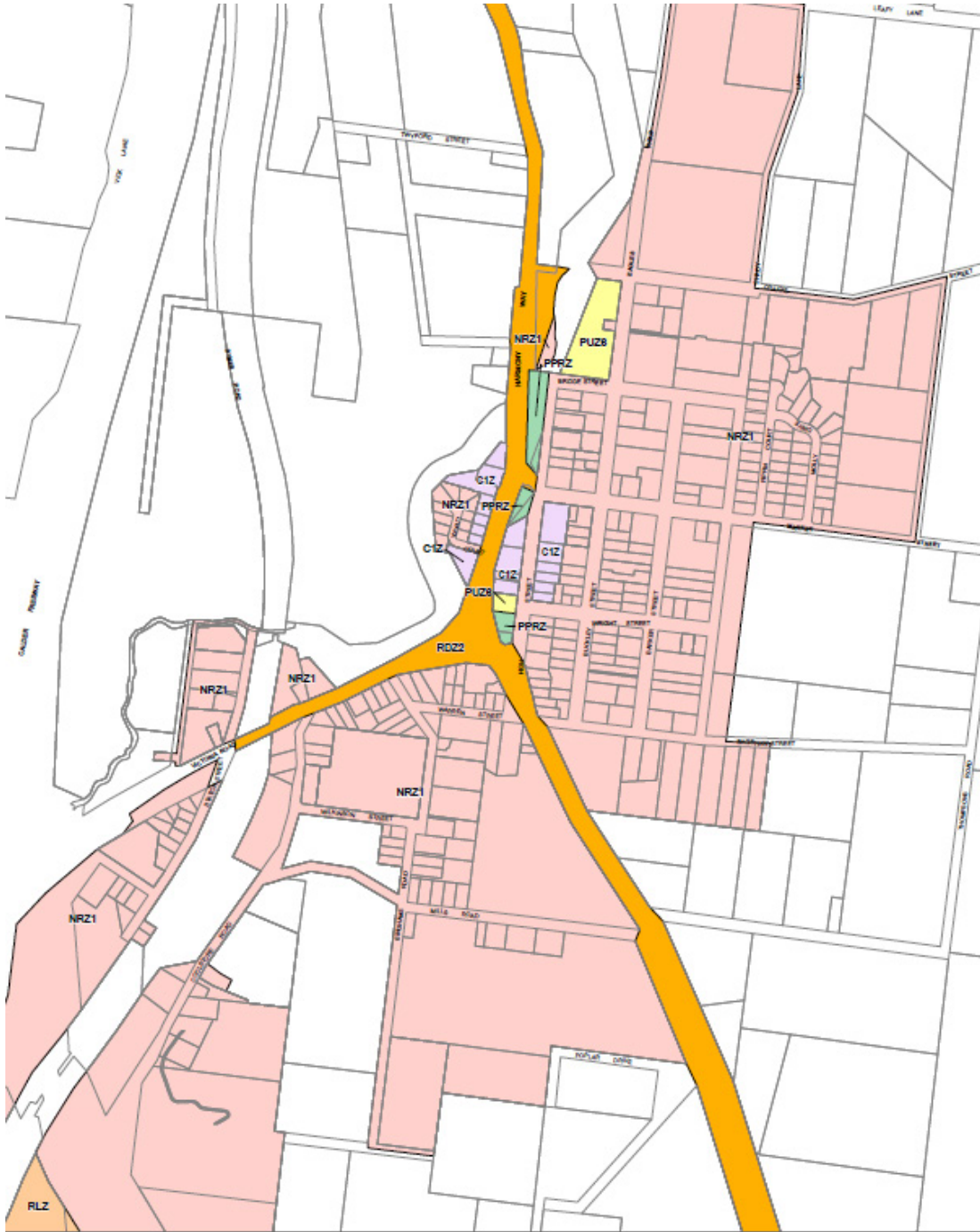# PLAN
HARCOURT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
SHEET 3 - RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES IN THE EXISTING TOWNSHIP ZONE

Why is the Township Zone changing to residential and commercial zoning?

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Harcourt is currently zoned Township Zone with some areas of General Residential Zone (at Pippin Court area). Plan Harcourt proposes to rezone the Harcourt town centre from Township Zone to Commercial 1 Zone, to reinforce this area as Harcourt's primary commercial area, which will assist in creating a defined town centre over the long term. Applying the Commercial 1 Zone sends a signal that this area is Harcourt's defined town centre and the focus of the town's future retail/commercial activities.

In 2019 the State Government released Planning Practice Note 91 (PPN91). PPN91 provides direction to planning authorities (including councils) on how to apply residential zones to towns. PPN91 states that the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ) is to be applied to areas where there is no anticipated change to the predominantly single and double storey residential character, and to areas that have been identified as having specific neighbourhood, heritage, environmental or landscape character values that distinguish the land from other parts of the municipality or surrounding area.

This fits well within the context of residential areas of Harcourt because Harcourt has specific neighbourhood character that distinguishes it from other towns of the Shire, and dwellings are predominantly single and double storey character. The community has also told us that they want to retain the 'village look and feel' of Harcourt in these areas.

Alternatively, PPN91 states that the Township Zone is to be applied to small towns with no specific structure of residential, commercial and industrial land uses.

This describes Harcourt well as it stands today, however one of the key messages heard from the Harcourt community is the need for a defined, commercial town centre in Harcourt. Therefore the Township Zone is no longer appropriate for Harcourt, nor is it suitable for Harcourt in future as it grows.

To provide a sense of structure for Harcourt into the future, we therefore need to rezone land from the Township Zone to:

- Commercial 1 Zone: To define the town centre and promote a mix of land uses there now and into the long term future.

- Neighbourhood Residential Zone: To retain the village look and feel of Harcourt by providing development that respects existing and preferred neighbourhood character.

It's important to note that there are currently no changes proposed to the Industrial 3 Zone land along Coolstore Road and the Public Use Zone Schedule 4 applied to the Railway Station area.

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Does this impact on how I currently use my land or if I want to develop or subdivide my land?

Planning Scheme Amendment C94malx aims to consolidate commercial growth within the town centre and encourage infill development within the existing residential area. Nevertheless, Council cannot require you to develop your land at any particular time just because it is noted in the Harcourt Framework Plan as being in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone or Commercial 1 Zone. In general, if you have a planning or building permit for how you currently use your land (that has not yet expired), you have 'existing use rights' even when, through rezoning of the land, your current use becomes prohibited under the new zone.

To find out more about how you can subdivide and/or develop your land, we encourage you to contact us at Council to discuss the planning controls relating to your site. Early planning advice can save you time, energy and money in the long run.

Will future development have an impact on the existing infrastructure, and will this need to be upgraded?

Development within both the future town expansion areas and established residential areas will contribute to a growth in Harcourt's population. This new development will generate increased usage and impact on the existing infrastructure (such as roads), both immediately surrounding the future town expansion areas and within other areas of the town. This highlights the need to plan for infrastructure to accommodate the growth in the community.

Council is currently preparing a strategic infrastructure plan for Harcourt (as was identified within Plan Harcourt), which will play an important role in clearly defining the infrastructure which needs to be delivered in order to meet the needs of the growing population. It helps to establish the strategic basis for direct provision of infrastructure as works in kind or as a monetary contribution toward infrastructure provision.

The Infrastructure Plan supports the preparation of voluntary agreements between landowners proposing to develop land and Council, which is then formalised via Section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. This is a different approach to a formal Development Contributions Plan (DCP), which is implemented via the planning scheme in an overlay. However, it does follow a similar methodology to a DCP, in that it identifies the key infrastructure projects to be funded, considers the demand for such infrastructure and then uses this information to calculate a contributions rate. This mechanism does not require a planning scheme amendment, reducing the time and resources required for its implementation. This approach is considered to be the most suitable for Harcourt.

An update on the strategic infrastructure plan for Harcourt will be provided early 2021.

Any other question not answered here?

Please see the other fact sheets specifically for existing residents, businesses and horticultural producers, visit www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/PlanHarcourt or contact Strategic Planning by email info@mountalexander.vic.gov.au or phone (03) 5471 1700.

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