

## FACT SHEET:

# OUR DRAFT FUTURE PLAN FOR GROWTH

Population and housing growth is happening all around us, particularly in our neighbouring cities of Geelong and Ballarat. Our location between these regional cities gives Golden Plains a unique opportunity to harness some of this growth and secure benefits for our community.

Council is currently preparing a plan to set the overall direction for how our Shire should grow up to 2050, it will be referred to as the Growing Places Strategy (GPS).

This is an opportunity to capture the benefits of growth and work towards our Community Vision 2040, and make sure we're well prepared so that our historic townships, farming areas, natural landscapes and country lifestyle are protected.

Council has prepared a draft 'future growth scenario' that shows where growth could occur over time: at 2030, 2040 and 2050. Once finalised, this will form the basis of the GPS.

**See our fact sheet: Growth in our Region** for more about why and how much our region is growing, the potential benefits and challenges, and how Council is developing the GPS.

## WHERE COULD FUTURE GROWTH GO?

Council already has plans in place to accommodate projected population growth within the next 10 to 15 years, mainly in the south-east (around Bannockburn). This will see an extra 9,950 people by 2036.

The draft future growth scenario outlines where housing and population could be provided for - in addition to what is already planned. This is shown on the map.

**By 2030**, new growth is already expected in Cambrian Hill. This captures overflow growth from Ballarat West which is well connected to existing or already planned services in the City of Ballarat and Smythesdale.

**By 2040**, land could be made available for housing in the areas around Stonehaven. This captures overflow growth from the Western Growth Area of Geelong which is well connected to existing or already planned services in the City of Geelong and Bannockburn.

**By 2050**, Meredith could grow to become a stand-alone hub for shops, services, community facilities, industry and jobs. This could also support some additional growth in Lethbridge and Teesdale.

All together this could see our Shire grow by up to 50,000 people by 2050.

## POTENTIAL GROWTH 2020-2050



## WHY IS THIS PLAN PROPOSED?

This proposed plan has two key objectives:

1. **Extending growth that is already happening along our borders where it is supported by existing services and infrastructure (Cambrian Hill and areas around Stonehaven)**
2. **Focusing growth in a township in proximity to Melbourne where it can attract investment in services and infrastructure to also benefit the communities around it (Meredith, Teesdale, Lethbridge)**

By extending growth where it is already occurring, we can maintain the rural and country feel across the rest of the Shire and create the mix of urban and rural townships our community wants. This type of growth builds on the infrastructure and services already provided and doesn't require significant new investment in services and facilities, which means additional rate-based income can help fund services, upgrades and programs across the whole Shire to work towards the Community Vision 2040.

Together these two approaches seek to balance the benefits of population growth with the importance of preserving the uniqueness of Golden Plains.

Directing growth to Meredith would also attract significant investment to value-add and strengthen the centre. It could become a hub for retail, hospitality, tourism and events, community facilities, industry and employment, supporting many surrounding townships.

Investment in town sewerage would be required for this growth. With Meredith serving as a hub, Lethbridge and Teesdale could also grow, and if carefully planned, studies show this could reduce bushfire risk and improve resilience in these areas.

Due to Meredith's location along the transport corridor from Geelong through Bannockburn and on to Ballarat, a plan for future population growth here would also strengthen Council's advocacy for the re-instatement of the passenger rail.

# HOW HAS THIS PROPOSED PLAN BEEN DEVELOPED?

To inform the draft future growth scenario (and the broader GPS) we've sought independent expert research and advice, reviewed existing government and council policies and strategies, and spoken with important stakeholders and government agencies.

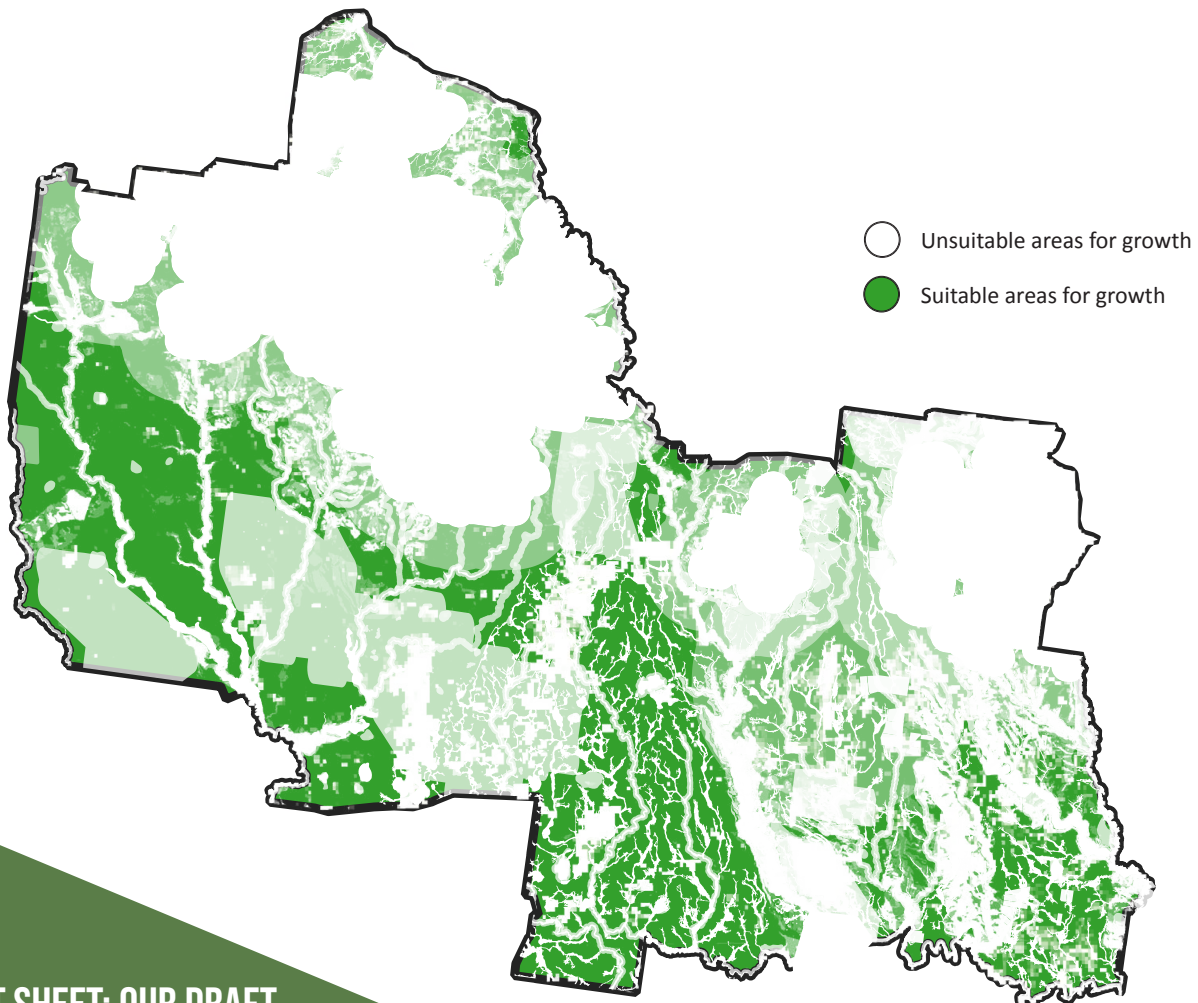
Through this work we've identified many areas that are unsuitable for future housing growth such as:

- Land that supports biodiversity and has important environmental attributes
- Areas that are culturally significant
- Important agricultural and industrial land
- Areas with bushfire and flood risk, contamination, landfill or safety issues
- Buffer zones around airports, windfarms and agriculture

These are shown on the map below.

This background work helped us understand what areas remain and could be suitable to consider for growth.

From there, we have been strongly guided by the goals and aspirations of the Golden Plains Community Vision 2040 – and how and where growth could help achieve these.





# DEVELOPING THE FUTURE GROWTH PLAN

## COMMUNITY VISION 2040

A diversity of quality rural and urban living alternatives that balances growth and retains a strong country feel.

Access to services, facilities and activities for people of all ages and abilities.

Value and preserve our natural ecosystems, landscapes, features, open spaces, bushland and connection to cultural heritage.

Promote and improve the regional economy through partnerships, innovation and support for local producers, agriculture and businesses.

## GOVERNMENT POLICY

Growth projections

Victorian Planning Policy

Regional Growth Plans

Existing Council Strategies and Plans

## RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE

Future housing needs

Natural environment conditions and hazards

Bushfire risk

Industrial land supply

Town character

Agricultural needs

Biodiversity protection

First Nations cultural heritage and values

And more to come

## DRAFT FUTURE GROWTH SCENARIO

## STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS

Discuss and test with key service providers, stakeholders and the community – is there anything else to consider or investigate?

See our Informing Document: *Growing Places 2051* for more detail about the policies, strategies and technical studies (including visual maps) that underpin the draft future growth scenario.



## CAN I FIND OUT MORE AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK?

We know there may be questions about this draft future growth scenario, and we want to talk with the community about their views and opinions to make sure we haven't missed any important considerations.

### There are many opportunities:

- Attend a community information session (several dates, online and in key locations)
- Read more detailed FAQs on our website and submit your own for us to respond to
- Review the range of background materials available including:
  - Informing Document: Growing Places 2051
  - Full copies of the independent research reports
  - A summary video and other fact sheets
- Submit written feedback by email to [growingplaces@goldenplains.vic.gov.au](mailto:growingplaces@goldenplains.vic.gov.au) or by post to Growing Places, PO Box 111, Bannockburn, Vic 3331.

## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

After this draft future growth scenario has been discussed with our community, Council will undertake any further work arising from these discussions and prepare a full draft of the Growing Places Strategy.

### This will include:

- a final future growth scenario; and
- an action plan outlining the work that needs to be done to support it.

The community will then have another opportunity to review it and provide feedback before it is finalised and considered by Council for approval.

Once approved by Council, it then needs to be approved by the State Government (Minister for Planning) before it can be included in the planning scheme (or 'rule book').

**See our fact sheet: Growth in our region for more information about the steps to develop the GPS and then move towards implementation.**

For more information on all of these opportunities, and to access copies of fact sheets and background materials visit our consultation webpage [www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/consultations](http://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/consultations) or call us on 5220 7111 to be added to the mailing list.