

Part 2

Policy context and background work



Policy context

A range of State Government and Moreland City Council policies have informed the development of the Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan. This section provides a summary of those policies that have significantly influenced the plan.

Coburg has been designated as a principal activity centre with the aim that it will be a focus for mixed-use development, including residential living within an integrated transport network. The Central Coburg 2020 vision is consistent with the objectives outlined in Melbourne 2030, including the following directions:

State policies

Melbourne 2030: Planning for sustainable growth

Melbourne 2030 is the Victorian State Government's strategy for the future development of metropolitan Melbourne to 2030. A key focus of the strategy is the development of activity centres as the focus for high quality development, activity and living across Melbourne.

The key principles of *Melbourne 2030* have been distilled into Clause 12 of the State Planning Policy Framework of the *Moreland Planning Scheme*.

- Direction 1 a more compact city
- Direction 2 better management of metropolitan growth
- Direction 4 a more prosperous city
- Direction 5 a great place to be
- Direction 6 a fairer city
- Direction 7 a greener city
- Direction 8 better transport links
- Direction 9 better planning decisions, careful management.

A range of policies in *Melbourne 2030* provide specific direction for the development of the Central Coburg structure plan. In particular:

- Policy 1.1 Build up activity centres as a focus for high-quality development, activity and living for the whole community.
- Policy 1.2 Broaden the base of activity in centres that are currently dominated by shopping to include a wider range of services over longer hours, and restrict out-of-centre development.
- Policy 1.3 Locate a substantial proportion of new housing in or close to activity centres and other strategic redevelopment sites that offer good access to services and transport.
- Policy 2.3 Manage the sequence of development in growth areas so that services are available from early in the life of new communities.
- Policy 4.4 Create opportunities for innovation and the knowledge economy within existing and emerging industries, research and education.
- Policy 4.5 Encourage the continued deployment of broadband telecommunications services that are easily accessible.
- Policy 5.1 Promote good urban design to make the environment more livable and attractive.
- Policy 5.2 Recognise and protect cultural identity, neighbourhood character and sense of place.
- Policy 5.3 Improve community safety and encourage neighbourhood design that makes people feel safe.
- Policy 5.4 Protect heritage places and values.
- Policy 5.5 Promote excellent neighbourhood design to create attractive, 'walkable' and diverse communities.
- Policy 5.6 Improve the quality and distribution of local open space and ensure long-term protection of public open space.
- Policy 5.7 Rectify gaps in the network of metropolitan open space by creating new parks and ensure major open space corridors are protected and enhanced.
- Policy 6.1 Increase the supply of well-located affordable housing.
- Policy 6.2 Plan for a more equitable distribution of social infrastructure.
- Policy 6.4 Develop a strong cultural environment and increase access to arts, recreation and to other cultural facilities.
- Policy 7.1 Ensure water resources are managed in a sustainable way.
- Policy 7.2 Reduce the amount of waste generated and encourage increased reuse and recycling of waste materials.
- Policy 7.3 Contribute to national and international efforts to reduce energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Policy 7.4 Reduce the impact of stormwater on bays and catchments.
- Policy 7.6 Ensure land-use and transport planning and infrastructure provision contribute to improved air quality.
- Policy 7.7 Protect native habitat and areas of important biodiversity through appropriate land-use planning.
- Policy 7.8 Promote the concept of sustainability and develop benchmarks to measure progress.
- Policy 8.1 Upgrade and develop the Principal Public Transport Network and local public transport services to connect activity centres and link Melbourne to the regional cities.
- Policy 8.2 Improve the operation of the existing public transport network with faster, more reliable and efficient on-road and rail public transport.
- Policy 8.3 Plan urban development to make jobs and community facilities more accessible.
- Policy 8.4 Coordinate development of all transport modes to provide a comprehensive transport system.
- Policy 8.5 Manage the road system to achieve integration, choice and balance by developing an efficient and safe network and making the most of existing infrastructure.
- Policy 8.6 Review transport practices, including design, construction and management, to reduce environmental impacts.
- Policy 8.7 Give more priority to cycling and walking in planning urban development and in managing our road system and neighbourhoods.
- Policy 8.8 Promote the use of sustainable, personal transport options.
- Policy 9.1 Achieve better planning decisions.
- Policy 9.2 Speed up resolution of appeals.

Linking Melbourne: Metropolitan Transport Plan

The Linking Melbourne: Metropolitan Transport Plan aims to manage and develop Melbourne's transport system. The plan outlines key transport challenges for Melbourne as well as directions and initiatives to meet these challenges over the next 10 years.

Melbourne 2030 sets out eight long-term policies for the development of Melbourne's transport system, including:

1. improve the Principal Public Transport Network
2. improve the operation of existing public transport network with faster, more reliable and efficient on-road, rail and public transport
3. plan urban development to make jobs and community services more accessible
4. coordinate development of all transport modes to provide a comprehensive transport system
5. manage road systems to achieve integration, choice and balance by developing an efficient and safe network and making the most of infrastructure
6. review transport practices, including design, construction and management to reduce environmental impacts

7. give more priority to cycling and walking in planning urban development and in managing our road system and neighbourhood
8. promote use of sustainable, personal transport options.

The Metropolitan Transport Plan outlines a number of programs to meet Policy 4, that is 'coordinate development of all transport modes to provide a comprehensive transport system'. Numerous reports and studies have been developed to address various sections of the transport system, including the Metropolitan Bus Plan, Tram and Train Plan, Victorian Freight and Logistics Strategy. The Metropolitan Transport Plans refers to all of these plans and aims to provide an integrated approach outlining priorities for action.

Key principles that underpin the development of the Metropolitan Transport Plan include:

1. provide better access to activity centres and job opportunities, via alternative modes
2. make better use of existing assets – arterial roads and public transport networks
3. improve access for freight and commercial traffic throughout the metropolitan area – with effective links to the port precinct and to regional Victoria

4. recognise the importance of non-motorised travel modes
5. promote greater use of public transport and develop better public transport options
6. improve safety for users of all modes
7. provide information to enable better travel choices to be made.

The plan is divided into four sections, which highlights four critical issues:

- safety
- rising congestion
- the growth of the metropolitan population
- promoting ongoing economic growth.

State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF)

The SPPF seeks to ensure that the objectives of planning in Victoria, as set out in the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, are fostered through appropriate land use and development planning policies and practices. These policies and practices are used to integrate relevant environmental, social and economic factors in the interests of net community benefit and sustainable development.

The relevant objectives to the *Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan* include the following:

Metropolitan development – concentrating new development at activity centres near current infrastructure. Locating a substantial proportion of new housing in or close to activity centres. Creating urban environments that are of better quality, safer and more functional, and that provide more open space and an easily recognisable sense of place and cultural identity. Providing fairer access to and distribution of social and cultural infrastructure. Minimising impacts on the environment to create a sustainable path for future growth and development. Creating a more sustainable transport system by integrating land use and development.

Settlement – ensuring a sufficient supply of land is available for residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, institutional and other public uses. Higher density development and mixed-use development is encouraged near public transport routes. Structure plans are to be prepared to facilitate the orderly development of urban areas. Consolidation of existing areas is encouraged, however should respect neighbourhood character.

Environment – ensuring land use and development is managed to minimise impact on the environment.

Economic development – encouraging the concentration of major retail, commercial, administrative, entertainment and cultural developments into activity centres. Highly accessible activity centres encourage multi-purpose trips. Tourism facilities should be well-designed and sited and build upon the surrounding urban activities and cultural and natural attractions.

Infrastructure – planning for land use and transport around railways, principal bus routes and tram lines. Higher land-use densities and mixed-use developments are encouraged around transport facilities with pedestrian access to these facilities safeguarded.

Design and built form – achieving high quality urban design and architecture that reflect the particular characteristics, aspirations and cultural identity of the community and enhance liveability, diversity, amenity and safety of the public realm.

Activity centre guidelines: Department of Sustainability and Environment

The DSE Activity Centre Guidelines aim to provide guidance in the achievement of high-quality urban environments for activity centres. These guidelines have been developed to assist in applying the principles of Clause 19.03 Design and Built Form of the SPPF. They

provide assistance in the development of the design guidelines for individual centres and may be used to guide the design outcomes for the centre once the structure plan is in place.

The guidelines are structured around eight elements of design consideration:

- Element 1. urban structure
- Element 2. stations and interchanges
- Element 3. street design
- Element 4. public spaces
- Element 5. building design
- Element 6. malls and large stores
- Element 7. higher density housing
- Element 8. car parking.

Guidelines for Higher Density Residential Development: Department of Sustainability and Environment

These guidelines have been developed to enable the planning system to promote well-designed higher density housing in activity centres and other redevelopment sites close to public transport. The guidelines will assist developers and designers when preparing proposals and planning applications and Council when assessing those applications.

The guidelines are structured around six elements of design consideration including:

- Element 1. urban context
- Element 2. building envelope
- Element 3. street pattern and street-edge quality
- Element 4. circulation and services
- Element 5. building layout and design
- Element 6. open space and landscape design.

Under each of the elements are a series of design objectives and a set of related design suggestions.

Safer Design Guidelines

The Safer Design Guidelines have been prepared to facilitate the planning of safer urban environments for Victorian communities. They will be used to guide the design, planning, refurbishment and maintenance of public and private places. They have been developed in response to two key government strategies: *Melbourne 2030* and *Safer Streets and Homes – A Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy for Victoria 2002–2005*.

The guidelines are structured around five principles, including improved safety in the community, personal safety and reducing people's fear of

crime, and enabling people to see, be seen and interpret their surroundings.

Local Planning Policy Framework

Local planning policies are those generated by Council, in consultation with the Moreland community. They build on State and Federal Government policies but provide variations that are particular to the planning and development needs of the City of Moreland.

Moreland Planning Scheme and Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS)

The MSS sets out Council's vision for the direction of land use and development for the municipality. The vision is:

Moreland seeks to create an environmentally sustainable and livable city where people can shop, work and socialise locally; a city where a car and high income are not necessary for a rich and rewarding quality of life; a city which will continue to provide a range of opportunities and choices for a diverse and prosperous community.

Improving social conditions, creating a sustainable employment base, improving the built and natural environment and ensuring open, responsive and consultative governance are the four pillars by

which Council's decisions and actions are considered. These pillars reflect a guiding philosophy of sustainability that is also the guiding principle of the MSS. The MSS recognises the strong link between the physical environment and the health and wellbeing of its community.

The MSS outlines the key influences and critical issues that are affecting Moreland, such as the result of changing population and employment patterns and the need to work towards achieving sustainability. Planning must also provide for the needs of shrinking household sizes, elderly people, people with disabilities and the need for more affordable housing. A key challenge is to ensure the community benefits from increased density development, including the opportunity to cater for housing needs, improvements to infrastructure and the public realm, thresholds for social services and greater environmental outcomes.

As the municipality is losing its traditional manufacturing base, there is a need to diversify the labour skills of the population and provide new employment opportunities. Opportunities to bring work and home closer together will enable changes to be made to the pattern of transport, including reduced trip length and alternative use of the car, for traffic and environmental

benefits. The MSS recognises the need to enhance environmental assets, including open space natural systems, creating habitats and managing drainage. Council is strongly committed to the reduction of the environmental impact of activities. In particular, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the impacts of car travel, reducing resource use, water conservation and sustainable design and development.

Moreland Industrial Land Use Strategy 2004

The Moreland Industrial Land Use Strategy provides clear direction about the long term planning and zoning of industrial land throughout Moreland. It sets out a framework for future changes to land uses in respond to the changing needs of industrial activities. Retaining a strong local economy and local employment opportunities is a core driver of the strategy.

The strategy makes recommendations for land within the Coburg activity centre along Sydney Road north of Bell Street, and south of Munro/Harding Street to Rennie Street. It recognises that these areas will evolve to provide a wider mix of employment opportunities including offices and the like. Residential activities may be appropriate, provided the development maintains an employment focus. Industrial

uses wishing to continue or establish are supported.

The strategy was adopted by Council in August 2004 and is currently with the Minister awaiting approval.

Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy 1998

The Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy (MITS) is Council's principal transport planning policy and forms a key part of Council's strategic planning work. The purpose of the strategy is to define key actions for Council to undertake over a 10- to 15-year timeframe.

The strategy is based on two equally important key objectives:

- improving access to satisfy social, educational and recreational needs
- improving access to work, shops, and for other commercial reasons.

The report is divided into three parts: Part A discusses the local and metropolitan context and a range of issues that creates the need for a transport strategy; Part B, contains the policy statements and actions; and Part C uses Sydney Road and the Upfield corridor as a case study and demonstrates the policies of MITS in action.

The vision for the future, as outlined in MITS, is to have four complementary transport networks (public transport, pedestrian, cycling

and vehicle networks) offering convenience and speed.

Strategies are outlined for how Council can improve all networks and encourage use of a range of transport alternatives to the car.

Moreland Municipal Public Health Plan 2003

The Moreland Municipal Public Health Plan (MPHP) provides the overarching policy framework for strategies to enhance health, safety and wellbeing in Moreland. The MPHP focuses on the social elements of Council's vision and complements the Moreland Municipal Strategic Statement with its focus on the physical environment.

The vision and purpose will be achieved by striving for integrated social, economic and physical objectives in Moreland, specifically:

- A healthy social environment – people living healthy lifestyles; easy access to appropriate services when needed; a well-connected, equitable and democratic society; convivial and harmonious community life.
- A healthy physical environment – clean food, water and air; livable and safe built environments and open space; affordable housing; viable and sustainable systems.
- A healthy economy – adequate prosperity and worthwhile

employment; a vibrant and sustainable local economy; access to lifelong learning.

- Healthy leadership and processes – integrated whole-of-Council, whole-of-government and whole-of-community approaches; enhanced personal and organisational capability to strengthen factors that support health and reduce factors that harm health; trustworthy and viable organisations; equity and democratic processes for decision making.

The MPHP 2003 comprises a plan for action over a 10-year period covering a range of action areas which can have a significant impact on health, safety and wellbeing outcomes. Integrating health, safety and wellbeing considerations into local area urban planning is included within this action plan. A number of specific plans fit within the MPHP Framework and inform the social, leisure and cultural planning for Central Coburg 2020, for example, the Moreland Leisure Plan, Arts Strategy, Youth Strategy, and the Early Years Plan.

Moreland Open Space Strategy 2004

The Moreland Open Space Strategy (MOSS) is a comprehensive study and analysis of the open lands throughout Moreland, to produce recommendations for action towards specified goals and objectives. The MOSS provides open space planning, design and development direction for the municipality. The types of open space considered in the MOSS include recognised 'public open space' – parks reserves, playgrounds, creeks – and those particularly relevant to activity centres, such as civic and urban spaces.

The MOSS identifies the following broad strategic priorities for the next five years which are of relevance to this structure plan:

- providing quality, accessible open space within safe walking distance of all citizens
- allocating adequate resources for maintenance and refurbishment of existing and additional open space
- assessing and prioritising open space needs in Moreland's designated principal and major activity centres, particularly for higher density residential development
- diversifying recreation and open space opportunities for children and youth
- master planning for undeveloped open space in Pentridge.

Moreland Economic Development Strategy Policy 1999

Council's Economic Development Strategy sets out the following vision:

Council is committed to working for a fair and prosperous local economy that maximises local employment opportunities, builds on the traditional strengths of local industry and develops new economic opportunities throughout the city.

Council is also committed to ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are shared throughout the community.

(Council Plan 1999–2002)

This policy is currently under review.

Draft Moreland Neighbourhood Character Guidelines 2005

Council has developed draft guidelines for neighbourhood character to ensure that new development in Moreland contributes positively to neighbourhood character. The guidelines will be implemented in the *Moreland Planning Scheme* and have been through a formal public consultation period. The draft guidelines were adopted by Council on 24 August 2004, and are undergoing Council-approved changes before being submitted to the Minister for Planning for approval. It is important

to note, a structure plan takes precedence over draft Neighbourhood Character Guidelines.

Design Guidelines for Buildings Over Three Storeys 2005

Council has developed a local planning policy and guidelines to improve the design quality and impacts of taller buildings in Moreland. The Design Guidelines for Buildings Over Three Storeys 2005, and associated local planning policy, form part of Amendment C43 to the *Moreland Planning Scheme* and have been through a formal public consultation period. The policy and guidelines were adopted by Council on 24 August 2004 and, following Council-approved changes, were submitted to the Minister for Planning for approval in July 2005. If approved by the Minister, they will form part of the *Moreland Planning Scheme* through the inclusion of the local planning policy at Clause 22 and incorporation of the guidelines at Clause 81.

Greenhouse Abatement Strategy and Greenhouse Action Plan 2001

The Greenhouse Abatement Strategy and Greenhouse Action Plan sets out priority actions for Council to achieve its greenhouse abatement targets.

The targets set by Council are:

- reducing net greenhouse emissions attributable to Council's operations by 40 per cent from 1995 levels, by 2010
- reducing net greenhouse emissions attributable to the Moreland community by 20 per cent from 1995 levels, by 2010
- Moreland commits to pursuing a long-term goal of zero net emissions of greenhouse gases.

Watershed 2005

Watershed is an integrated water management plan for Council. Council has committed to reducing its own water use by 50 per cent and the community's water use by 30 per cent by 2021. Priority actions to increase water conservation and water quality have been identified.

Moreland Planning Scheme – Zone and overlay requirements

Zone and overlay requirements form part of the Victorian Planning Provisions, which are used in all planning schemes as required. The zone and overlay requirements are to be administered to implement the State Government and Local Planning Policy frameworks contained within the planning scheme.

The zone requirements include the purpose of the zone and set out the type of uses and development

allowed in each zone. Zones currently applying throughout the Coburg Activity Centre include three business zones, an industrial zone, a residential zone, a range of public use zones, a special use zone, a comprehensive development zone, and the public park and recreation zone. A full list of the zonings and associated permitted land uses within the Coburg Activity Centre is included at page 14 of the *Central Coburg 2020 Background Report and Vision* (June 2003) and is attached at Appendix 1 in this volume.

In addition to the zone requirements, the planning scheme includes a range of overlay controls, which provide additional requirements for subdivision, buildings and works on specific areas of land. These include the heritage overlay and public acquisition overlay. Plans showing the location of the heritage overlay and public acquisition overlay form part of Appendix 1 in this volume.

The planning scheme also contains a range of 'particular provisions' that are specific prerequisites or planning provisions for particular uses and developments, including advertising signs and car parking. These apply consistently across Victoria, and apply in addition to the zones and overlay requirements.

Background work informing the structure plan

A range of background reports and research findings have informed the development of the *Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan*. Many of these have been undertaken since the development of the vision to inform the structure plan more fully. The major findings of each are summarised below. They are reflected in Part 4 *Background and issues* and have informed Part 5 *Structure plan policies* (in Volume 2).

Central Coburg Development Options Appraisal, SGS Economics, 2005

The Central Coburg Development Options Appraisal tested the feasibility of the Central Coburg 2020 Vision for medium density, European-style development of about six storeys, as opposed to two- to three-storey development. The demand for residential, retail and commercial space to occupy this development was also examined. Community consultation in developing the vision identified community support for, but also some level of concern over the impacts of this scale of development.

The appraisal concluded that there is demand for retail, commercial and residential land within the centre. In relation to residential, the demand is extremely price sensitive.

The feasibility testing of the two-, three- and six-storey development revealed the following challenges:

- management of existing car parking provision and future car parking demand is the key challenge
- the need for the re-provision of existing retail car parking spaces, makes the two- and three-storey options non-viable
- the costs involved in the provision of underground car parking at this point in time pushes the cost of each apartment to a level that the market may not be willing to pay at this stage and has implications for the affordability of dwellings
- alternative scenarios for the quantity of car parking and the way it is provided will need to be explored. These could include reduced parking ratios for new development, better management of car parking within the centre, and the possibility of constructing car parking garages.

Central Coburg 2020 Social and Cultural Needs Assessment, Collaborations, 2005

The primary objective of this project was to provide a detailed understanding of the social, cultural and leisure needs of current and future populations to inform the development of a structure plan for

the Coburg area and inform the proposed Developer Contribution Plan for the centre. The project identifies the social infrastructure priorities that will support the broad objectives of Central Coburg 2020 and support the capacity of services and facilities to respond to population change and growth.

In the context of this project, the following challenges were identified:

- supporting service integration of key life stages
- enhancing the role of community facilities in the activity centre
- supporting population growth around the activity centre
- improving community health and wellbeing
- delivering an integrated approach to community planning.

In response, the concept of five community hubs was developed to service both the regional role that Coburg plays in the delivery of social infrastructure, and the neighbourhood role of Coburg.

The community hub concept has been developed as an innovative way to provide social infrastructure for the centre. It responds to population projections based on the development demand for residential, retail and commercial land uses and the change in role of the centre. The community hubs concept moves

away from single-purpose, stand-alone facilities to encourage a more integrated approach to service and facility planning for the centre. This is likely to consist of facilities that provide complementary services where health and wellbeing outcomes can be increased, and are designed for use by a number of different users at different times of the day and night.

Central Coburg 2020 Transport Interchange Feasibility Study, GTA Consultants et al, November 2005

The development of a transport interchange in Coburg was a key recommendation of the Central Coburg 2020 Vision and was well-supported by the community during consultation. With additional funding from the State Government, a feasibility study was prepared to inform future planning of the transport interchange and understand its impact on the broader structure plan.

A range of possible locations for the transport interchange were tested and a preferred location determined. The preferred location, off Bell Street, provides a range of opportunities for the structure plan – including improved safety and accessibility between bus, train and tram services and better integration with the current and future retail opportunities

of the centre. The transport interchange has implications for the future traffic network with a number of new roads proposed to facilitate the movement of buses around the centre.

Sydney Road Coburg Business/Marketing Plan, Village Well, September 2005

Developed in conjunction with the Coburg Traders Association, the Sydney Road Coburg Business/Marketing Plan provides a three-year plan to reposition the centre to capitalise on the opportunities of Central Coburg 2020. A healthy retail and business environment is recognised as critical to the success of the Central Coburg vision.

The plan identifies strategies to position the centre in line with the vision as the vibrant heart of Moreland, offering something for everyone, with an authentic multicultural character. An opportunity exists to protect the authenticity of the centre and ensure the centre evolves as a unique point of difference as compared to more homogenous shopping centres and precincts.

The plan recognises gaps within the current retail and business offer available within the centre and outlines possible locations for businesses to fill these gaps to ensure the retail structure of the centre is enhanced by any new development.

Central Coburg 2020 Integrated Transport Strategy, GTA Consultants November 2005

The Central Coburg Integrated Transport Strategy brings together the results of a number of years of background studies, transport modelling associated with the construction of Pentridge Boulevard, and refinement and integration of more recent projects such as the Central Coburg Transport Interchange proposal.

This strategy covers the geographic area of the structure plan and deals with all transport modes. It seeks to resolve competing interests and sharing of road space while meeting the objectives of *Melbourne 2030* and the Metropolitan Transport Plan, in terms of sustainable transport design by reducing car dependency, encouraging use of public transport, cycling and walking whilst accommodating the use of principle transport routes for freight.

The plan also provides rationale for changes to the Public Acquisition Overlay in aiming to meet the objectives of VicRoads and Council. The strategy was endorsed by Council on 12 April 2006.