



# GROWING PLACES

| INFORMING  
DOCUMENT





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Golden Plains Shire spans the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar People. We acknowledge them as the Traditional Owners and Custodians.

Council pays its respects to both Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Elders past, present and emerging.

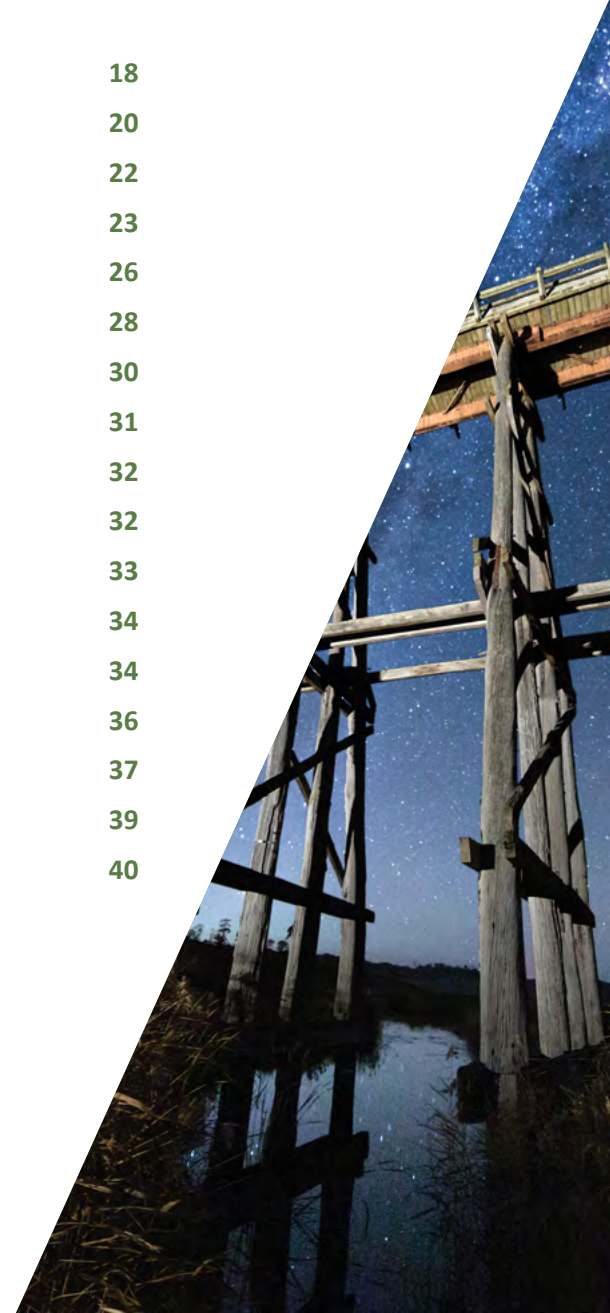
Council extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of the Golden Plains Shire.



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Published November 2024



# | GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE





# | PURPOSE AND SCOPE

**This document informs the development of the Growing Places Strategy which will consider where growth can be located within the bounds of good strategic policy and in the best interest of communities in the Golden Plains Shire.**

To inform the Strategy, Council has used the Community Vision 2040, and a series of technical reports as a foundation for evidence based strategic planning which have been summarised in this report.

Council will prepare amendments to the planning scheme and direct changes to the regional growth plans based on the Growing Places Strategy.

The Growing Places Strategy does not:

- address the detailed structure planning of areas identified for future residential growth
- prepare detailed infrastructure lists, or cost estimates, although recommendations have been informed in consultation with relevant authorities, agencies, and consultants to determine the practicality of servicing.

## | COUNCIL'S ROLE

Golden Plains Shire requires an overall approach to accommodating housing growth in the context of its many townships and the broader context of Geelong, Ballarat, the Surf Coast and Metropolitan Melbourne.





# STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Developing and implementing the Growing Places Strategy (GPS) will take time and involves many different players. Council's role is to develop the plan for where housing can go, and include it in the planning rules. The State Government, and the Minister for Planning, needs to agree with our plan before we can do this.

The process to develop the GPS has six key stages:

**Stage 1:** Background research

**Stage 2:** Development and testing of a future growth scenario

**Stage 3:** Preparation and consultation on the draft GPS and action plan

**Stage 4:** Adoption of the final GPS

**Stage 5:** Preparation and consultation on a Planning Scheme Amendment to incorporate the GPS into the Golden Plains Planning Scheme (the 'rule book')

**Stage 6:** Submission of the Planning Scheme Amendment to the Minister for Planning for final approval.

Each of these steps, from developing the GPS through to the consideration of specific development applications (Planning permit applications), includes the opportunity for community input and feedback.



# | WHY GROW?

**Golden Plains Shire has a large geographical area but low rate-base. Meeting the community expectations articulated in the Community Vision 2040 for service and infrastructure is a key challenge currently and into the future.**

Broadening the rate-base through population growth is a potential option given the Shire's unique position to leverage growth from surrounding municipalities, including Geelong, Ballarat and Surf Coast.

Increased growth close to municipal borders utilises existing regional services and infrastructure of neighbouring Councils and takes future residential supply pressures off smaller towns with limited services. While additional investment will be required to support growth, developer contributions would largely fund the expansion of local infrastructure to greenfield growth areas.

Forecasting and planning for ongoing population growth needs to be carefully managed to ensure desirable social, economic, and environmental outcomes.

Collective and coordinated strategic thinking, planning and management is critical if the Shire is to manage its own future, adjust to change and continue to prosper. Not managing growth in a co-ordinated way may result in:

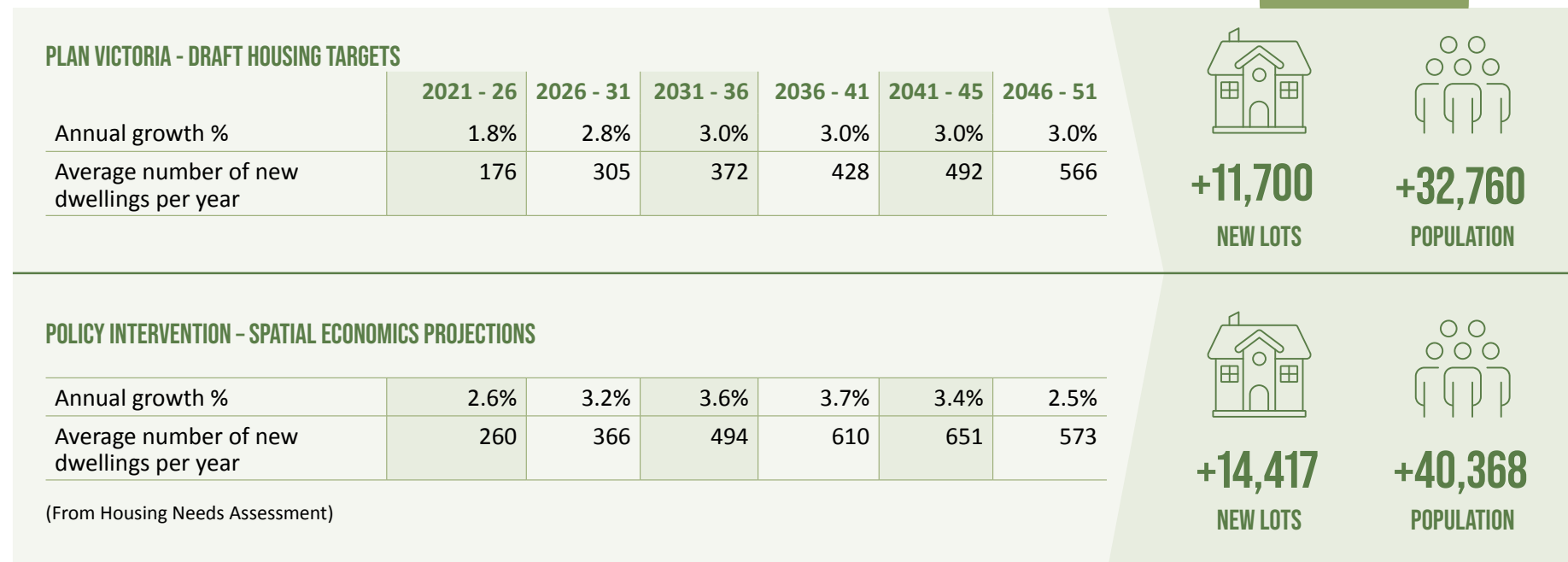
- Inappropriate growth in locations that are less suited to accommodate growth in a sustainable and safe way.
- Poor access to facilities and services, if towns are planned in isolation without fully understanding their broader role in the Shire and Region.
- Directing growth to areas of higher bushfire and flooding risk.
- Limited investment guidance and opportunities, resulting in ad-hoc delivery of services and infrastructure with little or no cost efficiencies.
- Missing opportunities for the consolidation, redevelopment, and intensification of existing urban areas.
- Potential damage to the environment and loss of natural assets, such as water quality, biodiversity, and significant landscapes.
- Potential damage to areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance through lack of understanding and acknowledgement.
- Development that is not suited to the changing climate.
- New development undermining the historic or valued character of townships.
- Difficulties in managing rural living development in a sustainable way.



# HOW MUCH GROWTH?

The Shire is in a unique position located between the City of Greater Geelong and City of Ballarat which are both experiencing significant growth pressure. Whilst the Shire has sufficient land supply to cater for conservative growth to accommodate the 15-year State Government's forecast, there is opportunity to accommodate a higher level of growth, leveraging the momentum from neighbouring municipalities – should it choose.

The Estimated Resident Population from the 2021 Census was 24,879 as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This figure used as the base population the projections are calculated from.



Golden Plains Shire requires an overall approach to accommodating housing growth in the context of its many townships and the broader context of Geelong, Ballarat, the Surf Coast and Metropolitan Melbourne.

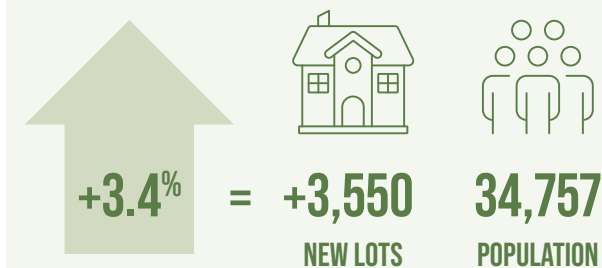
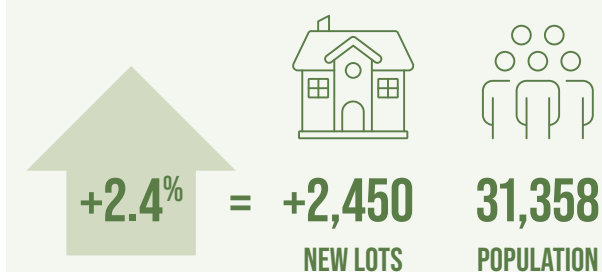
Council's current planned growth in Bannockburn, Cambrian Hill and within existing structure plans provides capacity to grow annually at 3.4% until 2051.

There is opportunity for Council to influence the annual growth rate, by managing the timing and amount of land released in areas identified as suitable for growth.



# HOW MUCH GROWTH?

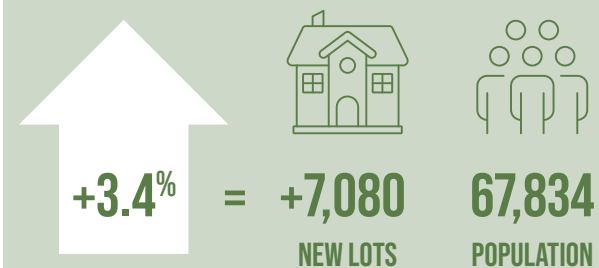
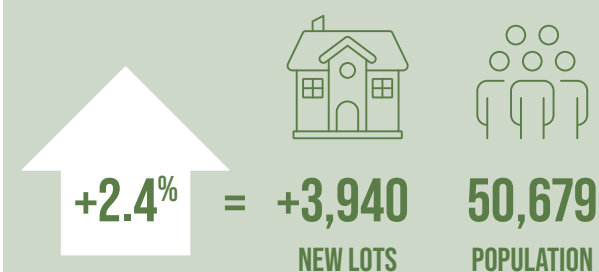
Adjusting the annual growth rate has the following implications for overall housing supply and population growth:



2031



2041



2051

# OUR COMMITMENT

The Strategy will provide direction for growth in Golden Plains Shire consistent with environmental constraints and government policy until at least 2051.

The Strategy will:

- Define a typology of towns that identifies each township's role, function and expected growth and clarifies the role of individual townships in a municipal and regional context.
- Direct future growth to the most appropriate locations based on a broad analysis of constraints and opportunities.
- Deliver collective and coordinated strategic planning to manage the amount and timing of growth within identified appropriate locations.

Our commitment derives from the Community Vision 2040. It is embedded in the Council Plan and Budget.

The following Strategic Directions and Objectives are fundamental principles of the Growing Places Strategy:



## COMMUNITY

- Proud
- Safe
- Inclusive
- Connected
- Engaged
- Resilient
- Supported
- Contributing



## LIVEABILITY

- Health and Wellbeing
- Rural and Urban Living
- Country Feel
- Active and Passive Recreation
- Services, Facilities and Activities
- Connected Transport



## SUSTAINABILITY

- Environmental Stewardship
- Value and Preserve Ecosystems, Nature and Cultural Heritage
- Responsible Attitudes and Behaviours
- Clean and Green Future



## PROSPERITY

- Learning, Education and Training
- Shopping, Goods and Services
- Employment Opportunities and Pathways
- Supporting Local Producers and Business
- Advocacy and Partnerships



## I VICTORIAN PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Planning policy requires all Councils to maintain at least a fifteen-year supply of land for residential development.

To strengthen the resilience of communities to bushfire a risk-based planning system is in place that prioritises the protection of human life over all other policy consideration; directing population growth and development to low-risk locations and ensuring the availability of, and safe access to, areas where human life can be better protected from the effects of bushfire.

Source: Victorian Planning Provision, 2018. *Bushfire Planning*, 13.02.15 VC 148

## I PROTECTING VICTORIA'S ENVIRONMENT - BIODIVERSITY 2037

This plan presents a new direction for Victoria to stop the decline of biodiversity and ensure that the natural environment is healthy, valued and actively cared for through the goals of 'Victorians value nature' and 'Victoria's natural environment is healthy'.

For more information on the Biodiversity Plan visit - [www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-plan](http://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-plan)

## I PLAN MELBOURNE 2017-2050

One of Plan Melbourne's seven outcomes is continuing to invest in regional Victoria, to support housing and economic growth, enhance social and economic participation and grow strong, healthy communities.

Development in regional Victoria also needs to be in keeping with the character, attractiveness and amenity of individual cities and towns while balancing the protection of productive land, economic resources and biodiversity assets that are critical to the state's economic and environmental sustainability.

For more information visit - [www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au](http://www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au)

Source: Plan Melbourne 2017-2050, Victorian Government, 2017.

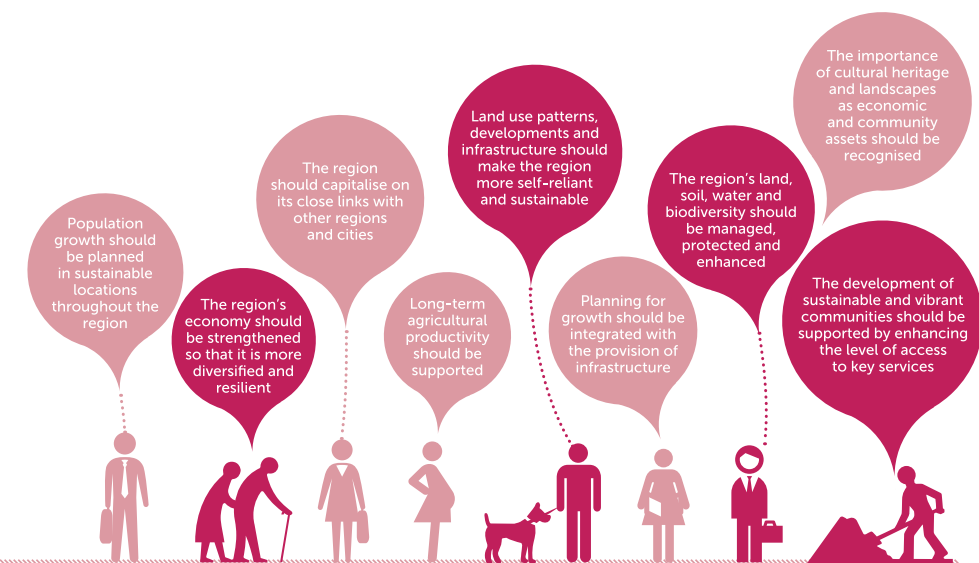
# REGIONAL GROWTH PLANS

The regional growth plans provide broad direction for land use and development across regional Victoria, in a partnership with local government, state agencies and authorities.

## CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN

The Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan provides a vision for long-term prosperity and sustainable growth for the municipalities of the Shire of Ararat, City of Ballarat, the northern portion of Golden Plains Shire, Hepburn Shire, Moorabool Shire and Pyrenees Shire.

For more information visit -  
[www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/regional-growth-plans/central-highlands](http://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/regional-growth-plans/central-highlands)



## G21 REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN

The G21 Regional Growth Plan provides broad direction for regional land use and development for the municipalities of Greater Geelong, Colac Otway Shire, Surf Coast Shire, Borough of Queenscliff and the southern portion of Golden Plains Shire.

The directions of the plan have been underpinned by nine key principles and an understanding of:

- the key linkages within the region and to other regions including Melbourne
- the key challenges for growth including managing infrastructure needs, climate variability, providing housing choice, reducing car usage, and protecting our environment and natural resources
- areas vulnerable to growth including significant natural environments
- areas vulnerable to inundation and flooding, erosion and fire etc
- the region's significant assets and competitive advantages which support our economy, landscape and lifestyle
- the importance and role of other projects including other Regional Growth Plans, Plan Melbourne, G21 priority and pillar projects, as well as strategies such as the Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy.

For more information visit -  
[www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/regional-growth-plans/g21-regional-growth-plan](http://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/regional-growth-plans/g21-regional-growth-plan)

Sources: Victorian Government, 2014. G21 Regional Growth Plan; Regional Growth Plans, Victorian Government, 2023 and Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan, Victorian Government, 2014.

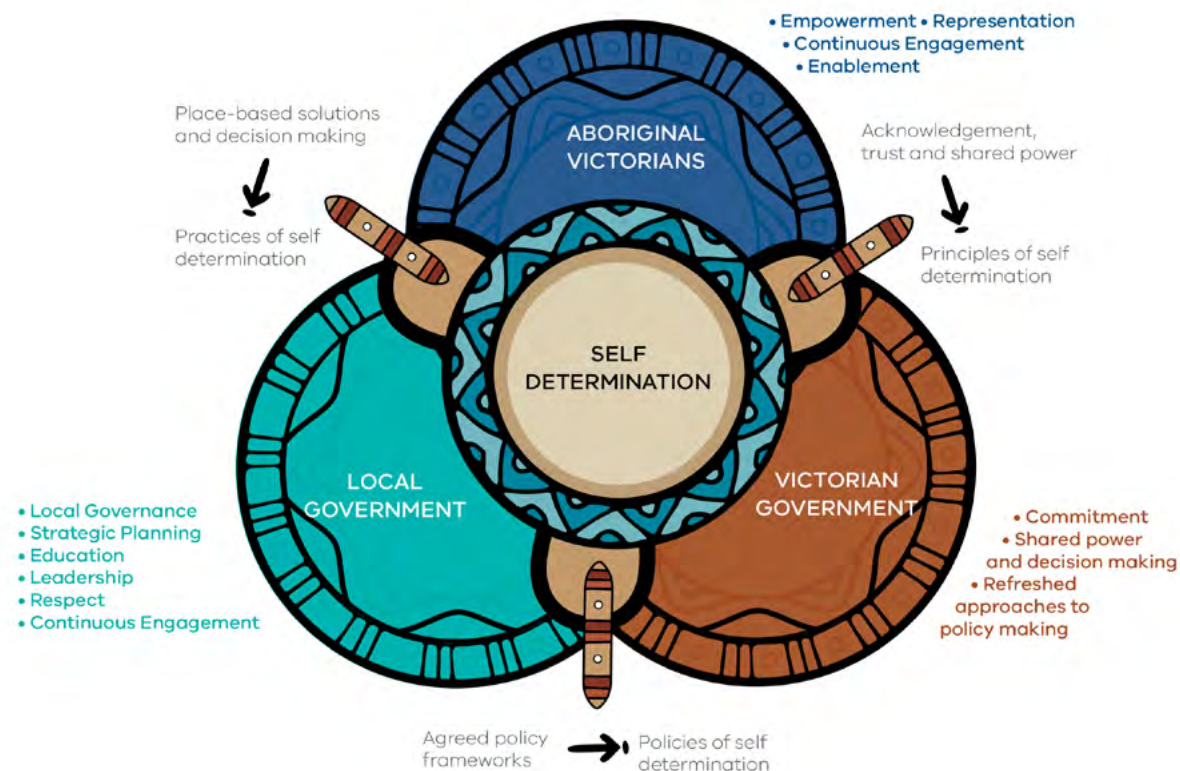


## VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRATEGY 2021-2026

The process towards self-determination is about acknowledging the devastating impacts of colonialisation to ensure Victoria's First Peoples are free to determine and pursue their own economic, social, and cultural development. The Victorian Government's roadmap to self-determination is provided through the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023* (VAAF) and the Self-Determination Reform Framework.

The Victoria Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy is a practical guide towards self-determination. The Strategy's recommended actions are drawn from the seven strategic pillars of culture, respect and trust; awareness and engagement; accountability and direction; governance and participation; economic participation; health and wellbeing; resourcing and funding. It aims to support local councils to include Aboriginal Victorians at the centre of their decision making, and foster mutual respect, trust, and goodwill.

Source: Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021-2026: Pathways to Stronger Partnerships, Victorian Government, 2020.



From more information on the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy visit - [www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-partnerships/victorian-aboriginal-and-local-government-strategy](http://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-partnerships/victorian-aboriginal-and-local-government-strategy)

# LOCAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

## Municipal Strategic Statement

The Municipal Strategic Statement sets out the key objectives and strategies that will guide land use and development in Golden Plains.

To inform the development of the Municipal Strategic statement, several strategies and plans have been prepared over time. These include:

## Strategic Land Use Direction

- Bannockburn Growth Plan
- Golden Plains Rural Land Use Strategy
- Northern Settlement Strategy
- Social Housing Plan 2021-24
- Southeast Land Use Planning Review

Framework Plans which direct growth have been prepared for Bannockburn, Batesford, Corindhap, Dereel, Gheringhap, Haddon, Inverleigh, Lethbridge, Linton, Meredith, Napoleons, Rokewood, Ross Creek, Scarsdale, Shelford, Smythesdale and Teesdale.

# LOCAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Local policies are used to implement the objectives and strategies of the Municipal Strategic Statement and have been used to inform the development of the Growing Places Strategy.

## Community Vision 2040

The Community Vision 2040 captures the common hopes and aspirations for improved liveability while maintaining the Shire's rural character and ensuring we are planning for a bright future for all. The Vision outlines the community's goals to be achieved through the following themes: community focused, liveability, sustainability, and prosperity.

## Council Plan 2021-2025

Our Council Plan 2021-2025 is Council's commitment to delivering on the dreams and aspirations outlined in the Golden Plains Shire Community Vision 2040; with a vision to a healthy, safe, vibrant, prosperous and sustainable community supported by strong leadership, transparent governance and community partnerships.

## Social Housing Plan 2021-2024

Council is committed to considering housing affordability and social housing as part of planning for the future. Bannockburn and Smythesdale currently stand out as the most viable locations to develop social housing based on services. Into the future, Council is committed to exploring opportunities for social housing in new greenfield developments.

## Active Ageing and Inclusion Plan 2020-2024

Golden Plains Shire Council has developed an Active Ageing and Inclusion Plan (AAIP). This Plan provides the framework to continue to support people with disabilities and other access challenges to engage with Council and access all areas of the organisation's operations.

## Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy 2022-2026

Our community's shared vision that Golden Plains Shire is a place of imagination, creativity and enterprise. The Strategy reflects the diversity of our people, shares their unique stories, improves community wellbeing and increases the attractiveness of our unique places, while representing the commitment by Council to lead, partner and support our communities to participate in, enjoy and develop the creative and cultural life of our Shire.

## Climate Emergency Plan 2022-2032

During 2021, Golden Plains Shire Council declared a Climate Emergency, a resolution for immediate and urgent action to reverse global warming and adapt to changes that society cannot avoid. As part of this resolution, Council committed to preparing a Climate Emergency Plan to put the declaration's words into actions.

## Environment Strategy 2019-2027

A framework that clearly identifies the Council's vision and five strategic directions for the future; aiming to protect, restore, and increase the health of our natural ecosystem, biodiversity natural habitats to ensure they survive and thrive in the Golden Plains Shire.

## Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2021-2025

The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Action Plan embeds an integrated responsibility across all areas of Council and community to reflect the view that health and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility.

## Reflect: Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2023

The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) provides a cohesive direction for reconciliation in the Shire, as we seek to develop more meaningful relationships

with our Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Shire, the Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung communities. This is achieved through the action themes of Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance.

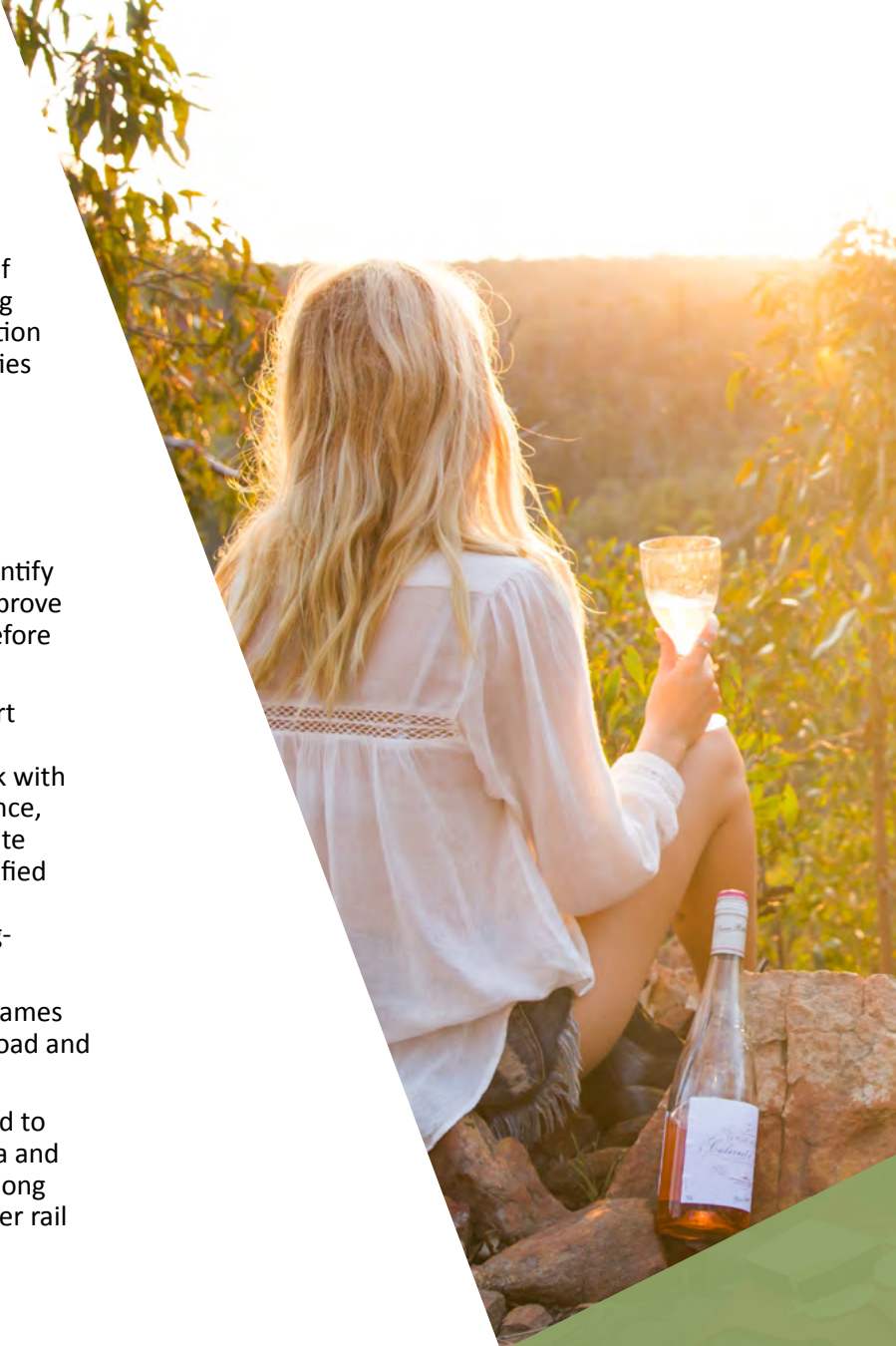
## Transport Connection Study

The Transport Connections Study provides a benchmark of existing community and public transport connections that can be used to identify gaps and further develop opportunities to improve transport connectivity, accessibility, and therefore liveability.

Council's role in improving the public transport network is to advocate for improved services, provide support for existing services and work with Department of Transport to review performance, suitability and alignment with Council and State Government strategies. An opportunity identified within the Transport Connections Study is the reinstatement of passenger trains on Geelong-Ballarat-Bendigo line.

Supporting this is the 2026 Commonwealth Games which will present an opportunity for major road and public transport improvements.

A more limited service has also been proposed to provide for the Western Geelong Growth Area and Bannockburn Growth Plan, with the G21 Geelong Regional Alliance having investigated passenger rail between Bannockburn and Geelong.



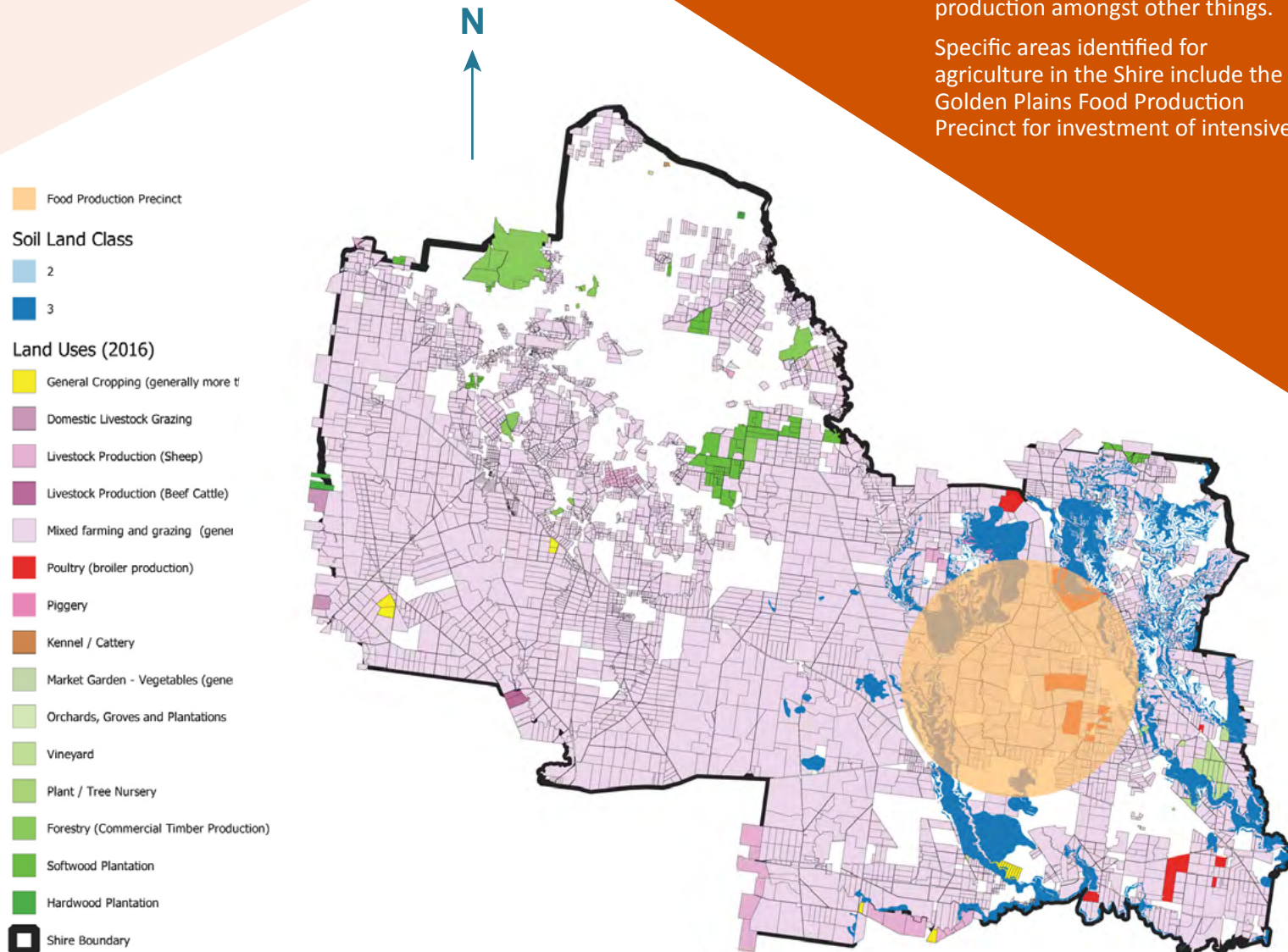




# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

To inform the Growing Places Strategy and outcomes for growth Council has commissioned a number of technical investigations which outline where and how the shire can safely and sustainably grow into the future. Each of these technical investigations is summarised in the pages below.

## GPS AGRICULTURAL LAND USES, SOIL CLASS AND WATER SUPPLY



### Agricultural Future

The identification of 'valuable' agricultural land goes beyond soil values. All agricultural land in Golden Plains Shire has value whether for food, fibre or energy production amongst other things.

Specific areas identified for agriculture in the Shire include the Golden Plains Food Production Precinct for investment of intensive

agriculture and also vast rural areas in particular locations are used or planned for energy production.

The Shire's rural areas are predicted to be less severely affected by climate change than other parts of Victoria, making the protection of agricultural areas relatively important as reliance on its productivity is likely to increase as suitability for agriculture declines in other parts of the state.

To support agriculture into the future, sustainable greenfield small lot growth that minimises consumption of land for residential purposes will ensure the maximum retention of residual farmland as a resource for food, fibre and energy production. [View report here](#)

#### Data Sources:

Land Use (2016) - Victoria Land Use Information System (DELWP 2016)  
Soil Type - Assessment of Agricultural Land Capability in Melbourne's Green Wedge and Peri-urban Areas (Agriculture Victoria 2018)



## BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION

**Biodiversity is all components of the living world, the number and variety of native plants, animals and other living things across the land, rivers, coast and seas. Subsequently, a Biodiversity Protection Assessment is a component to inform the Growing Places Strategy. The assessment focuses on targeted areas for biodiversity conservation based on their strategic biodiversity value and suitability in the predicted future climate.**

Council's *Biodiversity Strategy, 2016* has categorised biodiversity across the shire and areas predicted to have a favourable future climate. It is these key areas that are identified for protection from habitat fragmentation and where urban growth should be avoided.

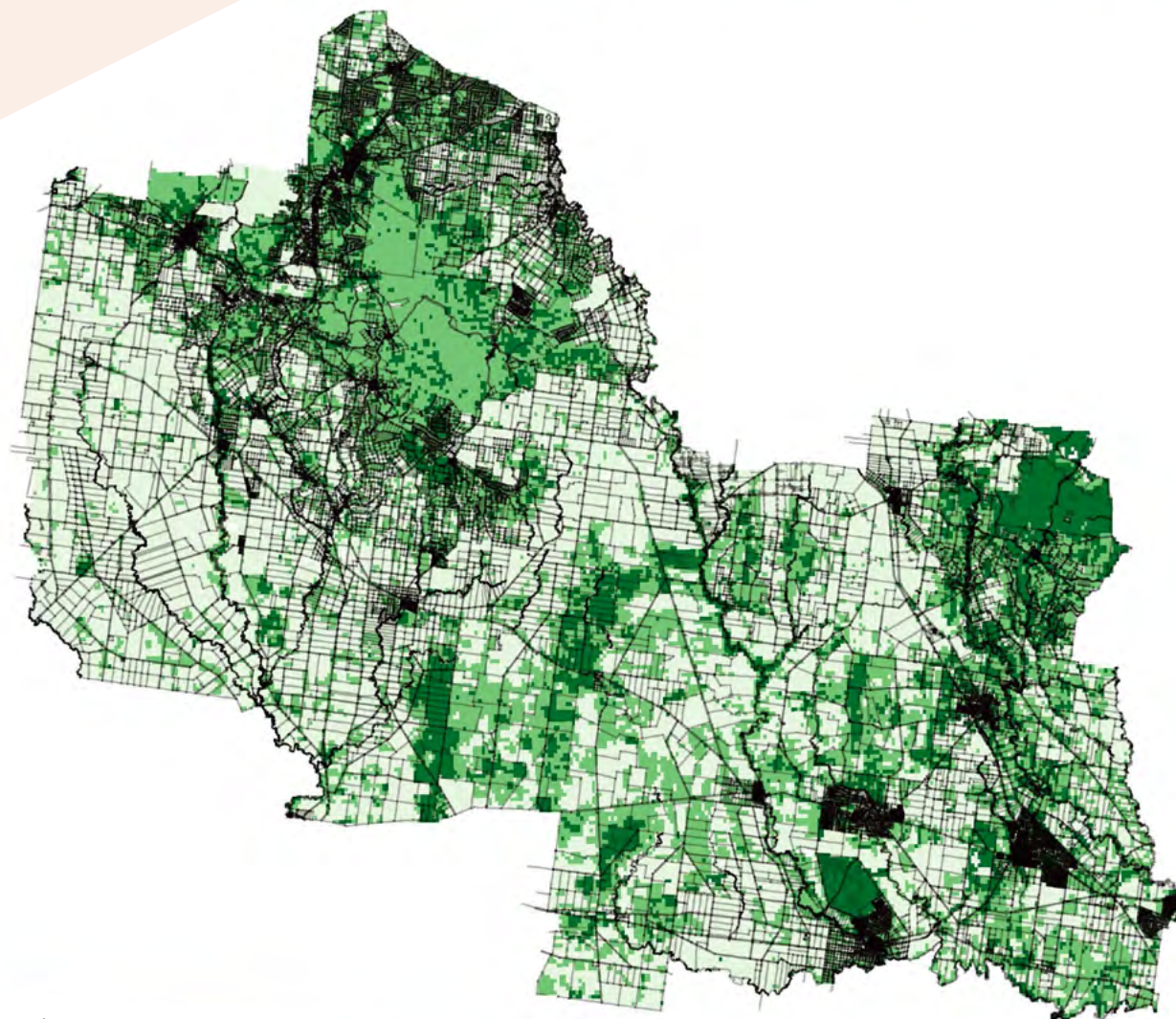
Other supporting policy and plans include Golden Plains Environment Strategy 2019-2027, Golden Plains Biodiversity Strategy 2016 and Climate Emergency Plan 2022-2032.

[View report here](#)





## STRATEGIC BIODIVERSITY VALUES IN GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE



### KEY

Low Strategic Value (0 - 40)
Medium Strategic Value (40-70)
High Strategic Value (70-100)

Data Sources:  
NaturePrint v4.0 Strategic  
Biodiversity Values, DELWP 2018

For more information:  
[https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/  
data/assets/pdf\\_file/0031/82993/3-  
NaturePrint-Strategic-Biodiversity-  
Values.pdf](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0031/82993/3-NaturePrint-Strategic-Biodiversity-Values.pdf)

## CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPARATIVE SIGNIFICANCE

**A common theme through the Council Vision and other community consultations is that the retention of the rural feel is important to the residents of the Shire. The purpose of the Characteristics and Comparative Significance Analysis was to capture the valued characteristics of towns and communities across the shire and classify their relationship and hierarchy as a basis from which to determine a strategic pattern for growth. It is intended that this report will aid in the retention of the valued character of the Shire.**

The character profiles were drawn from structure plan reports, the Northern Settlement Strategy Area Profile brochures, South West Landscape Assessment Study as well as news articles, community plans and site visits. Brief histories are also provided and are based on the Golden Plains Heritage Study, Heritage Victoria citations and Victorian Places website. The character of each place considers the interaction between built form, topography, and vegetation across public and private realms.

A township hierarchy was established and is based on population size, levels of services and community facilities. Regional and sub-regional centres have populations in excess of 10,000 and 5,000, respectively. Differences between District Town, Town and Small Town depend on the number of community or retail services and the presence of a town centre. Localities define areas of small populations relying on surrounding towns for community and commercial facilities. The hierarchy is shown the adjacent map.

Source: [Characteristics and Comparative Significance Analysis completed by Place2Place, 2022.](#)





# HEIRARCHY OF TOWNS





## INDUSTRIAL LAND SUPPLY AND DEMAND

**An Industrial Land Supply and Demand Assessment has been completed by Spatial Economics to inform the Growing Places Strategy.**

The Assessment has identified that there is a current deficiency of 29 hectares(ha) of industrial land across the municipality. It is estimated that 8ha of zoned Industrial land is required in the north of the Shire and 21ha in the south of the Shire. The imminent rezoning of the extension of the Bannockburn Industrial Estate will provide for an additional 22ha of industrial land.

Whilst there is approximately 25ha of zoned Industrial land in Smythesdale, it is suggested that development constraints, including excessive slope, adjacent bushland, flooding, bushfire risk and areas of environmental significance means there is likely to be very little of the industrial land supply in the north available to be developed.

The Assessment suggests there is an opportunity for Golden Plains to:

- Potentially capture a proportion of industrial activity from both Geelong and Ballarat; and
- Reduce or re-capture 'escaped/lost' local industrial land users.

Source: [Industrial Land Supply and Demand Assessment completed by Spatial Economics, 2022.](#)



## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND HAZARDS

**A Natural Environment and Hazards Analysis (NEHA)** has been prepared by Landserv which has collated and determined the relative importance of factors relating to the natural environment and hazards.

The NEHA maps the available information and categorises the hazards as detailed alongside. The categories were determined by considering threat to life (Very High), threat to biodiversity (High), threat to the environment (Medium to High). Hazards also include threats to buildings, farming/ food production, health and lifestyle.

### Very High Importance

- Fire Risk
- Flooding Risk

### High Importance

- Vegetation Protection
- Environmental Significance

### Medium to High Importance

- Landfills

### Medium Importance

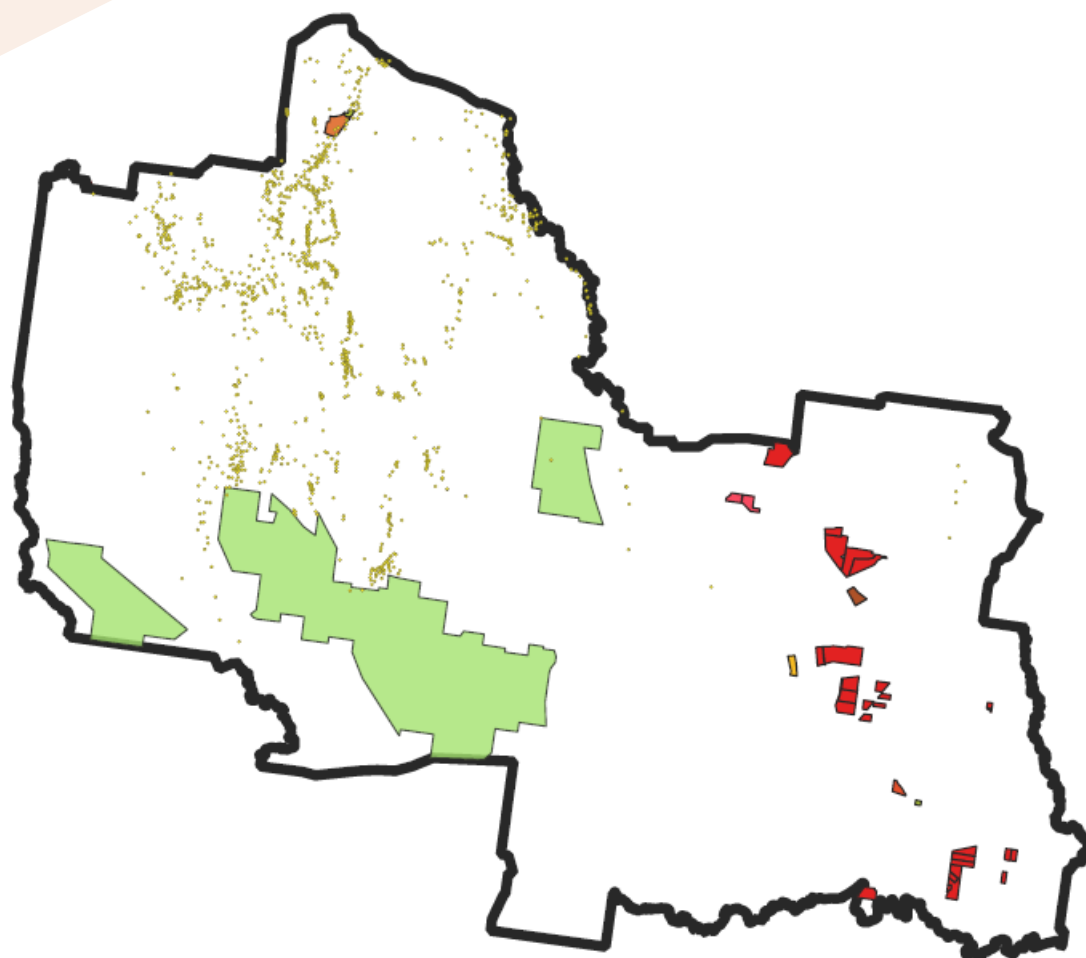
- Historical Mining Activity
- Landslip / Erosion Susceptibility
- Salinity
- EPA Audit site / Licensed EPA Activities / Contaminated Land
- Geological Sites of Significance

Other factors that may have implications for growth and development but have not been allocated a level of importance include:

- Windfarm – buffers
- Intensive animal husbandry activities – buffers
- Airport – distance buffer

Source: [Natural Environment and Hazard Analysis Golden Plains Shire completed by Landserv Environment, 2022.](#)

# HUMAN MADE HAZARDS



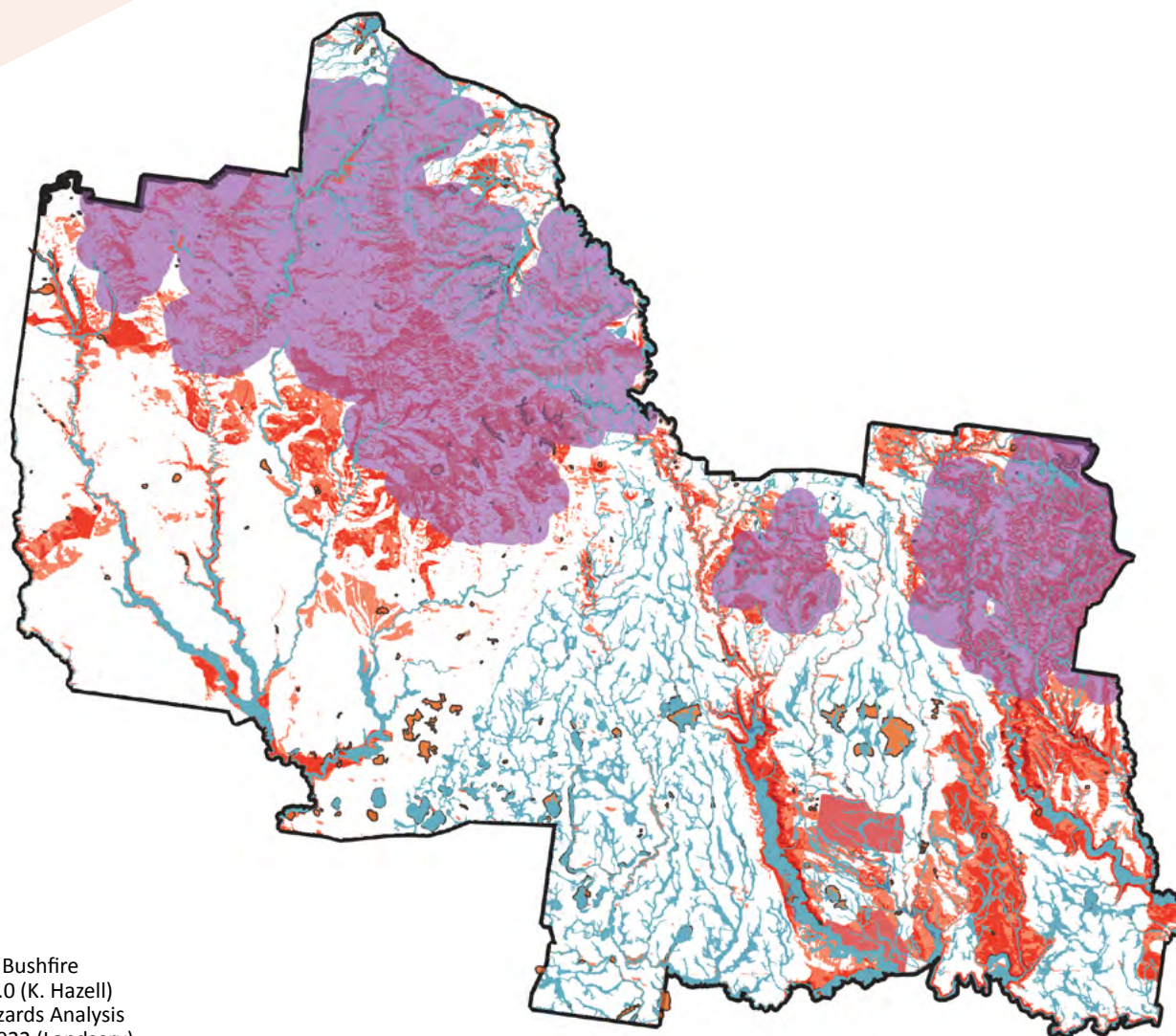
## KEY

- Historical Mine Shaft
- Wind Farms
- Land Uses (2016)
  - Poultry (broiler production)
  - Piggery
- Planning Scheme Zone
  - INDUSTRIAL 1 ZONE
  - Special Use Zone - Sechedule 1
  - Special Use Zone - Sechedule 2
  - Special Use Zone - Sechedule 3
  - Special Use Zone - Sechedule 4
- Shire Boundary

**Data Sources:**  
 Golden Plains Shire Strategic Bushfire  
 Assessment 12 April 2022 v1.0 (K. Hazell)  
 Natural Environment and Hazards Analysis  
 Golden Plains Shire 29 July 2022 (Landserv)



# NATURAL HAZARDS



## Key

- Riverine 1% Flood Extent - CCMA
- Bushfire Landscape Type 4
- Bushfire Landscape Type 3
- Wetlands (Current)
- Floodway

## Planning Overlay

- FO
- FO1
- LSI0
- LSI01

## Landslide susceptibility

- Band 1 (Gray)
- Very Low
- Low
- Moderate 1
- Moderate 2
- Moderate-High
- High
- Very High
- Very High
- Shire Boundary

Data Sources:  
 Golden Plains Shire Strategic Bushfire  
 Assessment 12 April 2022 v1.0 (K. Hazell)  
 Natural Environment and Hazards Analysis  
 Golden Plains Shire 29 July 2022 (Landserv)

## HOUSING NEEDS

**The assessment considers both the adequacy of existing planning controls to meet housing requirements to 2036, as well as longer term to 2050. In order to do this the assessment forecasts the housing supply required to meet future housing needs across the municipality.**

The Assessment noted that the Shire was unique due to its position and therefore requires a unique approach to housing needs. It found that the growth in population of the Shire had outstripped forecasts and most local government areas in regional Victoria, including the growth rates of the City of Greater Geelong and the City of Ballarat. The growth pattern has been uneven, with virtually all growth occurring within commuting distance of Geelong and to a lesser extent Ballarat.

The Assessment found that the lack of higher density development in the north of the Shire had been constraining growth in that area. Between July 2016 and February 2022, the south of the Shire has accounted for approximately three quarters of all residential building approvals and almost 90% of the development was residential lot construction.

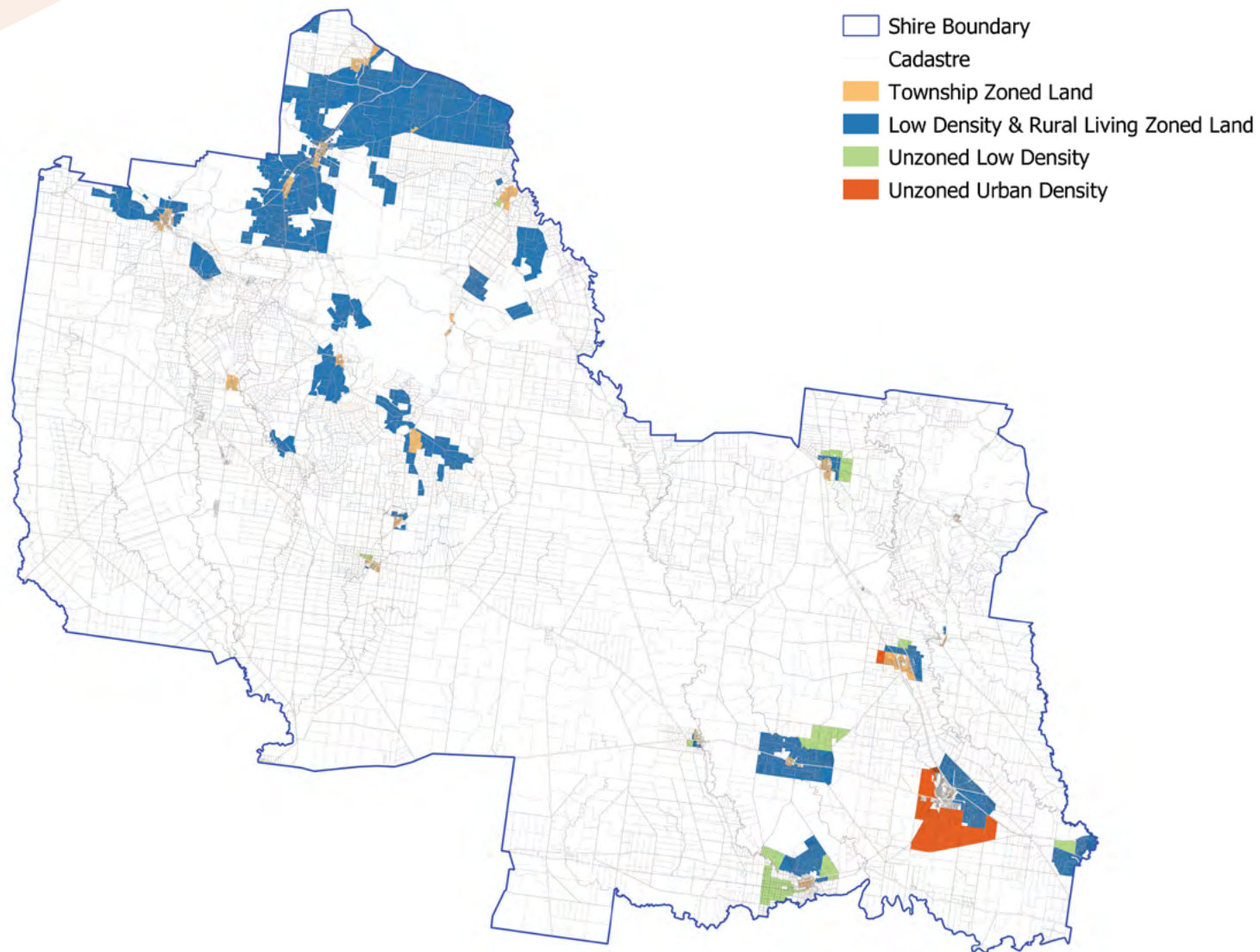
The report suggests that additional growth above the forecasts of Victoria In Future and idForecast projections could be achieved by policy intervention to capture a significant share of the Geelong and Ballarat housing markets. Golden Plains Shire has the opportunity to apply policy intervention to choose a rate of growth, locations for growth and the residential product offered.

Source: [Housing Needs Assessment completed by Spatial Economics, 2022.](#)





## RESIDENTIAL LAND SUPPLY OVERVIEW



Data Sources:  
Housing Needs Assessment, Spatial  
Economics, 2022



## STRATEGIC BUSHFIRE RISK

**The Strategic Bushfire Risk Assessment (SBRA), prepared by Kevin Hazell, Bushfire Planning. The Black Saturday bushfires in 2009 changed the way Victoria considers bushfire in planning for towns and other locations. State planning policy now requires human life to be prioritised over all other planning considerations. The Growing Places 2051 strategy must give effect to this policy, including by considering where the Shire can grow in ways that emphasise the protection of human life.**

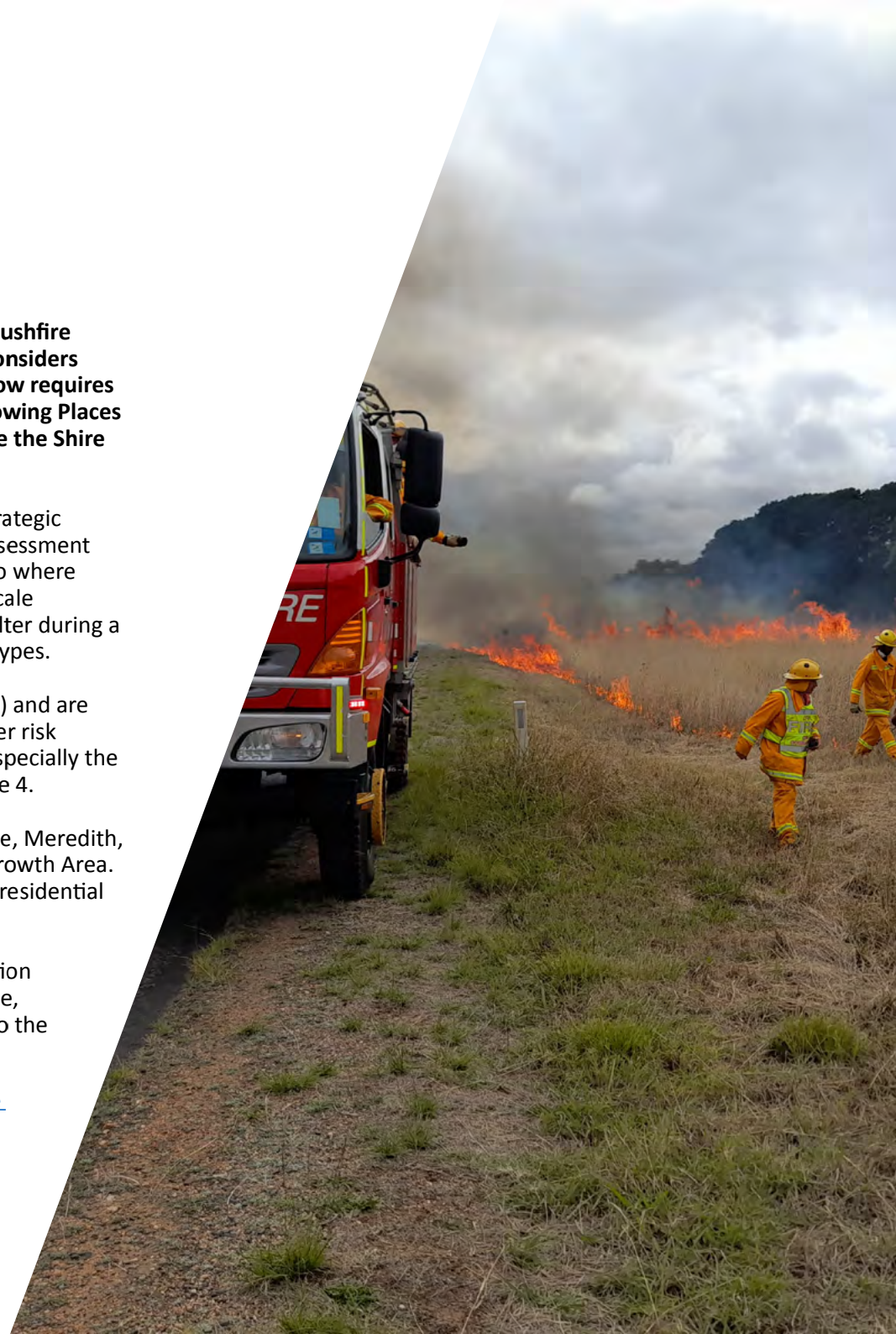
To help us understand how bushfire considerations will shape the Shire, a strategic bushfire assessment was prepared by *Kevin Hazell Bushfire Planning*. This assessment focused on what is called 'landscape' bushfire considerations. These relate to where large, uncontrollable bushfires may arise, the potential for neighbourhood scale destruction, and whether a neighbourhood has the potential for passive shelter during a bushfire event. These factors contributed to the identification of landscape types.

Landscapes Type 1 and 2 areas have a lower risk from bushfire (and grassfire) and are more suitable to allow residential growth. Landscapes Type 3 and 4 are higher risk where avoiding directing new residential growth is more necessary. This is especially the case in the higher risk northern parts of the Shire assessed as Landscape type 4.

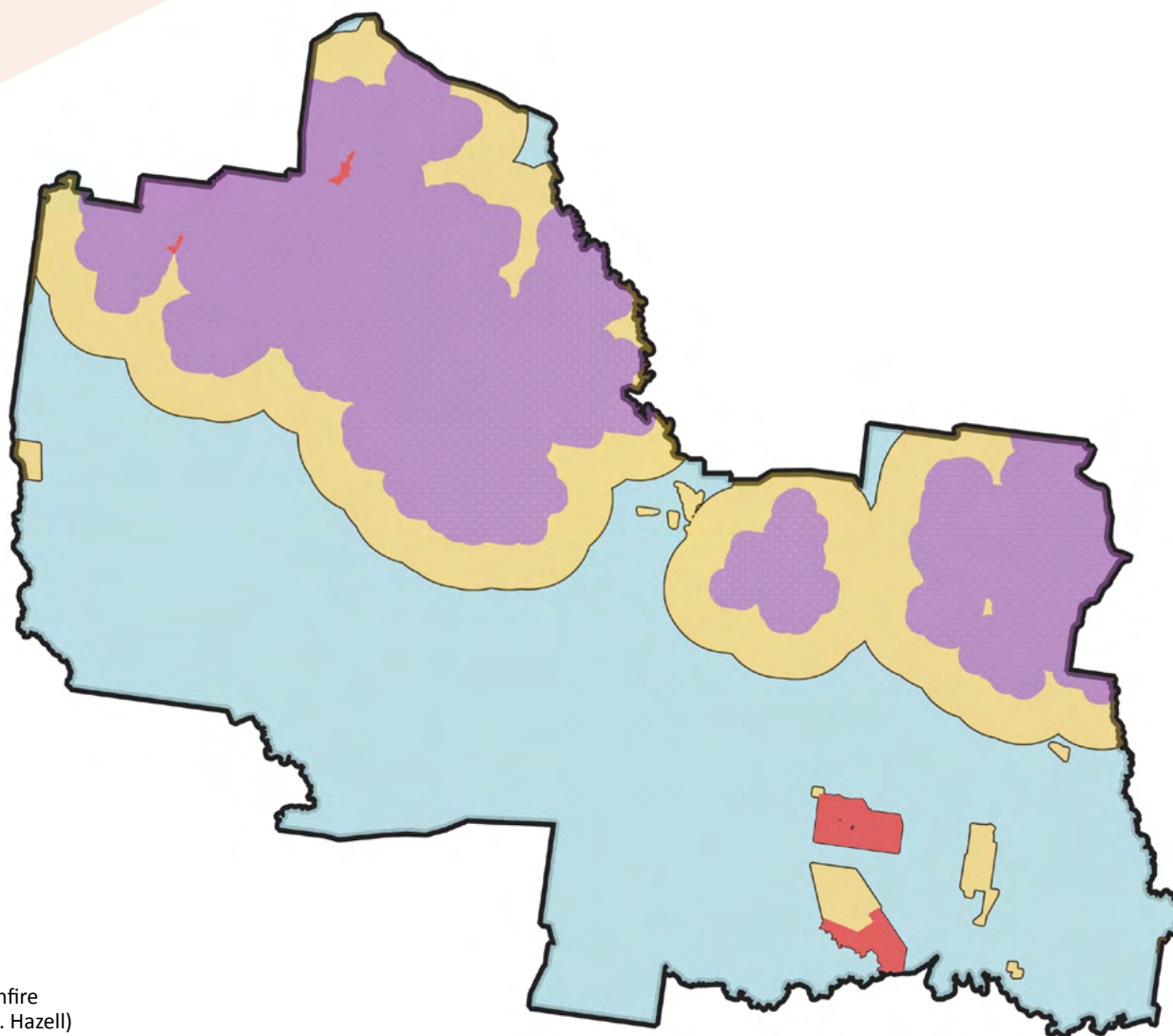
More detailed local analysis was prepared for Lethbridge, Inverleigh, Teesdale, Meredith, Napoleons, Haddon and the south east boundary with Geelong's Western Growth Area. This provides an analysis on where within an individual settlement directing residential growth is better optimised, working alongside the landscape type.

The analysis found that the south east shire boundary is optimised as a location to direct growth consistent with Landscape Type 1 being assessed. Lethbridge, Meredith to the north, Teesdale to the east, west and south and Inverleigh to the south are also suitable for growth.

Source: [Golden Plains Shire Strategic Bushfire Assessment completed by Kevin Hazell Bushfire Planning, 2022.](#)



## LANDSCAPE TYPE FPR BUSHFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT



### Key

- Bushfire Landscape Type 4
- Bushfire Landscape Type 3
- Bushfire Landscape Type 2
- LANDSCAPE\_TYPE\_1
- Shire Boundary

**Data Sources:**  
 Golden Plains Shire Strategic Bushfire  
 Assessment 12 April 2022 v1.0 (K. Hazell)  
 Natural Environment and Hazards Analysis  
 Golden Plains Shire 29 July 2022 (Landserv)

# COMMUNITY WEALTH AND WELLBEING ANALYSIS

**The function of a local economy goes beyond economic growth measures and numbers of jobs. A prosperous and optimistic economy includes a balanced distribution of wealth and opportunity, the provision of life's essentials such as housing, education, health care and political voice. Supporting local business, markets, community events and access to high quality infrastructure and services enables a strong economy and makes for a nice place to live.**

SGS Economics and Planning, undertook a Community Wealth and Wellbeing Analysis (2023) with the intention to articulate a preferred economic wellbeing vision for the future of Golden Plains. Four themes describe what wealth and wellbeing 'looks like' in the context of this outlook. The themes are:

## **Prosperous small town economies**

Promotes the ongoing viability of Golden Plains' small towns, with growth contributing to their character, vitality, inclusivity and liveability. The achievement of dense local supply changes is particularly important as a driver of sustainable, fulfilling economic activity that attracts and retains people and capital, which might otherwise be attracted to other areas.

## **Healthy, connected communities**

Promotes physical, social, political and economic health of communities. Inequality should be minimised, with the requisite social infrastructure to support Golden Plains' future population. Includes reducing health outcomes gaps and providing greater mobility and physical connection across Golden Plains to address broader social and economic inequities within the Shire.

## **A sustainable local environment**

This theme is about the health of Golden Plains' natural assets. Communities must be supported in mitigation and resilience-building activities and maximise sustainability in everyday life for Golden Plains residents and businesses.

## **Community wealth building through residential development**

This theme is about leveraging residential development to contribute to community wealth and wellbeing in Golden Plains. Retaining and growing economic strength in growth areas and distributing a proportion of this value across the towns and communities in the Shire. Ensuring social and affordable housing makes important contributions to diversity, inclusion and cohesion.

Findings of the Wealth and Wellbeing Analysis include recommendations to ensure that new development contributes to the above themes, rather than undercutting them.

Particularly important is securing equity across the Shire, with uneven patterns of advantage, disadvantage, growth and investment between communities potentially compounding in the years ahead. It is critical that the benefits of growth, likely focused in a small number of communities on the Shire's edge, are shared, resulting in improved social, economic and environmental outcomes across Golden Plains.



## SERVICE LIMITATIONS AND CIVIL INFRASTRUCTURE

Morphum Environmental developed the [Service Limitations and Civil Infrastructure Assessment \(SLACIA\)](#). The report looked into the potential growth locations that had been identified through the development of the Growing Places Strategy.

The findings inform the Golden Plains Growing Places Strategy by considering the necessary services and infrastructure required to support growth areas and ensure Golden Plains Shire remains a great place to live.

The report highlights areas within each of the five locations that have significant constraints. This information can be used by Council to reprioritise the locations if and when constraints are addressed. For example, this may include the building out of the growth areas in Ballarat and Geelong or the provision of public transport to an area.

The project includes of a framework, guidance and tools to ensure that future development aligns with the themes and objectives of the Community Vision 2040. Conceptual project examples are provided and designed to be living models that can be updated as new or better data becomes available. Regular updating can be used by the Strategic Planning Team to help prioritise growth areas and projects into the future.

## ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

In addition to the work provided by Morphum, there are other trunk infrastructure and servicing capacity matters of relevance to the prioritising of locations identified in the Growing Places Strategy, including capacity of major road infrastructure, limited public transport services; and reticulated sewerage. Changes to the status of the availability and capacity of these infrastructure items would have implications for the prioritising and enabling of particular locations.

### Transport

Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) has identified the capacity of the Hamilton and Midland Highways are expected to be reached with the planned population growth of the Western Growth Area of Geelong and Bannockburn. In consideration of this, traffic impact assessments should be undertaken as part of future detailed planning to fully appreciate access and movement demands.

The G21 Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) identifies that a 'business as usual' approach that remains heavily car dependent will constrain productivity and erode liveability as the population grows. The G21 ITS advocates for the revival of the passenger line between Geelong and Bannockburn running through Geelong's Western Growth area.

As a growing region with climate challenges, new technology and changes to the way we work, the Growing Places Strategy is a powerful spatial policy tool that enables a rethink of transport. The Growing Places Growth Scenario is aligned to the re-instatement of the passenger line between Geelong and Ballarat as a spine along which new growth can be accommodated. Meredith, Lethbridge, Bannockburn and Teesdale would be enabled to grow, based on proximity to this public transport spine. Similarly, a future population at Stonehaven could access the service through Geelong's Western Growth Area. Currently, DTP has no plans to introduce passenger rail along the Geelong to Ballarat rail corridor.

DTP's preference is to encourage increasing density within existing township boundaries to support residential population growth.

New growth areas should include provisions for integrating future public routes and infrastructure, including identifying suitable roads to enable bus route servicing. Design of growth areas should also prioritise multi-modal connectivity with pedestrian-friendly pathways, dedicated cycle lanes and public transport stops at key activity centres and schools.

### Sewerage

Existing and planned Barwon Water infrastructure in the Western Growth Area of Geelong cannot accommodate the growth scenario identified at Stonehaven. A new servicing solution (in particular sewerage) will need to be sought. It would likely need a new standalone solution or a significant upgrade to planned infrastructure.

Servicing existing towns (Meredith, Lethbridge and Teesdale) with sewerage relies on developing a case for sewerage based on environmental health issues, economic cost-benefit analysis; the level of support to local and regional planning; community support; and implementation readiness.

The findings from the SLACIA provide a framework to ensure that future growth in the Shire is located in the optimum locations and that the developments are sequenced to take advantage of existing and planned infrastructure and services.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In August 2021, Golden Plains Shire Council conducted an analysis of the required community services provision and community facilities to identify potential improvements across the Shire. This Plan has enabled departments in Council to prioritise projects by the facilities and locations of greatest need and identify facilities that have an underutilisation that provide an opportunity for alternate uses.

To help plan for the potential extra growth that may occur from the Growing Places Strategy, the CSIP has been updated with the population estimates from the proposed growth scenario. The population estimates are higher than the expected growth rates from the Housing Needs Assessment and can be used as a ceiling for the services and infrastructure requirement.

As growth locations are being planned through future structure plans, the CSIP Update will enable an estimation for the Development Contributions requirement and the land provision to provide for the future community.

## FIRST PEOPLES CULTURAL HERITAGE

As a land manager with statutory obligations, Golden Plains Shire has a responsibility to ensure the authority and interests of the Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) within the locality are acknowledged and suitably considered as part of both strategic planning and throughout the planning approval process

The Growing Places Strategy provides an opportunity to make improvements to the way Golden Plains Shire Council's statutory obligations under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018* are enacted, to ensure Aboriginal cultural heritage for the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (Wadawurrung) and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (Eastern Maar) are acknowledged, protected, and they are partnered with as part of our strategic planning and throughout the planning approval process.

### EASTERN MAAR

Council engaged with Eastern Maar, to take a shared approach to ensuring the values of the 'Meerreegeeye ngakeepoorryeeyt' Country Plan and Traditional Owners are aligned with the Shire's strategic land use directions for managing growth into the future, including the completion of a Cultural Values Assessment.

### WADAWURRUNG

Council engaged with Wadawurrung, to take a shared approach to ensuring the values of 'Paleert Tjaara Dja' – Let's make Country good together 2020-2030 and Traditional Owners to align with the Shire's strategic land use directions for managing growth into the future.

As a result of both these engagement processes, the [First Peoples Cultural Heritage Report](#) was prepared with consideration to the timeframe of the Growing Places Strategy, ensuring the report and the subsequent actions cover broader changes including:

- the continuation of self-determination for First Peoples and Treaty within Victoria
- the potential of expansion of Native Title and/or Recognition and Settlement Agreement for both RAPs, Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar.

The Cultural Heritage actions outlined in this report cover the areas of

- Traditional Knowledge.
- Protection of Cultural Heritage.
- Visibility of Cultural Heritage through recognition and use of language
- Supporting history and culture within the design of the landscape and public infrastructure of identified growth areas.
- Taking care of Country and waterways, rivers and wetlands through their protection and enhancement.
- Enabling the transition to healthy Country through providing areas of cultural burning practises to build resilient ecosystems, cultural connectiveness to Country and reduce the risk of bushfire.

These actions will underpin our commitment to a collaborative partnership and journey towards reconciliation within the Growing Places Strategy and Council as a whole.





## POST CONTACT HERITAGE

The Growing Places Strategy provides an opportunity to make improvements to the way Golden Plains Shire statutory obligations under the *Heritage Act 2017* are enacted, to ensure post contact heritage is acknowledged, protected, and is part of Council's strategic planning throughout the planning approval process.

The [Post Contact Heritage Report](#) was prepared with consideration to the length of time that the Growing Places Strategy spans, the intricate relationship between history and heritage and the proposed new development areas.

The Post Contact Heritage actions outlined in this report cover the areas of:

- respecting First Peoples' perspective of colonial history;
- registered heritage places will be incorporated into the urban landscape, which protects and conserves the heritage place/s;
- investigations of potential heritage places prior to urban development; and
- dry stone walls will be protected and incorporated into the urban landscape to contribute to the understanding of historical family practices in the Shire.

These Post Contact Heritage actions will underpin our commitment to a collaborative approach through the Growing Places Strategy, Council as a whole and Heritage Victoria.





# WHAT IS LEFT?

## How have these known challenges and opportunities informed us?

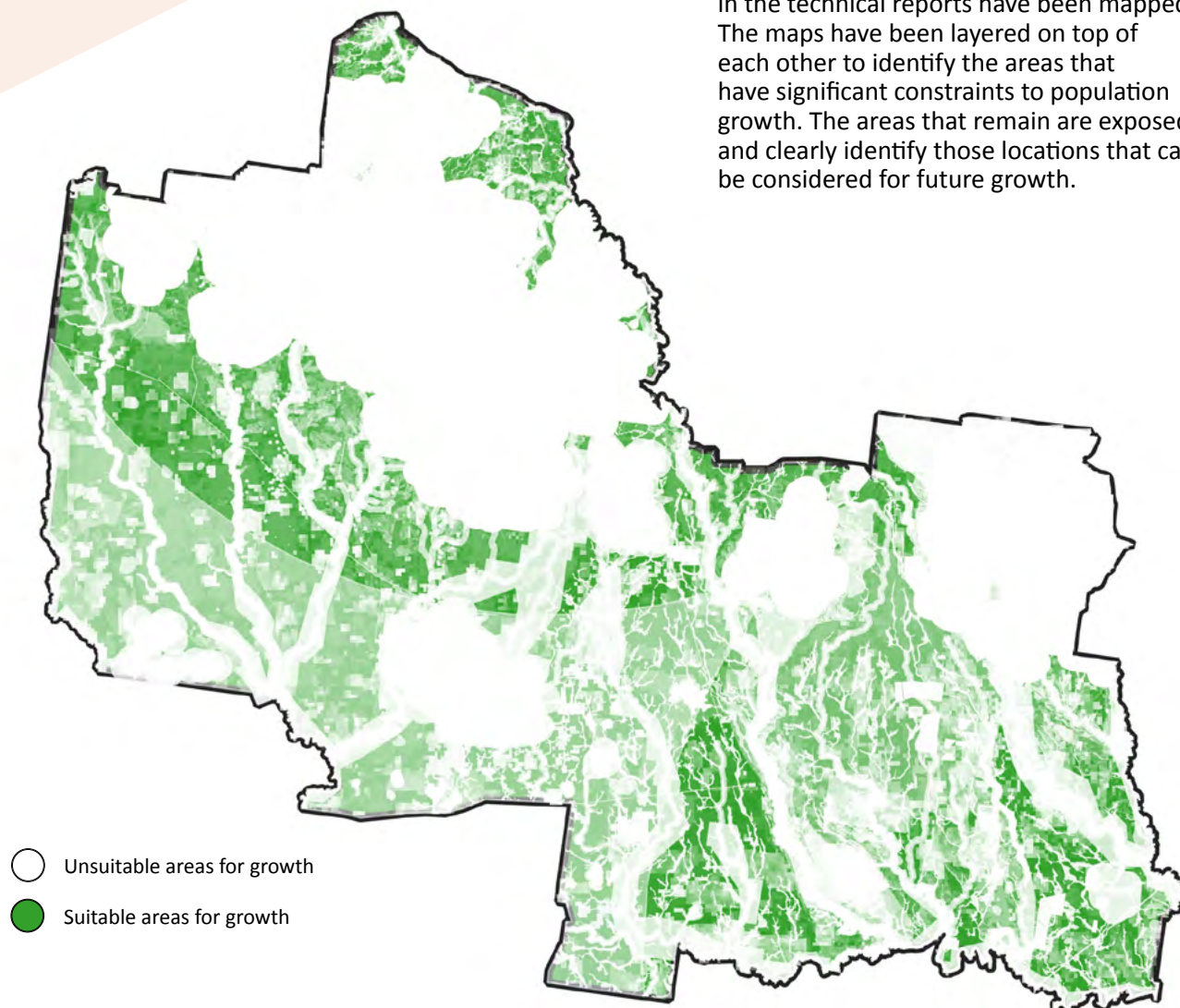
The challenges and opportunities revealed in the technical reports have been mapped. The maps have been layered on top of each other to identify the areas that have significant constraints to population growth. The areas that remain are exposed and clearly identify those locations that can be considered for future growth.

## Where do we Grow?

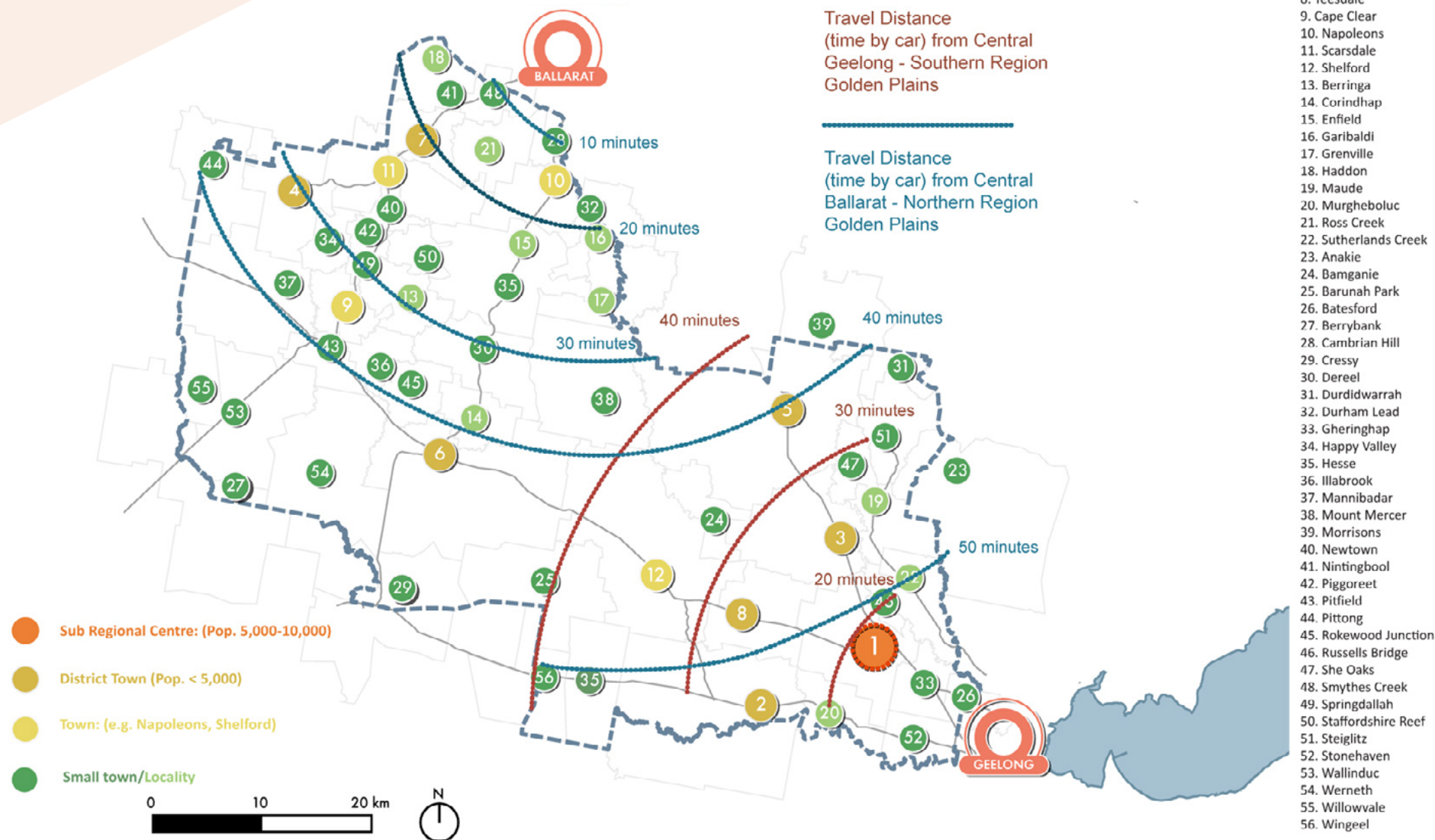
The 'What is Left?' map clearly demonstrates that there are significant areas of the Shire that are not suitable for residential growth. The north of the Shire in particular has few areas free from hazards. The priority locations considered for growth will be the uncoloured or lighter coloured sections.

The Housing Needs Assessment identified that the areas in most demand for growth were within commuter distance of either Geelong or Ballarat. The Characteristics and Comparative Significance Assessment provided a hierarchy of towns, showing the locations with better access to services which are more suited to grow. The summation from these two can be seen on the 'Hierarchy and Travel Times' figure.

Other considerations will be further explored in the Service Limitations and Civil Infrastructure Analysis, which will add further information about those locations that have opportunities or limitations due to services such as power and water and transport including roads and public transport.

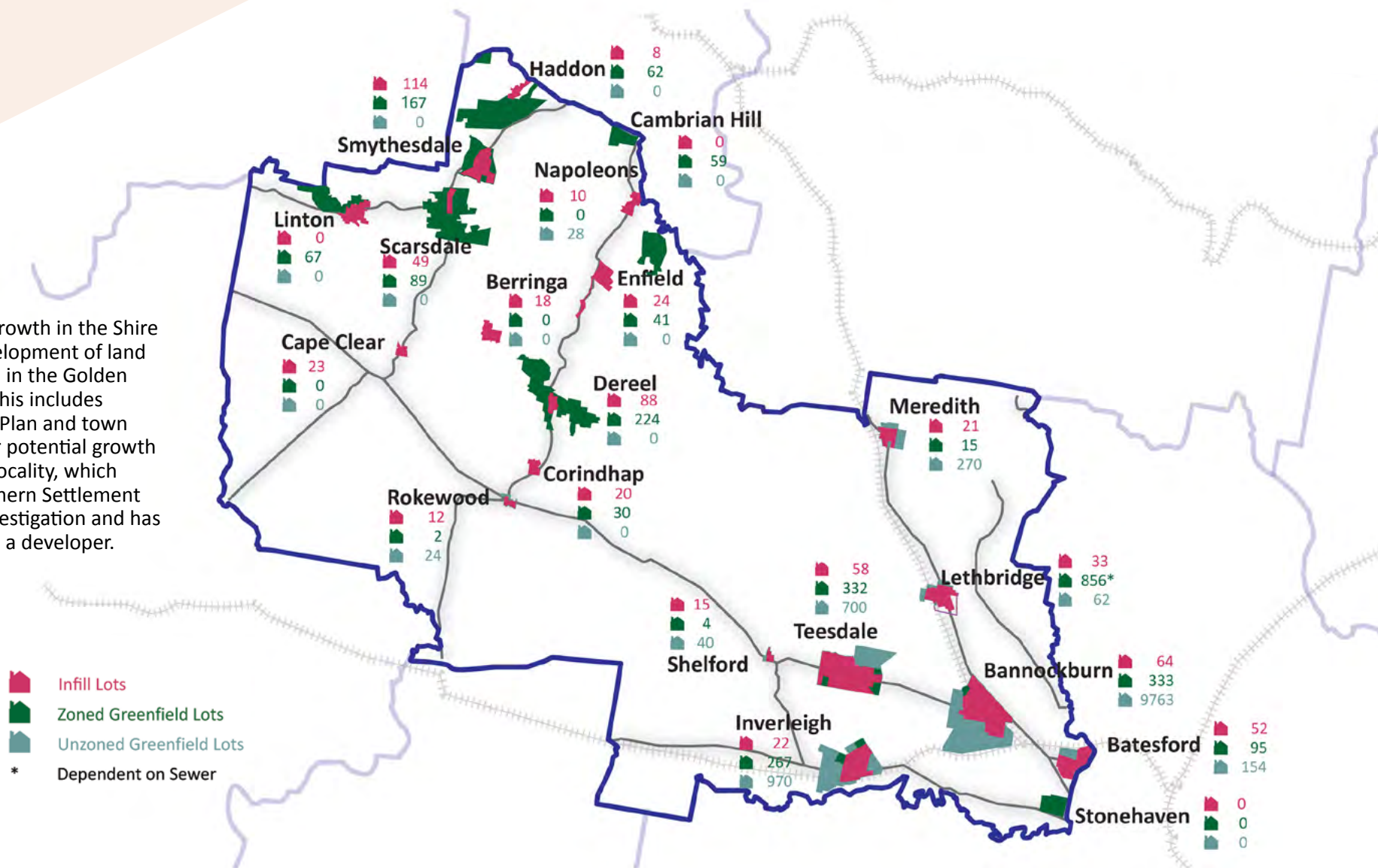


## HEIRARCHY AND TRAVEL TIMES



## CURRENT PLANNED GROWTH

Within the next decade, growth in the Shire will be dominated by development of land which is already identified in the Golden Plains Planning Scheme. This includes the Bannockburn Growth Plan and town Structure Plans. The other potential growth area is the Cambrian Hill locality, which was identified in the Northern Settlement Strategy as an area for investigation and has recently had interest from a developer.

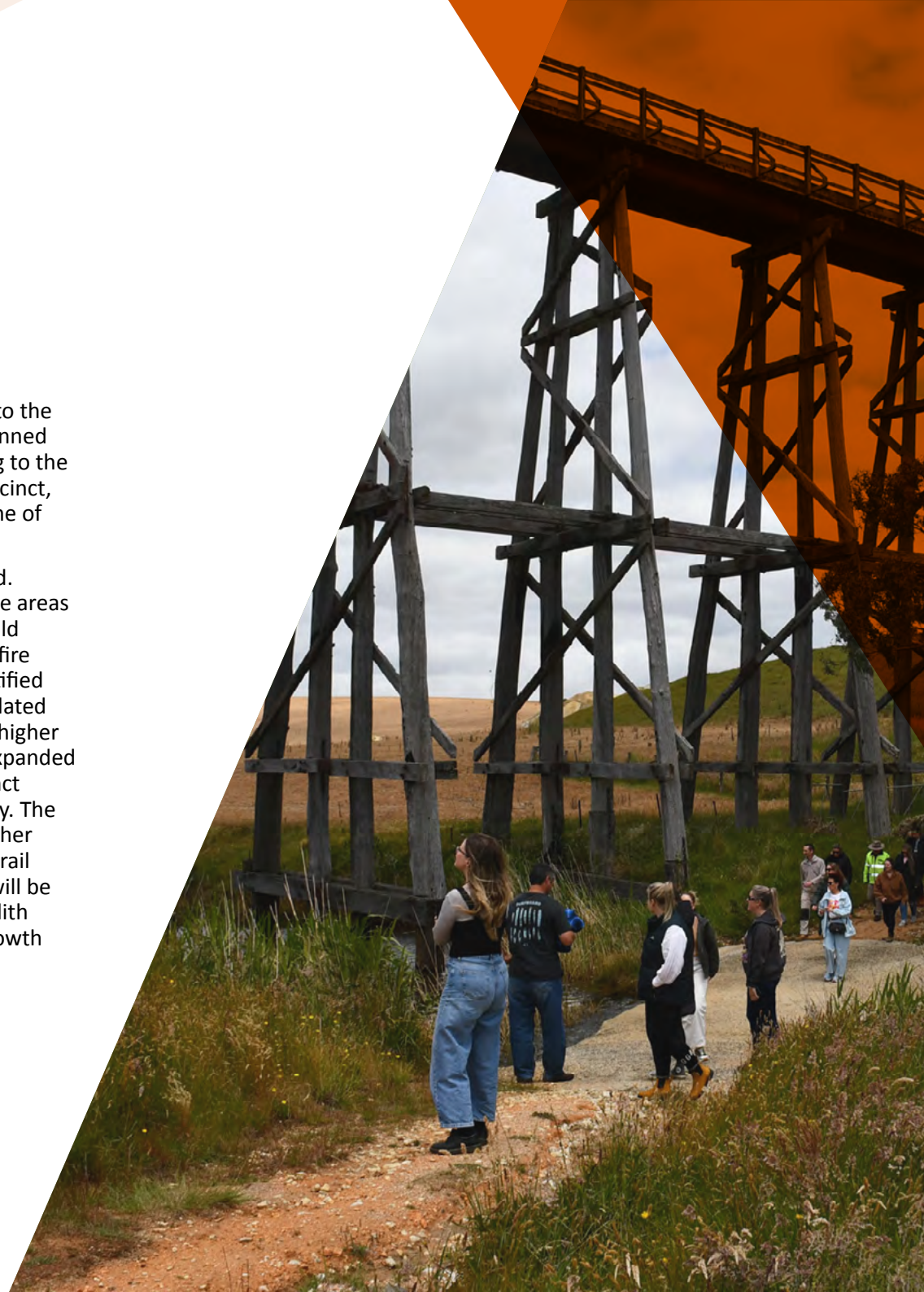




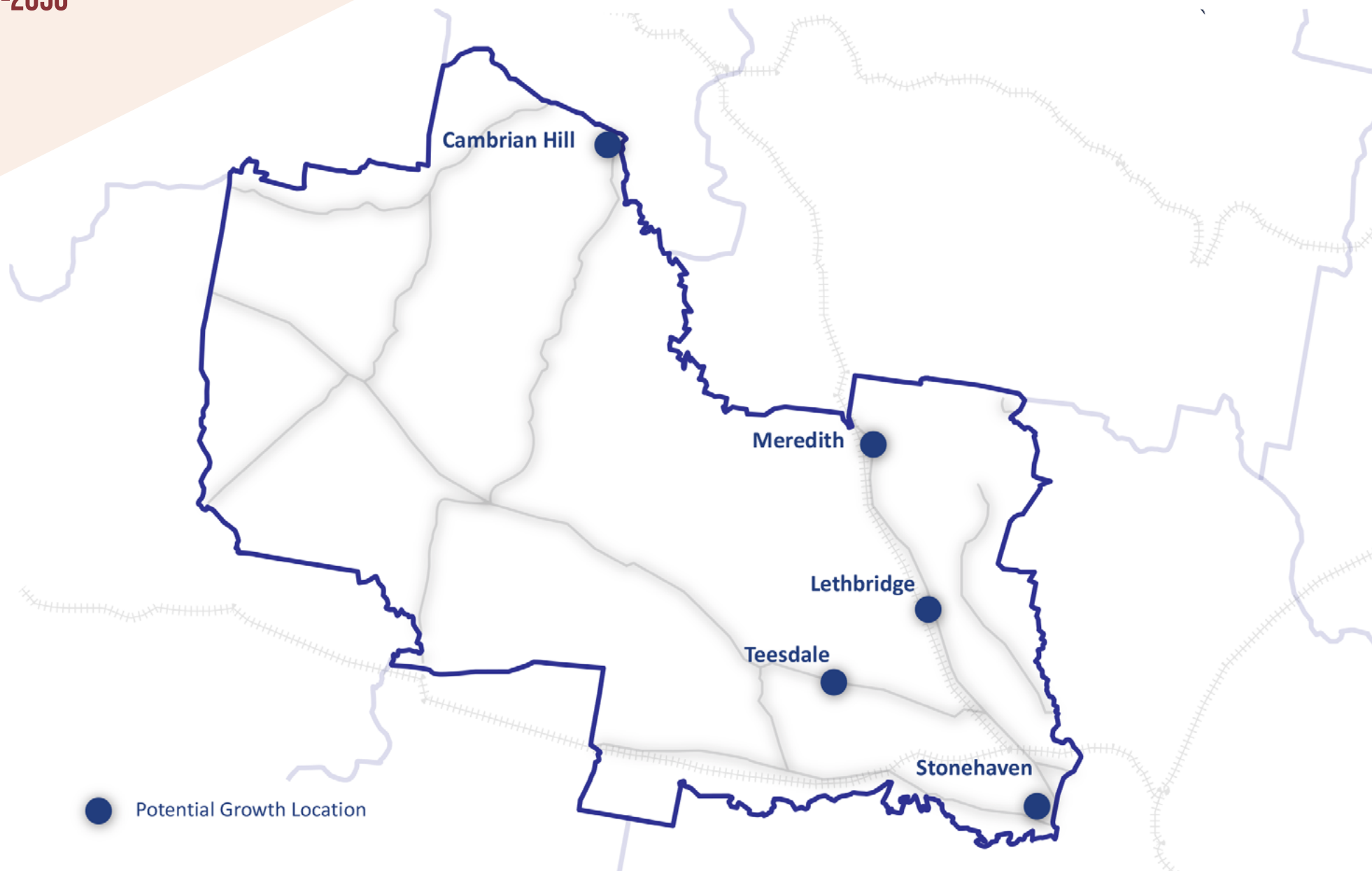
# WHEN DO WE GROW?

From 2030, there is opportunity to grow in connection to the Western Geelong Growth Area (WGGA). This area is planned to extend the urban edge of the City of Greater Geelong to the border with Golden Plains Shire. The McCanns Lane Precinct, which encompasses the area adjacent to the Shire, is one of three precincts in WGGA listed for the medium term.

Beyond 2040, new growth areas will need to be planned. Analysis of bushfire risk of towns within the commutable areas found that Meredith, Teesdale and Lethbridge's risk could be reduced by designing growth areas with strong bushfire mitigation features. Meredith has been previously identified as a priority for reticulated sewerage provision. If reticulated sewerage is provided, that creates an ability to provide higher density residential areas, with increased services and expanded employment to help service the Food Production Precinct and existing agricultural business such as Meredith Dairy. The location and density of development would require further strategic work in updating Structure Plans. If passenger rail on the Geelong to Ballarat train line is resumed, there will be further justification for growth in Lethbridge and Meredith and may require the acceleration of the planning for growth in these towns.



## POTENTIAL GROWTH 2020-2050



2025

**INCORPORATE THE FINDINGS OF THE GROWING PLACES STRATEGY INTO THE GOLDEN PLAINS PLANNING SCHEME**

- Golden Plains Shire
- CFA

**LONGER TERM****NEW MEREDITH STRUCTURE PLAN**

When reticulated sewer becomes available

- Golden Plains Shire
- Barwon Water

**NEW LETHBRIDGE STRUCTURE PLAN**

When existing identified growth areas are developed

- Golden Plains Shire

**NEW TEESDALE STRUCTURE PLAN**

When existing identified growth areas are developed

- Golden Plains Shire

**FACILITATE DELIVERY OF RESIDENTIAL LAND IN CAMBRIAN HILL**

- Golden Plains Shire
- DTP

**INVESTIGATE STONEHAVEN AS A LOCATION FOR GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT**

- Golden Plains Shire

**NEXT STEPS**

**This informing document will be used in the development of the Growing Places Strategy. The Strategy will update the Golden Plains Planning Scheme in readiness for the anticipated and planned growth over the coming decades.**

Additional work will be undertaken to incorporate the recommendations of the Strategic Bushfire Risk Assessment and associated reports. This work will culminate in a Planning Scheme Amendment in the coming years.

After the Strategy has been completed, Precinct Structure Plans will be required for Cambrian Hill and Stonehaven to plan for new communities in these regions, and updates to the town Structure Plans for Meredith, Lethbridge and Teesdale will need to be prepared before any newly planned additional expansion of towns can occur.



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