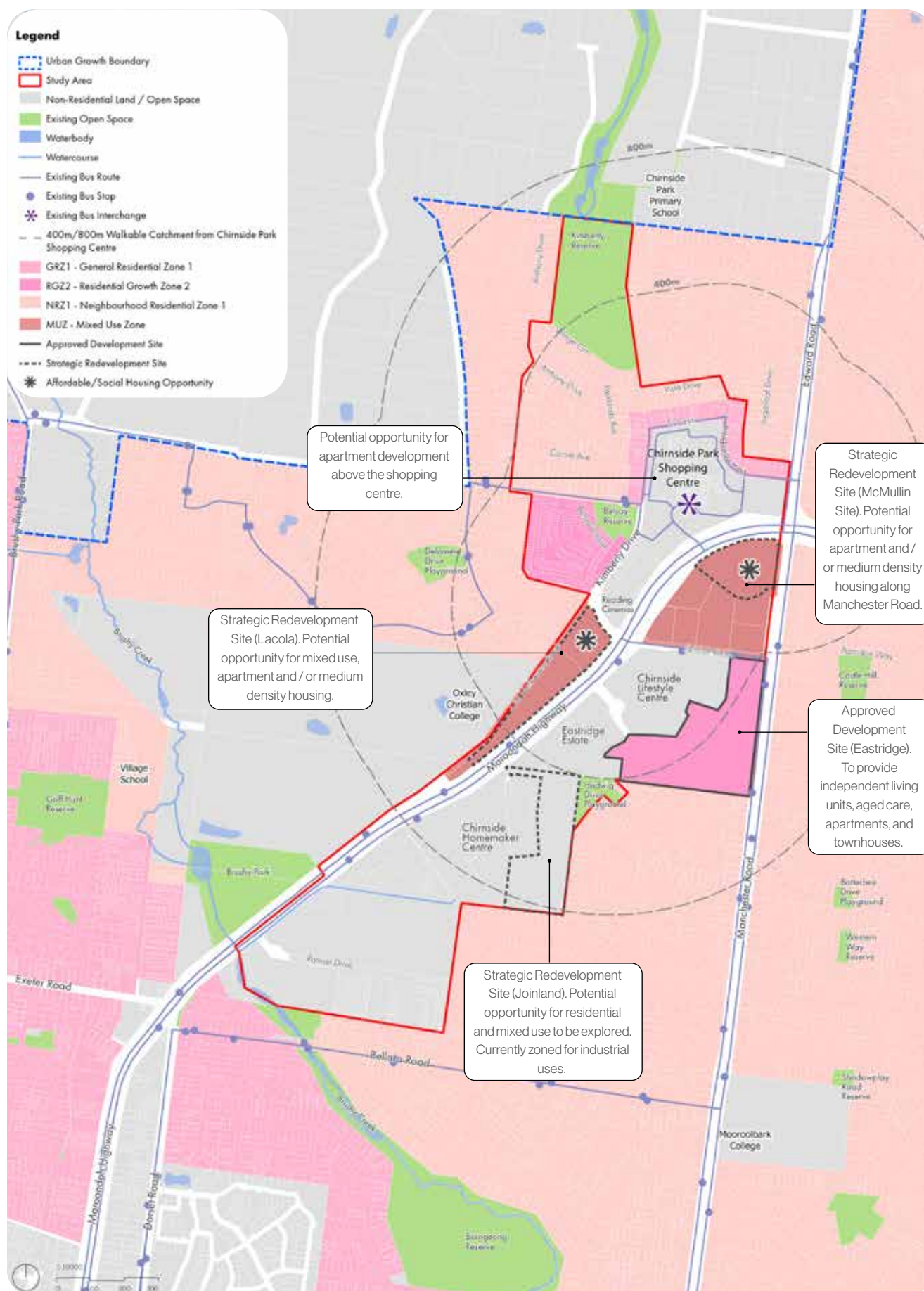


Figure 14. Housing Opportunity Plan

Unlock Strategic Redevelopment Sites for Higher-Density Housing

As identified in the [Housing Strategy](#), the four remaining Strategic Development Sites, and other vacant and underutilised land within the Activity Centre, are well placed to accommodate significant residential development, either alone or as part of a broader mix of uses.

However, despite strong planning scheme support for this outcome and, in some cases, planning applications having been lodged and/or approved, the development potential of these sites has largely remained unrealised in the 15 years since the 2010 Masterplan was approved.

Whilst partially influenced by market conditions and economic factors, unlocking the potential of these sites also requires consideration of the practical challenges to development, including topographical and access constraints, and infrastructure provision, and options to reduce these barriers.

Further commentary regarding site-specific issues and constraints is provided in Section 8. However, opportunities to address precinct-wide barriers and challenges which could be considered in the Structure Plan include:

- **Providing greater clarity and certainty** regarding the intended land use and scale/yield of development able to be supported.
- **Providing the strategic justification for changes to planning scheme controls**, including rezoning and/or updates to requirements, to remove barriers for appropriate development. These barriers could include outdated zoning or overly restrictive planning requirements.
- **Coordinating the delivery of new and upgraded infrastructure**, particularly civil and transport, by clearly identifying what is required and the roles and responsibilities of Council, developers and other authorities in facilitating these outcomes.



Townhouse development at the Old Colonial site

Support Housing Affordability and Delivery of Social and Affordable Housing

Increasing the supply of medium and high-density housing in the Study Area, particularly on strategic development sites, can help improve housing access and affordability in Chirnside Park. However, the private market alone is unlikely to deliver the right mix and types of housing to meet the needs of all community groups.

Chirnside Park is a priority area for greater housing diversity. The Structure Plan should support affordable housing in the Activity Centre and encourage housing types that meet the needs of affordable housing providers.

Specific advice and analysis will be needed to understand the demand and potential for affordable housing. This will help shape future directions and inform planning scheme controls.



View along Black Springs Road to existing detached homes.

Opportunities which could be considered in the Structure Plan include:

- **Providing targeted requirements for specific housing forms and types** which meet the needs of vulnerable groups, particularly on strategic redevelopment sites identified for significant residential development, in order to maximise opportunities for partnerships between developers and housing providers.
- **Providing clear direction regarding preferred locations for social and affordable housing**, to ensure it meets the needs and priorities of future residents and housing providers in terms of access and proximity to facilities, services and transport infrastructure.
- **Setting targets for the provision of affordable housing** in residential developments over a certain size.
- **Identifying specific opportunities for delivery of affordable and/or social housing** based on feedback and agreements between landowners and housing providers, to ensure these are considered in the design and assessment of future development proposals.



1. What type of new housing would you like to see on the major development sites?

6 Business & Economic Development

6.1 Key Elements of the 2010 Masterplan

The 2010 Masterplan focused on establishing a vibrant, mixed-use Activity Centre that functions as the economic heart of the community. Centred around the existing shopping and entertainment precinct, the Activity Centre was envisioned to accommodate a broad mix of retail, commercial, community, and residential uses. Kimberley Drive was identified as the 'Main Street'—a walkable high street precinct with convenience retail, hospitality, and shop-top housing to support activity at all hours of the day. The 2010 Masterplan also sought to contain bulky goods and industrial uses on the precinct's edges and to improve landscaping and design along Maroondah Highway to create a unified entrance to the Activity Centre.



Chirnside Park shopping centre outdoor dining area

6.2 Key Facts and Influences

Strategic Role

The Activity Centre plays a subregional role in the eastern Yarra Ranges, supporting approximately 2,700 jobs, more than half in retail and over 600 in industrial sectors. This accounts for around 6% of all employment in the municipality¹. Unlike nearby centres such as Lilydale and Mooroolbark, which are structured around traditional town centres and rail access, the Activity Centre offers a distinct alternative, centred around large development sites with high exposure along Maroondah Highway, and the ability to accommodate a diverse mix of land uses including bulky goods retail, light industry, commercial services, and health-related employment.

At a strategic level, the Metropolitan Industrial and Commercial Land Use Plan (MICLUP) identifies the Chirnside Park Shopping Centre and the commercial area within the western portion of the Eastridge site as forming a regionally significant commercial precinct, supporting retail and commercial activity beyond daily convenience needs. While MICLUP does not identify a specific need for additional industrial or commercial land within the Activity Centre, it directs that existing zoned land should be retained for these purposes unless a future economic and strategic assessment by Council justifies an alternative outcome.

Employment Trends

Between 2016 and 2021, employment in the Activity Centre grew by 3.1% per annum—driven primarily by growth in the industrial and health sectors². In contrast, employment in office-based, education, and some retail roles declined over the same period. The surrounding labour force (including the local government areas of Yarra Ranges, Maroondah and Knox) also expanded by approximately 24,000 workers over the past decade, with strong growth in health care employment (+5.5% p.a.) and professional services (+2.8% p.a.)³. These trends reflect a broader structural shift in the region towards service-based and white-collar employment. Future projections suggest that the Activity Centre could support an additional 700 to 800 jobs by 2046, including around 400 in retail, 200 in healthcare, and 130 in industrial sectors⁴.

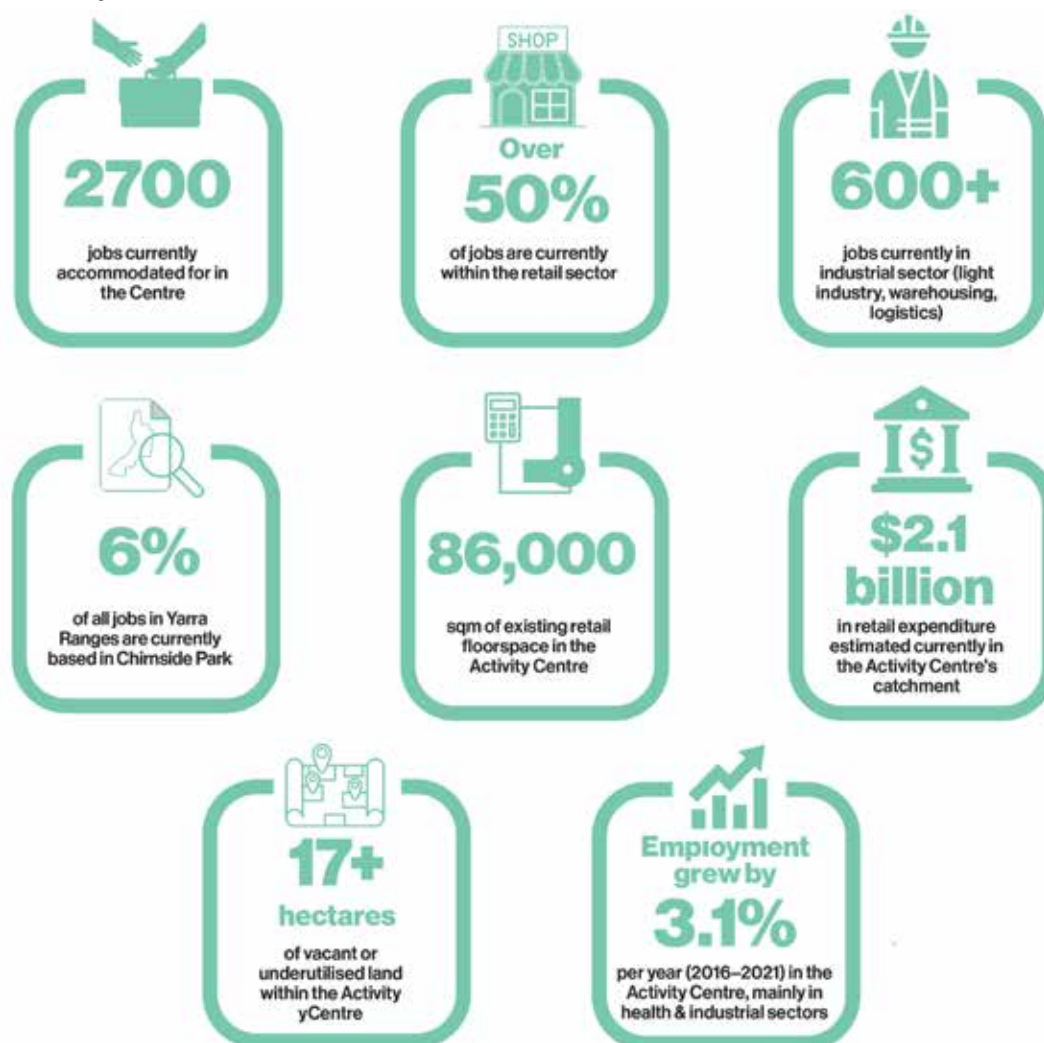
¹ ABS Census, 2016-21

² ABS Census, 2016-21.

³ ABS Labour Force Survey, Urban Enterprise

⁴ Chirnside Park Activity Centre Structure Plan Economic Assessment, Urban Enterprise, 2025

Chirside Park Snapshot



Source: ABS Census 2016-2021 and Chirside Park Activity Centre Structure Plan Economic Assessment, Urban Enterprise, 2025

Future Projections



Source: Chirside Park Activity Centre Structure Plan Economic Assessment, Urban Enterprise, 2025

Figure 15. Business and Economic Development Snapshot

Retail, Commercial and Industrial Growth

The Activity Centre currently accommodates approximately 78,000 sqm of retail floorspace, including retail and bulky goods formats. The Activity Centre is anchored by major retailers such as Woolworths, Coles, Aldi, Kmart, Officeworks, Bunnings, and Harvey Norman. An approved expansion of the Chirnside Park Shopping Centre will add 10,500 sqm of new floorspace, including retail, medical, childcare, and office components—representing a 28% increase in retail⁵. Based on population and expenditure growth, the Activity Centre is forecast to support an additional 7,000–13,000 sqm of retail and 10,000–18,000 sqm of bulky goods retail by 2046. This growth is supported by projected retail expenditure in the area rising from \$2.1 billion to \$2.56 billion over the same period⁶.

There is also the potential to accommodate commercial growth through flexible, smaller-scale office and co-working spaces, particularly for health and allied health services, and professional sectors. While the demand for traditional office space is subdued, the increasing presence of remote workers and health professionals creates opportunities for new workspace formats. Small home based businesses may also be provided, subject to meeting certain planning criteria, within residential areas.

The industrial precinct east of Maroondah Highway plays an ongoing economic role, providing space for light manufacturing, warehousing, trades, and logistics. Demand for smaller industrial units continues to increase, particularly for businesses serving the outer eastern suburbs. The retention of industrial land is important to support job growth and economic diversity.

Development Capacity and Redevelopment Opportunities

The Activity Centre includes more than 17 hectares of underutilised or vacant land, predominantly located east and west of Maroondah Highway. Some of these parcels are zoned for industrial or commercial use but have the capacity to support a greater mix of uses, including medium-density residential 3–6 storeys (approx. 11 - 20m), health services, commercial offices, and hospitality. These sites present a major opportunity to accommodate population and employment growth within walking distance of shops, services, and public transport.



Industrial uses located along Maroondah Highway

⁵ Chirnside Park Activity Centre Structure Plan Economic Assessment, Urban Enterprise, 2025

⁶ Chirnside Park Activity Centre Structure Plan Economic Assessment, Urban Enterprise, 2025

6.3 Key Opportunities for the New Structure Plan

Strengthen the Retail Core as a Vibrant Mixed-Use Centre

Retail and entertainment uses are central to the Activity Centre's identity, economic function and future growth. With the Shopping Centre performing strongly and set to expand, there is an opportunity to reinforce this precinct as the core of the Activity Centre by diversifying the current retail mix and experiences through incorporation of cafés, restaurants, and finer-grain shops in new mixed use development west and south of the Shopping Centre. Streetscape upgrades and improved walking and cycling connections, particularly across Maroondah Highway, would also help unify the Activity Centre, strengthening its appeal to both residents and visitors.

Opportunities for the Structure Plan include:

- **Focus retail and hospitality uses** within and around the Shopping Centre and along Kimberley Drive to help establish the Activity Centre as a vibrant, walkable town heart. This includes encouraging finer-grain retail, entertainment and community uses to broaden the retail mix and attract more visitors.
- **Supporting mixed-use development with active ground floors and upper-level housing or offices** to increase density, vibrancy and activate the Activity Centre at more hours of the day.
- **Improving public realm, streetscape and pedestrian/cyclist connections** to provide an attractive and comfortable setting for businesses and visitors.



Fine Grain

An urban environment where there are relatively narrow shopfronts (generally less than 10 metres in width), smaller blocks and a mix of uses that encourages small businesses and street level activity.

Support Small and Local Businesses

With a growing number of professionals, remote workers and local entrepreneurs, there is demand for flexible, affordable business spaces within and around the Activity Centre. Supporting small and local business growth will create jobs and diversify and build a more resilient local economy. Allowing for smaller tenancies or adaptable spaces, particularly along Kimberley Drive and Fletcher Road, will introduce street-level activity that complements nearby shops, while home based businesses and small-scale businesses should be supported in appropriate locations. The Structure Plan could support small and local business by:

- **Encouraging the provision of flexible, smaller retail and commercial spaces within mixed-use developments** to enable affordable entry points for local businesses.
- **Encouraging the development of Kimberley Drive as a 'main street'** for boutique retail, hospitality, and community uses, as well as shop top housing, in line with the directions of the 2010 Masterplan. Refer to Section 8 for further details.
- **Supporting pop-ups, markets and temporary uses on vacant or underutilised areas** to activate the Activity Centre and test new business opportunities. This could also provide a mechanism to activate areas where the ultimate land use or development outcomes identified in the Structure Plan are unlikely to be economically viable in the short term, but the opportunity for long term land use change needs to be maintained (refer to opportunities further outlined in this Section).
- **Encouraging the reuse of older industrial and commercial buildings** to provide affordable spaces for startups and artisans.
- **Identifying opportunities for Council or local business networks to offer grants**, mentoring and marketing support that strengthen local economic activity.

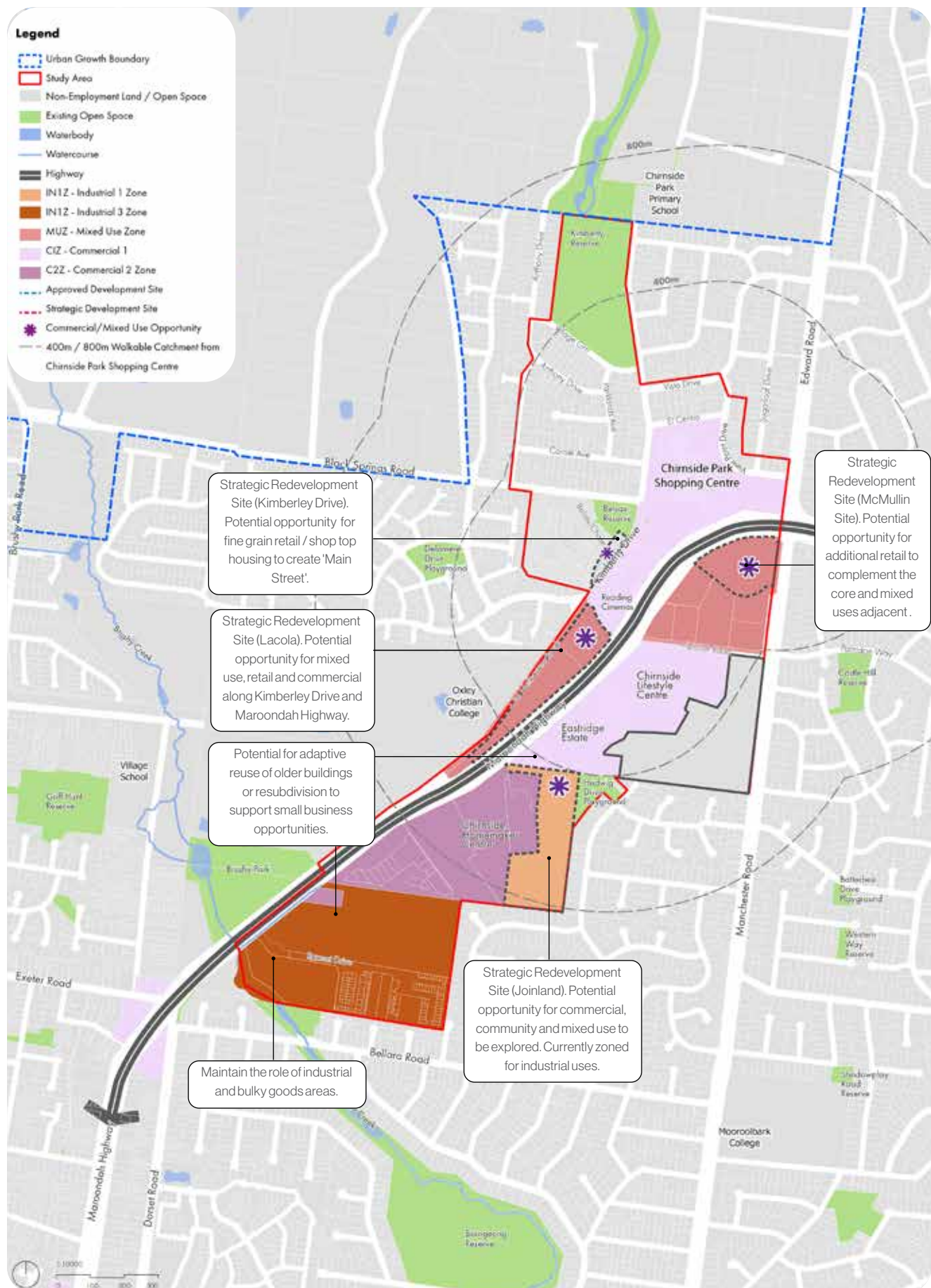


Figure 16. Business and Economic Development Opportunity Plan

Maintain and Strengthen Strategic Employment Precincts

The Activity Centre's industrial and bulky goods precincts provide a vital part of its economic role and support over 600 jobs in light manufacturing, logistics, trades, and large-format retail¹. There is the potential to maintain and clearly define these precincts, while managing how it impacts nearby residential uses, protecting employment functions, and enhancing the presentation of these uses along key entry points such as Maroondah Highway. Opportunities for the Structure Plan include:

- **Protecting and reinforcing the role of industrial and bulky goods areas** as key employment precincts, particularly south of Maroondah Highway.
- **Protecting the retail and residential core** through clear sub-precincts and targeted planning controls.
- **Encouraging site upgrades and coordinated design outcomes**, including improved landscaping, signage, and built form addressing Maroondah Highway.
- **Promoting long-term transition or re-subdivision of industrial land** where appropriate, to support smaller industrial units and hybrid business spaces.
- **Planning for high-quality interfaces with future residential, commercial or industrial development**, using setbacks, landscaping, and urban design guidelines.
- **Aligning Structure Plan policies with MICALUP** and the broader regional centre hierarchy and recognising the Activity Centre's distinct value as an easily accessible commercial and employment hub.

Unlock Development Capacity whilst maintaining Opportunities for Long-Term Land Use Change

Several vacant and underutilised sites, including Eastridge and the McMullin sites, have the capacity to accommodate additional retail, commercial, and community development. These areas also present an opportunity to consider future housing as part of a more diverse and vibrant Activity Centre. Unlocking this potential in a well-planned and coordinated way—while responding to site constraints, topography, and the broader market context—will help ensure the Activity Centre can grow sustainably over time. Supporting staged and flexible development will be critical to allowing change to occur progressively, without impacting future development opportunities or the long-term vision for the Activity Centre. Opportunities for the Structure Plan include:

- **Applying flexible zoning** (e.g. Mixed Use Zone) to support a wide range of future uses while retaining the integrity of the overall desired outcome and accommodating changing market conditions.
- **Allowing interim and short-term uses where long-term redevelopment is not yet viable** to activate sites and generate early value.
- **Coordinating internal road networks, pedestrian links and shared infrastructure** to enable logical and staged redevelopment across separate land parcels.

¹ ABS Census, 2016-21



- 1. What sort of businesses or services would you like to see and where?**
- 2. What changes or improvements are needed to support local businesses to thrive and to attract new businesses?**



Image opposite - Bulky goods located along Maroondah Highway

7 Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change

7.1 Key Elements of the 2010 Masterplan

The 2010 Masterplan embedded early principles of environmental sustainability and climate responsiveness, reflecting a growing recognition of the need to balance growth with environmental considerations.

Central to this was the Green Spine, a linear open space and movement corridor along Maroondah Highway, designed to act as a recreational route, and biodiversity link. It also incorporated a series of bioretention basins, swales and other Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) features to improve the quality of stormwater flows reaching Brushy Creek, contributing to waterway health.

A wider open space network was envisioned as a connected system of shared paths, tree-lined streets and local parks, supporting walkability, urban cooling, and water-sensitive design.

Sustainability was prioritised through built form outcomes, including the incorporation of passive solar design and Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles. Development was encouraged to retain canopy trees, respond to topography, and incorporate materials sympathetic to the local environment. Residential areas were encouraged near services and public transport to promote compact, low-emission living.

7.2 Key Facts and Influences

A Changing Climate

Over the coming decades Chirnside Park, and Melbourne's eastern metropolitan areas more broadly, will become hotter and drier due to the effects of climate change.

Based on regional climate modelling, average temperatures across the Yarra Ranges Council area may rise by up to 3.48°C by 2100, with corresponding decreases in average annual rainfall. However, this will be likely paired with increases in rainfall intensity, resulting in more storms and heavy rain events.

These changes are likely to increase flooding risks, reduce water availability during dry periods, and contribute to heat-related stress, particularly in urban areas like the Activity Centre, where population growth and urban densification will result in an increase in hard surfaces from new buildings, roads, and car parking areas.

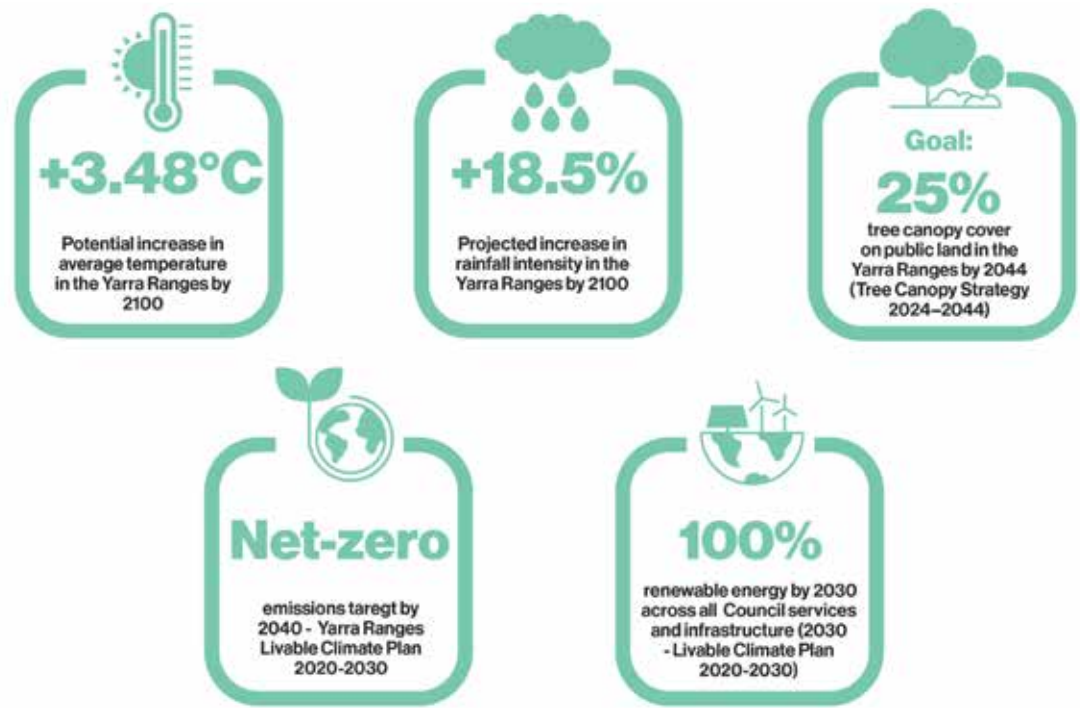
Tree Canopy and Urban Heat

Materials used in the built environment, particularly concrete and asphalt, absorb more heat than natural environments, with average temperatures in urban areas up to 1°-3° higher than surrounding rural areas. This is known as the "urban heat island" effect, and is likely to increase as average temperatures continue to rise due to climate change, and extreme heat events become more frequent.

The Activity Centre is particularly vulnerable to urban heat effects. Land within the Study Area is currently dominated by expansive areas of hard surface from roads, at-grade car parking areas, and buildings. This is paired with a notably low extent of tree canopy and landscape coverage when compared with surrounding residential areas, including vacant sites where existing vegetation is limited to grass.

Increasing the overall level and extent of tree canopy coverage within the Study Area is therefore critical to managing potential heat related impacts of climate change and protecting community wellbeing, by providing a cooler, more resilient urban environment.

Chirnside Park Snapshot



Source: Yarra Ranges Livable Climate Plan 2020-2030

Figure 17. Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change Snapshot



Vegetation in proximity to the Maroondah Highway

Council's *Tree Canopy Strategy 2024–2044* sets a goal of achieving a minimum 25% canopy cover on public land across the municipality, including in local streets. This does not cover areas such as Maroondah Highway, which is managed by DTP, or car parks on private land, which given their overall size generate a significant proportion of additional heat within the Activity Centre.



Significant areas of canopy tree cover along Maroondah Highway

Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD)

Yarra Ranges Council has committed to a series of targets and actions for its own operations to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through the Liveable Climate Action Plan, including achieving net-zero emissions by 2040 and 100% renewable energy by 2030 across all Council services and infrastructure.

Many of these actions involve improving the overall sustainability and environmental performance of Council buildings, both through upgrades to existing structures and in the design of new facilities. However, this only represents a small proportion of development within the Study Area, which is largely located on private land.

Council is committed to promoting sustainable design outcomes and recent updates to the planning scheme in 2022 reflect a strengthened approach to Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) across the municipality. Within the Study Area, there is opportunity to build on this foundation—particularly through innovative and high-performing development on vacant and underutilised sites, to further enhance sustainable development outcomes.



Environmentally Sustainable Design

The purpose of Environmentally Sustainable Design is to reduce impacts in the construction and use of buildings on the natural environment, whilst improving the comfort of the inhabitants.



Figure 18. Tree Canopy / Surface Cover Plan

NB: Surface cover plan based on aerial and Geoscape data dated late 2021/early 2022 and may not be 100% accurate.

Flooding

Existing flood risk within the Study Area is primarily associated with the overflow from the existing drainage network along Maroondah Highway and Brushy Creek, as shown in Figure 19.

Increased urban development and more extensive areas of non-permeable surfaces are expected to increase runoff volumes, while increased rainfall intensity will contribute to higher peak flows and flood risk. Melbourne Water, in collaboration with Council, are in the process of preparing updated flood modelling and mapping which reflect these predicted changes across the municipal area, including Chirnside Park. This will be undertaken separately to the preparation of the Structure Plan, and information will be shared to ensure key findings are integrated into future planning.

More broadly, as flood risk within the Study Area is primarily due to stormwater flooding, i.e. drainage system capacity, managing and reducing the volume of stormwater runoff generated by new development is a key strategy to mitigate potential flood impacts, in line with any broader infrastructure upgrades or new assets which may be separately pursued by Council once updated flood information is available.



Wetland and detention pond at Belsay Reserve

Integrated Water Management

Council's Stormwater Management Strategy 2024-2034 identifies the need to shift from the traditional 'pits and pipes' approach to drainage and water management, to a more holistic appreciation of the role of stormwater as a resource within the urban environment.

In addition to the Green Spine, a number of integrated water initiatives have been delivered in and around the Study Area which provide combined benefits across the water cycle. This includes the stormwater treatment wetland co-located in Belsay Reserve, which provides an attractive landscape feature and habitat for wildlife whilst also retaining and treating stormwater generated by nearby development.

Expanded planning requirements for stormwater management in new developments were introduced in 2018, and have strengthened the role of private land development through development-scale measures such as rainwater tanks for stormwater reuse or integration of WSUD treatments in the design of car parks, driveways and other areas of extensive hard surfacing.

A challenge and opportunity for the Structure Plan is how to build on these existing networks, facilitate improved integration between public and private land water management systems, and maximise potential benefits across the Activity Centre as a whole. In particular, the extent of vacant and/or underutilised land within the Study Area provides an opportunity to leverage existing planning scheme requirements to achieve improved neighbourhood or precinct scale outcomes, in collaboration with developers, through the design and siting of new assets.

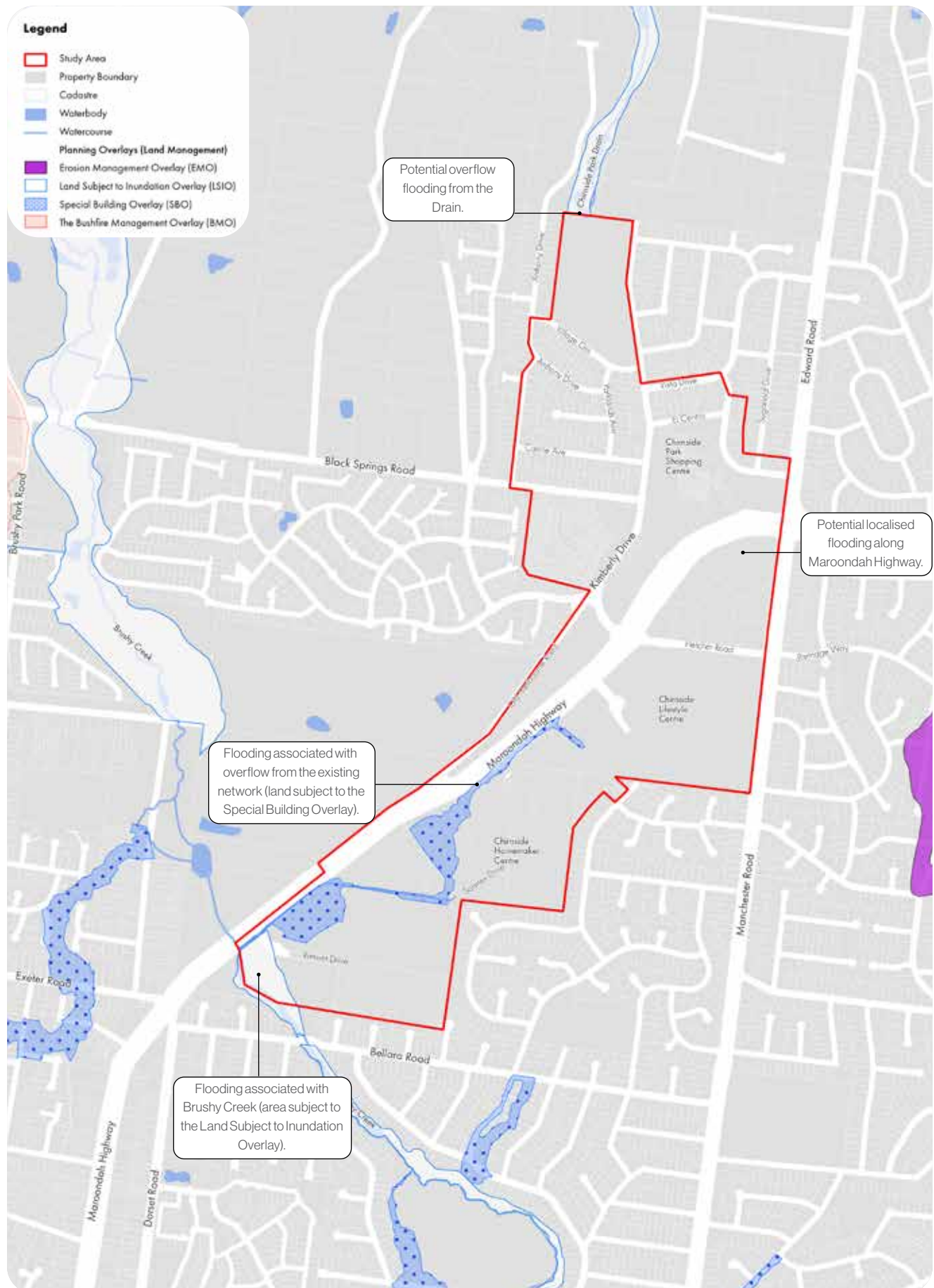


Figure 19. Hydrology Plan

7.3 Key Opportunities for the New Structure Plan

Improve Urban Greening and Canopy Coverage

Tree cover in the Activity Centre is below Council's target of 25% canopy on public land, with large expanses of paving and few shade trees. Increasing overall canopy coverage, in combination with reducing hard surfaces and improving opportunities for landscaping, would improve both the attractiveness and environmental performance of the Activity Centre.

Opportunities the Structure Plan could consider include:

- **Identifying priority locations and contexts for additional tree planting and landscape enhancement** where benefits can be maximised, ensuring that these opportunities are captured in the design of new developments and public realm improvements. Some initial ideas are:
 - **In and around at grade car parks and driveways** to maximise shade cover over hard surfaces, including consideration of minimum space to canopy tree ratios.
 - **Creating “cool routes” with high levels of shade along local streets** connecting to open space, shops and other daily destinations, ideally in combination with broader streetscape enhancements where required to meet other objectives.
 - **On land directly abutting the Maroondah Highway road reserve**, to complement planting in the Green Spine and provide improved shade coverage to the shared user path.
- **Introducing centre-wide targets for increased canopy cover**, to ensure the responsibility and benefits of additional planting are equally shared across both public and private land.
- **Planting the right tree in the right place** to maximise cooling, increase canopy cover, and integrate with urban infrastructure.
- **Requiring utility services in nature strips and verges to be bundled**, maximising space for planting of street trees.
- **Working with DTP to increase tree planting and landscaping along Maroondah Highway**, particularly along the Green Spine and within the central median, where this can be accommodated without impacting on road safety or underground service utilities.
- **Encouraging the incorporation of green infrastructure in new development**, such as green roofs, vertical planting, deep soil zones and generous landscape setbacks, especially on prominent sites and strategic redevelopment areas.



Right tree in the right place

A performance-based approach to deliver quality tree planting that considers tree species selection, planting location, planting reason and planting method. (Source: Yarra Ranges Tree Planting Strategy 2024-2044)



Examples of vertical planting / green walls

Increase climate resilience through integrated stormwater management

A coordinated approach to managing stormwater is essential to protect homes, reduce flood risk, and support greener, more liveable neighbourhoods. Opportunities the Structure Plan could consider include:

- **Designing in elements that reduce overall flood risk and build climate resilience**, through guidelines and/or requirements for hard surface cover, materials, rainwater harvesting and incorporation of design elements which maximise retention of stormwater in the land.
- **Providing targeted guidance around the type and treatment of stormwater measures** to be included in new developments where provided in response to existing planning requirements, to maximise potential for combined benefits and alignment with broader sustainability outcomes identified for the Activity Centre. An example could be identifying water tanks as the preferred response in areas with known drainage capacity constraints.
- **Encouraging rainwater capture and reuse on site** to save water, reduce flooding, and make better use of natural resources.
- **Providing an integrated water management plan for the whole Activity Centre**, outlining opportunities, guidelines and requirements for how water resources will be managed across all land, regardless of tenure, to deliver multiple benefits. This would need to be informed by separate technical investigation and costing, particularly where new or upgraded assets are proposed to be delivered on private land.
- **Establishing a centre-specific voluntary stormwater offset scheme** to support delivery of shared WSUD assets. This could provide developers the option to satisfy planning scheme requirements for stormwater management by making a financial contribution.
- **Encouraging and maximising opportunities to co-locate stormwater and WSUD assets in open space areas**, including common areas in private developments.

Investigate Ways to Strengthen Existing Planning Tools

The Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme already requires the design of new buildings to incorporate sustainability through Council's local ESD policy at Clause 15.02-1L. However, the scale of development able to be achieved within the Study Area, particularly within strategic redevelopment sites, potentially allows for a greater level of innovation and environmental performance to be achieved. Opportunities which could be included in the Structure Plan include:

- **Preparing centre-specific ESD design guidelines** which outline expectations and outcomes to be achieved when responding to existing planning requirements. This could include matters such as specific guidance on plant selection, the preferred approach to WSUD/IWM, and carbon reduction as examples.
- **Developing elevated ESD requirements** which apply in addition to existing planning scheme requirements to development above a certain scale or type. This could be applied via a planning scheme control. Some preliminary ideas include:
 - **Guidelines for the design of common property (private) roads**, including street tree canopy cover, verge widths, and efficient lighting design.
 - **Green walls, roofs and other innovative design elements** which promote urban cooling.
 - **Passive solar design, energy efficiency, and the use of renewable energy** such as all-electric development, rooftop solar PV systems, battery storage and solar generation over at-grade car parks to reduce energy-related carbon emissions.
 - **Electronic vehicle (EV) and bike charging infrastructure** for medium to large developments, to support the use of electronic vehicles and bikes.
 - **Incorporating space for local food production**, such as vegetable gardens or fruit trees, into landscape design of common areas.
 - **'Future proof' for systems change**, such as green waste collection, and other known innovations, in design, layout and utility provision.

- **Providing examples of ESD best-practice development,** such as through demonstration projects that showcase integrated ESD, community benefit, and low-impact design, and standard drawings and plans to guide future development.



- 1. Where would you like to see more trees or green spaces?**
- 2. Are there any other environmental improvements you would like Council to explore?**



Brushy Creek, to the south west of the Study Area

8 Urban Design, Placemaking and Built Form

8.1 Key Elements of the 2010 Masterplan

The 2010 Masterplan encouraged buildings to be built close to the street, or with minimal setbacks, to create more active and engaging frontages along key public spaces like the Green Spine, Kimberley Drive, and Fletcher Road. Upper levels were to include balconies or windows that overlook the street, along with shelter for pedestrians, to help improve safety and make the streets more welcoming.

A height limit of four storeys (approximately 12–14 metres) applied across most new residential and commercial areas in the Activity Centre. Taller buildings were supported on key sites where high-quality design could be delivered without negatively impacting the surrounding area.

Design guidelines focused on reinforcing the existing street layout, maintaining the area's low-rise character, and protecting open sky views by setting back higher levels of buildings. Housing density was planned to be highest in the centre of the Activity Centre and gradually decrease towards the edges, to better match the scale of nearby residential neighbourhoods.

Placemaking was central to the 2010 Masterplan, anchored by a series of connected public spaces. At the centre of the Activity Centre, a new urban park—now delivered as Belsay Reserve—was planned as a community hub for informal recreation, events, and gathering spaces, surrounded by medium- and higher-density housing. Kimberley Drive was intended to link this park to the shopping centre and future development on the Lacola site, creating a central civic connection.

Open space was to be provided as part of all major redevelopments, with the aim of creating a connected network of parks, tree-lined streets, and shared paths. These would link into existing reserves such as Kimberley Reserve and the Brushy Creek Trail.



Placemaking

Placemaking is about creating places that people feel connected to; safe, welcoming, and enjoyable and where people want to spend time. It means designing streets, parks, plazas, and neighbourhoods in ways that reflect the local character, support community life, and make it easy for people to gather, walk, relax, and connect with others.



Belsay Reserve and playground

8.2 Key Facts and Influences

Urban Structure and Land Use Patterns

The Activity Centre stretches along a 2-kilometre corridor, following the alignment of Maroondah Highway. The Study Area includes larger lots for retail, commercial and industrial uses along the Highway, and smaller residential lots located in the northern part of the Activity Centre, particularly around Kimberley Drive and Black Springs Road. Residential areas are mostly low-density and follow an irregular, suburban street pattern.

Vacant or underused land and large surface car parks are scattered throughout the Activity Centre. These spaces break up the built environment, reduce walkability, and make the area feel less connected and cohesive.

Topography and Views

The Activity Centre features gentle topography and wide road reserves, which allow for long views along Maroondah Highway toward the surrounding foothills and the Kinglake Ranges. The predominantly low-rise built form supports these broad view corridors, making open views a key characteristic of the Activity Centre.

However, many developments currently turn inward toward large car parks and do not take advantage of these views. Few buildings are designed to maximise visual connections to the landscape. One exception is the aged care facility on Manchester Road, which shows how new development can better respond to the area's natural topography and scenic outlooks.



Aged care facility which takes advantage of the slope and views.

Public Realm and Open Space

The public realm in the Activity Centre is shaped by car access and large format retail and commercial development. Many buildings are set back behind car parks, which means there is little interaction with nearby footpaths and streets.

Belsay Reserve is a recent addition, providing a vibrant and attractive gathering place for the community. However, outside of this park, open space is limited throughout the Study Area, and much of the pedestrian network remains incomplete or poorly connected. (See Section 10 for more on open space provision.)

Built Form, Frontage and Activation

Most buildings in the Activity Centre are low-rise, typically between 1 and 3 storeys (about 3 to 11 metres high), with many being single-storey. Larger retail, commercial, and industrial buildings are often set back from the street and surrounded by car parking. This arrangement makes the streets feel less lively and reduces the visual connection between buildings and public spaces.

Several key buildings, including the Chirnside Park Shopping Centre and Lifestyle Centre, have blank or inactive frontages facing Maroondah Highway and other public areas. Others, like Bunnings and Reading Cinemas, are located closer to the street but still turn their backs to it, offering no entrances or windows to engage with pedestrians. Secondary roads such as Fletcher Road and Manchester Road also lack street activation, with recent developments failing to provide engaging frontages or a consistent built form character.

Car Parking

Car parking takes up a lot of space in the Activity Centre. Most shops and businesses have their own large car parks, which means buildings are often set back from the street and separated from each other. This makes it difficult to walk between places and limits how lively and welcoming the Activity Centre feels. Many key destinations, like the shopping centre, cinema and homemaker centre, are designed around car access rather than being easy to walk to.

All these separate car parks break up the Activity Centre and make it feel disconnected. Large expanses of unshaded asphalt contribute to urban heat and create harsh, uncomfortable walking conditions. Streets lack definition and passive surveillance, making them feel unsafe and uninviting for pedestrians.

To support a more walkable, compact and vibrant centre, car parking needs to be better managed, consolidated where possible, and balanced with pedestrian and public realm improvements.

Residential Interface and Transition

The Activity Centre is surrounded by established residential neighbourhoods, which provide a clear edge to the Activity Centre. These neighbourhoods mostly consist of low-rise, detached houses, although some places, like The Gardens between Kimberley Drive and Black Springs Road, feature more compact housing. To protect the privacy, sunlight, and outlook of these homes and maintain its character, new development within the Activity Centre will need to carefully manage how building heights, setbacks and land uses, and transition along these edges.



A street in The Gardens

Placemaking and Identity

The Activity Centre currently lacks a strong sense of identity. Its car-focused layout, scattered buildings, and limited civic spaces create a disconnected environment that doesn't encourage walking or cycling.

Belsay Reserve has provided a much-needed community focus. It introduced the flight theme and helped create a sense of character and identity. There is an opportunity to strengthen the Activity Centre's overall character by reflecting local history, values, and the natural environment. Arrival into the Activity Centre could be enhanced by distinctive architecture and landscaping treatments. Public spaces could also be more inclusive, and supported by broader placemaking initiatives. Together, these improvements can help create an Activity Centre that is more welcoming and engaging place for everyone.



Why is Identity Important?

Identity, sometimes referred to as character, is what makes a place recognisable and distinct. It can come from the natural landscape, built form, cultural history, or the way people use and experience a place. A strong identity helps people feel connected to where they live, fosters community pride, and makes places more welcoming and vibrant for locals, businesses and visitors alike.

8.3 Key Opportunities for the New Structure Plan

Promote High-Quality, Sustainable and Adaptable Built Form

The built form across the Activity Centre is mixed in quality and doesn't fully reflect its unique setting. Many retail and commercial buildings are low-rise, large-format, and set back behind large car parks. This car-oriented layout leads to poor street-level activity, disconnected areas, and limited interaction with public spaces.

To help create a more vibrant, connected and engaging Activity Centre, new higher-density, mixed-use development could be focused within 400 metres of the shopping centre and on key landmark sites. These areas could support increased building heights, provided they carefully manage impacts on nearby homes through thoughtful design, such as building setbacks, upper-level changes, and landscaping.



Wayfinding

Wayfinding helps people find their way around a place easily. It includes signs, maps, paths, and landmarks that guide people to key destinations, like shops, parks, or transport, so they feel confident and comfortable getting where they need to go.

Built form controls could also provide clearer guidance to ensure new development creates inviting, people-friendly places. Built form could achieve this by:

- **Requiring active frontages** along key streets such as Maroondah Highway, Kimberley Drive and Fletcher Road. This includes providing shelter for pedestrians, incorporating upper-level uses, and designing with details that make streets feel safe and welcoming.
- **Encouraging zero or reduced front setbacks** in appropriate locations to define public spaces, improve walkability, and create vibrant civic streetscapes. This could include along Kimberley Drive to reflect a more main street setting.
- **Promoting adaptable buildings** that can support different uses over time. For example, ground floor shops that could later serve as community spaces, or offices or be converted into apartments as community needs change.
- **Encouraging the incorporation of universal design principles** to ensure buildings are accessible and inclusive for everyone.
- **Supporting design that reflects the local setting**, by using natural materials, responding to views and topography, and drawing inspiration from the landscape.
- **Providing distinctive architecture at key entrances and intersections** to improve wayfinding, enhance local identity, and create a stronger sense of arrival.
- **Encouraging elevated ESD requirements** as outlined in Section 7.3, to promote environmentally responsible and climate-resilient development.

Create a Connected and Inviting Public Realm

While recent projects like the Green Spine and Belsay Reserve have created more welcoming, people-focused spaces, much of the Activity Centre remains car-dominated and disconnected. The Structure Plan can help transform the area into a more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly place by improving key streets, connecting public spaces, and encouraging new development to engage with the street. This could be achieved by:

- **Transforming Kimberley Drive into a ‘main street’** that prioritises people and creates a strong sense of place. This could include wide footpaths, canopy trees, lighting, public seating, and buildings that open directly onto the street with shops, cafés, and other active uses at ground level. The street could link key destinations, such as the shopping centre, Belsay Reserve, and the Lacola site, and become a focal point for community life. Future development could include fine-grain retail, commercial and community uses on both sides of the street, with opportunities for shop-top housing or upper-level offices and services. New development could occur on currently vacant land along Kimberley Drive and the Lacola site, while the southern side would require redevelopment of existing sites over time in partnership with private landowners.

- **Improving connections between public spaces** such as the Green Spine, Brushy Creek Trail, Belsay Reserve, and Kimberley Recreation Reserve by creating a continuous, easy-to-navigate green network. This could include better signage, rest areas, tree planting, and pedestrian-priority pathways to make it safer and more enjoyable to walk or cycle between these spaces.

A challenge in creating a more connected and welcoming public realm is that many of the ‘public spaces’ in the Activity Centre are privately owned, such as large parts of the shopping centre and surrounding commercial areas. As a result, improvements will need to be developed in partnership with landowners.



Example of a potential main street

Encourage Strategic Redevelopment of Key Sites

As outlined throughout this Paper, several large vacant or underused sites within the Activity Centre offer valuable opportunities for redevelopment. These sites could support a mix of more intensive uses, such as higher-density housing, shops, offices, and community facilities, to better meet the needs of a growing population and help create a more vibrant and connected Activity Centre.

Most of these redevelopment sites have remained undeveloped since the 2010 Masterplan, due to factors like market conditions, and challenges with infrastructure delivery. The updated Structure Plan provides a chance to revisit these issues and set clear directions to support redevelopment.

More specifically, these redevelopment sites and their potential opportunities include:

- **Lacola Site** (335 Maroondah Highway) -

The Lacola site is a key opportunity for higher-density residential development, located within a 400-metre walk of the retail core and with good access to public transport. Future development could include medium-to higher-density apartments, with ground-floor shops or community spaces and active street frontages along Kimberley Drive and Maroondah Highway.

New buildings will need to carefully respond to the site's steep topography. Along Old Melbourne Road, building heights may need to be limited to two storeys (approximately 6–8 metres) to respect the scale of nearby homes. Given the site's location close to shops, services and transport, a proportion of affordable housing should also be considered in line with Council's [housing strategy](#).

Access is a key consideration. Development is likely to require a new signalised intersection on Maroondah Highway and upgrades along Kimberley Drive. The site's shape, slope, and the cost of higher-density construction may impact feasibility, and current market demand for apartments in the area, as identified in the background economic assessment, remains relatively low.

- **McMullin Site** (325 Manchester Road) - Located at the prominent corner of Manchester Road and Maroondah Highway, the McMullin site is within proximity to the core and zoned Mixed Use. It offers an opportunity for landmark development that combines retail, commercial, and residential uses. Its development could help activate the streetscape, reduce surface parking, and improve internal connections between Manchester Road and Maroondah Highway.

Future development might include retail on the ground floor, with commercial and residential uses above. Higher-density housing could be focused along Manchester Road, which has a more residential feel. The design of buildings on this site should reflect its prominent location and take advantage of views to the surrounding landscape.

The site does face some challenges, including steep slopes, drainage issues, and access constraints. Upgrades to the nearby signalised intersection on Maroondah Highway are likely needed. Access from Manchester Road will need to carefully consider existing median breaks and avoid conflicts with turning lanes onto Maroondah Highway.

- **Joinland Site** (270 Maroondah Highway) - Although currently zoned for industrial use, the Joinland site, located near Hedwig Reserve, offers a strategic opportunity for transitional uses such as medium-density housing, commercial activities, or community facilities.

Access to the site is limited by its narrow 4-metre frontage on Maroondah Highway, creating challenges for vehicle entry and exit. Additionally, the site's topography and the need to integrate sensitively with nearby residential areas will be important factors to consider in planning its future development.

- **Eastridge** (1 East Ridge Drive - southern portion) - While most of Eastridge is planned or under construction, some southern areas are still underused. These sites offer opportunities for transitional uses, including a mix of medium-density housing, commercial spaces, and community facilities. There is also potential to explore physical connections between this site and the nearby Joinland site, though the steep topography presents a significant challenge.

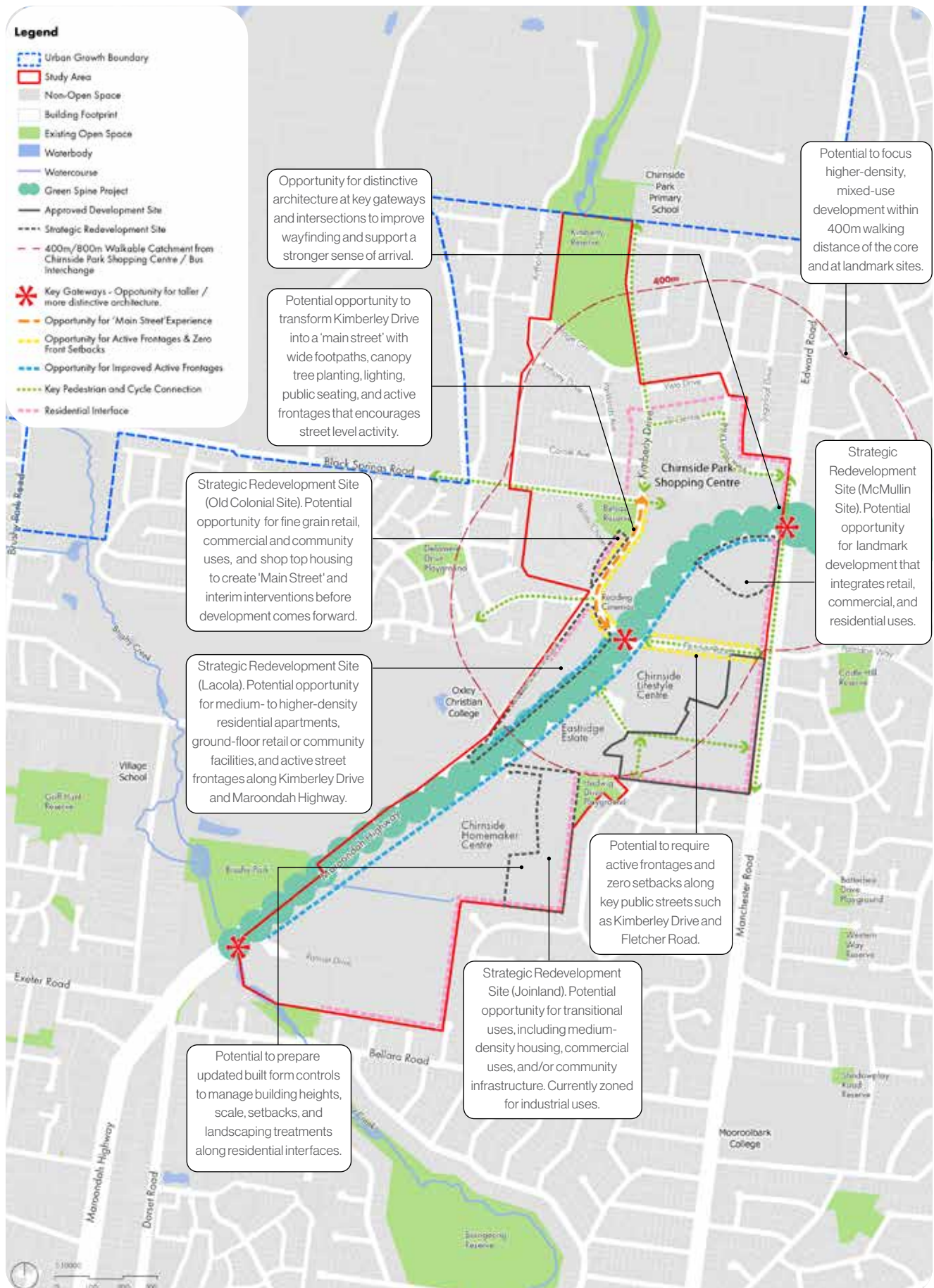


Figure 20. Urban Design, Placemaking and Built Form Opportunity Plan

Integrate with Surrounding Residential Development

The Activity Centre is framed by well-established residential neighbourhoods that provide a clear edge to the Activity Centre. As the Activity Centre grows, it's important to strengthen connections with these neighbourhoods by improving walking and cycling routes.

At the same time, new development needs to be designed carefully to create smooth, respectful transitions that protect the privacy, sunlight, and overall amenity of nearby homes.

Opportunities for the Structure Plan include:

- **Providing new pedestrian, vehicular and open space connections** through large development sites to enable greater access to adjoining residential neighbourhoods.
- **Using open space, landscaping, and streets** to buffer new development and soften visual impacts where development interfaces with low-rise residential areas.



- 1. What do you think makes Chirnside Park unique?**
- 2. What elements do you think are important in the design of new development?**

Enhance Placemaking and Local Identity

Placemaking can play a key role in transforming the Activity Centre into a place that feels welcoming, distinctive and reflective of local values. For the Activity Centre, improvements could be delivered through permanent civic spaces and public realm enhancements, as well as short-term events, activations and public art. Together, these initiatives can help establish the Activity Centre as inclusive, vibrant, and locally loved. The recognition of Indigenous culture expressed through public art at Belsay Reserve provides a strong foundation that could be further celebrated and expanded throughout the Activity Centre. Opportunities could include:

- **Activating existing parks and public spaces through placemaking initiatives** such as seasonal lighting, pop-up food trucks, art installations, live performances, and temporary play features.
- **Embedding public art and storytelling into the streetscape and public spaces**, including murals, pavement designs, interpretive signage and sculpture that celebrate Chirnside Park's indigenous and colonial history, landscape and community.
- **Establishing a consistent and distinctive identity** using coordinated lighting, street furniture, landscape elements, and signage that reflect the local character.
- **Collaborating with local artists, schools, community organisations and private landowners** to deliver small-scale activations within public spaces, on underutilised spaces such as car parks and undeveloped /vacant sites.
- **Strengthening the Green Spine as a central placemaking corridor**, by using landscaping, art, and seating to connect important public places, and promoting small activations along the corridor to encourage use.

Successful placemaking depends on meaningful community input, strong partnerships, and a clear vision that reflects local identity and needs. This means engaging local people early and often, fostering collaboration between government, community groups, businesses, and landowners, and ensuring every project is grounded in the unique stories and aspirations of Chirnside Park and its people.

9 Transport and Movement

9.1 Key Elements of the 2010 Masterplan

The 2010 Masterplan identified several outcomes and opportunities to improve access, safety and movement in the Activity Centre. These included improvements to pedestrian and cycling networks through new footpaths, shared trails, and improved crossings; upgrading public transport infrastructure and services to better connect the Activity Centre with surrounding suburbs; and enhancing road networks to reduce congestion and improve traffic flow.

The 2010 Masterplan envisioned Maroondah Highway as a 'Green Spine,' providing a key pedestrian and cycling link including a shared path and links to other open spaces. Better links between large-format retail sites were also proposed, including new internal roads and improved car parking layouts to enhance pedestrian safety.

9.2 Key Facts and Influences

A Car-Dominated Environment

The Activity Centre is currently designed with a focus on car movement. Key roads, including Maroondah Highway, Manchester Road, and Kimberley Drive, are dominated by car movement and access, while many retail sites provide large, open car parks with little shade or greenery, and poor pedestrian connections.

Maroondah Highway as a Major Barrier

Maroondah Highway is a major six-lane road that runs through Chirnside Park and is managed by the Department of Transport and Planning. While it plays an important role in moving vehicles and freight, it also acts as a significant barrier for people walking or riding bikes.

There are currently only four pedestrian crossings along the highway within the Study Area, all located at traffic lights. Ideally, crossings should be spaced about every 400 metres to make walking safer and more convenient. However, in some parts of the Activity Centre, crossings are up to 700 metres apart, making it harder for people to move around safely and comfortably.

A new set of traffic lights is proposed near the Lacola site, which could provide another pedestrian crossing in the future.



Maroondah Highway is a significant road corridor.

A Fragmented Active Transport Network

Some walking and cycling connections in the Activity Centre are disconnected and incomplete. Key routes include the Green Spine, Brushy Creek Trail, and footpaths along major roads like Kimberley Drive, Fletcher Road and Black Springs Road. These paths vary in width and quality, and some are only on one side of the street.

Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN) analysis undertaken as part of the background assessments for this project indicated that most walking trips are focused around Kimberley Drive and Black Springs Road. In contrast, Maroondah Highway has low pedestrian use due to a lack of nearby housing and limited safe pedestrian crossing points.

Cycling access is also limited. While the Green Spine and Brushy Creek Trail offer off-road cycling paths, unprotected on-road bike lanes are restricted to Manchester Road only. Key places like the shopping centre are also hard to access by bike, with few bike parking spaces or cyclist-friendly facilities provided.



Active Transport

Active Transport means getting around by using your own energy, such as walking, riding a bike, scooting, or using a wheelchair; instead of driving a car or taking public transport. It's a healthy, eco-friendly way to travel that helps you stay active and reduces pollution.

When planning for and thinking about transport, Active Transport is always considered as the first priority, followed by public transport and then private vehicles.

Limited Public Transport Accessibility

The Activity Centre is serviced by buses only. The closest train stations, Mooroolbark and Lilydale, are about 3.5 kilometres away, which makes people more likely to rely on cars to travel to the Activity Centre.

Buses operate along main roads including Maroondah Highway, Manchester Road and Black Springs Road. Most services stop at the Chirnside Park Shopping Centre, which serves as a local bus interchange. However, the interchange is on private land, which may limit how well it can function or expand in the future.

More broadly, walking connections between bus stops and nearby homes, shops and services are sometimes incomplete or unclear, making public transport harder to use.



Chirnside Park Bus Interchange at the shopping centre

The Influence of Topography and Site Layout

The steep slopes near Old Melbourne Road and Manchester Road make it harder for pedestrians and cyclist to move around the Activity Centre.

The Activity Centre stretches over about 2 kilometres, which limits how easy it is to walk between places. Large-format retail developments with expansive car parking and poor pedestrian access also contribute to a disconnected walking and cycling network. In addition, steep land, narrow frontages, and limited road access, make it difficult for cars to reach some key development sites.

Future development offers a chance to create better walking, cycling, and local road connections through the creation of new internal streets and paths that improve how people can move around the Activity Centre.

9.3 Key Opportunities for the New Structure Plan

Transform Maroondah Highway into a Connected 'Green Spine'

The draft Yarra Ranges Paths and Trails Plan 2025–2035 proposes the extension of the 'Green Spine' shared path to Lilydale. This creates an opportunity to strengthen this key walking and cycling corridor as a safe, attractive, and comfortable connection for pedestrians and cyclists. Any upgrades will need to support the road's ongoing role in regional traffic movement and will require close coordination with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP).

Opportunities for the Structure Plan include:

- **Working with DTP to continue to enhance the 'Green Spine'** including continuous path connections, additional tree planting, stormwater management, improved lighting and signage to enhance the attractiveness and safety of this corridor for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Providing additional and strategically located pedestrian crossings across the Highway** to improve access between residential areas and retail, recreational, and community facilities.
- **Investigating grade-separated crossings**, such as a pedestrian bridge from Old Melbourne Road or the Green Spine, to provide safe east-west links over this busy road.
- **Increasing tree planting along both sides and within the median of the Highway**, to improve the attractiveness of the Highway and to provide increased shade for pedestrians and cyclists.



An example of additional tree planting contributing to a high quality pedestrian experience.

Create a Safe and Integrated Active Transport Network

There is a need to expand and improve walking and cycling access within the Activity Centre to create a safer, more connected, and easy get around centre that links homes with key destinations like shops, parks, schools, and public transport. Opportunities for the Structure Plan include:

- **Expanding and upgrading pedestrian and cycle paths** to create a clear, safe and connected network throughout the Activity Centre.
- **Improving path quality, width, and signage**, with priority on high-activity areas including the shopping centre, Brushy Creek Trail, schools, parks, health and community services, and bus stops.
- **Providing a safe crossing opportunity on Kimberley Drive**, as identified in the 2010 Masterplan, to improve safety and access between the shopping centre, Belsay Reserve and surrounding residential areas.
- **Providing secure bike parking, repair stations, water fountains and end-of-trip facilities** at key destinations, such as the Community Hub, Kimberley Recreation Reserve and shopping centre, to encourage increased bike usage.

Steep slopes and uneven terrain will likely continue to make access difficult in some parts of the Activity Centre, especially along Manchester Road and Fletcher Road. However, new pathways can offer alternative, easier routes, especially for people with limited mobility and those using prams or wheelchairs.



An example of an at grade pedestrian crossing



Figure 21. Active Transport Opportunity Plan

Support Improved Public Transport Access

Improving bus facilities and creating an Activity Centre that is easier to move around via public transport will help to reduce car use. Better connections between bus stops and key destinations will also support a shift to public transport.

While bus services are managed by Public Transport Victoria (PTV), and the current bus interchange sits on private land, the Structure Plan can advocate for better services and facilities.

Opportunities for the Structure Plan include:

- **Working with the shopping centre landowners and PTV to upgrade the bus interchange** with enhanced commuter facilities, including lighting, seating and weather protection. In the longer term, there is the opportunity to explore the potential relocation of the bus interchange to improve safety.
- **Enhancing pedestrian access and safety** between bus stops and key destinations including shops, schools, and community facilities.
- **Advocating for more frequent and flexible bus services**, to support local trips and improved connections to Mooroolbark and Lilydale train stations, as well as exploring the potential to extend rapid bus transit services.



Bus stop located along Maroondah Highway

Improve the Safety and Functionality of the Road Network

The current road network has several safety and traffic issues, including confusing merge lanes, busy and unsafe access points, and a lack of traffic calming measures. Improving these conditions would help traffic flow more smoothly and make the roads safer for everyone. Opportunities for the Structure Plan include:

- **Working with DTP to address the current operation of Maroondah Highway**, including the removal of confusing merge lanes and the redesign of high-conflict access points such as those near Hungry Jack's, Red Rooster and Officeworks.
- **Reconfiguring the southbound carriageway** to a consistent three-lane cross-section to enhance traffic flow and reduce conflict points.
- **Introducing a 40 km/h speed zone on local streets** supported by traffic calming and Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) treatments to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety.



Officeworks access point and Green Spine interface

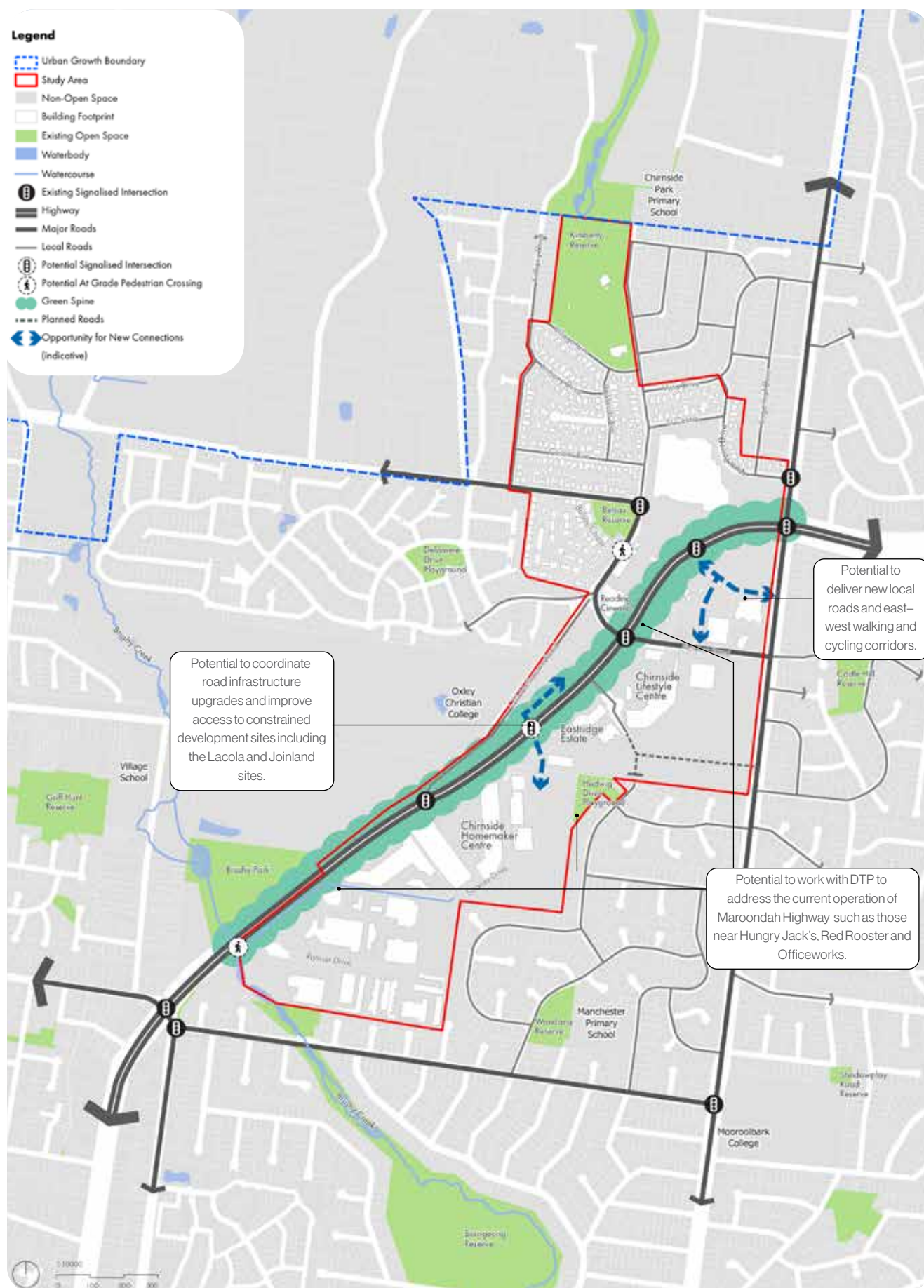


Figure 22. Vehicular Connection Opportunity Plan

Unlock Connectivity through Future Development

Underused and vacant sites offer a chance to improve how people move around the Activity Centre. With coordinated planning and good urban design, redevelopment sites could provide new streets, walking and cycling paths, and better connections across the Activity Centre. Opportunities for the Structure Plan include:

- **Leveraging redevelopment opportunities** to create new local roads and east–west walking and cycling links.
- **Coordinating road infrastructure upgrades** to improve access to constrained development sites including the Lacola and Joinland sites.
- **Designing flexible road reserves and pathways** that can adapt to changing transport needs over time.

Delivering new links will require strong guidance through the Structure Plan, developer cooperation, and mechanisms such as landowner agreements.

Image Opposite - East Ridge Drive connection through to new development.



10 Community Infrastructure

10.1 Key Elements of the 2010 Masterplan

The 2010 Masterplan highlighted the role of community facilities and open space in creating a more liveable and inclusive Activity Centre.

A key initiative was the development of a new 1-hectare Urban Park on Kimberley Drive, now known as Belsay Reserve, designed to provide a recreational and play space for local employees, residents and visitors, and to meet the increased demand for open space from new development.

Other elements included the expansion of Hedwig Reserve to the west, to be delivered through development of the Joinland Site (270 Maroondah Highway), potential co-location of community facilities with the Urban Park, encouraging 'pocket parks' and informal open space areas within new developments and establishing the 'Green Spine' as a recreational link to the Brushy Creek Trail.



Chirside Park Community Hub

10.2 Key Facts and Influences

Existing Community Infrastructure

The Study Area includes a mix of public and privately operated community services, mostly located in the northern part of the Activity Centre, between the shopping centre and Kimberley Reserve, as well as some located within the shopping centre itself.

Background assessments for this project indicate that early childhood education currently meets provision standards¹. The is one council-owned kindergarten in the Activity Centre is CIRE Children's Service & Kindergarten located at Chirside Park Community Hub ('the Hub'). Other services are provided by private operators, including Oxley Kids, Community Kids, and Story House Early Learning.

Currently the Activity Centre includes two main community facilities: Kimberley Reserve Pavilion and the Hub. These venues support a range of activities, including community meetings, State Government-funded neighbourhood house programs, and sporting club use. However limitations on size and availability may present challenges in the future. High demand for maternal and child health services (MCH) at the Community Hub also highlights growing pressure on available spaces.

¹ Chirside Park Activity Centre Structure Plan Economic Assessment, Urban Enterprise, 2025



Multipurpose community spaces

Multipurpose community spaces are flexible places that can be used for a variety of activities and services—such as meetings, classes, events, exhibitions, or local programs. They are designed to support different groups and changing community needs over time.

Kimberley Reserve is the main recreational space within the Activity Centre, providing two football/cricket ovals, a netball court, cricket nets, clubrooms, and car parking. Belsay Reserve offers additional amenities, including BBQs, public toilets, and seating.

Larger and more specialised community and recreation facilities such as libraries and aquatic centres are provided on a regional basis. Chirnside Park is serviced by libraries located in Lilydale and Mooroolbark and Council's Aquatics Strategy proposes a leisure centre for the urban areas of Yarra Ranges.



Playground at Belsay Reserve

Current and Future Infrastructure Needs

As the Activity Centre grows, the demand for local services and community spaces will increase. The background economic assessment prepared for this project considered the existing facilities and what will be needed in the future based on population growth and demographic trends. It identified that currently there will likely be gaps in services like early childhood programs, recreation spaces, and general community facilities. State Government policy reforms including 'Best Start Best Life' will also increase demand for kindergarten places by introducing extended hours for three and four year old kinder.

Recent population growth and a growing number of families with young children, will also have implications for the availability of early childhood services, public play spaces, family-friendly community facilities, and local schools in the future.

To support these changes it is estimated that by 2046, the following will be needed to support the local community²:

- Up to two more kindergarten rooms;
- One new long day care centre;
- More flexible and accessible community spaces;
- Access to additional AFL and cricket ovals, as well as soccer facilities in the broader area; and
- Better-located parks and community facilities in the southern and eastern parts of the Activity Centre.

² Chirnside Park Activity Centre Structure Plan Economic Assessment, Urban Enterprise, 2025

10.3 Key Opportunities for the New Structure Plan

Consider more neighbourhood-level community spaces

Existing multi-purpose community spaces in the Activity Centre are currently in high demand. The background economic assessment recommended that additional local spaces may be needed to meet future community needs. The Structure Plan can help by identifying opportunities for more accessible, flexible, and well-located multi-purpose spaces that meet local needs and complement larger services available in nearby centres like Lilydale and Mooroolbark. Opportunities that could be explored through the Structure Plan include:

- **Investigating the potential to provide additional multi-purpose spaces**, as part of future developments or as part of upgrades to existing facilities.
- **Increasing access to existing multi-purpose community spaces in the Activity Centre.** This could include increasing opportunities for after-hours use (such in the evening and on weekends) and hire of existing spaces within the Community Hub and Kimberley Reserve pavilion for local groups, events and gatherings.

Plan for increased demand of early childhood services

Options to address increased demand for early childhood services, particularly MCH, kindergarten and child care within the Activity Centre, require thoughtful consideration. Opportunities may include better integrating community services with retail, commercial, and other uses, and improving connections to these facilities. Private operators may also deliver additional long day care and kinder services in response to local need.

The recently approved expansion of Chirnside Park Shopping Centre, which includes space on the upper level for health and community services, provides a specific opportunity which could be explored further through this Structure Plan process.

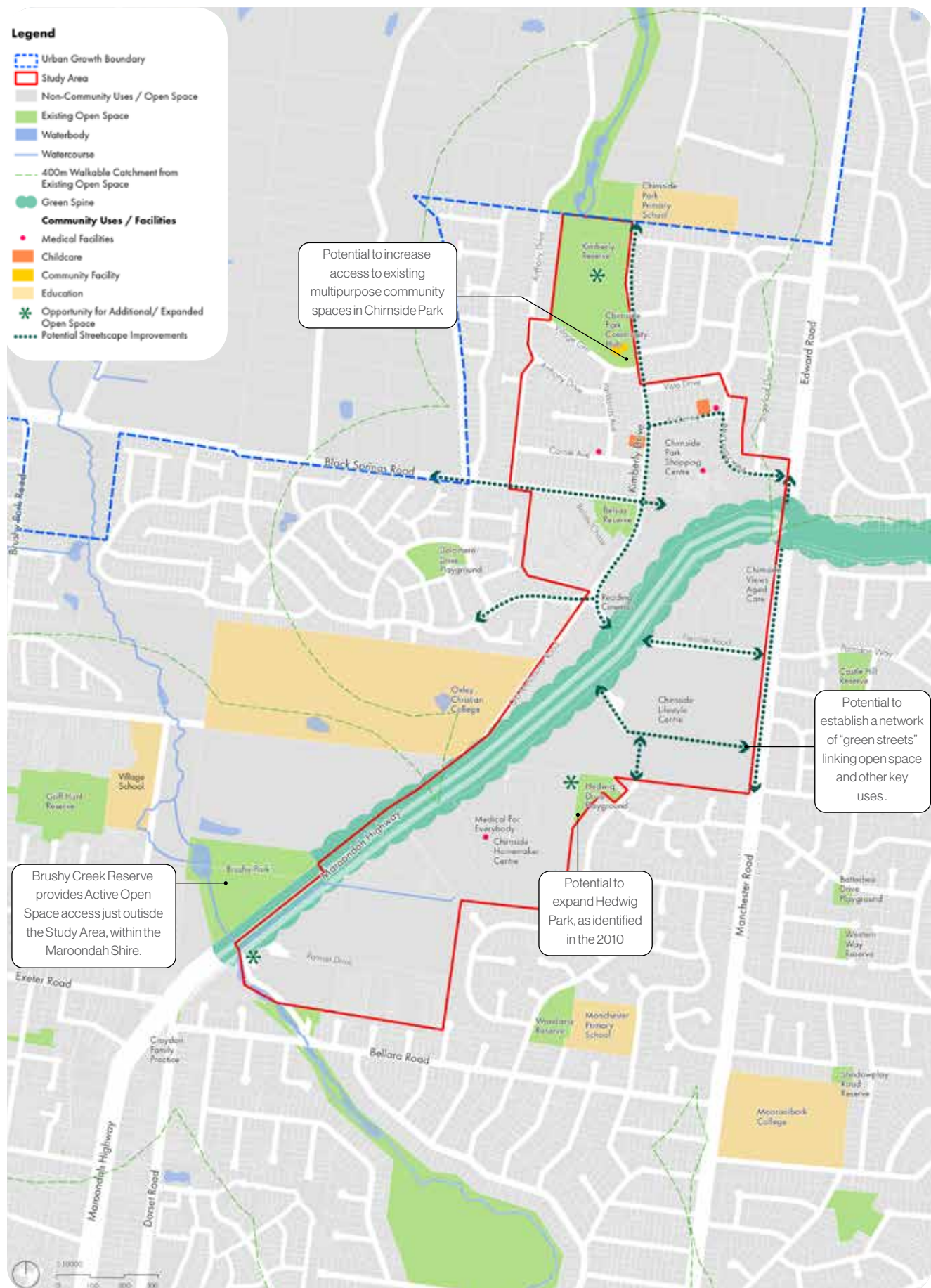
Expand and Connect Local Open Spaces

Open space plays a vital role in supporting liveability, health, and local identity. While some parts of the Activity Centre are well-served, others, especially to the south and east of the Study Area, have limited access to quality green spaces. There are also opportunities to strengthen the open space network by improving streetscapes and enhancing safety and comfort for people walking and cycling. Opportunities that can be considered in the Structure Plan include:

- **Acquiring additional land for the expansion of Hedwig Park**, as identified in the 2010 Masterplan, as part of the development of the Joinland site (270 Maroondah Highway).
- **Creating a network of “green streets” that connect open spaces and other key destinations.** These streets would be priority locations for more street trees, improved footpaths, landscaping, and lower vehicle speeds to create a safer and more attractive environment for walking and cycling.



An example of landscaping and canopy trees can enhance streets.



11 Next Steps

11.2 Feedback on the Issues & Opportunities Paper

We want to hear from you. Your feedback on the ideas and opportunities presented in this Paper will help shape the future of the Chirnside Park Activity Centre and guide the development of a new Structure Plan.

You can provide your feedback by completing the survey, available at:

www.shaping.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/chirnside-park-structure-plan



If you have questions, want to know more, contact us below:

Who: Strategic Planning Team
Phone: 1300 368 333
Email: designandplace@yarraranges.vic.gov.au
In writing: PO Box 105, Lilydale VIC 3140

11.1 Next Steps

All community feedback from this stage will be considered and summarised later this year. A draft Structure Plan will be released in mid 2026, giving you another chance to have your say before it's finalised.

Once the final Structure Plan is adopted by Council, it will guide future changes through planning scheme updates, Council capital works and projects, and further planning and advocacy work.

Figure 24 below provides a summary of the next project stages and indicative timing:

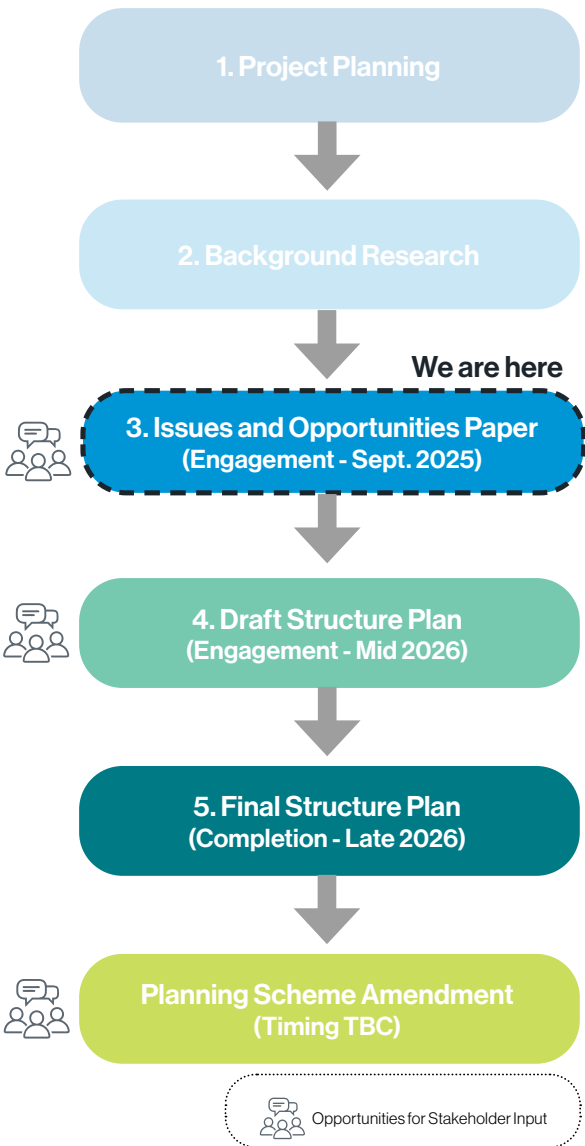


Figure 24. Project Stages

Issues & Opportunities Paper

Chirnside Park Structure Plan

