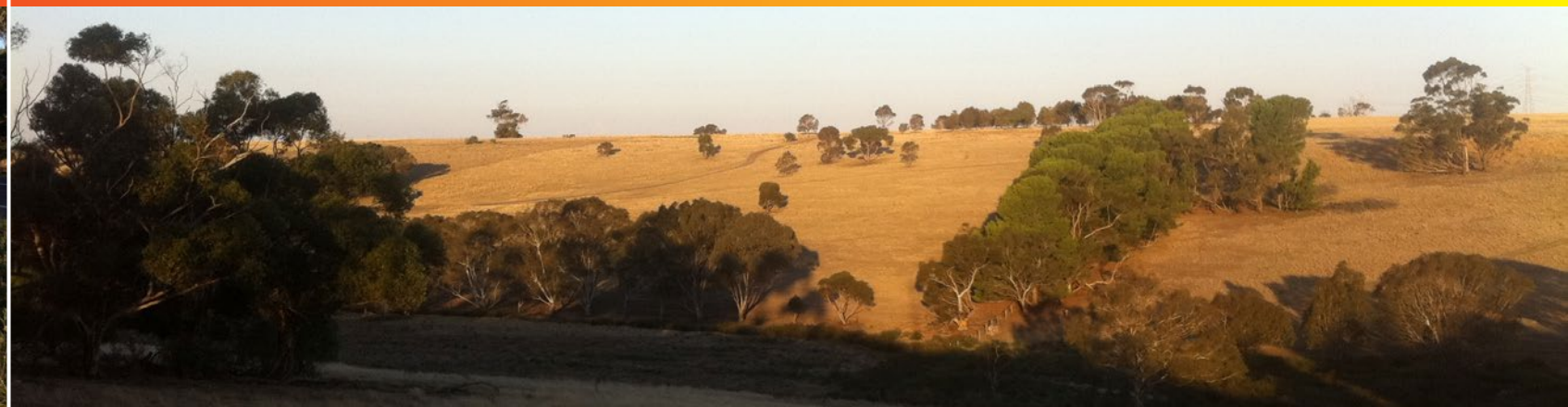


GHERINGHAP



Structure Plan



**PARSONS
BRINCKERHOFF**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and objectives

This Structure Plan has been prepared by the Golden Plains Shire with input from the local community, key stakeholders, government agencies and service providers.

The Gheringhap Structure Plan sets out the long term vision to guide future development providing a clear plan for the future. The Plan identifies: the type and form of development that should be encouraged in Gheringhap; the areas in which development should be directed; and identifies infrastructure and services upgrades required to meet the overall vision for the area.

The Golden Plains Planning Scheme Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) as identified in the Planning Scheme provides clear direction regarding the required content of Structure Plans. This is stated as follows:

“a preferred layout of residential, commercial, community and other land uses based on a ten (10) year outlook. The structure plans are designed to meet a variety of objectives including quality of lifestyle, environmental quality, and economic and quality tourist opportunities. The opportunity for coordinated town improvements, in terms of the location, appearance and servicing of use and development, has also been identified.”

Golden Plains Planning Scheme Clause 21.03.

This Structure Plan has been informed by the following:

- Community and key stakeholder views to assist in identifying opportunities, constraints and developing an overall vision for the area.
- Information provided by key service providers to identify the capacity of existing services and the need for future services and facilities
- Technical studies including a Flora and Fauna and Heritage Study and an Engineering Services Assessment prepared for the project
- Key strategies and policies including:
 - ▶ Gheringhap Development Review Study, 1996
 - ▶ Review of South-East Area Golden Plains Shire, 2007
 - ▶ Golden Plains Rural Land Use Strategy, 2008
 - ▶ Revised Bannockburn Urban Design Framework 2011
 - ▶ Golden Plains Shire Planning Scheme
- Background studies including:
 - ▶ Geelong Regional Airport Feasibility Study, 2011
 - ▶ Geelong Intermodal Freight Terminal Feasibility Study, 2007

1.2 Boundary

The Gheringhap Structure Plan area is shown on Figure 1

The area is irregular in shape as it takes in to consideration a number of existing constraints and conditions in the locality. It also accounts for various strategic decisions already committed to in previous planning studies including the ‘Review of the south-east area Golden Plains Shire’.

The Structure Plan area encompasses 14 lots and has an area of approximately 173ha.



Figure 1 Gheringhap Structure Plan Area

1.3 Vision

The overall vision for Gheringhap has been developed through a review of background material, policies, strategies and community and stakeholder consultation. The vision statement is as follows:

To balance the rural character and lifestyle of Gheringhap while providing for future business opportunities and community facilities that are appropriately located, sited and designed so to protect the rural, natural and amenity features of the area.

The 10 principles supporting this overarching vision statement are as follows. These are explained in more detail in Section 6 of this Structure Plan.

1. **Encourage a 'planned' approach to development, avoiding ad hoc decisions.**
2. **Limit development on parcels of land which have existing constraints/commitments.**
3. **Protect existing assets and infrastructure. Maximise the opportunities that these services provide for businesses, the community and the region as a whole.**
4. **Ensure that the costs of the development are met by those who benefit.**
5. **Consider the existing character of the Gheringhap environment.**
6. **Provide for the development of business and commercial activities which do not**

adversely affect the safety and amenity of the local community.

7. **Increase the safety of the existing road network.**
8. **Discourage residential development on land designated for employment.**
9. **Protect existing industry and employment activities. Avoid constraining their potential.**
10. **Provide for flexibility, allowing Gheringhap to respond to changes in demand and growth. Assist in ensuring that the community remains resilient over time.**

1.4 Implementation

A major consideration in the completion of this project has been the need to provide a flexible and dynamic strategic Plan that recognises the existing capability of Gheringhap and the key influences on its growth. The projected growth within Geelong and the anticipated development of Bannockburn and Batesford, will substantially determine the capability of Gheringhap to develop as a key employment area. There is also a need to protect the economic and social development within these townships, and avoid any competition for employment development.

A further consideration in the implementation of the Plan is that although Gheringhap has major utilities in close proximity, these services require substantial capital investment to provide for access and augmentation of the individual utility system.

1.5 Report Structure

This Structure Plan includes the following Sections:

- **Section 2** Regional role, environment and existing conditions
- **Section 3** Policy context
- **Section 4** Community and Stakeholder Engagement
- **Section 5** Vision for Gheringhap
- **Section 6** Planning for Gheringhap – Strategic Response
- **Section 7** Implementation
- **Section 8** Monitoring and Review

This Structure Plan has been informed by completion of a comprehensive literature review, completion of a SWOT analysis and through consultation with key stakeholders and the community.

2. Regional role, environment and existing conditions

2.1 Metropolitan and regional context

Gheringhap is situated approximately 80km to the south-west of the Melbourne Central Business District (CBD), approximately 15km north-west of Geelong and 6km south-east of Bannockburn. It is located in the south-eastern area of the Golden Plains Shire. Figure 2 shows the location of Gheringhap in a regional context.

The greater south-east region of the Golden Plains Shire is rapidly changing as a result of an increasing population, changes in agricultural markets, expansion of the Melbourne metropolitan urban boundary and the recent completion of the Geelong Bypass. These trends are putting pressure on resources including land, infrastructure and community facilities. While there is an increasing demand for such development, there is a general desire by local residents and the community to maintain the 'rural character' of the area that is reflective of the low-density land use.

Traditionally, the economic strength of the region has been based on the agricultural market, mainly sheep grazing and broad acre cropping. However, over recent years the area has seen growth in the intensive farming sector, particularly poultry and pigs as well as in the wine making and tourism sectors.

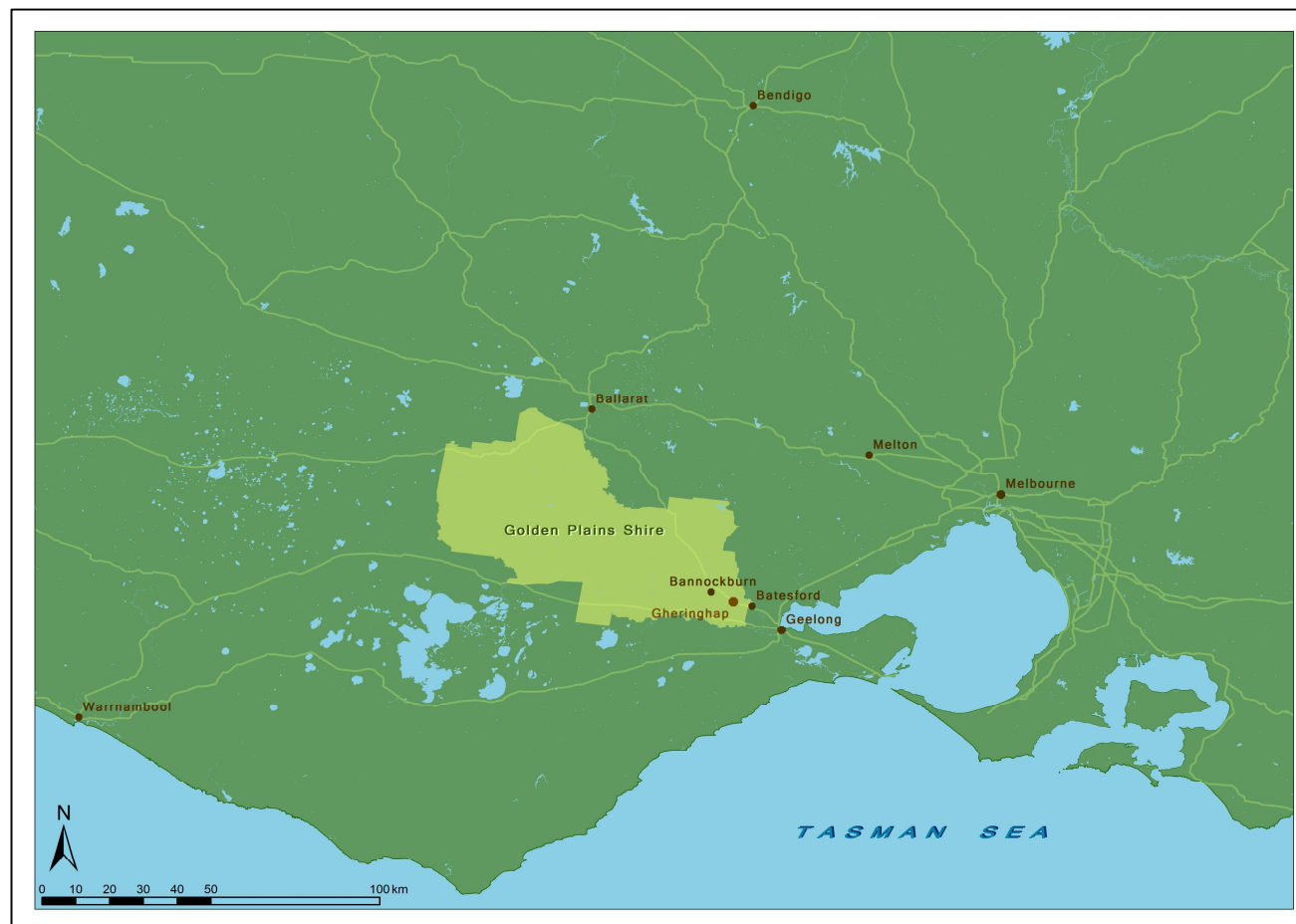


Figure 2 Regional Context

The area around Gheringhap is predominately used for rural purposes and mainly grazing purposes. There are two urban settlements located in close proximity to Gheringhap; Bannockburn

located to the north-west and Batesford located to the south-east. These are also shown on Figure 2.

Bannockburn, situated approximately 6km from Gheringhap, is the administration centre of Golden Plains Shire, with Council offices as well as an established shopping, education, health and social facility precinct. Recent policy prepared for this

area including the *Revised Bannockburn Urban Design Framework 2011*, seeks to further emphasise the role of Bannockburn as the major centre making provision for further residential and commercial growth and development. The Bannockburn township is the primary source of commercial, community and recreation facilities for Gheringhap.

Batesford is a smaller township located to the south-east of Gheringhap. Both Bannockburn and Batesford are designated areas where future growth and development is to be focused, as noted in the *Bannockburn Urban Design Framework* and the *Batesford Framework Plan*. The provision of new services, facilities and infrastructure associated with residential growth is also to be directed to these areas.

2.1.1 Regional trends

There are a number of key trends which are influencing the Shire's rural assets which have been considered as part of this Structure Plan. These are as follows:

- Increasing demand for land, as pressure arises following the construction of the Geelong Bypass. This is primarily in regard to better access to key infrastructure and locations, for example, Geelong and Melbourne.
- Loss of agricultural land through subdivision for rural-residential sized lots. This is now

more effectively managed and its impact is less apparent.

- Steady population growth over the last 15 years, with the majority of the population concentrated in the south-east, within existing townships (i.e., Bannockburn). With population growth comes community requirements and expectations in regards to access to suitable services and facilities in close proximity.
- Increasing demand for residential and rural-living development in the areas surrounding Gheringhap, particularly Bannockburn and Batesford. This has resulted in a trend of creating and selling small individual lots with limited agricultural productivity, but offering an increased range of lifestyle opportunities.
- It is expected based on economic projections that the demand for lower priced rural-residential lots will increase in the south-east region. This is partly due to the lower land price for larger sized allotments in these locations.
- Growth in the intensive agricultural industry, particularly specialist livestock and wine making.
- Given the high demand for land in the area, rural land prices are increasing, reducing the attractiveness of the area for agricultural purposes. This was confirmed by farmers who owned land in Gheringhap and were unable to

afford to expand their holding to increase production.

- Depletion and loss of native vegetation has resulted in the reduction in biodiversity values.
- Protection of natural resources, the water quality in rivers and streams and the protection of the Shire's landscape assets. Inappropriate land use patterns such as vegetation clearance and polluted runoff are contributing to the water quality issues within the Shire. Increased attention to landcare projects and the extension of vegetation corridors along rivers and creeks is required.
- Economic projections indicate the potential of growth in employment levels in the Shire attributed to increasing accessibility and the indirect benefits as a result of the construction of major infrastructure (i.e., the Geelong Bypass).
- Lack of water supply and restrictions in some areas. Upgrades are likely to be required to accommodate future growth. Consideration needs to be given to the additional water consumption needs of piggeries, broiler farms and other agricultural industries.
- Community desire to maintain the 'rural lifestyle' and 'non-urban' breaks between designated rural townships. There is however an expectation for a certain level of social and physical infrastructure to be provided within the Shire. Issues arise when development is

isolated or dispersed (i.e., limited access to existing infrastructure).

- The south east area has a number of infrastructure and locational attributes that will prove to be attractive to certain forms of development.

These trends are relevant to the Gheringhap locality as they influence the demand for land, facilities and resources, which will ultimately impact on the overall direction for the area. It is important that this Structure Plan recognises and addresses these trends to ensure the overall plan for Gheringhap is reflective of the regional context. This is dealt with in further details in Sections 5 through to Section 7.

2.2 Local context

2.2.1 Land use and topography

Gheringhap is a small rural settlement situated north and south of the Midland Highway and the standard gauge railway. The railway and highway bisects the settlement into two parts, with the majority of the existing residential (rural-living style development) and agricultural development occurring to the south.

The general topography of the area to the north of the railway line is flat up to approximately 2-3km north of the Midland Highway, after which the Moorabool River corridor creates a significant intrusion into the plain, with undulating valleys. To

the south of the Midland Highway the land is generally flat and with minor variations in slope.

There is no conventional residential development within Gheringhap, however, there are pockets of rural-living type development; one located at the northern end of Ryan Road near the Midland Highway; and one along a 1200 meter stretch of McCurdys Road, south of the Midland Highway. All land within the Structure Plan area is zoned Farming Zone (FZ).

Historically the land within the Gheringhap locality has been used for agricultural purposes, mainly broadacre sheep, cattle grazing and cropping. However, the area has been recently noted as having poor soil quality, meaning that the majority of the area is unsuitable for intensive agricultural activities. Over time there has also been an expansion into intensive animal industry such as poultry farming, with these activities generally located to the south of the Midland Highway, around McCurdys Road and Booleys Road.

The development of poultry farms in these locations has resulted, in some cases, with a sensitive land use (i.e. residential) being located in close proximity to these farms. There is a need to recognise and manage any potential conflicts between these two land uses, avoiding adverse impacts on the amenity values of residential land uses. It is noted that while current planning guidelines (*Poultry Farming Planning Guide*) recommend a minimum 500m buffer between sensitive land uses such as residential development and poultry farms, development prior to these policies has resulted in some houses being located as close as 100m from

existing poultry farms (i.e. development within the vicinity of McCurdys Road). This conflict needs to be managed and further development which would compound this issue should be discouraged.

There are no other significant land uses within the Gheringhap locality.

2.2.2 Environment

Character and setting

Land within Gheringhap is relatively flat with much of the land previously cleared of vegetation. The flat open plains are considered by the local community to be a defining feature of Gheringhap and the wider Golden Plains south-eastern region. Figure 3 shows the view from Bakers Bridge Road, looking east over the northern area of the Gheringhap precinct across the valley of the Moorabool River.

Other identifiable features include a large ephemeral wetland located between the railway line and the Midland Highway. This wetland is known to fill during rainfall periods, providing water resources in the locality for many terrestrial fauna groups. In addition, there is a small dam located to the north of the Midland Highway, south of Bakers Bridge Road, which provides a water source for livestock.

The grade separation of the Midland Highway and the Geelong- Ballarat railway line is an identifiable and defining element of the township. This is shown in Figure 4.

The remainder of the area consists mainly of large parcels of land, approximately 1 to 10 hectares in area. As noted above these are used primarily for agricultural purposes with some rural-living style development located around Ryan Road and along McCurdys Road.

Watercourses, Flooding and drainage

There are a number of major watercourses that traverse the Shire and which largely shape the topography and environmental features of the area.

These include the Moorabool River (to the north-east of Gheringhap), Sutherland Creek, the Barwon River and Bruce's Creek watercourses (to the south-west of Gheringhap). While these river systems are attractive and highly valued for their environmental and amenity features, they are generally in poor condition. Environmental Significance Overlays (ESO) as identified in the Planning Scheme, apply to the north of Gheringhap, along the Moorabool River and to the west along Bruce's Creek.

Low lying areas, particularly in the north and west of the Structure Plan area are prone to flooding. These areas are identified as being 'Land Subject to Inundation (LSIO)' as shown on the Planning Maps in the Golden Plains Planning Scheme.

In addition, a large ephemeral wetland is located north-west of the Structure Plan area, between the rail line and Midland Highway. This wetland is known to fill during high rainfall periods, providing attenuation of stormwater during peak periods, assisting with flood avoidance and management of the surrounding area. A number of depressions and

minor wetlands are also present within the vicinity of the Moorabool River north of Gheringhap.

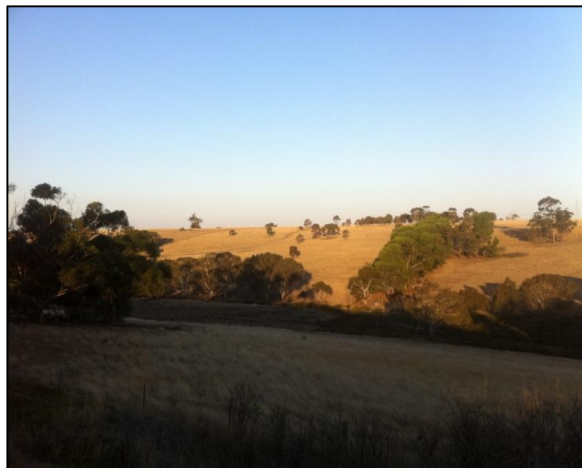


Figure 3 View from Bakers Bridge Road, looking east



Figure 4 View towards the bridge over the railway line looking south-east

Flora, Fauna and Ecological Communities

Gheringhap and its surrounds contain a number of significant flora and fauna species, scattered throughout the locality. These are as follows:

- Seven Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) located within the investigation area as shown on Figure 1 contained in Appendix A, all of which are classified as Endangered. These EVCs are distributed mainly to the north-west and south-east of the study area.
- Vegetation communities mapping within the study area corresponds with three threat-listed ecological communities under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC) and the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG). This relates to the EVC 55 – Plains Grassy Woodland and natural temperate grasslands, distributed throughout the Gheringhap Structure Plan area as shown on Figure 1 in Appendix A.
- Twenty two (22) threat-listed species of animal have been recorded within the study area, 13 of which form recent records (>1980.)
- One BioSite of regional significance located within the north-eastern area of the Gheringhap precinct, and two BioSites (both of State significance) located to the east, outside of the precinct.

The identified wetland also provides water resources in the locality for many terrestrial fauna groups.

It is noted that these areas have been mapped at a high level and that further on-ground investigations will need to be undertaken to confirm the presence, and the precise location of these species. This will need to be undertaken at the time of considering specific development proposals within the mapped areas.

2.2.3 Heritage and culture

A review of the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) data layer shows an area of cultural heritage sensitivity, located within the northern portion of the Gheringhap locality. This is based on sensitive attributes such as proximity to water courses, known aboriginal sites and/or other areas of cultural heritage significance. Any development proposals within this area will be subject to a requirement to prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) unless it has a specific exemption under the *Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

There are also a number of historical archaeological sites located to the north, south and east of the Gheringhap locality, however these are located outside of the Gheringhap Structure Plan area. See Figure 2 in Appendix A for details.

Whilst there are a number of local heritage significant properties in the vicinity of the Structure Plan area, there are no World Heritage properties or National Heritage places.

2.2.4 Demographics

The Gheringhap locality is a small rural settlement with a total of 47 houses located on 122 parcels of land. While there has been rapid growth within the south-east region as a whole, the rate of development within Gheringhap is slow, with only 3 dwellings constructed in the past 5 years and no new development in the past 2 years.

Within the Structure Plan area, it has been determined that there are 8 houses located on 16 different lots. The total population is therefore considered to be approximately 20 people based on the assumption that there are 2.5 persons per household¹.

It is expected that this number will not dramatically increase in the foreseeable future.

2.2.5 Employment

Traditionally agriculture has been the economic strength of the south-east region of Golden Plains Shire, for primary production (mostly dryland farming), sheep grazing and broad acre cropping as well as intensive animal industries such as poultry and some viticultural industries. However, it is noted that while there are a number of productive agricultural enterprises in the region, these activities do not provide sufficient employment opportunities for the region as a whole and there is a high reliance on off-farm income with residents

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Household and Family Projections Australia 2021 to 2026*

commuting to areas outside of the Shire (i.e., Geelong) for work opportunities.

This situation has been confirmed by local residents who, during the consultation processes undertaken for the preparation of this Structure Plan, have confirmed that Geelong and Bannockburn, and in some cases Melbourne, are the primary locations for employment. Gheringhap residents typically travel to these locations on a daily basis to access work.

The significance of the projected growth in industrial land use within Geelong is that when there is major competition for development sites within industrial areas, the attractiveness of alternative sites such as Gheringhap is increased. This is due to the price of land within Gheringhap being considered to be cheaper than in Geelong.

2.2.6 Transport

Gheringhap is situated in relatively close proximity to Geelong and has good access to the Geelong Ring Road, the Hamilton Highway and the Port of Geelong.

The Midland Highway and the Fyansford-Gheringhap Road both serve as significant road links, providing access between Geelong and Ballarat.

Local access roads within Gheringhap include: Ryan Road, which extends directly off the Midland Highway to the south; McCurdys Road which extends off Ryan Road to the west; and Bakers Bridge Road which connects to the Midland

Highway from the north. These local roads consist of sealed pavements which are adequate for low vehicle traffic volumes. While it is noted that some of these roads are used by trucks servicing the existing agricultural activities in the area, upgrades are likely to be required in the event that any substantial development occurs in the area.

A bus service runs between Geelong and Ballarat and stops at Gheringhap four times a day.

The standard gauge railway line, which runs through the centre of the study area, provides access to Geelong, Ballarat and other areas within Australia. The railway line is an important regional rail link, and has the potential to be used for future additional freight and passenger services. It is also nationally significant as it connects Melbourne to other major cities including Adelaide and Perth.

It is noted that there is no existing station or stop within Gheringhap. There is however, an existing siding to the north of the Midland Highway used in an operational capacity.

Given the train line currently provides a major piece of infrastructure, it was considered as part of this structure planning process in terms of providing opportunities for the development of land adjacent the train line for activities which require rail access. Advice was sought from the Department of Transport (DoT), in relation to potential development opportunities and whether or not they would support such development. At this time, the DoT would generally support development adjacent to the railway and within the Structure Plan area. Any future development proposals would be

assessed on merit and the associated impact on the rail infrastructure at the time of application.

It was also noted that any new development proposed in the area should be designed so that it does not jeopardise the existing and future operations of the railway system. Development would therefore need to respond to existing amenity impacts of train operations including noise

2.2.7 Infrastructure

The study area has significant strategic infrastructure assets which serve regional and state functions See Figure 1 and 2 in Appendix B for details of these assets. In summary, these are as follows:

- A 500mm diameter high pressure gas pipeline, with APA Gasnet being the owner of this asset. The pipeline runs east to west crossing over Steiglitz Road and Moorabool River before changing direction, heading south-west, crossing the Geelong and Ballarat Rail Line, the Midland Highway and Fyansford-Gheringhap Road. The pipeline then continues south-west towards the Hamilton Highway.
- A 500 kV high voltage power line runs west across the study area, beginning near the intersection of Steiglitz Road and Geelong-Ballan Road, crossing the Midland Highway near Bakers Bridge Road and continuing towards Burnside Road. SP Ausnet is the owner of this asset. See Figure 5.

- Another 220 kV power line starts at the same location, near Steiglitz Road and Geelong-Ballan Road, heading south-west towards the Hamilton Highway.



Figure 5 View north from the Midland Highway showing the electricity infrastructure

A number of easement restrictions apply to land around these infrastructure assets. These are typically between 15m to 50m depending on the asset and location.

In addition to the significant infrastructure assets noted above, there are also local assets which service existing residences and farming activities. These include:

- High voltage (HV) power lines, under 66 kV along all arterial and local roads in the area. This includes Fyansford-Gheringhap Road, Midland Highway, McCurdys Road, Booley

Road and Bakers Bridge Road. Powercor is the electricity distributor responsible for services under 66kV in the Gheringhap locality.

- A 675mm diameter water pipeline runs along Fyansford-Gheringhap Road, continuing onto the Midland Highway, before heading north at the intersection of Bakers Bridge Road and the Midland Highway. A number of branches of this pipeline supply some of the local residents. However, Barwon Water has confirmed that many of the properties in the study area use private water tanks to meet their potable water needs.
- Telstra has assets along most local and regional roads in the area. Legislation requires Telstra to provide basic communication services to all new and existing developments.

Reticulated sewerage is not available within Gheringhap or the surrounding area. Soil absorption in the area is poor, limiting the ability of the use of on-site treatment/disposal systems.

2.2.8 Recreation and community facilities

The only community facilities provided within the Gheringhap locality are the three tennis courts and a small club room, located to the north of the Midland Highway, as shown in Figure 6. The courts are of good quality and used by the local community.

The closest school facilities are provided in Bannockburn and Geelong. Bus services provide access to these facilities from Gheringhap.

There are also comprehensive sporting facilities comprising an indoor recreation centre (stadium), multi-purpose courts, tennis courts and a football club located in Bannockburn. These facilities will be further developed over time to include additional ovals, tennis courts, a duplicate stadium, aquatic centre, soccer pitches, netball courts, cricket pitches and additional parking.



Figure 6 View north-east to tennis courts at Gheringhap

3. Policy context

3.1 Strategic direction

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) and the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) set the direction for future growth and development of the south-east region.

Analysis of the environmental, housing, economic, and rural development objectives under the SPPF and the LPPF has identified key themes relevant to the type, form and spatial objectives for the Golden Plains Shire as a whole and also to Gheringhap specifically. These objectives are identified below, with discussion provided in Section 3.2 as to how these relate to Gheringhap.

Settlement

- *Developing networks of settlements that will support resilient communities and the ability to adapt and change (Clause 11.05-1 SPPF).*
- *To manage land use change and development in rural areas to promote agricultural and rural production (Clause 11.05-3 SPPF).*
- *Limit new housing development in rural areas, including:*
 - ▶ *Directing housing growth into existing settlements*
 - ▶ *Discouraging development of isolated small lots in the rural zones from use for*

single dwellings, rural living or other incompatible uses

- ▶ *Encouraging consolidation of existing isolated small lots in rural zones (Clause 11.05-3).*

- *Preserving and protecting features of rural land and natural resources and features to enhance their contribution to settlements and landscapes (Clause 11.05-1 SPPF).*

The objectives and strategies relating to settlement under the SPPF seek to manage future growth and protect valuable agricultural land by directing housing developments into existing urban settlements. In regard to Gheringhap, this has been demonstrated by the decisions of the Golden Plains Shire to direct new residential growth into Bannockburn and Batesford.

The objectives also seek to ensure that the features of rural land and resources are protected and their contribution to the settlement and landscape is enhanced. Again within the investigation area of Gheringhap the current settlement pattern has resulted in a dispersed and less productive use of agricultural land. The potential to consolidate smaller holdings to improve the efficiency of agricultural use is not feasible, given the value of these sites and the investment in housing and outbuildings.

Economic Development

- *Provide adequate separation and buffer areas between sensitive uses and offensive or dangerous industries and quarries to ensure*

that residents are not affected by adverse environmental effects, nuisance or exposure to hazards (Clause 17.02-2 SPPF).

The economic development objective under Clause 17.02-2 seeks to ensure that appropriate separation distances are maintained to avoid adverse impacts on sensitive land uses. This is to allow these enterprises to operate effectively and to provide a clear path for the augmentation of their plant when required. It is also to provide certainty for the residents who live immediately outside the required buffer area, in making long term site investment decisions.

Infrastructure

- *To plan for the provision of water supply, sewerage and drainage services that efficiently and effectively meet State and community needs and protect the environment (Clause 19.03-2).*

Clause 19.03-2 seeks to ensure that water, sewerage and drainage facilities are provided to adequately meet community needs. This is highly pertinent to the delivery of fully serviced land within Gheringhap, and the current absence of a reticulated sewerage service.

South-East Area

- *Plan for staged business development in the Gheringhap locality to take advantage of the localities proximity to infrastructure, which includes State highways, railways, high pressure gas pipeline, high voltage*

transmission line and water pipelines (Clause 21.08 MSS, Strategy under Objective 1)

One of the key considerations here is the capability to effectively access these services. This is because they are main infrastructure services, and there are substantial costs in providing for local reticulation.

- *Recognise environmental constraints and protect environmental values and cultural heritage places (Clause 21.08 MSS, Objective 2).*
- *Maintain a clear distinction between urban and rural areas, maintaining the 'non-urban' break between Batesford and Bannockburn (Clause 21.08 MSS, Strategy under Objective 4).*

This is also a clear strategic objective of the Review. The separation between Bannockburn and Gheringhap is to be achieved by a non-urban break adjacent to the Midland Highway, and between Batesford and Gheringhap by establishing a non-urban area along the western edge of Batesford. This Clause has been respected in this Structure Plan.

- *In the Gheringhap Precinct ensure development planning and the siting, design and operation of business uses with potential for adverse amenity impacts incorporate relevant measures that minimise amenity impacts on existing rural residential areas in the locality (Clause 21.08 MSS, Strategy under Objective 5)*

The objectives for the south-east region under the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) identify the strategic opportunities within Gheringhap given its proximity to infrastructure. The objectives seek to take advantages of the opportunities by planning for staged business development in Gheringhap, while minimising the adverse impacts on existing rural residential land uses.

There is a need to address the anticipated fluctuations in the demand for employment land in this location. Effective staging of the industrial land delivery, that is within an area which does not compromise the amenity of the adjacent rural properties will allow for the incremental development of individual sites.

The objective also recognises the environmental constraints of the area and seeks to protect environmental and heritage values.

Intensive Animal Husbandry

- *To ensure the use and development of land for intensive animal husbandry does not impact on the environment (Clause 22.03 LPPF).*
- *To protect and maintain residential amenity in Residential Zones through the use of buffer areas and setbacks (Clause 22.03 LPPF).*

The objectives of Clause 22.03 under the LPPF identify the need to protect the amenity of existing residential land uses from the potential impacts of animal husbandry activities. This includes the use of buffers and setbacks as necessary.

Floodplain management

- *To minimise flood risk and promote sustainable use and development of the floodplain (Clause 22.11-1 LPPF).*

Clause 22.11 seeks to minimise flood risks while promoting the sustainable use of floodplains. This is highly relevant in the Gheringhap locality due to the potential impact of inundation from the Moorabool River to the north and in association with the previously identified significant wetland immediately south of the Midland Highway.

3.2 Directions for Gheringhap

The objectives and policies for the Golden Plains Shire and the south-east region seek to protect existing agricultural activities while managing land use change and providing for future growth and development of the region. Clause 11.05-3 of the SPPF in particular seeks to “*manage land use change and development in rural areas to promote agricultural and rural production*”. This emphasises the need to protect the existing poultry farms in the southern area of Gheringhap, around McCurdys and Booleys Road, ensuring that conflicts between sensitive land uses are managed appropriately.

The south-east region, including Gheringhap, provides strategic opportunities with potential for future development of business, employment, industrial or transport activities. The location of the Shire in proximity to Melbourne, Geelong and Ballarat makes it attractive to export and transport facilities, regional markets and export suppliers. It

is important to recognise that development within the Gheringhap locality will be highly dependent on the level of growth within Geelong and the adjacent townships of Bannockburn and Batesford.

Gheringhap in particular, given its strategic position with the convergence of the Midland Highway, Fyansford-Gheringhap Road, the high pressure gas pipeline, and high voltage transmission line and water pipelines, is suitable for land uses which need to be served by major road and/or rail and require electricity and/or gas services for operation. In addition, the large, vacant and flat parcels of land make the area appropriate for land uses which require large areas of land and/or require large buffers.

Clause 21.08 of the MSS notes the importance of planning for future growth of Gheringhap, stating the need to:

“Plan for staged business development in the Gheringhap locality to take advantage of the localities proximity to infrastructure, which includes State highways, railways, high pressure gas pipeline, high voltage transmission line and water pipelines”

Recognising the scale of these infrastructure items and the cost to develop local reticulation networks, there will be a need to harvest the necessary levies on development to finance access to these utility services.

In terms of residential and rural-residential development, the Golden Plains Shire comprises a small number of moderate sized towns (ie,

Bannockburn, Batesford, Lethbridge, Meredith) and large number of dispersed rural settlements, such as Gheringhap. The SPPF and the MSS both seek to direct further housing growth into existing settlements, discouraging the development of isolated small lots. Both Bannockburn and Batesford are identified as areas where future residential and rural-residential growth is to occur as noted in the MSS, the *Bannockburn Urban Design Framework* and the *Batesford Framework Plan*. As such, any future rural-residential development planned for the Gheringhap locality should be limited, allowing this type of development to be directed to existing urban settlements, in line with Council’s strategy for the region as a whole.

It is noted that, given the current settlement pattern within Gheringhap there is an availability of rural living size allotments, and these allotments are anticipated to be retained in the immediate future.

State and local policies also recognises the importance of maintaining a clear distinction between the urban and rural areas, including areas between Batesford and Bannockburn. This is noted in Clause 21.08 of the MSS which seeks to:

“Maintain a clear distinction between urban and rural areas, maintaining the ‘non-urban’ break between Batesford and Bannockburn”

It is important to ensure that each settlement (i.e. Batesford, Gheringhap and Bannockburn) has its own ‘identity’ and is spatially ‘separated’ from other settlements. By retaining the previously identified ‘rural breaks’ between the townships, it will avoid the development of a continuous ‘line’ of

development surrounding the Midland Highway, which would ultimately lead to a lack of distinction between each settlement. This is also important in terms of the overall definition and character of the township. Gheringhap has a recognised and independent community and the Structure Plan seeks to retain this identity.

It is also important to identify and establish buffers to ensure that existing land uses and activities are not adversely affected by future development. This is emphasised in Clause 17.02-2 of the SPPF which states the need to:

“Provide adequate separation and buffer areas between sensitive uses and offensive or dangerous industries and quarries to ensure that residents are not affected by adverse environmental effects”

While it is noted that there are a number of development opportunities within the Gheringhap locality, there is potential for adverse impacts on existing land uses if these activities are not appropriately sited. In particular, industrial/commercial development located too close to existing allotments utilised for residential use could have adverse impacts in terms of noise and visual amenity issues. This Structure Plan needs to provide appropriate separation distances between different land uses and provide design considerations (i.e. acoustic screening/landscape treatment) that can minimise potential effects.

Equally important is the need to recognise existing natural features and cultural heritage and to protect these values and enhance their contribution to

settlements and landscapes. The environmental and heritage values of the locality as identified in Section 2.2, will need to be protected via relevant development controls and restrictions.

It is noted that there are opportunities to enhance the appreciation of existing environmental features identified within and surrounding the Gheringhap locality by creating 'ecological corridors' which link to other ecological areas. These corridors can form important view shafts or can be used by the local community for recreational purposes (i.e. walking tracks).

In planning for future growth and development a flexible approach is required, one which allows Gheringhap to respond to emerging trends and development opportunities as and when they arise. This is stated in the SPPF which seeks to develop:

"networks of settlements that will support resilient communities and the ability to adapt and change" (Clause 11.05-1 SPPF).

The Structure Plan has been prepared on this basis, with the vision statement and principles developed for the locality (as outlined in Section 6), which are flexible enough to provide for future changes in demand and site characteristics.

In determining a vision for Gheringhap this has been acknowledged in the form of the options prepared responding to the need for flexibility in both the composition and rate of future development. It is extremely important that the existing settlement of Gheringhap achieves tangible benefits from this future development. This can be

achieved through the application of development levies which are used to complete road access improvements, public environment area enhancement and upgraded utility services.

Notwithstanding the above, it is noted that while the SPPF and the LPPF do clearly identify the key outcomes sought at the state and regional level, the policy does lack any specific direction as to the type, form and extent of development for the Gheringhap locality. As a result this Structure Plan has largely been based on a review of background documents, site investigations and feedback provided from the community and stakeholders to provide overall direction for the area, as further discussed in the following sections.

4. Community and stakeholder engagement

The Gheringhap Structure Plan has been prepared by the Golden Plains Shire, in consultation with Parsons Brinckerhoff and input from key stakeholders and the local community. This involved an extensive consultation process involving one-on-one meetings with landowners, community workshops, stakeholder and government agency workshops and ongoing consultation with service providers.

Consultation was undertaken in a phased manner, consisting of early consultation to identify opportunities, constraints and setting the overall vision for area and further consultation as the Structure Plan has developed and finalised. Figure 7 illustrates this process.

Consultation for the preparation of the Structure Plan was undertaken in three distinct phases. These are as follows:

Phase 1: The first round of stakeholder and community consultation involved:

- One-on-one meetings with all landowners in the Gheringhap locality (where possible)
- Stakeholder workshop with key authorities and selected property developers
- Local community workshop

The project team visited landowners within the study area to gain feedback on peoples' likes/dislikes and future aspirations for Gheringhap. A total of 33 households were identified within the study area. The project team visited all households and one-on-one discussions were held with

landowners that were home at the time and interested in discussing the project (14 landowners). Letters were left for those landowners not home, inviting them to attend the planned community workshop.

Following this a stakeholder workshop was held with key authorities, government agencies and selected property developers.

A local community workshop was also held where again key strengths, issues and concerns for Gheringhap were discussed. Outcomes of the one-on-one meetings were also presented.

Feedback provided from the consultation processes was used to identify key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and to develop an overall vision for the area.

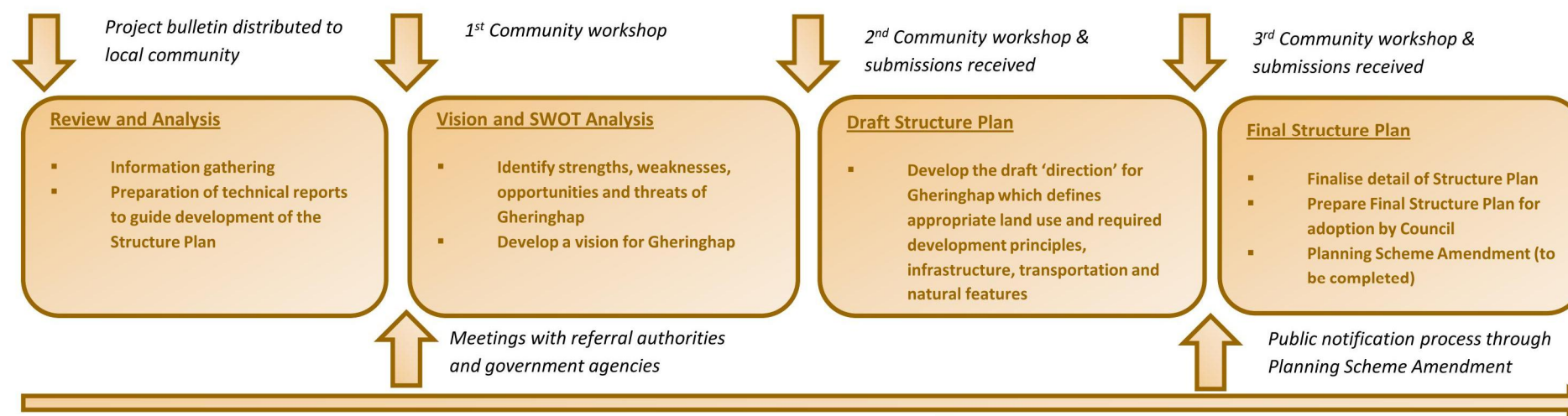


Figure 7 Community and stakeholder consultation process

Phase 2: A draft Structure Plan was prepared and presented at a second community meeting. Feedback from the community was recorded at the time and subsequent submissions were received.

These submissions were used as a basis for updating the Structure Plan.

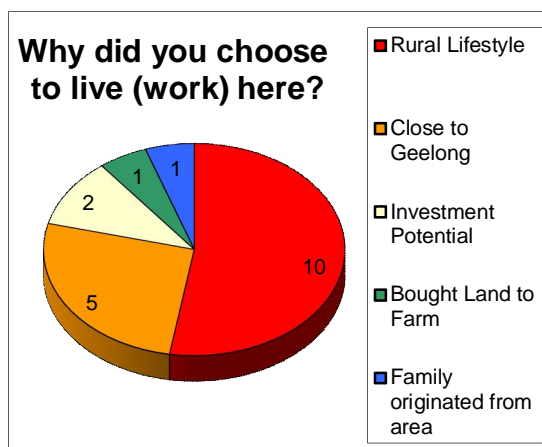
Phase 3: Due to the nature of the submissions and the resultant changes to the Structure Plan, Council organised a third community meeting to present the updated version to the community. Feedback received at this meeting was used to develop the final version of the Gheringhap Structure Plan.

The key themes and feedback received from the community and stakeholder engagement processes are discussed below.

4.1 Community feedback (one-on-one meetings)

Overall respondents identified a number of positive aspects about Gheringhap, being the main reasons why people choose to live in the area. Some of the key findings included:

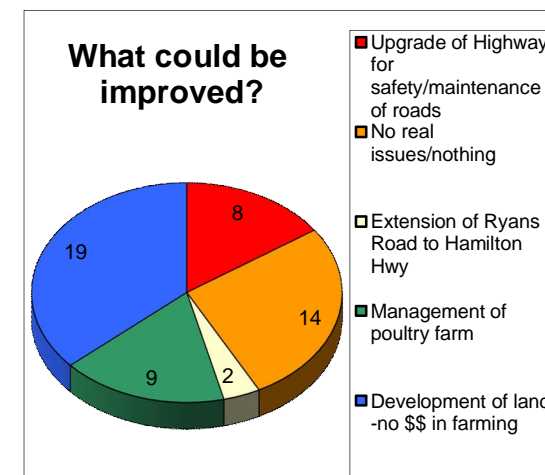
- People enjoy the **rural lifestyle**
- People enjoy the **peaceful setting** / quietness
- The area has **good access** to facilities/work (Geelong, Bannockburn)
- General feeling that **change is inevitable**



Generally people felt that the rural lifestyle combined with good access to work opportunities and community facilities make Gheringhap an attractive area to live. In response to questions relating to what people's concerns for the area are, or what they would like to be improved, the following comments were made:

- Concerns regarding industrial/business development
- Concerns around existing operation of poultry farms
- Concerns with highway safety and access
- Suggestion of Ryan Road extension to Hamilton Highway
- Support for more 'rural living' type residential development in the future
- Divergent views on development vs. non-development

Feedback received from the community indicated that there is a general recognition that change, at some level, is inevitable. However there was divergent views on the type (i.e. employment versus residential) and intensity of development that would be appropriate for the area. There was general recognition that if development did occur there would be a requirement for additional facilities and services to accommodate this growth.



When asked how people would like to see Gheringhap in the future, again responses were mixed. Some people indicated a preference for more rural living development, others were opposed to employment type development, some wanted no change to the existing situation, and others indicated a preference for some level of development. This highlights the differing views across the community.

4.2 Stakeholder feedback

A workshop was held with key stakeholders, including relevant Government agencies, and local land developers to identify the capacity of existing infrastructure and to identify key opportunities and constraints for the area. The findings from this workshop are summarised below:

- VicRoads recognise safety issues on the Midland Highway
- VicRoads confirmed that duplication of the Midland Highway is a long term strategic option, but nothing is yet confirmed. Setback requirements will need to be considered around this Highway to provide for future widening if required
- Barwon Water stated that there would be limited capacity for future development and that upgrades would be required to the reticulated water supply. This could potentially be provided through provision of a pumping station or upgrade of the pumping station supplying Bannockburn and associated pipes
- Barwon Water confirmed that there is no capacity for reticulated sewerage and unlikely to be in the future
- Powercor identified two main power feeders to Gheringhap; one along Midland Highway; and the other along Hamilton Highway. The feeder is proposed to provide additional capacity to Bannockburn. There is potential for future capacity to Gheringhap through this

upgrade, with another proposed for Bannockburn

- Potential gas connection to Bannockburn in the short-term future
- Various development proposals were discussed for the area (including a funeral chapel, an intermodal freight transfer facility, a local store and a service station)

The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) highlighted the need for the Structure Plan to be consistent with the regional growth plan currently being developed for the area. There is also a requirement to consider the broader regional context, particularly in relation to the demand and supply of industrial/employment land. There may be an opportunity for Gheringhap to address capacity issues in relation to these land uses in Golden Plains Shire that cannot be provided in surrounding towns such as Bannockburn or Batesford (i.e. Bannockburn does not have the land capacity to provide for large scale developments).

The need to confirm the capability of establishing a rail intermodal facility at Gheringhap, which has been suggested previously for this location, required that detailed discussions be completed with representatives from Vic Track and the Department of Transport. As these two agencies were not represented at the stakeholder workshop, separate meetings were held to discuss development potential.

As a result of these discussions it was confirmed that at this time there is no capability or justification for the establishment of a rail intermodal facility at Gheringhap. This is because of the following:

- It would jeopardise the existing and future planned operational capacity of the railway lines
- When considering the existing landscape and infrastructure requirements, it would be an expensive option to develop in the Gheringhap locality. This includes the Midland Highway bridge requiring significant works to allow additional line capacity
- There are a number of other complex issues that would need to be resolved including design, interface, operational and compatibility issues

4.3 Submissions

A total of 16 submissions were received on the draft Structure Plan. Themes included:

- General acceptance of some development in Gheringhap
- Concern that development boundaries bisected property boundaries
- Development should be contained either north or south of the Midland Highway
- Specific property owners had no desire to develop their property and wanted to retain as viable agriculture land

- Land to the north of the Midland Highway is perceived to have better drainage than land to the south. However development to the north raised concerns of potential contamination of the Moorabool River

Following consideration of the initial submissions, the draft Structure Plan was revised and re-exhibited with the community. A further six submissions were received. Themes included:

- Support for the amended draft Structure Plan
- Desire to have their land included within the employment precinct boundary
- Preference for development to be directed north of the Midland Highway
- Opinion that development would significantly impact the existing amenity and quality of life
- Preference to develop land designated within the non-urban break or rural area on the Framework Plan
- Opinion that development would exacerbate flooding in flat low lying area's and should be directed to better drainage sites north of the Midland Highway.
- Opinion that there should be a significant setback of development from the McCurdy Road boundary

5. Vision for Gheringhap

5.1 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The Gheringhap locality is recognised as having a number of key attributes that make it attractive to residents and being the main reasons why people choose to live in the area. Residents have highlighted the importance of the peaceful, rural lifestyle, with a number of the community expressing an interest in maintaining this character.

The area does however also contain a number of constraints which limit the development potential and which need to be considered in the overall planning for the area.

Prior to establishing the overall vision for the area, an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats was undertaken to assist in identifying key directions and constraints for the area. The process for undertaking this analysis

involved input from desk top studies, reports, policies and community and stakeholder views, as outlined in Figure 8. The outcomes of this analysis are as follows:

Strengths: Most importantly, the Structure Plan should recognise Gheringhap's existing character, being a small rural locality consisting of large rural properties, located near Geelong and Bannockburn. The areas' existing attributes in terms of its 'rural lifestyle' makes it an attractive place for residents and it is important that this character is retained within the Structure Plan.

In addition, the convergence of rail, road, gas, power and water within Gheringhap makes the area strategically attractive for a number of employment/commercial type activities.

Gheringhap, being located in relatively close proximity to Geelong and Bannockburn has good access to employment, community facilities and services. Given that there is already good access to these facilities, additional facilities are not

considered necessary for Gheringhap itself.

Weaknesses/Constraints: Constraints which limit the development potential of Gheringhap include factors such as:

- flooding occurring on the northern and western areas of the Gheringhap locality and the need to avoid development in areas identified as being subject to inundation;
- high soil salinity which makes the soil unsuitable for intensive agricultural use;
- existing ecological and heritage features and the need to avoid development in areas which will compromise the ecological or heritage values;
- requirements of providing easement provisions for existing infrastructure through the site. These range from 15m to 50m depending on the asset and location.

In addition, while the 'rural-lifestyle' and relatively small population base has been identified as a key strength of the area by many of the local community, this view can also be considered a constraint by limiting the potential economic activity and restricting the opportunities for development of infrastructure.

Access onto the Midland Highway has been identified by the community and stakeholders as a major issue. Access onto the Midland Highway from Ryan Road has been acknowledged as the main concern with this intersection having poor visibility. While it is noted that the costs of road upgrades/intersection modifications are likely to be

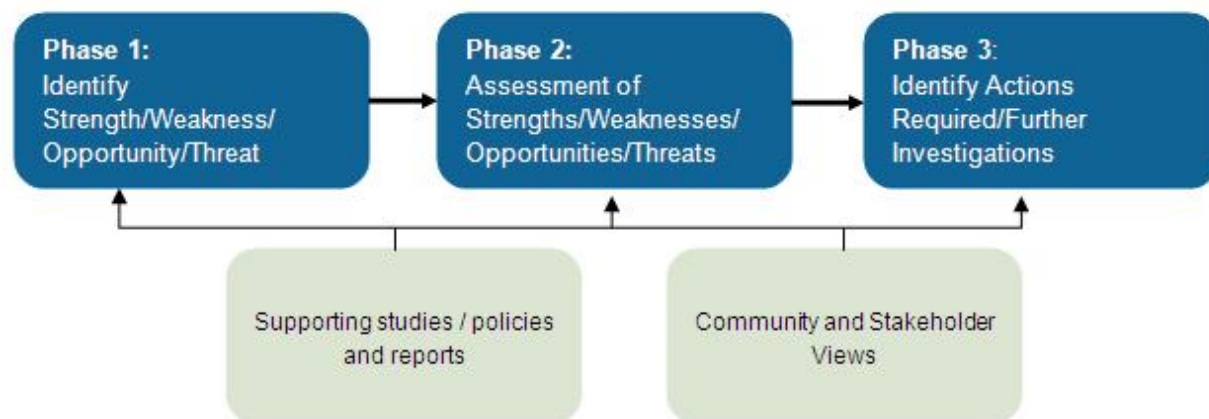


Figure 8 Methodology for SWOT analysis

significant, VicRoads recognises that this issue need to be addressed.

Opportunities: There are a number of key land use opportunities for Gheringhap. It is recognised that if appropriately located, these land uses could have benefits for existing residents and can assist in meeting regional demands. Most notably, the large, vacant and flat parcels of land make the area suitable for land uses which require large areas of land/and or require large buffers. Industrial development/commercial activities would improve the economic base and would also create employment opportunities. Such development would be consistent with the policy direction for the Gheringhap locality as identified under the MSS, with Clause 21.08 seeking to “*plan for stage business development*” within Gheringhap. Areas of land suitable for this type of development should be identified, taking into account locational constraints, appropriate buffers and separation distances from existing residential development.

Some landowners during the consultation process expressed an interest in subdividing properties for additional ‘rural-living’ style development. However, the roads and infrastructure (water, electricity and gas) required to support large numbers of rural-living developments could not be adequately provided by Council or service providers as the costs could not be sufficiently recovered through rates or the cost of the development. In addition, such development would be inconsistent with the policy direction for the south-east Region, which, as discussed in Section 3, seeks to direct additional rural-living development into the existing settlements of Batesford and Bannockburn. Some small scale

rural-living development may however be suitable in certain locations, taking into account the ability of existing services and infrastructure to accommodate this growth.

Various ‘small scale’ development proposals have been identified by stakeholders for the Gheringhap locality. For example a funeral chapel, local store and service station have been discussed as possible activities to be located within Gheringhap. Given that such uses would serve a ‘local’ function and can be relatively easily accommodated within the existing setting without requiring any infrastructure upgrades, such developments are considered suitable. If appropriately located these activities could assist in developing a ‘centre’ for the Gheringhap locality and ‘focal point’ for the area. There is a need to identify parcels of land that would be suitable for this type of development and ensure that appropriate separation distances are provided from these land uses and other incompatible land uses.

It is noted that a previous study undertaken in 2011 by Rehbein Airport Consulting recommended safeguarding land within Gheringhap for a possible future regional Airport. The report identified a preferred site at Lethbridge for a new Airport, but also stated that Council should consider securing land within Gheringhap, at the time of preparing the Structure Plan. Golden Plains Shire has confirmed support for the airport at Lethbridge, but has also noted that there is sufficient land to the south of the area included within the Gheringhap Structure Plan which could accommodate a regional Airport, if required in the future.

Threats: There is potential for adverse impacts on existing land uses as a result of future development within Gheringhap. In particular, industrial/commercial development located too close to existing residential land-use could have adverse impacts in terms of noise and visual amenity issues. This Structure Plan needs to consider appropriate separation distances between different land uses (i.e. residential and industrial activities) and design considerations (i.e. landscaping/screening) that can minimise potential effects.

There is potential for reverse sensitivity effects on existing activities, such as the poultry farms and the rail corridor. There is a need to maintain buffer requirements around the poultry farms (recommended 500m between sensitive land uses and poultry farms as noted in the *Poultry Farming Planning Guide*) and to introduce appropriate setback requirements from the rail corridor to avoid curfews or operation restrictions on rail services in the future.

5 Vision for Gheringhap

5.2 The Vision

An overall vision for the Gheringhap locality has been developed taking into account feedback provided through an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the area. This is illustrated in Figure 9.



Figure 9 Developing the vision

The key challenge for Gheringhap is to balance divergent views of the community by ensuring that development promoted through the Structure Plan is suited to the locality. This can be achieved through recognising the existing rural nature, building upon the identified strengths and by ensuring that the existing infrastructure can adequately accommodate development requirements without resulting in

unreasonable cost burdens on the community, developers or Council.

In this regard, the overall vision for Gheringhap can be described as:

To balance the rural character and lifestyle of Gheringhap while providing for future business opportunities and community facilities that are appropriately located, sited and designed so to protect the rural, natural and amenity values of the locality.

This vision has been used to guide the development of this Structure Plan and will be the overarching goal for the future of Gheringhap.

5.3 Scenarios

In determining the most appropriate planning solution for the Gheringhap locality three specific alternatives have been considered, to achieve the vision identified above.

Given the divergent views across the community in regards to the future land use/development of Gheringhap, these options have been developed on a continuum from the do-nothing option to developing a detailed and comprehensive spatial plan. These are discussed as follows, with the advantages and disadvantages of each option outlined in Table 1.

Option 1: Status- quo, continue current practices

The first option considered is the 'do-nothing' approach. This would result in no change to existing planning practices or upgrades in infrastructure.

Ultimately this would mean that there would be no defined overall 'plan' for the area and that any future development proposal would be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the local Council under the existing planning policy and requirements.

While such an approach would provide for the maintenance of the existing characteristics of the area, particularly in the short to medium term, there would be no certainty that these characteristics would be protected in the future. Given the lack of direction in terms of the location, siting and design of land uses under existing planning policy, this scenario may result in inappropriately located land uses or result in piecemeal development that are contained in isolated 'pockets' throughout the locality. Council would have no control over the location of each activity and would be required to respond to each development proposal as brought forward by individual proponents.

Option 2: Setting of guiding principles & high level precinct plan

The second option considered for the Gheringhap locality was the identification of a set of guiding principles and the development of a 'high level' precinct structure plan which would provide direction in terms of the future outcomes sought. Specifically these principles and plan would identify appropriate land uses, their approximate siting and interaction considerations with existing land uses and features of the locality. The precinct plan would be at a level that would identify areas of land and features to be protected, buffer requirements from certain land uses and would identify, in general terms, land uses suitable to Gheringhap. It would also identify areas

that would be appropriate for future development. The plan would not provide detail in terms of the precise siting of each activity and size of lots, but rather would identify general areas for future land uses/development.

These guiding principles and precinct plan could potentially be incorporated into the Golden Plains Planning Scheme and would be used as a basis of assessing development proposals provided by proponents.

In addition, such principles would also be used as a basis of directing Council's infrastructure expenditure and arrangements with stakeholders in terms of upgrades/new facilities required for the locality.

Such an approach would provide some level of certainty to landowners, the Council, the community and developers as to the type and approximate location of future land uses and development. However, there would be no certainty as to the exact location, the form and intensity of land use activities. Within this context it would also be difficult for detailed cost apportionment in the form of a Development Contributions Plan or similar instruments.

Option 3: Detailed spatial plan

The third option considered for the Gheringhap locality was the development of a detailed spatial plan based on the set of guiding principles as identified in Option 2.

This spatial plan would be more detailed than the high level precinct plan as identified for Option 2 as it would control the type of development, identify the

precise location of each land use activity and control the intensity (i.e. number of lots and size of development) of future land uses within Gheringhap.

This spatial plan could also be accompanied by a Development Contributions Plan or similar cost apportionment mechanism to identify which improvements in road access, public areas and utility services are to be provided, and how they are to be funded by future development.

While such an approach would provide benefits to local landowners, the Council and developers in terms of providing absolute certainty as to where certain land uses can and will locate, this approach is somewhat flawed in that Council cannot control the rate and demand for such development. Demands and trends change over time and settlements must be able to adapt and respond to these changes so that they are resilient over time. A spatial plan that lacks any flexibility could lead to a situation where the demand for the land use activities identified in the spatial plan changes or is never realised, leading to large expanses of designated land which are essentially 'unusable' for uses other than those identified in the plan.

A plan of this nature will require periodic reviews and possible revisions to respond to fluctuations in demand, and changes in utility service requirements. Such a process would ultimately provide a nexus for 'ad-hoc' planning as described in Option 1.

5.3.1 Preferred Scenario

Based on the assessment of options identified above, *Option 2: Setting of guiding principles and high level precinct plan* is considered to be the most appropriate option to achieve the vision for the Gheringhap locality. This is on the basis that this scenario would provide the greatest flexibility for change when responding to future demands, while also providing certainty to the local community and Council in terms of what type of development is likely to be encouraged and where this will be located.

Accordingly this option has been taken forward for the development of the Structure Plan for Gheringhap.

<u>Scenario/Option</u>	<u>Advantages</u>	<u>Disadvantages</u>
Option 1. Status-quo/ Do nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides for the maintenance of the existing 'rural-character' and lifestyle, particularly in the short to medium term. However, no certainty that this would be protected in the long term Local community familiar with existing planning policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developments assessed on a 'case-by-case' basis therefore no certainty for local community and Council in terms of future developments or locations No clear direction for Gheringhap to assess development proposals against, which may result in inappropriate types of land use or inappropriately located development
Option 2. Set of guiding principles and identify a high level 'precinct plan'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a basis with which to assess future development proposals, ensuring that key attributes are maintained/protected or enhanced as per guiding principles Identifies appropriate land uses and approximate locations avoiding development in areas that would be 'inappropriate' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of certainty for landowners, the Council, the community and developers as to the exact location, form and intensity of land use and activities Lack of overall physical plan that identifies key infrastructure and required improvements in public facilities.
Option 3. Detailed spatial plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a basis with which to assess future development proposals, ensuring that key attributes are maintained/protected or enhanced as per guiding principles Provides certainty to landowners, the community, Council and the developers on the types, form and location of land use and development and associated improvements in the public domain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of flexibility as demands and growth may not be as predicated. The detailed plan does not provide for change. Required monitoring and revision of Development Contributions Plans or similar cost apportionment plan in response to delays in implementation.

Table 1 Scenario assessment

6. Planning for Gheringhap – strategic response

6.1 Guiding principles

The following set of principles have been developed which will serve as a basis for determining future land use and for directing future investments in infrastructure and services. These principles are based on the overall vision and have been developed based on the analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as outlined in Section 5. They are to be read in conjunction with Figure 10 – Gheringhap Land Use Framework Plan.

These principles outline the high level strategic objectives for the Gheringhap locality and will be used by Council to inform future policy directions and to assess development proposals in the area.

These are as follows:

1. Encourage a 'planned' approach to development, avoiding ad hoc decisions

It is important that land use decisions are made in a comprehensive manner, ensuring that outcomes are consistent with the overall objectives for the area. Failure to do so can lead to ad-hoc decisions, where matters such as cumulative impacts are not adequately considered.

An integrated approach where there is an overall plan guiding land use decisions is likely to produce more desirable outcomes to manage the future growth and development of the Gheringhap area. It would also promote growth in accordance with the Land Use Framework Plan.

This will also give greater assurance to residents who occupy allotments within the Gheringhap

locality which lots will be affected by future changes in land use.

While it is noted that each development proposal will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, these principles will ensure that the outcomes are consistent with an overall approach for the area.

It is important to emphasise that this plan is a 'guide' rather than a strict spatial plan. Future developments should be assessed against this plan but a flexible approach should be taken.

It is the impacts of the activities on the character and surrounding environment that are important – rather than conforming strictly with the plan locations. The plan identifies the preferred distribution of land uses, modification to transport routes and potential target sites for community and commercial facilities. It also identifies required buffers and ecological corridors/links. Some general direction for the ongoing enhancement of Gheringhap is included in the plan.

2. Limit development on parcels of land which have existing constraints/commitments

There are a number of constraints which limit the development potential of Gheringhap. These include factors such as: existing settlement areas, flooding, utility service corridors, ecological and heritage values, urban break /buffers, and poultry farming buffers. These are identified in Figure 11 – Gheringhap Constraints/Commitment Plan and ultimately define the Gheringhap Structure Plan Area. Importantly, some of these potential constraints could be considered attributes for the development of the township. For example the requirement for inter-urban breaks will allow for comprehensive landscape treatment of the road corridor between Gheringhap and Bannockburn to establish a stronger landscape character setting for

the town. The areas which have been identified as subject to flooding south of the Midland Highway have the potential to be used for wetland habitats. This has been expressed as a key aspiration for some of the community within Gheringhap.

3. Protect existing assets and infrastructure. Maximise the opportunities that these services provide for businesses, the community and the region as a whole

Within the central area of Gheringhap and immediately adjacent to the road and rail corridors, land parcels are generally on flat land and are not subject to inundation. These areas are however bound by rural living style allotments to the south, and require an effective treatment of the rear boundaries of the properties on the north side of McCurdy Road. These properties have the capability to provide an effective address point and gateway from the Midland Highway and the Fyansford-Gheringhap Road.

The rail asset within the Structure Plan Area is also an area which requires significant consideration. Any use located on adjacent land which would jeopardise the optimum usage of this asset should be discouraged. This includes noise sensitive land uses or uses which would affect the existing and future operational capacity of the train lines.

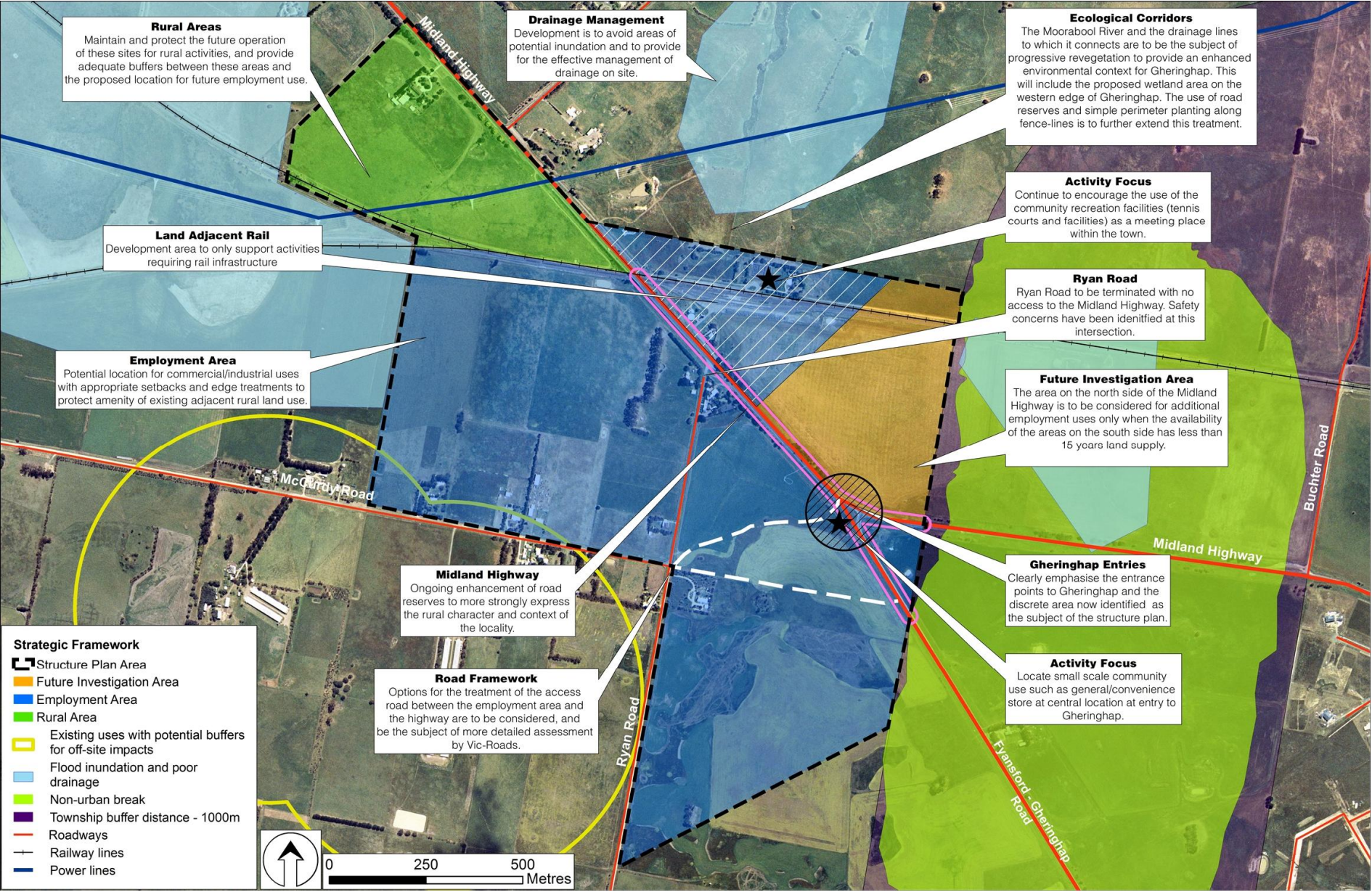


Figure 10 Gheringhap Land Use Framework Plan

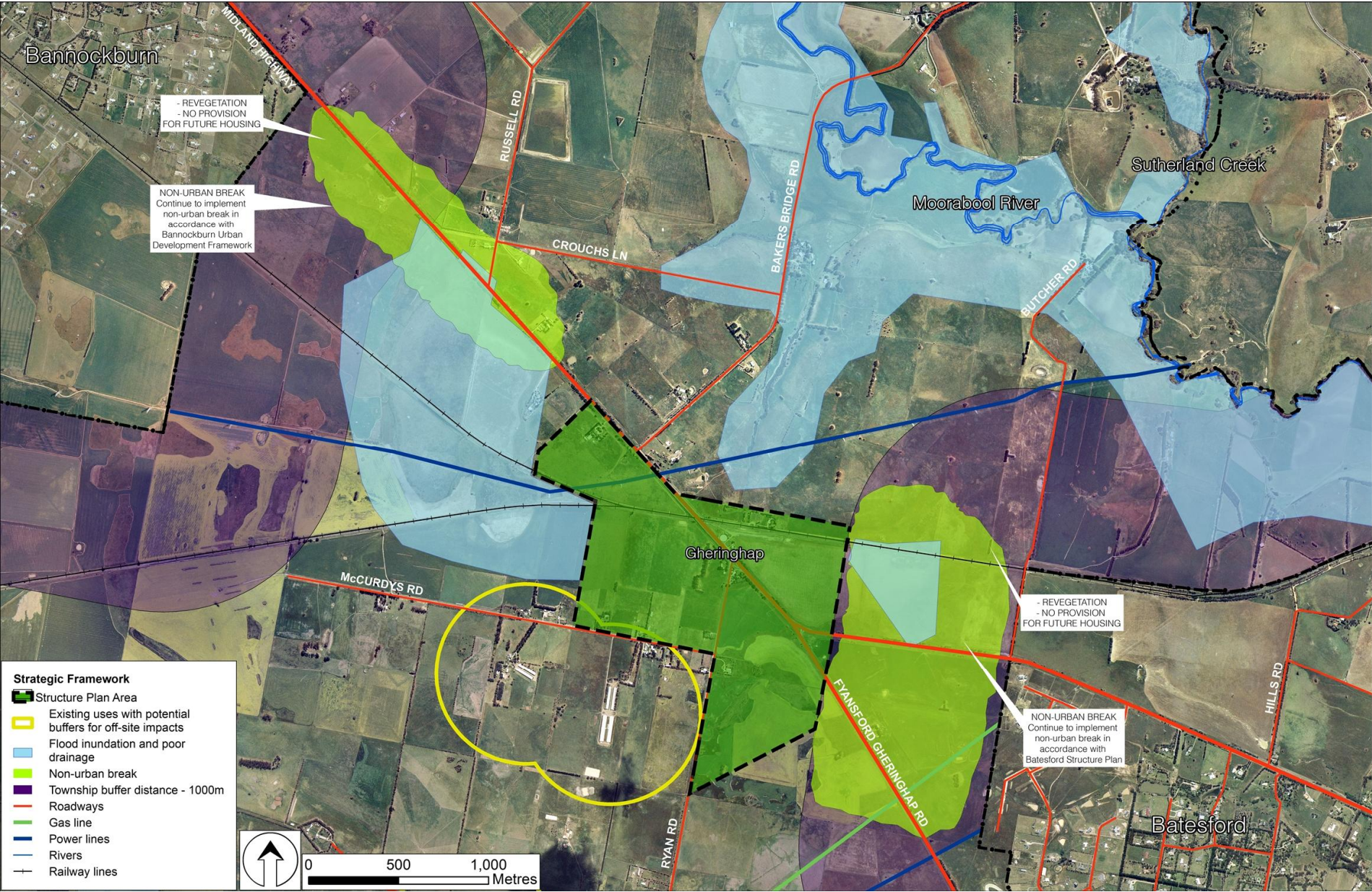


Figure 11 Gheringhap Constraints/Commitments Plan

Within the identified employment area, activities should be limited to service business, storage and small scale manufacture type uses as these will interface most effectively with the existing environment. Heavy duty or intensive industrial uses that would typically require a buffer distance (as specified in Clause 52.10 of the Golden Plains Planning Scheme) should be discouraged in this locality.

4. Ensure that the costs of the development are met by those who benefit

Some forms of development in Gheringhap are not suitable under current Council capital works funding programs. For example, the rezoning and development of a large number of rural-residential lots in the Gheringhap locality would require significant upgrades to the existing infrastructure, including roads and utilities. Funding for these upgrades would be so significant that they cannot be met through rates provisions. This may also result in some initiatives being considered premature or unwarranted because of the inability to provide for necessary infrastructure services.

This Structure Plan therefore needs to recognise the capital works implications for dedicating land for certain development in the future.

There is a need to ensure than any future development, including business and industrial uses can be serviced by existing infrastructure. The objective of this Structure Plan is to provide for the timely delivery of any additional required infrastructure services that are fully costed, and that these costs are borne by the developers of these

facilities. Full cost benefit assessment of any required additional infrastructure is required to determine if there are wider benefits to the community. The supply of reticulated gas is an example of a utility service which may benefit existing residents as well as new developments and could in fact be a catalyst for future development.

5. Consider the existing character of the Gheringhap environment

The environmental features of the Gheringhap locality, although of significant value, are not generally associated with the township. This is particularly relevant to the Moorabool River and its environs to the north of Gheringhap and the wetland south of the Midland Highway.

Re-establishment of environmental values within the Structure Plan area must underpin all future forms of land use and development. To achieve this outcome, the following initiatives are to be implemented:

- Identification, protection and enhancement of ecological corridors that connect to the Moorabool River
- Promote the enhancement of the wetland south of the Midland Highway
- Landscape design treatments for all future business/commercial activities to achieve high levels of amenity, and natural resource sustainability (see Figure 12-14: Example design guidelines).

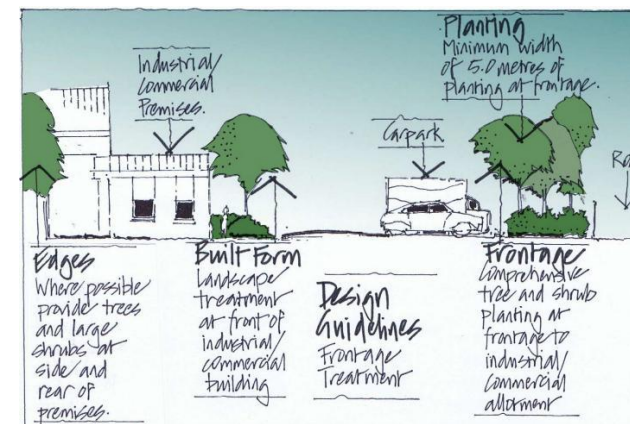


Figure 12 Example design guidelines – Frontage Treatment

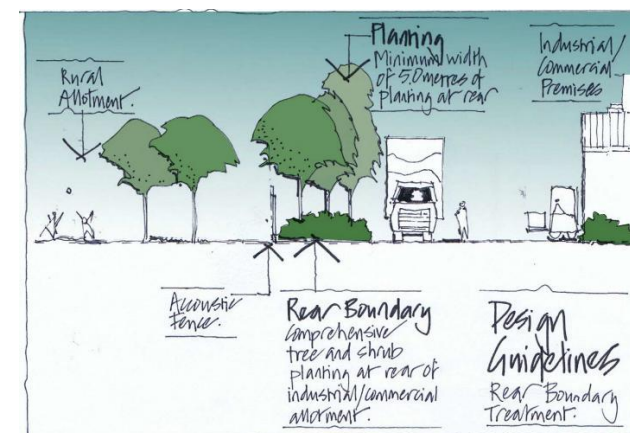


Figure 13 Example design guidelines – Rear Boundary Treatment

- Setbacks from the Midland Highway and Fyansford-Gheringhap Road are to be generous and the subject of mass planting of

site indigenous plant material to assist with maintaining a 'rural feel';

- The heritage features associated with the history of the railway, although of limited extent, are to be used as the foundation for enhancement within the rail corridor. This will require further co-operation with the relevant rail authorities to enable improvement projects to be completed.
- The existing Gheringhap tennis courts and pavilion are to be considered for a community improvement project to provide a 'focal point' or gathering point for the local Gheringhap community.
- In association with the proposed vegetation treatments along the Midland Highway, and the Fyansford-Gheringhap Road, gateway treatments are to be used to reconfirm the geographic identity of the township.

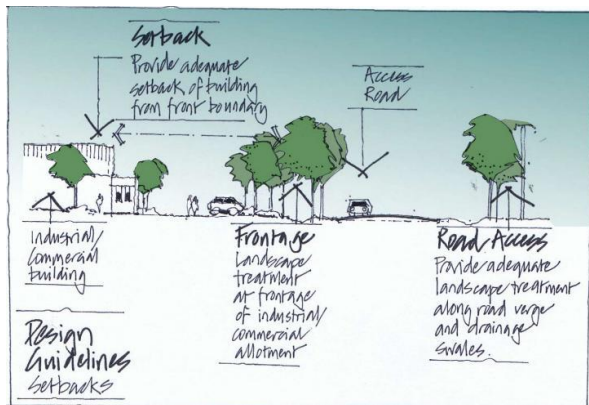


Figure 14 Example design guidelines – Setbacks

6. Provide for the development of business and commercial activities that do not adversely affect the safety and amenity of the local community

The scale and intensity of business and industrial activities is to be limited to smaller enterprises that are compatible with the nature of the surrounding settlement.

These uses will not require buffer distances and can be effectively sited in close proximity to existing housing, and areas to be used as environmental corridors.

At key locations a limited range of commercial uses such as a convenience shop/service station and some ancillary community orientated uses would be appropriate. Other retail should be discouraged given the impacts, including noise and traffic that would result and it would not be consistent with the existing 'rural-feel'.

7. Increase the safety of the existing road network

There are currently recognised potentially hazardous intersection points along the Midland Highway.

The design and implementation of the proposed commercial / industrial employment area on the south side of the Midland Highway has the potential to exacerbate this issue if not treated appropriately. Accordingly, this Structure Plan provides for improved access arrangements, by terminating Ryan Road at the Midland Highway and redirecting traffic via a new proposed road to either a round-a-

bout connection point with the Midland Highway and Fyansford-Gheringhap Road or to a connection straight onto the Fyansford-Gheringhap Road. These initial concepts are illustrated in Figure 15.

These two options would need to be developed and refined with VicRoads to identify the best outcome for the locality. To inform this assessment, it is anticipated that a traffic impact assessment would be required and funding would need to be provided from a developer.

There will also be a requirement for improvements to the existing local road network. This should be funded in association with any new development of the identified commercial /employment area

8. Discourage residential development on land designated for employment

Residential development, being a sensitive use, can sometimes constrain the effective implementation of employment land. Further residential development should therefore be discouraged on land in the Structure Plan area so that the employment land can be developed accordingly.

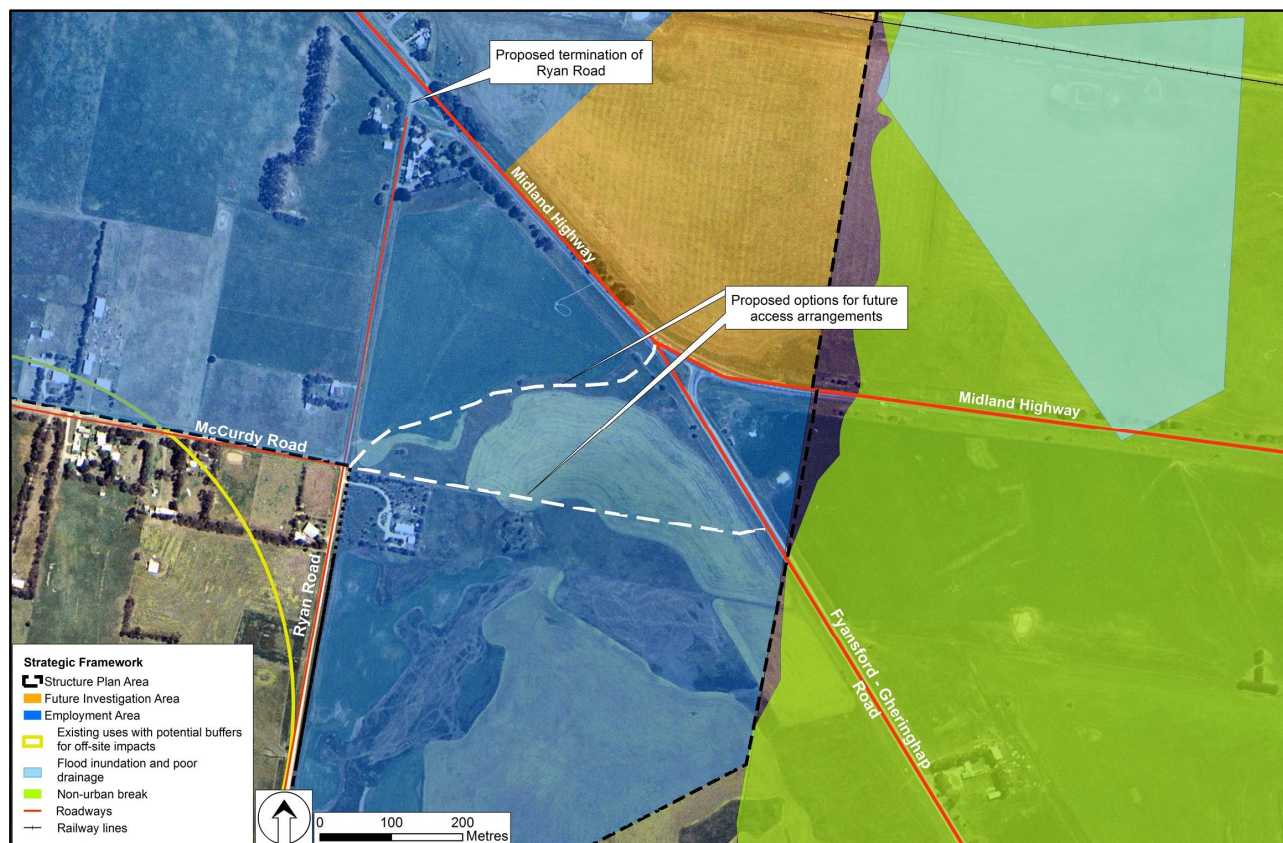


Figure 15 Proposed future access arrangements

9. Protect existing industry and employment activities. Avoid constraining their potential

There is a need to consider existing activities in the locality (i.e. poultry farms and the rail operations) when assessing development proposals, to examine whether the development proposal would adversely impact on the future operations of these activities.

It is undesirable to constrain existing land uses with others which will cause conflict and restrict the capacity of their potential.

10. Provide for flexibility, allowing Gheringhap to respond to changes in demand and growth. Assist in ensuring that the community remains resilient over time.

As noted previously, these are guiding principles, rather than a strict spatial plan. They should be

used as a guide for assessing development proposals and for infrastructure investments.

Proposals should be assessed on their own merits and facilitated as they are required. Developments which will jeopardise the on-going potential of the area should be discouraged.

The requirements for monitoring and review contained in Section 8 of this Structure Plan should be recognised.

7. Implementation

The challenge Golden Plains Shire faces with future urban growth means that it will be forced to make hard decisions about urban form and identify targeted redevelopment of strategic areas. This is normally completed in conjunction with new urban growth in greenfield areas. Gheringhap has been identified as being an area that can accommodate urban development in the future when recognising the residential development currently occurring in Bannockburn and Batesford.

It is difficult to predict accurately the long term requirements or potential growth of the Gheringhap locality; however should the necessity arise for land to be 'ready to go' Council needs to be able to ensure that development is indeed well located, has service capability and does not impact on the existing community.

The identified commercial / employment area in this Structure Plan has a land area of approximately 125ha of generally vacant and unconstrained land. Through implementation of this Structure Plan, moderate growth can occur and is supported. Should further demand and therefore land be required, the land north of the Midland Highway (20ha) can be investigated in the future. This will occur at a designated 'trigger point' when the availability of the land on the south side of the Midland Highway has less than 15 years land supply.

Each of these areas have been identified as possible for development. Decisions about each site need to be made in association with the landowners

to facilitate the development. Some portions of the sites may be ruled out for the foreseeable future. Decisions that effectively lock these sites into long term fixed uses that perpetuate current inefficiencies in the urban form should be avoided.

Despite the opportunities presented in Gheringhap, the successful implementation of this Structure plan requires the cooperation and involvement of all parties including Council, stakeholders, service providers, land developers and the local community.

7.1 Implementation Actions

This Structure Plan provides a framework for development in the Gheringhap locality over the next 20+ years with identified policies and strategies to provide a basis for future decision-making.

It should be noted that some initiatives reflected in the Structure Plan are already in the process of being implemented. This reflects existing Council programs and priorities and the integration with other townships including Batesford and Bannockburn.

This Section identifies implementation provisions and key Planning Scheme alterations, or supporting strategic work, necessary to attain the principles and directions identified in the Structure Plan including:

- Introduction of Planning Policy;
- Application of Zones and Overlays;
- Further strategic work required to support additional planning controls;
- Other actions critical to attaining key principles and directions.

7.2 Planning scheme changes

The primary planning instrument or statutory process to implement this Structure Plan is through the Golden Plains Planning Scheme. This will ensure that the identified land is reserved and available to accommodate the identified development requirements, as anticipate by this Structure Plan, over the long term – the next twenty years (refer to Implementation Table at Section 7.4). Four specific changes are recommended to implement the Structure Plan:

- The Gheringhap Structure Plan should be referenced in the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) as the basis for the strategic planning of Gheringhap
- The MSS should set out that development in Gheringhap should be guided by the development principles. This is a critical implementation element of the Plan. This statement ensures that it outlines a clear expectation in providing the desired outcome of facilitating flexibility for change when responding to future demands. It also provides certainty to the local community and Council in terms of what type of development is likely to be encouraged and where this will be located.
- The MSS would indicate that a principal means of implementing the Structure Plan would be to support a progressive series of rezoning of the land in Gheringhap, in line with the staged development.
- The MSS would reference a Local Planning Policy to be inserted in the Local Planning

Policy Framework. The Local Policy would set out the principles that are listed in the Gheringhap Structure Plan and reference the document. The Policy would provide that all use and development should be consistent with the guiding principles of the Plan. The Policy would also state that all proposals for the rezoning of land should be consistent with these principles. The Policy should also provide for amendments of the Structure Plan Principles and Plans following a consultative process should the need arise.

7.3 Developer Contributions

For Gheringhap to progress as set out in this Structure Plan, new development is required. There is an opportunity to seek developer contributions in the form of payments or in-kind works for civic infrastructure improvements. This may include roads (new roads, bicycle/pedestrian paths, intersection treatments), streetscapes (lighting, kerb and channel), storm water and urban run-off management systems, open space and other facilities.

There are principally two methods whereby Council may recoup costs from landowners to offset the cost of development and associated infrastructure provision:

- Section 173 Agreements – Council may enter into individual Section 173 Agreements instead of using a Development Contributions Plan (DCP) to recoup the apportioned cost of providing infrastructure. The required upgrades

to services and infrastructure may be negotiated at the time of a rezoning request and secured through a Section 173 Agreement. Alternatively a Section 173 Agreement could appear as a permit condition however this would be open to challenge at VCAT.

- DCP's – A DCP is different to a mutually agreed Section 173. A DCP is binding to both Council and landowners and monies must be spent by Council when and on what it was collected for. It sets out a framework of what projects are required, the cost of each project, when it will be delivered, what is Council's contribution and how much is apportioned to the landowner. DCP's are transparent, equitable and provide certainty.

Whilst a DCP is the preferred mechanism for securing contributions, this option is both costly and timely. In addition Council would need a clear understanding of how the land is to be used and developed to complete a DCP. The Gheringhap Structure Plan identifies land for an 'employment precinct' however is not specific about how the land will be used and does not propose to rezone land. Council therefore has an opportunity to consider necessary contributions, associated upgrades, service connections and costs at the time a rezoning application is made. There is also greater opportunity to enter into a Section 173 Agreement with the landowner at the time of rezoning than at the Planning Permit stage.

Council is wishing to pursue the development of a DCP for the entire municipality once the Minister for

Planning releases a standard model. At this time further consideration may be given to the Gheringhap area.

7.4 Implementation table

The actions required to implement the Structure Plan are detailed in the matrix below. The table also identifies timing, responsibilities and priorities.

Timeframes

Immediate	within < 1 year
Short-term	within 1-5 years
Medium-term	within 5-years
Long-term	within 10 + years

Action		Statutory Instrument	Non-Statutory Instrument	Commence	Duration (months)	Lead Agency/Responsible Project Manager	Possible/required partners	Stakeholder & Community Engagement (yes/no)
Overall	1. Introduce the 'Gheringhap Structure Plan' as a reference document to the Golden Plains Planning Scheme. Introduce:	Planning Scheme Amendment	Gheringhap Structure Plan	Immediate	12-18	GPSC	DPCD	Yes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Local Policy, in which the Structure Plan will be a reference document 							
	2. Apply planning principles of the Municipal Strategic Statement which reflect the directions of the Gheringhap Structure Plan. Require development and subdivision applications to demonstrate response to the Gheringhap Structure Plan Principles	Planning Scheme	Gheringhap Structure Plan	Immediate	Ongoing	GPSC	Developers	Yes

7 Implementation

Action			Statutory Instrument	Non-Statutory Instrument	Commence	Duration (months)	Lead Agency/Responsible Project Manager	Possible/required partners	Stakeholder & Community Engagement (yes/no)
Traffic	3.	Undertake further strategic work to resolve the traffic access arrangements proposed by the Gheringhap Structure Plan	Nil	Gheringhap Structure Plan	Immediate	12-18	GPSC	VicRoads	Yes
Employment Areas	4.	Undertake a detailed investigation of the land north of the Midland Highway when further employment land and the availability of the land on the south side of the Midland Highway has less than 15 years land supply	Nil	Gheringhap Structure Plan	Long-term	12-18	GPSC	DPCD / Developers	Yes
	5.	Develop design guidelines for the Gheringhap Structure Plan area that responds to the existing environment, anticipated development and community expectations	Nil	Gheringhap Design Guidelines	Short-term	12	GPSC	DPCD/DSE/VicRoads	Yes
	6.	Pursue development of a small scale community use such as a general/convenience store in a central location at the entry to Gheringhap.	Nil	Gheringhap Structure Plan	Short-term	Ongoing	Community	Developers	Yes
	7.	Define the edge of the defined employment area, establishing planting or the like	Nil	Gheringhap Structure Plan	Immediate	Ongoing	GPSC	Developers/Community	Yes
	8.	Continued assistance from Council's Economic Development Unit to industry seeking to establish business	Nil	Gheringhap Structure Plan	Immediate	Ongoing	GPSC	Developers	No

Action	Statutory Instrument	Non-Statutory Instrument	Commence	Duration (months)	Lead Agency/Responsible Project Manager	Possible/required partners	Stakeholder & Community Engagement (yes/no)
	in the Gheringhap Structure Plan Area						
9.	Investigate opportunities to work with VicRoads to implement the non-urban breaks which separate Gheringhap from Bannockburn and Batesford	Nil	Gheringhap Structure Plan Golden Plains South-east Review	Short-term	Ongoing	GPSC	VicRoads/Community Yes
10.	Investigate opportunities to develop/enhance an ecological corridor. The Moorabool River and the drainage lines to which is connects are to provide an enhanced environmental context for Gheringhap. This also includes the enhancement of the existing wetland south of the Midland Highway	Nil	Gheringhap Structure Plan	Long-term	12-24	GPSC	DSE Yes
11.	Continue to encourage the use of the community recreation facilities (tennis courts and facilities)	Nil	Gheringhap Structure Plan	Short-term	Ongoing	GPSC	Gheringhap Tennis Club Yes

Action			Statutory Instrument	Non-Statutory Instrument	Commence	Duration (months)	Lead Agency/Responsible Project Manager	Possible/required partners	Stakeholder & Community Engagement (yes/no)
	12.	Provide for high quality landscape treatments along road corridors.	Local Planning Policy	Gheringhap Structure Plan	Short-term	Ongoing	GPSC	VicRoads	Yes
	13.	Prepare urban design framework to guide treatments of the identified gateways.	Nil	Urban design framework	Short-term	18-24	GPSC	VicRoads	No
Infrastructure	14.	Undertake drainage schemes for large scale drainage of development areas.	Nil	Drainage schemes	Short-term	12-18	GPSC	Developers Water authorities	No
	15.	Undertake drainage schemes for large scale drainage of development areas.	Nil	Drainage schemes	Short-term	12-18	GPSC	Developers Water authorities	No

Table 2 Implementation Table

8. Monitoring and review

In order to ensure the effectiveness and future relevance of this Structure Plan it is necessary for regular monitoring to be undertaken to assess its performance against the overall vision and guiding principles as set out in Section 5 and Section 6.1 of this Structure Plan. It is indeed an essential part of the implementation of this Structure Plan.

This Structure Plan has been prepared with a 20 year horizon, while acknowledging that changes in demand are likely to occur and that the Plan must be responsive and adaptive over time. Therefore, it is necessary that several forms of monitoring be carried out during the implementation period of this Plan. This includes the following:

- Review and updating of the Structure Plan to ensure its strategic directions remain up to date. The Structure Plan should be reviewed initially in 5 years time to include an examination of trends in the employment area take-up and development. It should also include an analysis on needs and opportunities, the management of land use conflicts in the Region and changes in legislation and land management practices that may require examination of specific directions and recommendations.
- Review of Planning Scheme zones, overlay controls and policies to ensure that the desired outcomes of the Structure Plan are being successfully implemented. This should be conducted with Council's Senior Statutory Planners and include a review of Council's

success in negotiating (including VCAT) positive development outcomes.

- Providing additional guidance on key sites as required.
- Monitoring of land uses and activity within the Structure Plan area.
- Ongoing assessment of community needs and services, particularly in relation to services and community facilities.

Appendix A

Flora, Fauna and Cultural Heritage Details



Figure 1: Biodiversity Values

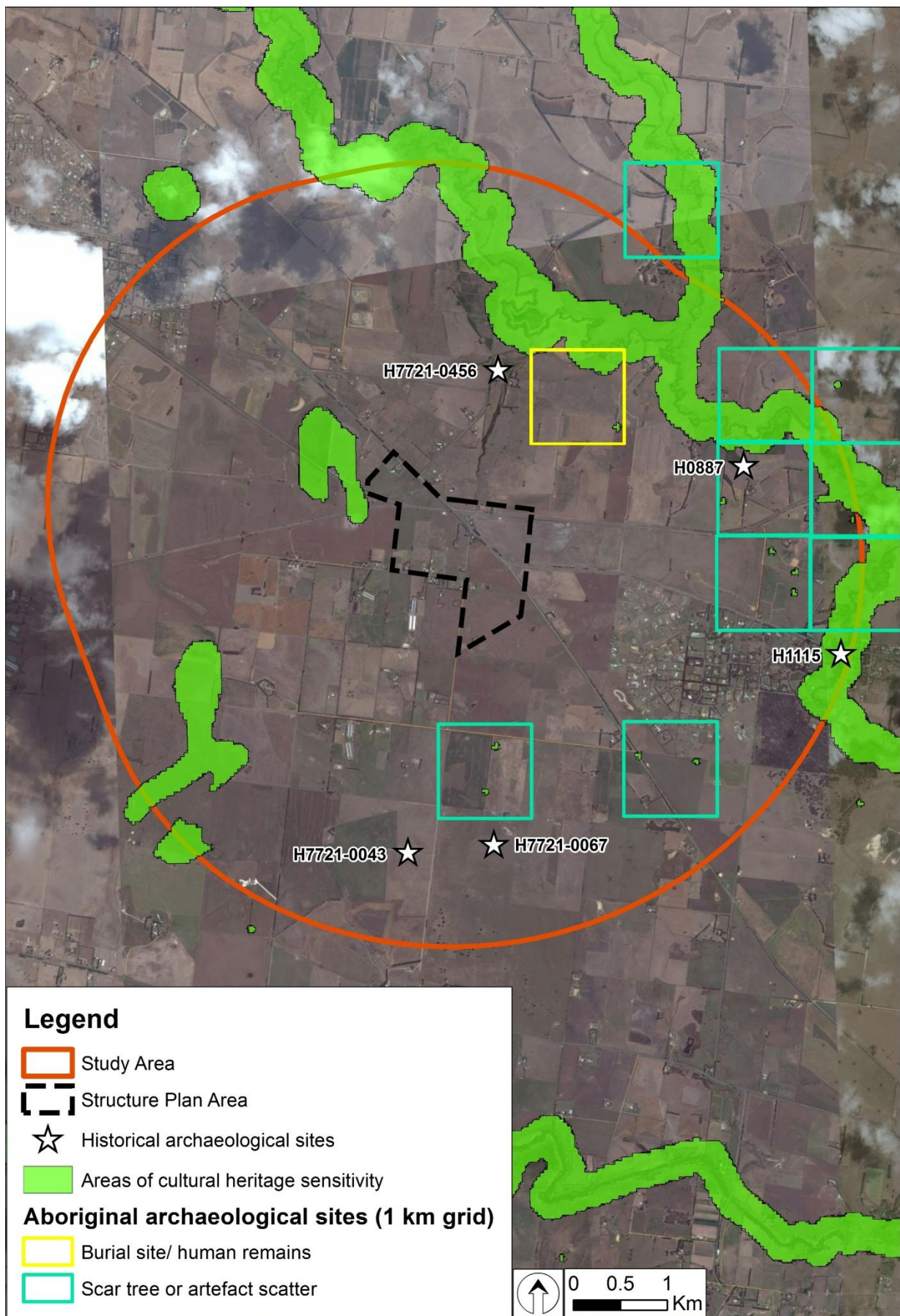
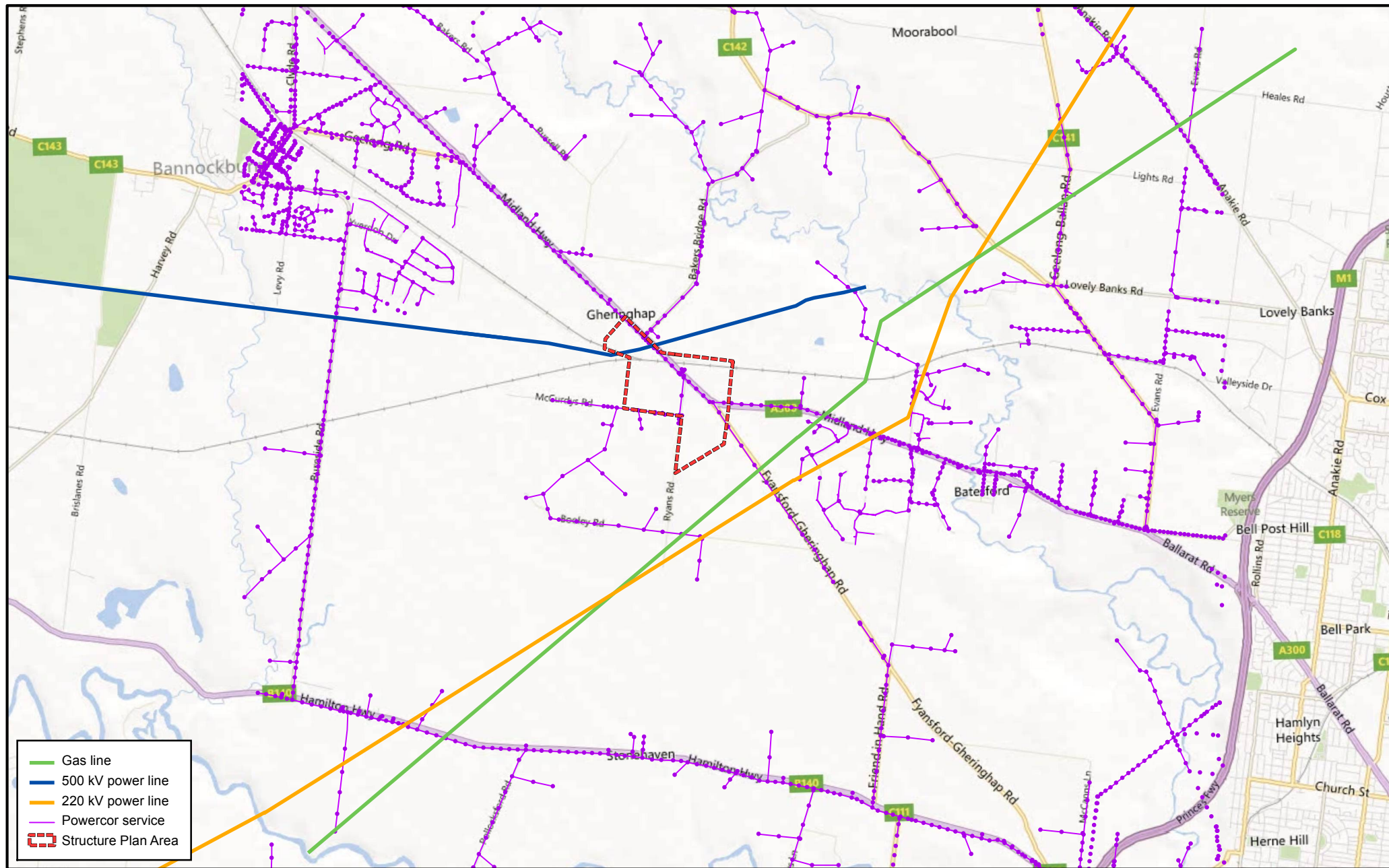


Figure 2: Cultural Heritage Values

Appendix B

Infrastructure Details



Data Source: Bing Maps (2012), client supplied

Drawn: Gheringhap_AppB_F1_Servicing2_261112

Scale 1:70,000

Author: TK

Date: 17/05/2012

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Editor: TK

Print Date: 26/11/2012

Projection: Transverse Mercator
Coordinate System: GDA 1984 MGA Zone 55

Revision: A1

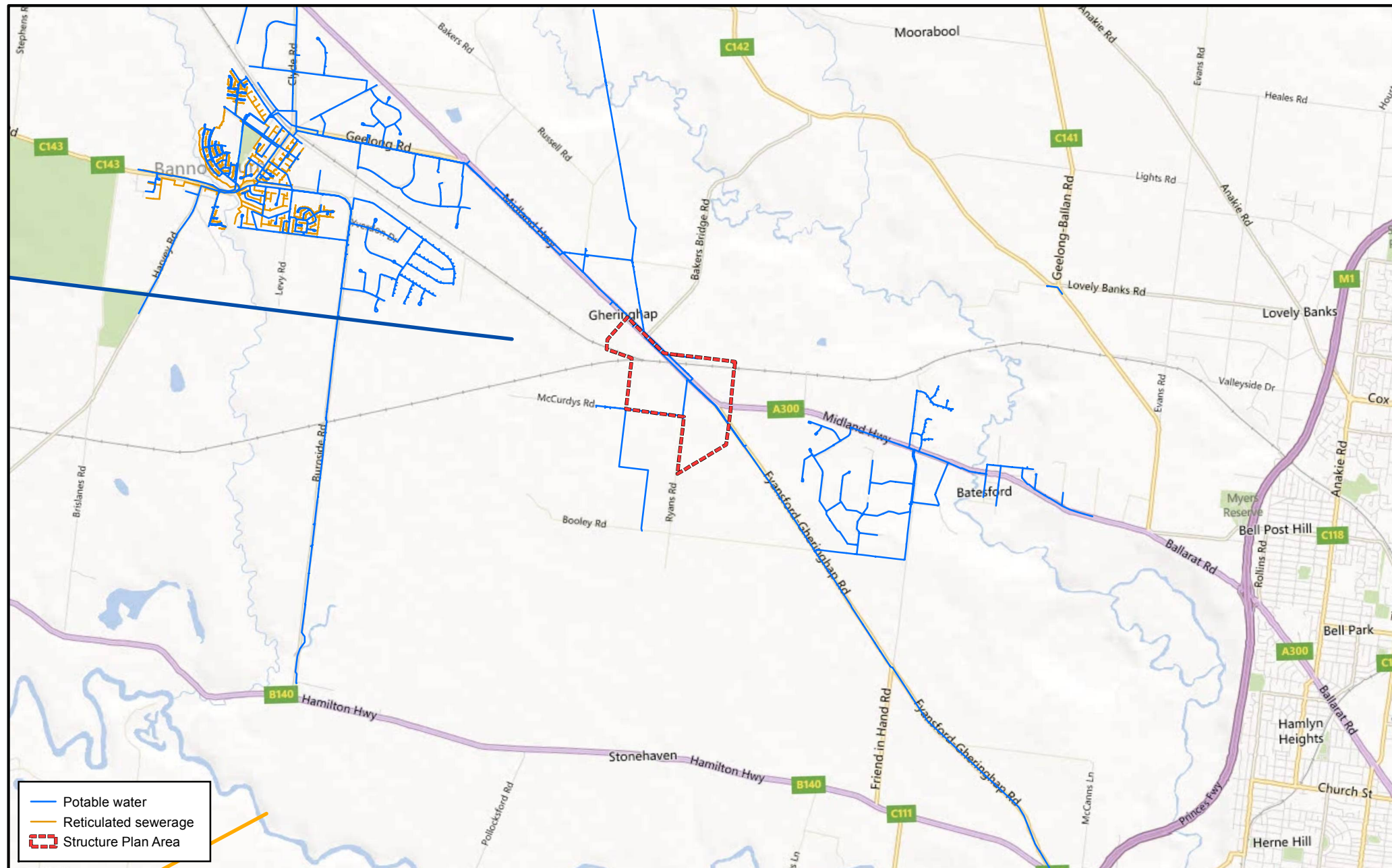
Review: PD

Scale correct when printed at A4 Landscape

PRELIMINARY

Gheringhap servicing report

Figure 1
Asset location map



Data Source: Bing Maps (2012), client supplied

Drawn by: Gheringhap_AppB_F2_Servicing1_261112

Scale 1:70,000

Author: TK Date: 17/05/2012

0 510 1,020 metres

Editor: TK Print Date: 26/11/2012

Projection: Transverse Mercator
Coordinate System: GDA 1984 MGA Zone 55

Revision: A1 Review: PD

Scale correct when printed at A4 Landscape

PRELIMINARY

Gheringhap servicing report

Figure 2
Potable water and reticulated sewerage

**PARSONS
BRINCKERHOFF**



**PARSONS
BRINCKERHOFF**