

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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Proposed
Amendment
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Settlement

Urban growth

Warrnambool's urban settlement boundaries and growth areas are identified on the *Warrnambool Strategic Framework Plan* at Clause 02.04. Warrnambool is forecast to grow at 1.4 per cent per annum until 2040 requiring about 250 new dwellings per year to meet demand.

Council has around 23 years supply of zoned residential land (2019). There is also sufficient commercial and industrial land available to meet forecast demand within the Warrnambool City Centre, activity centres and the Eastern Industrial Precinct.

Growth areas

Warrnambool's growth areas provide for a variety of dwelling types and development densities including:

- **North East Warrnambool Growth Area** will proceed in accordance with approved development plans with a forecast lot yield of 720 lots.
- **Coastal Hopkins Growth Area** contains 115 hectares of land with the potential for 650 lots.
- **North Dennington Growth Area** of 160 hectares accommodating 1250 new residential lots.
- **North of the Merri River Growth Area** of 250 hectares of land with potential for 2200 lots over the next 15-20 years and an additional primary school.
- **East of Aberline Road Future Urban Growth Corridor** consists of 410 hectares of land that could contain a mix of uses, such as residential and industrial.
- **South Dennington Growth Area** consists of 30 hectares of land with potential for residential development.
- **Eastern Activity Centre** containing a mixture of retail, commercial/office, community and residential uses. About 40 hectares has been identified as either conventional residential development or higher density, mixed use residential development.

Council's strategic directions for its growth areas are:

- Directing urban growth to identified growth areas in order to protect productive rural areas and achieve a more compact sustainable urban area.
- Supporting increased residential densities in growth areas close to transport corridors, activity centres and open space.
- Facilitating infrastructure provision of roads, drainage, utilities and community infrastructure through structure planning and development contributions plans.

Activity centres

The *Warrnambool Retail Strategy* (Ratio, 2007) identified an activity centre network hierarchy consisting of:

- **Warrnambool City Centre** (Principal Activity Centre) serving a primary retail role anchored by a department store and discount department stores and the principal location for higher-order professional services, health services, education providers, community services, hospitality, entertainment and tourism.

- **Eastern Activity Centre** (Major Activity Centre) having a secondary retail role to the Warrnambool City Centre. The Centre has a retail core area that encompasses the Gateway Plaza and Environs. It serves a subregional retail role and is also the principal bulky goods precinct, with a regionally-significant cluster of restricted retail stores.
- **Northpoint Village** and **Dennington** Neighbourhood Activity Centres, where the highest- order retail attractor is a supermarket.
- Convenience Centres proposed at **Allansford** and within the **North of the Merri River Growth Area** , where there are no major retail stores (including supermarkets).
- Convenience Nodes of existing isolated convenience stores and future retailing ancillary to tourism developments.

Council's strategic directions for activity centres are:

- Supporting use and development that reinforces the Warrnambool activity centre hierarchy at Clause 11.03-1L-01.
- Directing core retail activities to the Warrnambool City Centre including the majority of major retail stores.
- Locating further regional level retailing, services, facilities and activities in the Warrnambool City Centre as a first preference.
- Ensuring the Eastern Activity Centre is developed as a secondary retail centre supporting the Warrnambool City Centre.

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Environmental and landscape values

Biodiversity

The Warrnambool coastline supports an impressive range of environmental values. Areas of coastal vegetation provide wildlife habitat and corridors for vulnerable and threatened flora and fauna species. Warrnambool's coastline adjoins a number of ecologically important areas including the Southern Right Whale nursery and the Merri Marine Sanctuary.

The Merri River, Hopkins River and associated wetlands and floodplains form a highly significant coastal wetland system that provides important habitat for listed species of flora and fauna.

The South Warrnambool coastal wetlands are home for wildlife and native vegetation. The wetlands are of regional geological, flora, fauna and recreational significance and are of local Aboriginal, cultural and historic significance. Middle Island, the Lower Merri River Wetlands (Kelly's Swamp, Saltwater Swamp), Lake Gilleard, Francis Tozer Reserve and Starlight Cave, among others, include important biodiversity assets, some of which are protected by international agreements and conventions.

Extensive clearing of native vegetation in the years since European settlement has drastically reduced the extent and quality of habitat for native species. Further urban development and the introduction of pest plants and animals could impact on biodiversity and remnant native vegetation.

Council's strategic directions for biodiversity are:

- Protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity conservation significance.
- Providing wildlife habitat and corridors for vulnerable and threatened flora and fauna species in coastal reserves.
- Arresting the decline and fragmentation of native vegetation to minimise land and water degradation issues.

Significant environments and landscapes

Warrnambool is situated on one of the most spectacular sections of the southwest Victorian coastline. The coast has significant cultural values for both Aboriginal and European heritage and is also valued highly for its environmental, recreational and tourism aspects.

The coastal landscapes include the ancient dune systems of Thunder Point and Pickering Point, the wave dominated Merri and Hopkins River estuaries, brackish wetlands and the sheltered beaches of Lady Bay, forming part of Victoria's 'shipwreck coast'.

The coastal foreshore, Lake Pertobe and the Breakwater Activity Node have significant conservation and coastal recreation functions. The Logans Beach area is recognised internationally for viewing the Southern Right Whale.

The Hopkins estuary is one of only three 'Premier Rivers' for fishing across Victoria. The Merri River is also a significant waterway within the Hopkins Basin. Both rivers are socially and economically valued for the supply of water for agriculture, drinking water, tourism and fishing. Agricultural activities can impact upon river water quality.

The natural landscape is an important asset of the municipality that requires protection from inappropriate use and development. The city's landscape character is framed by the ocean, the Merri River, the Hopkins River, inland hilltops, ridgelines and surrounding rural areas. Norfolk Island Pines lining the Princes Highway median and other streets are also important local landscape features.

Council's strategic directions for significant environments and landscapes are:

- Protecting coastal areas, waterways and sensitive ecosystems from the detrimental impacts of urban and rural development.
- Protecting significant landscapes and landforms from inappropriate development.

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Environmental risks and amenity

Climate change

Climate change presents a threat to the natural and built coastal environment, to the community and to economic activity. The results of climate change, such as storm surge, inundation through sea level rise and temperature increase pose some of the most significant threats to Warrnambool's coastline.

Council's strategic directions for climate change are:

- Adapting to the impacts of a changing climate.
- Planning for the risks associated with possible sea level rise in areas of known vulnerability.
- Ensuring that the risks of sea level rise are mitigated or avoided where possible.

Soil degradation

Coastal acid sulfate soils occur in Warrnambool and, if disturbed, can have a detrimental impact including the acidification of water and soil, poor water quality, dissolution of soil, rock and concrete, and corrosion of metals.

Limestone cliffs, steeper earth slopes and coastal dunes along the main rivers and coast are susceptible to erosion as a result of landslip. Further development and vegetation removal on land with a slope that exceeds 20 degrees could compromise land stability.

Warrnambool contains a number of sites that have been previously used for industry or the storage of liquid fuels that may be contaminated.

Council's strategic directions for land degradation are:

- Avoiding disturbance of coastal acid sulfate soils.

- Managing erosion and surface runoff and protecting vegetation in river and estuarine environments.
- Ensuring the ongoing protection of land susceptible to landslip.

Floodplain management

The Merri River and Russells Creek floodplains affect large expanses of land within urban and rural areas. The management of floodplains protects the natural environment and properties that are at risk of flooding. The filling of flood prone land can significantly alter water flow within the floodplain.

Council's strategic directions for floodplain management are:

- Protecting floodplains from development that would detrimentally impact their function.
- Protecting life, property and community infrastructure from flood events.

Land use conflicts

The historical development of Warrnambool has resulted in some industrial and residential areas being located adjacent to each other such as in the Merrivale area.

The Warrnambool Livestock Exchange, Wannon Water Reclamation Plant, Fonterra Milk Processing Plant in Dennington, Midfield Rendering Plant in Swinton Street, the Warrnambool Regional Airport, the Premier Speedway and the Lake Gilleard sporting area are important regional assets that need to be protected from residential encroachment.

The Eastern Industrial Precinct on Horne Road also needs to minimise conflicts between the industrial area and the existing rural residential area to the east.

Council's strategic directions for land use conflicts are:

- Prioritising separation distances to assist in the retention of existing employment generating activities.
- Protecting communities close to established industries from off-site impacts such as dust, odour, noise and air pollution.
- Managing land use conflicts at the urban/rural interface and development pressures at the edge of Warrnambool's settlement boundary.

Bushfire

There are a number of settlements that are at significant risk from bushfire, including Woodford and Bushfield, the coastal area of Warrnambool and the grassland interface of Warrnambool. Fires from inadequate separation between vegetation and powerlines also poses a risk.

Council's strategic direction for bushfire is:

- Planning for and managing bushfire risk.

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Natural resource management

Agricultural land

The Warrnambool region has opportunities for growth of viticulture, horticulture and alternative agricultural production. The preservation of the maximum amount of the limited supply of agricultural land is necessary to sustain the agricultural economy and to support those industries that rely on agricultural products for processing.

Council's strategic directions for agricultural land are:

- Protecting rural areas to ensure agricultural uses remain viable.
- Ensuring the City's unique rural character is protected from urban development.

- Managing the urban-agricultural interface to protect farming operations.
- Maintaining a greenbelt around Warrnambool's settlement boundary.
- Limiting use or development that will be incompatible with the agricultural use of the land.

Catchment planning

The Hopkins River has its headwaters in the Great Dividing Range, reaching the coast at Warrnambool where it is a wide river in a steep valley. Eastern Maar people still use the river for food and water, and it has spiritual and cultural significance.

The Merri River loops around the northern and western parts of the city and has poor water quality, but supports several native species. The river has been adversely impacted by urban activity and requires enhancement and restoration.

Russells Creek is an intermittent creek that has undergone flood mitigation works. The upper reaches are in rural land and the creek has been degraded as a result of stock grazing and access to the creek. Housing estates border the creek corridor in most of the lower reaches.

Council's strategic directions for catchment planning are:

- Retaining the Hopkins and Merri River environs as natural drainage corridors with vegetated buffer areas.
- Facilitating enhancement of the riparian vegetation, in-stream rehabilitation and improvements in the quality of stormwater entering Russells Creek.
- Minimising the impact of use and development on water resources and waterways.

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Built environment and heritage

Sustainable development

A compact urban environment that encourages increased public transport patronage as well as walking and cycling has substantial benefits in reducing reliance on motor vehicles with a consequent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

A socially and economically sustainable Warrnambool will generally include a mix of shops and services, community facilities, employment choices, housing choices, a network of open spaces, and public transport options.

Council is committed to ecologically sustainable development principles in relation to water conservation, the minimisation of greenhouse gas emissions, protection of biodiversity assets and the protection of natural coastal resources.

Council's strategic directions for sustainable development are:

- Creating a sustainable City that allows people to walk or cycle to access their everyday needs and contributes to social interaction, community building and wellbeing.
- Promoting ecologically sustainable development.
- Supporting development that reduces energy and greenhouse gas emissions.

Urban design

View sharing is an emerging issue within the municipality. Views of the ocean, the Merri and Hopkins Rivers, inland hilltops and ridgelines, and surrounding rural areas are highly valued. The siting and design of development can have a critical impact on sensitive areas, views, liveability, safety and visual appearance.

Signs are an important component of the built environment in the City. A key challenge is to balance supporting business activity and economic development with providing signs that complement or enhance the host building or site on which they are displayed, and contribute to a high standard of visual amenity in the built environment.

Major promotion signs can be visually dominant features in a landscape and therefore their siting and frequency need to be carefully managed.

Distracting and dominating signage can impact on public amenity particularly in areas of heritage significance and along township entrances.

The vision for a liveable city revolves around health and wellbeing and the social and physical attributes that contribute to this. The design of the built environment can also influence the incidence of crime and feelings of safety within the city.

Council's strategic directions for urban design are:

- Protecting and enhancing the quality of the built environment.
- Facilitating the sharing, rather than protection, of views from the public realm and private areas.
- Supporting signage that is effective and improves the public realm, having regard to the host building or site, and the role and interests of the specific area.
- Discouraging Major Promotion Signs at identified gateways and landscaped streetscapes.
- Providing for signs that are in context with the scale of development, the surrounding environment and the surrounding signage patterns.
- Promoting safety and the perception of safety in the design of buildings.
- Designing developments to maximise vehicle and pedestrian access between activity centres and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Facilitating sensitive design solutions for Younger Street (west), Logans Beach, areas of South Warrnambool and the Coastal/Hopkins River Growth Area.

Neighbourhood character

Parts of Warrnambool are increasingly a focus for medium density redevelopment. Within the inner residential areas, there are buildings and streets of historic value and a mix of housing style that form the character of the area.

Failure to consider neighbourhood character has resulted in some development within the inner areas being out of character. Heritage and character considerations do not preclude infill development, rather they add to the range of design considerations that should be considered and responded to.

Council's strategic direction for neighbourhood character is:

- Integrating infill development with the existing architectural, historic and landscape character of the neighbourhood.

Heritage

Maintaining heritage values and places is a vital part of the community's 'sense of place', cultural identity and wellbeing. This is particularly true for Eastern Maar people, whose heritage creates and maintains links between ancestors, people and the land.

Eastern Maar people live in the Warrnambool district and many significant cultural sites are known to exist, particularly along the coast and river valleys.

Warrnambool has several notable post European heritage precincts including civic and public buildings as well as significant stands of Norfolk Island pines. There are twenty-six heritage precincts where streetscape and character issues are a key consideration.

Signage in heritage places should be discreet and complement the cultural significance of the place.

Council's strategic directions for heritage are:

- Protecting the importance of cultural heritage in the area.
- Conserving, maintaining and enhancing the character of heritage precincts, particularly individual listings and contributory elements.
- Managing signage in the City to maintain and enhance heritage places and precincts.

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Housing

Housing diversity

Large sites within established urban areas have the potential to accommodate further residential development. Sites that are no longer needed for their original purpose and that may be suitable for residential redevelopment include the former industrial sites such as the Warrnambool Woollen Mills.

There is also capacity for more intensive forms of residential development within proximity to open space, activity centres and along public transport routes.

The development of growth areas provides an opportunity to develop a variety of dwelling types with varying development densities. Land adjoining the Coastal Hopkins Growth Area (Logans Beach area) is of high environmental and landscape amenity and an important entrance to the city. The area has some capacity for low-density development, provided various constraints are properly managed.

Warrnambool has a range of dwelling sizes. Every five in ten dwellings contain three bedrooms. Two and four bedroom dwellings represent one in six of all dwellings. Over the next two decades, Warrnambool's population is projected to age and household sizes are expected to continue to get smaller. Dwelling sizes however, are anticipated to increase and by 2031, a quarter of the City's dwellings could have four or more bedrooms. More diversity in dwelling sizes is needed.

Council's strategic directions for housing diversity are:

- Providing infill opportunities to accommodate residential development.
- Ensuring future populations have access to a diverse range of housing options including increasing the supply of housing for smaller households.

Housing affordability

The affordability of housing has significant impacts on the liveability and economic prosperity of the community. A lack of affordable housing is a barrier to attracting key workers and tertiary students to the City. It also has detrimental impacts on sole parents, single people, young people, older people (65+ years) and children of sole parents.

Council's strategic directions for housing affordability are:

- Facilitating smaller lot sizes and housing for the ageing and student populations close to community services.
- Providing social housing in future growth area planning.

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Economic development

Diversified economy

Warrnambool is a major centre for food manufacturing with an emphasis on dairy products, sheep and beef processing. The Warrnambool region produces 25 per cent of Australia's milk and 30 per cent of Victoria's beef and lamb. Warrnambool's other employment strengths are in health and community services, education, government, retail and tourism. Warrnambool is the Great South Coast Region's main service centre for retail, business services, health and education.

Council's strategic direction for a diversified economy is:

- Developing value-adding opportunities.

Agriculture

Agriculture is an important element of the regional economy especially the dairy industry. Sixteen per cent of the work force is employed within the agriculture, fishing and forestry sector.

Council's strategic directions for agriculture are:

- Protecting the significance of agriculture in the local economy.
- Preserving agricultural land in large areas to support those industries that rely on agricultural products for processing.
- Avoiding development that may compromise the dairy industry and its processing facilities.
- Facilitating opportunities for agricultural diversity.

Industry

Warrnambool is the industrial service centre for the South West region. The West Warrnambool Industrial Precinct is one of the City's key employment precincts featuring a wide range of manufacturing, warehousing, transport logistics and service industries.

The development of the West Warrnambool Industrial Precinct has resulted in some industrial and residential uses being located within proximity to each other.

A combination of population increases and growth in industrial sectors such as wind and natural gas energy production, has seen increased demand for land. Future demand for industrial land will be met by the development of the Eastern Industrial Precinct.

Council's strategic directions for industry are:

- Providing an adequate supply of land for industry.
- Managing the industrial/residential interface to ensure any off-site amenity impacts are minimised.
- Ensuring that industrial development meets standards for amenity and urban design that promotes the attractiveness of the municipality.

Commercial

Substantial residential growth to 2031 is expected to create the opportunity for the revitalisation of the Warrnambool City Centre, with higher-order retail stores, services and other facilities.

The demand for bulky goods retailing is growing, with this form of retailing being concentrated along the Princes Highway that offers large, level sites with a high degree of exposure.

Council's strategic directions for commercial land are:

- Ensuring future development reinforces the primacy of the Warrnambool City Centre.
- Consolidating and strengthening the Warrnambool City Centre's retail and service functions, as the principal centre servicing the South West region of Victoria.
- Encouraging the consolidation of restricted and peripheral retailing in the Eastern Activity Centre.

Tourism

Tourism is a significant economic driver in the region. Natural and man-made tourism attractions include maritime and built heritage, the coast and beaches, the Great Ocean Road, the Lady Bay area, the Southern Right Whale Nursery at Logans Beach and the Flagstaff Hill area.

Warrnambool is the western gateway to the Great Ocean Road region with capacity for visitor accommodation. Opportunities exist for coastal tourism development to the east of the city taking advantage of the scenic coast while remaining sensitive to its environmental and landscape values. The Lady Bay foreshore area and Lake Pertobe also provide opportunities for tourist oriented developments.

Lifestyle resorts are a rapidly expanding component of the tourism market and provide tourist and ancillary residential accommodation. Cultural heritage tourism is another potential year- round attractor for the area.

A significant entertainment precinct including restaurants, taverns and hotels is evolving at the southern end of Liebig Street, adjacent to the civic buildings.

Council's strategic directions for tourism are:

- Balancing environmental impacts and pressure for development from a large influx of tourists.
- Protecting those assets on which tourism depends.
- Ensuring that linkages between Lake Pertobe and the foreshore are strengthened.

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Transport and infrastructure

Transport

Warrnambool residents are currently heavily reliant on personal motor vehicles for transport. The *Sustainable Transport Strategy* (WCC, 2010) seeks to improve walking and cycling infrastructure and to encourage residents and visitors to use these transport modes and public transport more often.

Council's strategic directions for transport are:

- Providing an integrated transport network.
- Facilitating the use of sustainable transport modes.
- Prioritising pedestrian movements in the Warrnambool City Centre.

Open space

Warrnambool's open space network is identified on the *Warrnambool Strategic Framework Plan* at Clause 02.04. While overall provision of open space in Warrnambool is good, there are some areas where residents do not have access to open space within walking distance of home.

Council's strategic directions for open space are:

- Facilitating high quality open space within walking distance for all residents.
- Improving access to waterways to provide important recreational opportunities.
- Improving connectivity between open spaces and access to off-road trails.

Community Infrastructure

Warrnambool has an extensive range of education, community and health services that support the lifestyle of local residents and serve the wider region.

Demand for community services is affected by a growing population, the increased use of services by older residents, the specific needs of children and young people, increased demand for early years services, the use of services by people living outside the municipality, and the growing demand for meeting and program spaces.

Planning for community services and infrastructure should focus on the delivery of shared or multi-purpose community hubs in locations that allow shared service delivery.

The presence of health and education institutions provides the city with a strong employment base as well as opportunities for industrial, health and education related research facilities.

Council's strategic directions for community infrastructure are:

- Providing community services and flexible spaces for activities supporting community health and wellbeing.
- Supporting health and education institutions due to the social and economic benefits they provide to the city.

Development infrastructure

Water and sewerage services are provided by Wannon Water. The City's water treatment and sewerage treatment plants have sufficient capacity to meet the short-term community needs before augmentation is required. The settlements of Bushfield and Woodford are not connected to reticulated sewerage services and their soils have limited capacity to carry much further growth in septic systems. Drainage impediments in Allansford will also have an impact on development.

Warrnambool is at the forefront of integrated water management with the implementation of Wannon Water's 'roof water collection system' within the North-East Warrnambool Growth Area. This initiative together with the development of other groundwater resources, will meet the growth needs of Warrnambool for at least the next 50 years.

The design, management and delivery of infrastructure are key issues for Council. The *Infrastructure Design Manual* (LGIDA, 2020) includes guidelines for the design and construction of infrastructure within the municipality including (among other things) roads, drainage, stormwater, car parking, landscaping, access, earthworks and intersection infrastructure.

The municipality contains a number of telecommunications towers that traditionally have been co-located with other infrastructure such as water towers.

Council's strategic directions for development infrastructure are:

- Minimising stormwater runoff into the catchments by the use of water sensitive urban design and utilising open spaces to act as floodways.
- Providing for the sustainable planning, design and construction of infrastructure.

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Gaming

Warrnambool has an extensive range of gaming venues and machines. The number of venues and machines can have significant social and economic impacts on the community.

Council's strategic directions for gaming are:

- Minimising the social and economic effects of gaming on the community.
- Discouraging further increases in gaming venues and machines.
- Giving preference to community based organisations rather than commercial premises when considering a replacement of gaming machines.