

Mount Alexander Urban Growth Strategy

Summary of Submissions and Workshops

February 2016



Background

The first community consultation process has now been completed as part of the preparation of an Urban Growth Strategy for the shire.

The UGS will guide population and residential growth in urban areas and towns throughout the shire, in particular:

- Campbells Creek
- Castlemaine
- Chewton
- Elphinstone
- Guildford
- Harcourt
- Maldon
- Newstead
- Taradale

As part of the preparation of the Urban Growth Strategy and to assist with the community engagement process, a Background Report has been produced. The Background Report provides information on the context of the shire, demographic information, and other strategies and policies which help inform the Urban Growth Strategy.

A copy of the Background Report can be found online at:

www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/ugs

Consultation and Community Workshops

Community consultation was held to start the conversation about what about the future of the shire when it comes to residential growth. As part of the engagement process, Community Workshops were held in six towns over a two day period between Wednesday 17 February and Thursday 18 February. Written submissions were also provided.

Workshop and Submission summaries and responses are outline in the following pages.

Government Agencies were consulted occurred during November 2015.

Next Steps



Work has now commenced on the development of the Draft Urban Growth Strategy.

Once this Draft is complete the document will be publically available for comment. It is expected that this will occur late April 2016.

Further information is available from Council's website:

www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/ugs

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Taradale/Elphinstone Workshop Notes

Strengths

- Strong local communities in both towns, reinforced by local community groups and local schools
- Picturesque landscape and rural character a key strength
- Accessible recreation activities
- Close to V/Line Service and freeway and easy commute to Melbourne.
- Local trade skills
- Community feels safe

Weaknesses

- Unsewered and within Special Water Supply catchment
- Reliance on private vehicles
- Lack of local retailing and services, employment, medical care etc, residents often need to travel out of town to access services
- Frequent blackouts, significant problem for local businesses
- Lack of recreation for older children and young adults

Opportunities

- NBN
- Leveraging the numerous holidaymakers (AirBnB, glamping)
- Weekenders often become permanent residents
- Infrastructure would support growth of towns
- Attraction of close community, rural lifestyle and local schools.
- Home based businesses
- Community facilities could be used for different uses
- Improve town entrances
- Land is available for development

Threats

- Lack of sewerage significantly impacts ability for density within townships. Concerns about what this means for the future.
- Uncertainty what can be developed and the requirements for onsite wastewater treatment.
- Environmental Risks (Fire, Climate Change).
- Population decline or less active people in the community.
- Land banking.
- Closure of local business or community services would have big impact.
- Losing involved members of the community

Directions for UGS

- Both Elphinstone and Taradale were previously identified for “Planned Growth”, in part due to their accessibility and local services, including schools.
- Both towns have a valued rural character which is relevant for consideration in the UGS.
- While State-wide changes in an approach to onsite wastewater treatment have occurred since the 2004 Strategy, and the identified sewer connection did not occur, the factors which made these towns attractive to growth in 2004 remain unchanged. Furthermore the UGS should not preclude sewer being installed or alternative waste water treatment options being available in the future. There are opportunities for growth which can occur in accordance with the waste water requirements (generally lower density and/or rural lifestyle). The UGS will consider these

Campbells Creek Workshop Notes

Strengths

- Located between Bendigo and Ballarat and close to Castlemaine.
- Picturesque setting.
- Good sport and recreation opportunities.
- Active community.
- Diversity of housing types supports a diverse population.
- Lots of families in comparison to other places in Mount Alexander.
- Not many weekender houses.
- Relatively affordable housing .
- New development bringing more people to community.
- Local history.
- Existing Urban Growth Boundary allows for more growth.

Weaknesses

- Not many local services or retail premises.
- Limited access to public transport, connections also poor.
- Flooding.
- Lack of formed infrastructure. No NBN and poor bike paths.
- Heavy vehicles use Midland Highway.
- Could be seen as a "dormitory " suburb.
- Facilities not of high standard.
- Management of public land, particularly the creek is poor.

Opportunities

- Improve facilities and infrastructure sequential with urban development.
- Upgrade bike paths and walking paths and encourage active transport for better connectivity. Better utilisation of the creek for recreation and amenity.
- Re-establish the identity of the township.
- Leverage the Primary School as a hub for community growth (Community Garden, social networks).
- Lot diversity supports diverse community.
- First home owners.
- Newer community.
- Infill development opportunities.
- Less attachment to the past

Threats

- Environmental risk (Bushfire and Flooding)
- Community lethargy after emergency events.
- Change in global financial markets.
- Local building industry may not be able to keep up with demand.
- Access and capacity to use infrastructure.
- Social isolation.
- Land banking.
- Residential expansion into productive agricultural land

Directions for UGS

- The Urban Growth Boundary identified in the 2004 strategy has allowed for new greenfield development to occur in Campbells Creek, and much of the growth which has occurred in Mount Alexander Shire has occurred here. The UGS should consider how to facilitate improvement to facilities and infrastructure sequential with urban development.
- While Campbells Creek is located within close proximity to Castlemaine, and as such is accessible for "main town" services, this also means that it lacks local services and retailing which was identified as desirable in the workshop. In this regard the existing Township Zone allows for a variety of uses to be contemplated and likely reinforces the character of the town.
- The latest data in relation to environmental risk, particularly flooding, should feed into the UGS.

Harcourt Workshop Notes

Strengths

- Proximity to Castlemaine, Bendigo and Melbourne
- Local infrastructure (NBN, sewer) and facilities (school, pre-school, church, swimming pool).
- Access to fuel
- Modernised irrigation
- Horticulture industry
- State Government Policy support for Harcourt.
- Relocation of highway has increased liveability.
- Regionally significant bike track.
- Rural country character and feel.

Weaknesses

- Train Station not open
- Lack of heritage buildings
- Two focal points separated from one another.
- Infrastructure divides the town.
- Undeveloped zoned land.
- Lack of subdivision has hampered town growth.
- Sewer does not reach south of highway.
- Geology.
- Younger people have moved out.
- Lack of rental accommodation.
- Small lot subdivision has occurred in the Farm Zone in the designated growth area, which has harmed the long term prospects of the land.

Opportunities

- Intensify centre of town.
- Reduce supply of land to the south.
- Community house and community development.
- Walking track to connect town to Mount Alexander.
- Expand Coolstores.
- Niche farming, leverage water supply.
- Train Station.
- Incremental re-subdivision.
- Leverage State supported growth
- Improve community infrastructure sequential with development.

Threats

- Loss of community infrastructure.
- Planning inertia.
- Insensitive residential growth
- Small lot subdivision in the wrong location.
- Losing retail premises.
- Loss of productive agricultural land.
- Flooding risk.
- Poorly designed development.
- Rating of property.

Directions for UGS

- Since the 2004 Strategy, Harcourt has been identified for regionally significant growth. This is predominately due to its proximity to Bendigo, as well as Castlemaine. In this regard, the strong growth in Bendigo and associated policy and strategic work is highly relevant.
- While there is a lot of vacant zoned land within Harcourt, it is yet to be developed. Areas within the township boundary but zoned Farm Zone are underpressure to develop as large lots. The UGS should consider what this means for Harcourt in achieving growth in the future.
- Consideration should be given to balancing residential uses and horticulture and other agricultural uses. The Mountain Bike track provides tourism opportunity for Harcourt.
- The UGS should consider flood and fire risk, as well as areas which are and are not serviced by infrastructure.

Maldon Workshop Notes

Strengths

- Heritage and landscape value
- Active, engaged and creative community.
- Attractive lifestyle.
- Local tourism
- Mix of new-comers and long standing residents.
- Local recreation and sporting facilities. Good community infrastructure. Local services support aging in place.
- Township is walkable.
- Prison supports local employment.
- Buses available, particularly for school children.
- Low density contributes to character.
- Internet available.

Weaknesses

- Limited housing diversity. Particularly problematic for older people who cannot maintain house and garden.
- Public transport limited and poorly timetabled.
- Unmet demand for smaller houses.
- Access to high schools poor.
- Weekenders don't contribute as much as people living full time in the town.
- Housing affordability a problem.
- Limited white-collar employment.
- No reticulated gas.
- Mobile blackspots.

Opportunities

- Improvements to tourism signage.
- Improve design around town entrances.
- Better scheduling of buses.
- Weekenders often become permanent residents. Can better engage with this community.
- Leverage tourism (accommodation).
- Attract and retain younger people.
- Specialist/niche education.
- Articulate design guidelines for new buildings, not just for heritage buildings.
- Allans Road/Boundary Road industrial land.
- Harness Maldon's creativity.
- Underground power.

Threats

- Poor design outcomes (both development and subdivision), particularly for new development not affected by Heritage Overlay.
- Lack of certainty to community and developers in relation to design outcomes.
- High density which detracts from character.
- Dilution of heritage values.
- Heavy transport in the town.
- Reduction in state delivered services.
- Lack of maintenance on heritage buildings.
- Environmental risk including fire, weeds and climate change.
- Infrastructure which detracts from heritage character.

Directions for UGS

- Design outcomes were identified as being a key issue for the community in the workshop, and a key message was that growth in and of itself was not problematic, however poorly design growth which did not respect or respond to the heritage and character of the town should not occur. Design guidelines are outside the scope of the UGS, but can be recommended for future work.
- It was recognised that smaller and easier to maintain houses would assist “aging in place”, although again they would need to be well designed. It was also recognised that housing which encouraged a more diverse community should be encouraged (such as more families).
- The UGS should consider the strong community sentiment regarding protection of its heritage and character, as well as environment risk such as bushfire.

Newstead Workshop Notes

Strengths

- Strong growth occurring.
- Strong community. Well organised community events and projects (such as local pool).
- Market demand for its village and town atmosphere.
- Relatively affordable, particularly when compared to Maldon and Castlemaine.
- Attractive to young people and families.
- Open rural character.
- A lot of zoned land available.
- Electric car charging station coming.
- Community buildings well located and in good condition.
- Tree lined streets and walkable.

Weaknesses

- Not enough smaller housing.
- High proportion of new builds not on sewer.
- River divides the town.
- Flooding is an issue. Drainage not able to accommodate recent weather events.
- Erosion.
- Public transport between Maryborough and Castlemaine poor. Strong reliance on private transport.
- Elms are dying.

Opportunities

- Well-located smaller houses.
- Community buildings between utilised.
- Pedestrian bridge over river would impact floodplain but improve accessibility.
- Former netball courts are an opportunity.
- Township zoning provides flexibility.
- Low construction costs (generally flat topography).
- Walking/cycling trails to other townships.
- Community bus and community transport.
- Sustainable design.
- Protect and enhance open space sequential with development.
- Support tree lined streets (aesthetics, microclimate)
- Provide clearer guidance in relation to design responding to flooding and sustainable design.

Threats

- Rate of change.
- Environmental Risk (including climate change, flooding and fire)
- Ageing street trees.

Directions for UGS

- As evidenced by the list of “Threats”, the community involved in the workshop have already undertaken work to identify opportunities and reduce the weaknesses and threats within their town.
- Newstead has undergone growth, although land within the 2004 township boundary continues to be available.
- Unlike other towns, Newstead has an identified area of “medium density housing” in its existing Framework Plan, although it is unclear from the strategy what this means. This can be clarified through the UGS. It is noted that in the workshop there was support for smaller housing which is more affordable and requires less maintenance and which is walkable from the town centre, provided it could “fit in” with the Newstead character.

Castlemaine Workshop Notes

Strengths

- Walkable.
- Railway is a focal point.
- Wonderful services and facilities.
- Great social infrastructure.
- Feels safe.
- Planned with an urban structure.
- Demand for growth.
- First home owners attracted to rural Victoria.
- Tourism
- Accessibility to Bendigo and Melbourne.
- Not wholly reliant on tourism for employment. A working town with a good balance.
- Involved community.
- Character and appearance of town.
- Nice place to live
- Has a rural feel.

Weaknesses

- Amount of open space in new development.
- New development poorly located to access shops.
- Inconsistent decision making.
- Capacity to fund and maintain infrastructure.
- Lack of sustainable design in new development.
- New housing aimed at single demographic, not built for elderly, singles in the centre of town.
- New suburbs car dependant.
- Becoming increasingly less affordable.
- Water security for non-urban land problematic.
- New development ad-hoc and undermines original town.
- Poor public transport (particularly across town).
- Heavy vehicles.
- Schools at capacity
- No NBN.

Opportunities

- Recycled water
- Bypass
- Well-designed medium density housing close to services and town and shop top housing.
- Be at the forefront of sustainability and ESD.
- Planning for climate change.
- Weather protection.
- Curb outward growth and facilitate urban consolidation.
- Calder corridor presents opportunities. Review zoning of corridor.
- Affordable housing.
- Retain more young families.
- Home based business, co-share work spaces.
- Increased density outside of heritage areas.
- More public facilities (pools).

Threats

- Environmental risks, including water security, fire and climate change.
- Cuts to employment from State and Federal Governments.
- Population shifts.
- Loss of farmland to housing.
- Lack of infrastructure provisions, no new or updated infrastructure.
- Lack of vision or design guidance for housing.
- Weak planning scheme and lack of planning enforcement.
- Inadequate rail service.
- Failure to diversify community through lack of housing diversity and affordability.

Directions for UGS

- There were concerns that the design of new housing was poor, and did not support a diversity of housing types (people who don't want 3+ bedroom homes). The workshop generally supported opportunities for infill development close to services which does not impact heritage character of Castlemaine. This also supports the desire to stop the expansion of the township. This will be considered through the UGS.
- Community expressed a desire for clearer planning controls, which can be addressed through the UGS in terms of the locations for growth, in order to address the detailed design concerns, this is outside of the scope of this project.

Various Towns* Workshop Notes

Strengths

- Community.
- Development occurring in Harcourt.
- Separate local town identifies.
- Connection to sewer in some locations.
- Accessibility and V/Line.
- Wildlife and environmental values.
- Chewton Town Hall restored.
- Chewton Community Pool.
- NBN in some areas.
- Number schools.
- People can work from home.
- U3A

Weaknesses

- Local businesses closing down.
- Businesses not meeting needs of community.
- Too expensive to shop locally.
- Loss of orchards in Harcourt.
- Loss of local employment.
- Lack of housing diversity in Chewton.
- Lack of central place in Campbells Creek.
- Cost of living is increasing.
- Lack of footpaths in some areas.
- New development has poor infrastructure.
- Decline in local employment and some local businesses not employing locals.
- No nightlife or activities.
- "cookie cutter" design.
- Lack of high school education choice.

Opportunities

- Harcourt to grow as a commuter town to Bendigo.
- Additional services along VLine. Improved accessibility at Castlemaine Station.
- Uber and community based transport.
- Better use of event signage.
- Bigger local events to attract tourists.
- Leverage heritage and character.
- Street planting and town beautification.
- Improved development and house design.
- Protect heritage and maintain heritage buildings.
- Support new housing.
- Reuse of industrial sites.
- Active promotion of the Shire as a great place to live.
- Car-less main streets.
- Recognise rural small towns not included in study and how they interact with the urban towns (such as Yapeen).
- Car clubs and bike clubs

Threats

- Closure of business which support local employment.
- Lack of diversity of employment.
- Merger with other municipalities.
- Environmental risk, including water security, climate change, flood and fire.
- Poor information services when there is a fire and complacency from the community.
- Growth occurring too quickly.
- Out of centre development.
- Doing nothing (letting towns die, or infrastructure to fail)
- Aging population
- Loss of heritage.
- Day trippers not staying overnight.
- Inconsistent planning decisions.

Directions for UGS

- Recognise the potential growth has to support the existing population and businesses, including the broader impacts in rural townships and areas.
- Consider how the UGS can protect the heritage, character and environment which are valuable to the Shire.
- Concerns were raised that planning decisions were inconsistent. This was often remarked in relation to design. The UGS can provide more certainty in relation to urban growth however is not able to provide detailed design guidance.

* This Section relates to workshops which included participants from other towns than that which was the location of the workshop. Each township was represented, with the exception of Guildford. Guildford have recently undertaken consultation on other projects, and the UGS will consider what inputs can be gathered from that data.

Written Submissions

#	Summary of Submission	Response
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UGS should consider townships, particularly Newstead, should be considered as a whole, not the sum of their parts, and it is not possible to consider residential land uses in isolation. • Preservation of the character of Newstead is important. This is reinforced through the Newstead Community Plan, which also identified the growth that has and will continue to occur in Newstead and that it has the potential to impacts on built and natural values, bushfire and biodiversity and social connections. <i>“Planning for a liveable Newstead to ensure Newstead retains its unique built and natural values into the future”</i> was a top priority of the Plan. • The recommendations of the 2004 study continue to be relevant, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation of town character • Keeping town boundaries and focussing on infill. • Connect to sewer • Flood survey to identify possibility of residential areas on south and western side of Newstead. • Newstead has seen growth higher than projected, with many houses being built outside the central township area and not all served by sewer. This should be considered by the UGS. Given the relatively low population, the relative growth has been higher than the “incremental” growth as expected by the 2004 strategy. • The affordability of Newstead makes it attractive, however it should be noted that Newstead cannot provide the level of servicing and resources as identified in larger towns. The relative socio-economic disadvantage of Newstead should be recognised and the consequences of this on infrastructure and serve requirements should be considered. • Environmental factors, including fire and flood should be considered in the UGS. • The introduction of sewer has meant the minimum subdivision size in the Township Zone has decreased. Consideration should be given as to what this means for the character of Newstead, particularly in the outskirts of Newstead. • What was the reason for the location of the Development Plan Overlays on the 2004 plan? • Additional consideration to the improvement of the town entrances and the street trees should be given. • The Light Industry/Commercial Zone is out of date; the land now contains the Newstead Artshub. • Has the Newstead Flood Study been completed? • New development should incorporate ESD, including consideration of site orientation. • The importance of open space and accessible corridors are not well shown on the Framework Plan. As the town grows, these areas will be more important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study is concerned with residential land use, however it is agreed that broader consideration should be given to other land uses. This approach will be taken with the UGS. • The pleasant character of Newstead is recognised. The UGS is not able to make detailed recommendations in relation to character, however can consider how residential growth may impact character (i.e more intensive growth may impact character). • Updated flooding and fire risk data will be key considerations of the Study. • It is recognised that the introduction of sewer has meant smaller lot sizes are possible in some areas of Newstead. This will be considered in the UGS. • It is understood the Development Plan Overlays sought to establish a plan for development in Newstead. These overlays were never applied. • Improve facilities and infrastructure should be sequential with urban development, and this will be articulated through the UGS.

- 2
- Maldon contains undeveloped land to the south of the main township, and other areas of low density residential development. The area is dominated by the environment of the Maldon Historical Area and box and ironbark forests. The houses within this area are generally larger contemporary homes which respond to the strong landscape character of the area. The land is identified in the existing Urban Living Strategy as being a preferred location for future residential development.
 - Low density development is supported by all levels of strategic planning, and it is specifically identified in the Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan (LMSRGP) as a lifestyle phenomenon that will continue to attract people to the region. Maldon and Castlemaine are the only areas of Low Density Residential Zone in Mount Alexander Shire. Despite the large areas of undeveloped land in Maldon, many lots are constrained by vegetation, access and slope which effects the available land suitable for development.
 - All levels of strategic planning also support moderate growth of Maldon that reflects its heritage environment and landscape. Infill development and consolidation are supported in the historic township, as outlined in the Maldon Framework Plan. The key issue raised in the planning documents discussed above is to ensure that new residential development in this area is provided with the appropriate level of services (i.e. reticulated sewerage and water), whilst balancing development outcomes with the towns rich historical and vegetated environment. The importance of these historic and landscape values are clearly articulated through the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme, together with the importance of planning for bushfire and prioritising the protection life over other matters.
 - Household sizes are reducing, and Maldon has an above average gaining population. Many of the existing housing stock in Maldon is of heritage value and expensive to purchase and maintain. In this regard additional housing opportunities in boutique or smaller scale new developments with design guidelines or planning controls to ensure an appropriate built form outcome.
 - The land at 35 Newstead Road Maldon represents a legitimate opportunity for low density residential development and should be identified as such in the UGS.

- The land identified is already within the township boundary and identified for residential land use.
- The UGS will consider the appropriateness of the existing framework plan, the sentiments expressed during community consultation and current policy and strategies in relation to the subject land.

- 3
- The property at 3003 Pyrenees Hwy, Newstead, is currently vacant 12.8 acres of farming land which has been unproductive for over 20 years.
 - There is a desire to subdivide the property and allow for rural lifestyle dwellings, and also retaining the original home and orchard and creating new lots.
 - The site is a five minute walk to the centre of town and new development would encourage new families live a short distance from the townships centre.
 - The land is currently rated rural residential/rural lifestyle.

- The land is outside of the township boundary and is within a Farm Zone. This has been the case since the New Format Planning Schemes were introduced in 1999.
- The submission will be broadly considered as part of the UGS, however it is noted that no detailed considerations of Rural Living are included in this strategy as it is for urban residential land.

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2004 Urban Living Strategy is in need of being updated, however it is recognised that the Cluster, Connect and Consolidation approach is still a good approach. • The UGS should not solely consider residential uses, but should take a broader approach in recognition of the community's desire for a sustainable and healthy environment. • The Background Report fails to note the physical characteristics of Newstead, such as the levee bank, the division of the town by the river, landscapes and stands of native trees. • Policy does and should ensure the character of the town is preserved. • Despite an updated Framework Plan being an identified priority for Newstead, it has not been completed. A separate study should be undertaken specifically for Newstead to ensure it is specifically considered, and Newstead's issues will not be "lost" as part of the development of a municipal wide approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study is concerned with residential land use, however it is agreed that broader consideration should be given to other land uses. This approach will be taken with the UGS. • The UGS will consider the changes to Newstead since the previous study, and will also consider the need and make recommendations relating to future works in the town.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The original Framework Plan identified areas of Harcourt suitable for rezoning to residential or Township Zone. This includes land at Craigie Street, Eagles Road and Leafy Lane. This land is susceptible to frost and too small to be profitable. While we recognise we have a personal interest in the rezoning of land, we also genuinely support the development of the Harcourt region. • The existing work undertaken relating to Harcourt promotes appropriate development and at the time the work was undertaken we were excited to see the forward planning which was occurring. • The area seems to be affected by inappropriate overlays (specifically ESO5). • Land within Harcourt still within the Farm Zone are being subdivided into lots which are larger than desirable under the existing Framework, as this is all that is able to occur under the zoning of the land. • Coliban Water should be consulted as to what sewer can be provided to future populations. • The topography of land contains development. This should be considered. • Will infrastructure and services be upgraded as the population increases? • Some lots have been impacted by the Freeway- will this be considered in Planning Applications? • Harcourt North Hall is a community asset that is underutilised and may not have been included with other asset discussions. Only 14 years old. The progression of residential towards Harcourt North could result in increased use of this venue. • What is the best use of land within central Harcourt within close proximity to the Post Office? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recognised that Farm Zone land identified for residential uses in the 2004 Framework Plan is under pressure for subdivision, and that this is resulting in pressure for larger subdivisions than envisaged. This will be considered in the UGS. • The ESO5 has been applied since 1999 and is intended protect the watercourse. Removal of the Overlay would need to be approved by the Catchment Management Authority and Council. • All relevant authorities have been consulted with and will continue to be consulted with for the development of Harcourt. • It is recognised that infrastructure needs grow with population growth. The UGS will consider this. • The land in central Harcourt will be considered as part of the UGS. Council can provide specific feedback as to the current policy approach to these sites outside of this project.

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- This submission is principally related to 6.5ha of land within Harcourt. Importantly, all of the subject land is within the Harcourt Framework Plan.
 - This land is subject to a subdivision permit, which approved 14 lots within a 2ha area of the subject land within the Township Zone. Critically, the remainder 4.5ha of the subject land falls within the Farming Zone, and with the exception of an access road, is subject to rezoning to facilitate future development.
 - Council have advised that further assessments on the desired rezoning should occur as part of the next review of the Harcourt Framework Plan.
 - Lots have sold quickly.
 - Harcourt is identified for growth within the Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan (LMSRGP) and is a place where sustainable growth should be encouraged. The LMSRGP also identifies that Harcourt may have potential to grow beyond its current township boundary. One of the factors contributing to Harcourt's potential for growth is its proximity to Bendigo, which is continuing to experience growth.
 - The LMSRGP also designates Castlemaine as Regional Centre and seeks to manage and support growth. Council's recent Diamond Gully Structure Plan (Amendment C56 - including 182ha of land), its consideration of McKenzie Hill rezoning (Amendment C76) and its February 2016 resolution to seek approval to prepare Amendment C78 which will facilitate the rezoning of an additional 27ha of land in Campbells Creek will provide Castlemaine with three long term residential development fronts that are appropriately sited. Such a development outcome is consistent with the direction provided by the LMSRGP and Council's LPPF.
 - In order to encourage and facilitate the required growth sought by State and Regional Planning Policy, it would be strategically sound and beneficial for Harcourt to have at least two (if not three) co-ordinated and active development fronts (a similar situation that will be realized for Castlemaine via approval and subsequent realization of Amendments C56, C76 and C78).
 - The development of Harcourt has significantly been hindered due to there being no significant residential subdivision activity in the town for in excess of 20 years. With the exception of 2 four lot developments, all new housing growth in the township has occurred via the re-subdivision of existing township lots. The town will not, and cannot, grow to reach its potential unless there is an available, affordable and well sited conventional residential lot supply. There are a number of land holdings within the Township that are appropriately sited for development. However these parcels have been in the same ownership for in excess of 20 years, and based on history, it is uncertain when the land will be developed. It may well be a further "generation away". Furthermore, some of these vacant land parcels may be too costly to service due to geology or bushfire.
 - It is sought to support the rezoning of the identified land and any other land which is strategically justified.
- It is recognised that Harcourt is supported for growth through policy support, which has increased since 2004 Strategy.
 - It is agreed that Harcourt's growth should be considered not only in relation to Mount Alexander Shier but also Bendigo's growth.
 - It is noted that no significant growth has occurred to date in Harcourt despite policy support.
 - The UGS will consider the subject land and other sites in Harcourt in relation to the relevant policies and other considerations.

7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New housing estates such as the new developments at the outskirts of Castlemaine are inappropriate to the rural character of the Shire and are solely money making exercises. • These types of new homes are built in a similar style and detract from the unique and culturally rich heritage of the area. • New housing areas should be in keeping with the existing character of the townships and respect the environment and open spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UGS does not include scope to undertake work which will provide design guidance for the Shire and any such work should occur as a separate project, which allows for additional community consultation and specific consideration.
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Farming Sector of the Shire have been ignored, with vocal newcomers being more clearly heard. • Kangaroos are a major threat to pasture, cropping and other agricultural activities, as well as native bush. They place additional stress on an already stressed farm sector. They are also dangerous on the roads and damage vehicles. • Farmers are disadvantaged because their land asset can prevent them from accessing the pension and other Government services. • Harcourt was set up as an apple growing area due to the construction of Bakers Creek Reservoir. This was despite the frost which occurs. Through the years, orchards have continually faced challenges. Water is expensive and economic activity in the area is decreasing due to the increasing challenges faced by producing an income off land. • In order to support economic activity and stimulate the economy, Council should allow land to be developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UGS is an urban strategy, although the broader concerns for farmers and orchards are noted.