

Urban Living Study
Mount Alexander Shire

Stage One
Urban Living Options

A report for public comment

June 2003

Urban Living Study

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Stage One
Urban Living Options

Prepared for Mount Alexander Shire Council

by

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Contents

Summary.....	i-vii
1. Background.....	1
2. Mount Alexander Strategic Planning Program	3
3. Historical Settlement Pattern – An Overview.....	5
4. Population and Household Trends	6
5. Population Growth Scenarios	11
6. Physical and Environmental Constraints	13
7. Services and Infrastructure.....	14
8. Land Availability	19
9. Urban Living Objectives.....	29
10. Urban Living Options	30
11. Discussion About Options.....	39
12. Next Step – Consultation and Selection of Preferred Option	44

Plans for Options

1. Option 1 Castlemaine Consolidation & Calder Corridor	iii
2. Option 2 Castlemaine Consolidation	iv
3. Option 3 Castlemaine Consolidation & Pyrenees Corridor	v
4. Option 4 Cluster and Connect	vi
5. Services and Infrastructure.....	17

Summary

The Urban Living Study is one of the main studies of the Mount Alexander Strategic Planning Program (2002-2005). The program establishes a process for the preparation of various related studies dealing with future planning and management of growth in the Shire.

The Urban Living Study has two stages. This report is Stage One. The overall aim of Stage One is to identify and evaluate urban living options for Mount Alexander Shire. The urban living options describe different ways to distribute future urban growth.

Stage Two will be prepared based on the outcome of the option evaluation phase. The selected option will become the Shire's urban living strategy to accommodate expected population increases to the year 2021. During Stage Two residential strategies and land use framework plans will be prepared for the Shire's main towns.

The Urban Living Study applies to the main towns of Castlemaine, Maldon, Harcourt, Newstead, Taradale, Elphinstone, and Guildford.

Settlement Pattern

Settlements were first established by goldseekers in the 1850's. Some settlements serviced the goldfields. The establishment of settlements as towns was not realised until the 1860's with Land Acts and cultivation of land. Castlemaine's permanence was assured by the town's diversification into manufacturing in the late 1850's. With the increase in car ownership in the 1930's, other outlying townships dwindle in population as Castlemaine grew.

Today the settlement pattern is characterised by a network or hierarchy of towns with an economic and social dependency on the larger centre of Castlemaine. Amalgamation of the former four municipalities into one larger municipality in the mid 1990's, formed on the basis of a community of interest, allows considerable scope to plan and build communities based on the existing settlement pattern.

Population and Household Change

In the decade from 1991-2001, the population in many of the smaller towns and rural areas grew more significantly than the rate for the Shire as a whole. In particular, growth in Newstead, Harcourt and many of the rural areas on the Calder corridor increased in population.

Between 1996 -2001 approximately 3,000 persons moved into the Mount Alexander municipality with the majority coming from metropolitan Melbourne, particularly inner, inner northern and north-west suburbs. Other areas in the north central region were also sources of new arrivals. Net migration to the Shire between 1996-2001 is estimated to be 354 persons, indicating a significant number of people leaving the Shire.

Common to many other areas in regional Victoria the Shire's population is ageing, although it is more pronounced in communities such as Mount Alexander.

Household sizes in the Shire are declining, with a greater number of 1 or 2 person households. In 2001, over 65% of all households in the Shire included only one or two persons, In Castlemaine, 35% of all households included only one person, reflecting the comparatively older population. Declining household sizes explains why rates of household (and housing) growth have exceeded population growth.

Growth Influences

Interest in towns and rural areas in the Shire as alternatives to metropolitan living began in the 1970's. Through the 1980's and 1990's this interest has grown. This has brought about changes to urban living environments - new housing in towns and rural areas, a busier and livelier Castlemaine town centre, more tourists and visitors, better roads, more frequent and fast rail services to Melbourne and Bendigo to mention a few.

It is expected that the Shire will continue to attract new residents. It is generally considered that people move to the area for family reasons,

Discussion and Evaluation of Options

A preferred urban living option will emerge from discussion and evaluation by Council and the community. The preferred option could be a hybrid of two or more options or possibly a new option.

This Urban Living Options report includes a set of urban living objectives. The objectives are to be used in the evaluation of options and selection of the preferred option. The objectives will also assist debate and discussion in the community about the options. These objectives relate to:

- Strengthening of Castlemaine's regional role.
- Providing choice in residential location and lifestyle.
- Protecting heritage resources and cultural landscapes.
- Accessibility to services and equity of access.
- Sustainable and energy efficient settlement and urban form.
- Protecting box-ironbark forests and significant landscapes values.
- Protecting valued lifestyle attributes
- Protecting and strengthening the Shire's community identity.

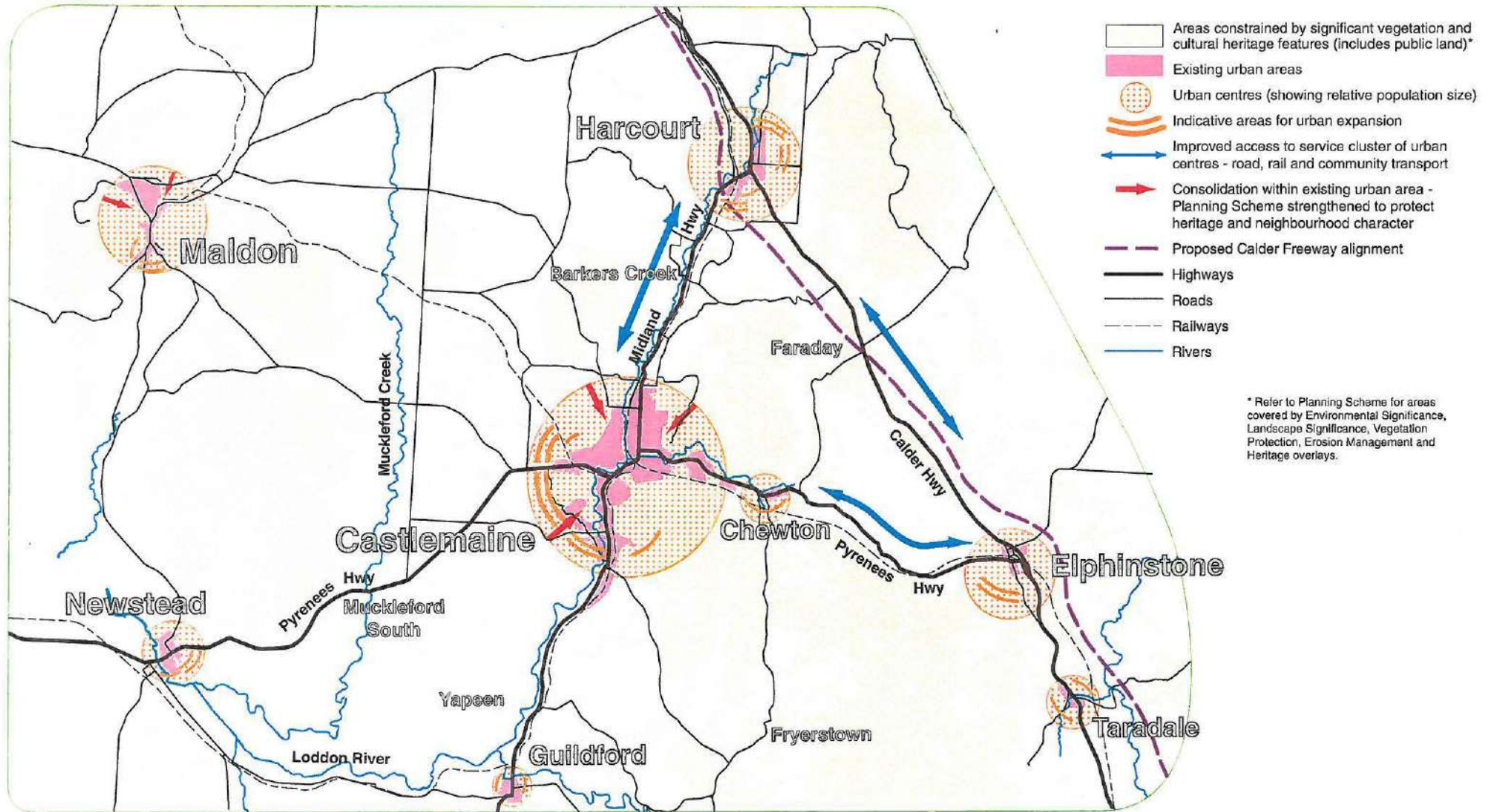
Have Your Say

Written submissions on the Mount Alexander Urban Living Options are invited and should be addressed to:

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PLAN ONE: Option 1

Castlemaine & Calder Corridor



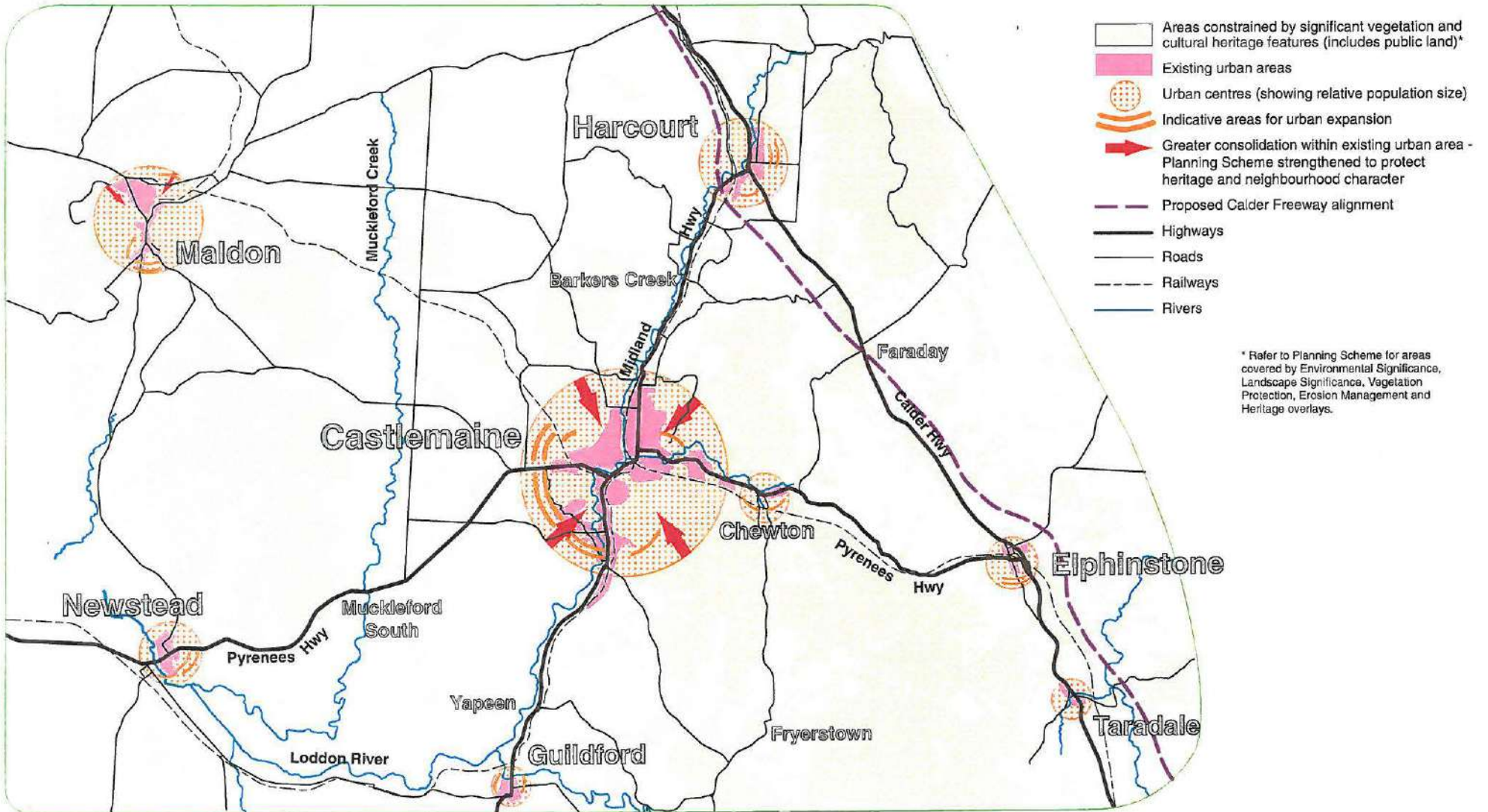
* Refer to Planning Scheme for areas covered by Environmental Significance, Landscape Significance, Vegetation Protection, Erosion Management and Heritage overlays.

MOUNT ALEXANDER URBAN LIVING STRATEGY: Urban Living Options

This plan is indicative only.

PLAN TWO: Option 2

Castlemaine Consolidation



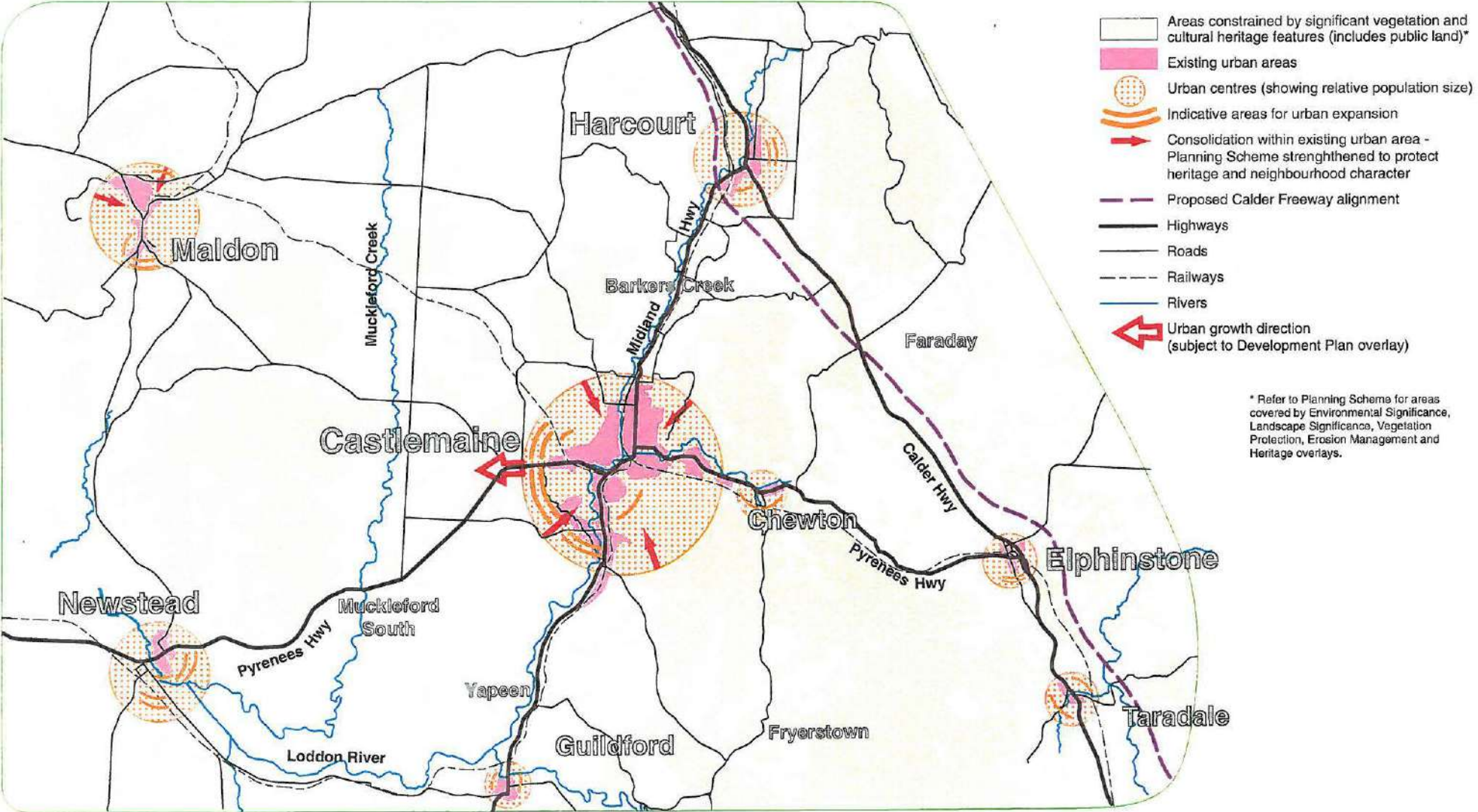
* Refer to Planning Scheme for areas covered by Environmental Significance, Landscape Significance, Vegetation Protection, Erosion Management and Heritage overlays.

MOUNT ALEXANDER URBAN LIVING STRATEGY: Urban Living Options

This plan is indicative only.

PLAN THREE: Option 3

Castlemaine & Pyrenees Corridor



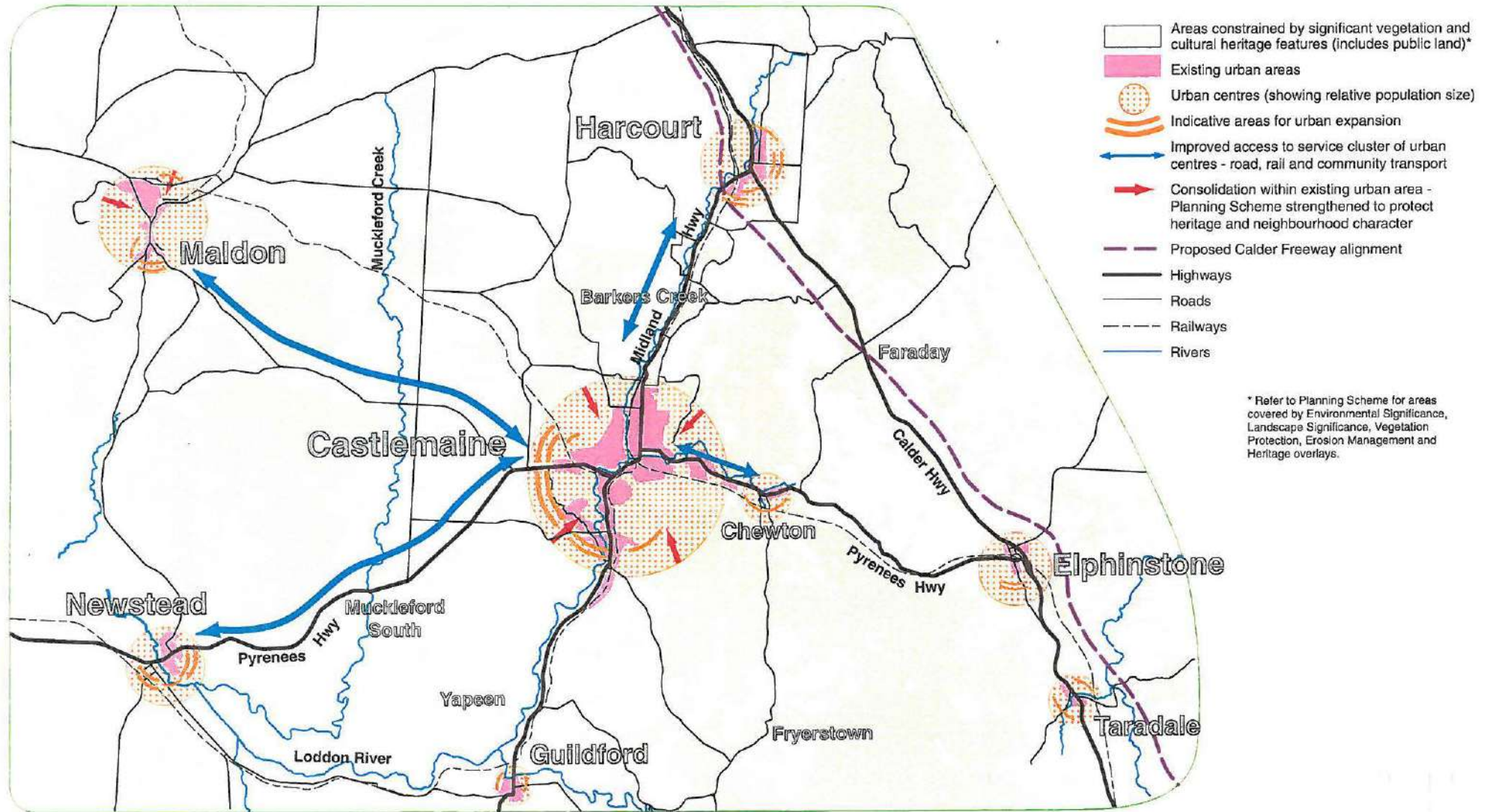
* Refer to Planning Scheme for areas covered by Environmental Significance, Landscape Significance, Vegetation Protection, Erosion Management and Heritage overlays.

This plan is indicative only.

MOUNT ALEXANDER URBAN LIVING STRATEGY: Urban Living Options

PLAN FOUR: Option 4

Cluster and Connect



MOUNT ALEXANDER URBAN LIVING STRATEGY: Urban Living Options

This plan is indicative only.

1. BACKGROUND

The Urban Living Strategy is part of the Mount Alexander Strategic Planning Program (MASSP) for 2003-2005. The program consists of a series of studies providing an overall strategic view and direction for management of growth the Shire. The MASSP reviews the current Mount Alexander Municipal Strategic Statement. The MASSP is explained in Section 2.

Council has commissioned the Urban Living Strategy in response to recent population and housing trends in the Shire and the urban planning issues arising from the Calder Highway upgrade, sewerage of townships, and the proposed Melbourne to Bendigo Regional Fast Rail Service.

The Shire continues to attract new residents due to the character and lifestyle of the Shire and its towns and the comparatively lower house prices.

Castlemaine, some towns and rural areas have experienced population and household growth over the past 20 years. Population increases have been moderate compared to others areas such as Macedon Ranges Shire, however there is potential for future growth in both population and housing resulting from changes to commuting patterns and improved access to larger urban centres. Furthermore average household sizes are declining, resulting in a higher level of household growth than growth in the population.

Between 1996 and 2001, 2966 people moved into the municipality with the majority moving from Melbourne, particularly from inner, inner northern and north-western suburbs. It is estimated that 2,612 left the municipality during the same period most probably for employment and educational reasons.

The recent period of growth and new development is clearly shown in records at Council's Planning and Buildings departments with:

- record numbers of planning applications being processed at the Shire's Planning Office.

- a rise in the number of planning applications that propose an increase to residential densities with potential impact on residential and neighbourhood character.
- higher rates of new housing occurring on crown allotments in rural or bushland areas near to Castlemaine and other towns due in part to the lack of serviced residential lots in Castlemaine.

The Urban Living Study has a short (3-5 years) and longer term planning period. The Study adopts a population growth estimate of 25,000 persons by the year 2021. Management of this growth requires a longer-term vision.

Future population and household growth in the Shire raises several important questions and issues about future urban form:

- What are the limits to growth in Castlemaine, Maldon and Chewton?
- How can Castlemaine absorb new development in its historic urban fabric whilst retaining integrity and character?
- Where will the new residential areas be in Castlemaine and how can they be integrated with existing residential communities.
- What is the infill potential of Campbells Creek?
- How can Chewton retain its historic urban form and identity whilst growing as an urban community?
- Is it possible for the towns such as Harcourt and Newstead to reach a population size where they can be more self reliant for business and community services?
- How will Taradale's function change as a result of the Calder Freeway Bypass?
- Will Harcourt gravitate to Bendigo as a satellite town?

The Shire's settlement pattern comprises a network of towns and villages with Castlemaine at the centre and other main towns within 10 to 20 kilometres distance from Castlemaine. The existing settlement pattern offers a range of opportunities and choices for urban living – large urban centre, town, village, rural or bushland environment. The choice of residential location is one of the Shire's attractive features.

Study Area

The Study Areas shown on plans 1–4 include the following major urban settlements in the Shire:

- Castlemaine
- Maldon
- Harcourt
- Newstead,
- Taradale
- Elphinstone
- Guildford

Smaller towns such as Baringhup, Vaughan Springs, and Fryerstown are not included, as they will not experience the magnitude of growth of larger seweraged towns located on highways. The future of smaller towns and rural living areas such as Barkers Creek, Golden Point, Sutton Grange, and North Harcourt are being considered in the Mount Alexander Rural Living Study, which is now underway.

Urban Living Study - Stages One and Two

The Urban Living Study has two stages:

1. **Urban Living Options** – formulation and evaluation of urban living options and selection of a preferred option
2. **Urban Living Strategy** – describing and illustrating the preferred option as the Mount Alexander Urban Living Strategy
preparing residential and urban framework plans for Castlemaine and all towns included in Stage One.

Study Aims – Stage One

- identify and evaluate urban living options for Mount Alexander Shire based on principles of protection of the environment, heritage, and lifestyle; access to services and employment; and efficient use of energy resources.
- develop an urban living strategy for Mount Alexander Shire to accommodate expected population increases to the year 2021.
- provide a strategic basis for the preparation of the Urban Living Strategy (Stage Two) and for detailed planning of urban settlements in the Shire.
- co-ordinate with other strategic projects, and in particular the Mount Alexander Rural Living Study.

2. MOUNT ALEXANDER STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK 2003-2005

The Mount Alexander Strategic Planning Framework (MASPF) was adopted by Council in January 2003. It reviews the Municipal Strategic Statement which was prepared in 1999. The Urban Living Study is one of the priorities of the MASPF.

Purpose of the Framework

The purpose of the framework is to:

- provide a long term vision (2003-2021) that sets out the strategic directions for planning in the Shire, and
- provide a short-term strategic work program outlining the key studies that need to be undertaken in the period 2003-2005.
- review the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme.

Co-ordination with other Studies

The Urban Living Strategy is being prepared concurrently with the Mount Alexander Rural Living Study, also a priority of the Strategic Planning Framework. These two major studies provide a foundation for all other studies.

There are important links between what has been happening in the urban centres and the rural areas of the Shire. A significant proportion of new housing has occurred in the Shire's rural areas over the past 10 years and the majority of this has occurred at or near to the urban edge of Castlemaine. This raises some important issues -

- Where should future urban edges or boundaries of Castlemaine and the townships be?
- Subdivision of land must not prevent future opportunities for residential development that can be sewered.
- Good quality agricultural land at the edges of urban areas needs to be protected.

- Environmental and landscape values of bushland areas at the edges of towns need to be protected.

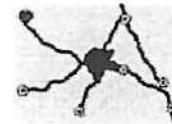
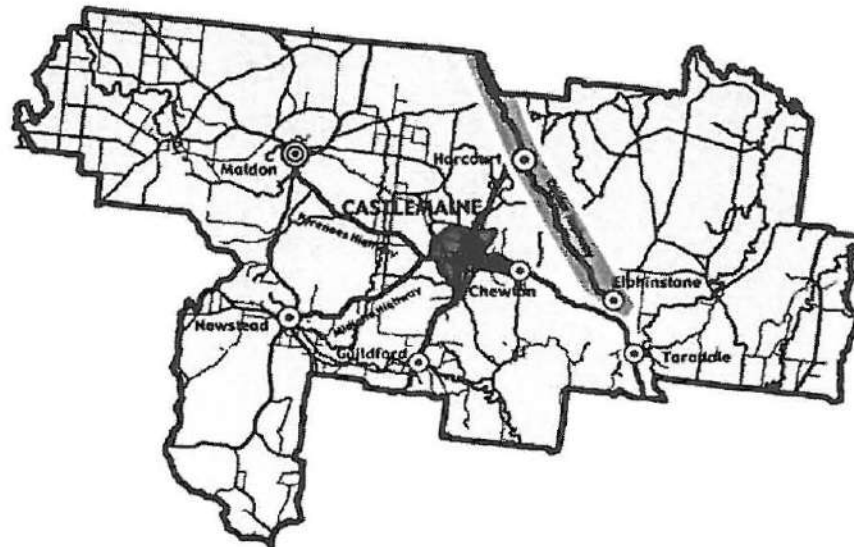
The Mount Alexander Planning Scheme addresses these issues. These issues have to be re-examined as part of the current review of the Planning Scheme and in the light of population and household growth scenarios for the Shire.

Co-ordination between the Urban Living and Rural Living studies will resolve these and other planning issues.

The MASSPP proposes that land use plans for all townships in the Shire.

The Urban Living Study will provide a strategic basis for other studies such as the proposed Castlemaine Neighbourhood Character Study and Mount Alexander Housing Strategy.

Mount Alexander Strategic Planning Framework 2003-2005



URBAN LIVING STRATEGY
 Determine future settlement pattern and distribution of population growth within network of towns based on physical capability, energy efficiency, availability of infrastructure, access to services and work, and protection of character (heritage, landscape, townscape).



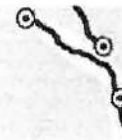
RURAL LIVING STUDY
 Determine supply and demand for rural living and low density residential. Assess land capability, lot sizes, land management and infrastructure availability. Identify areas for potential rezoning. Prepare new Local Policy for rural living and low-density residential zones.



CASTLEMAINE
Castlemaine/Campbells Creek/Chewton Land Use Framework Plan
 Prepare integrated land use plan for major land uses—residential, retail and business, industry, open space and recreation and transport. Plan to be based on findings of Urban Living Strategy and to incorporate agreed proposals from existing studies.
Castlemaine/Campbells Creek/Chewton Neighborhood Character Study
 Identify neighborhood character precincts. Prepare neighborhood character statements for precincts. Prepare guidelines & policies to protect neighborhood character. Recommend planning scheme amendment, overlays & local policies. Review Castlemaine Heritage Study. Complete review currently being undertaken by Heritage Advisory Board.



CALDER HIGHWAY CORRIDOR STUDY
 Identify land use and development opportunities arising from Calder Freeway. Describe new role for highway towns (Harcourt, Elphinstone). Identify directions for town growth and location of expanded township boundaries. Identify future use and zoning along length of corridor. Identify necessary changes to planning scheme. Prepare Land Use Framework Plans for Harcourt and Elphinstone.



MALMSBURY TO CHEWTON TOURIST ROAD
 Investigate implications of new Calder Freeway. Explore tourism and other opportunities arising from new role of towns (Taradale, Chewton). Review land use zoning along Pyraeas Highway corridor. Undertake landscape and heritage assessment and revise planning controls along length of corridor. Prepare land use framework plans for Taradale and Chewton.



TOWNSHIP LAND USE FRAMEWORK PLANS
 Review existing township structure plans and prepare land use framework plans for Newstead, Guildford. Plans for Chewton, Harcourt, Taradale, and Elphinstone prepared under other studies listed above.



MALDON TOWNSHIP
 Complete Maldon Urban Design Framework. Undertake review of Maldon Heritage Study.

Fig 2. Mount Alexander Strategic Planning Program 2002-2003

2. HISTORICAL SETTLEMENT PATTERN

An Overview

The townships of Harcourt and Elphinstone (Saw Pit Gully), both on the Melbourne road, were established during the era when Squatters took up vast tracts of land for the grazing of sheep and cattle following the expedition of Major T. L. Mitchell through the area in 1836.

The rushes to the Mount Alexander diggings in 1851, to the Tarrengower field in 1853, and to Taradale in 1855-56 brought an influx of gold seekers who established settlements at Fryers Creek, Campbells Creek, Vaughan, Guildford, Forest Creek, Castlemaine, Maldon and Taradale. Newstead and Guildford, already established as river crossings, serviced nearby goldfields. Some of these settlements later experienced the gold activity of sluicing and quartz mining and maintained their populations until the 1870s.

It was the Land Acts of the 1860s and the cultivation of land however that established permanent settlement. Selectors of agricultural blocks were provided services by the fledging townships that were already established in the era of alluvial gold mining.

This stable population helped to consolidate growth of the townships. Castlemaine's permanence was ensured by the local economy's diversification into manufacturing. Thompson's Foundry, Castlemaine Woollen Mill and Castlemaine Brewery were all established by the late 1850's. Castlemaine enjoyed continued growth well into the twentieth century due to these major industries and the decision, after intense lobbying, on the route of the Melbourne-Murray Railway. With the increase in car ownership in the 1930s, other outlying townships dwindled in population as Castlemaine grew in size.

It was during the 1970s and 1980's that interest in Castlemaine, Maldon and the general locality now known as Mount Alexander Shire grew as attractive alternatives metropolitan living. Castlemaine urban area and the Shire have experienced consistent yet modest population growth during the 1980's and 1990's.

Amalgamation of the four former municipalities into the Mount Alexander Shire in 1995 overcame the problems of a fragmented approach to planning where more than one municipal council had control over an urban area such as Castlemaine. One larger municipality formed on the basis of a community of interest has allowed considerable scope to plan and build communities based on an existing settlement pattern. This settlement pattern is characterised by a network or hierarchy of towns with an economic and social dependency on the larger centre of Castlemaine.

There is little doubt that the existing settlement pattern will change in the years to come. The more significant changes are likely to occur in the towns that have recently been sewerred. These towns such as Harcourt and Newstead will support higher levels of population and services in the future. Calder Highway duplication will alter the roles and functions of highway towns of Harcourt, Elphinstone and Taradale.

At present the historical perspectives of the Shire and its towns are disjointed. There are now collections of area based heritage studies, some of which need reviewing. An essential first step is to prepare a consolidated history of the Mount Alexander Shire. This consolidated history should record and describe the historic settlement pattern and the important interconnections between urban centres.

4. Population and Household Trends

This chapter is a summary of major population and household trends from the Mount Alexander Population Review – A Report Based on Findings of the 2001 Census (A. Butt with Planit, 2003).

4.1 Population Change

At the 2001 Census, Mount Alexander Shire had a population of 16,173 people. This represents an increase of 243 people since 1996, or an average annual change of 1.1%.

In the decade from 1991-2001, the population in many of the smaller towns and rural areas grew more significantly than the rate for the Shire as a whole. In particular, growth in Newstead, Harcourt and many of the rural areas on the Calder corridor increased in population. The following map provides details of population increase at a collection district level (areas of about 200 households).

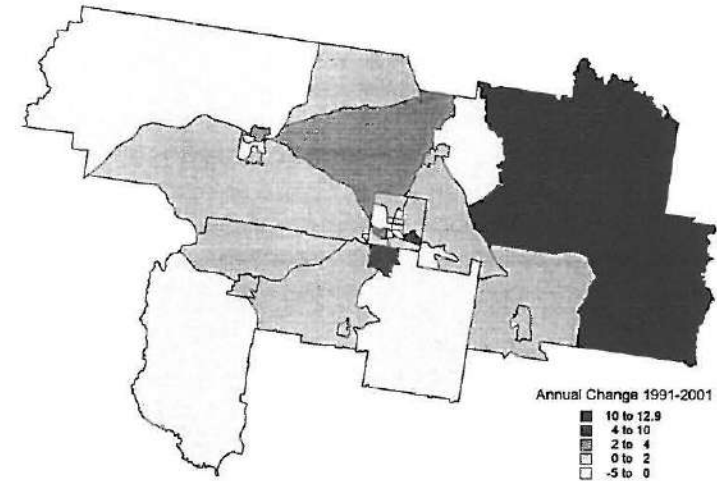


Fig. 3 Annual Change, 1991-2001: Census Collection Districts

Table 1 Population Change, Towns and Rural Areas 1991-2001

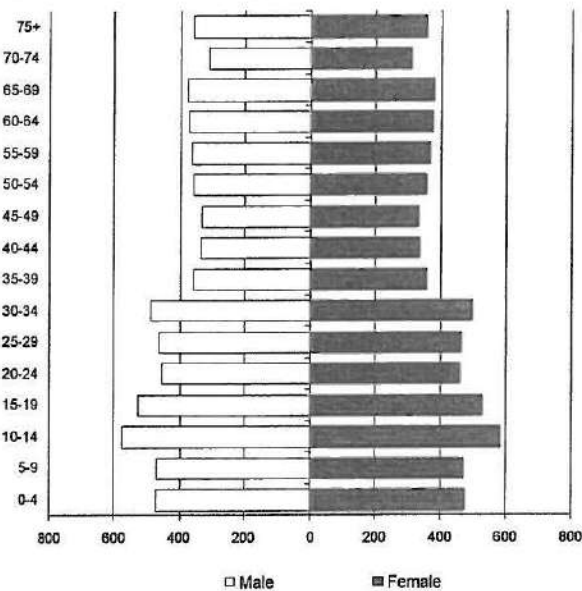
Source: ABS Census

	1991	1996	2001	Av. Annual Change 91-01
Castlemaine	6,812	6,690	6,835	0.0%
Campbells Creek	737	833	1,085	3.9%
Chewton	404	393	367	-1.0%
Harcourt	387	384	422	0.9%
Maldon	1,174	1,255	1,231	0.5%
Newstead	490	505	527	0.7%
Taradale	167	170	102	-4.8%
Other Areas	5,159	5,700	5,604	0.8%
Total	15,330	15,930	16,173	0.5%

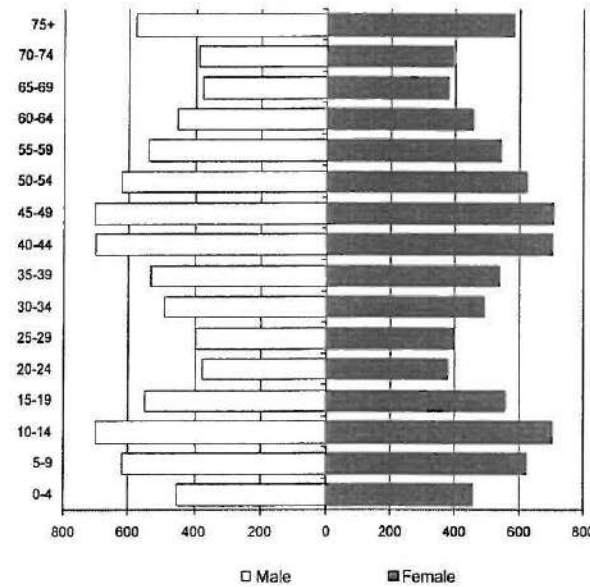
The age structure of the Shire reveals characteristics common to many other areas in regional Victoria. Specifically, the population is ageing, with low (and declining) numbers of young adults and increasing numbers of older people. This pattern has been evident for a number of years, and is common to the broader Australian population, although it is more pronounced in communities such as Mount Alexander.

Fig 4. Age Structure: Mount Alexander Shire 1981 & 2001

Mount Alexander: Age Structure 1981



Mount Alexander: Age Structure 2001



Source: ABS Estimated Population

Other significant changes in the age structure of the community include the increasing predominance of people aged between 40 and 55 years in this profile. While the numbers of young adults (and their role in the age profile) have declined, school-aged children still form an important element of the age structure

4.2 Household Size and Type

The characteristics of households within the Shire reflect these population trends and trends within the broader community. In

general household sizes are declining, with a greater number of 1 or 2 person households. Additionally, household structures are reflective of broader social trends with increasing numbers of single parent households, high numbers of couples without children and single person households.

In 2001, over 65% of all households in the Shire included only one or two persons, including 29.5% (or 971) single person households. In Castlemaine, 35% of all households included only one person, reflecting the comparatively older population.

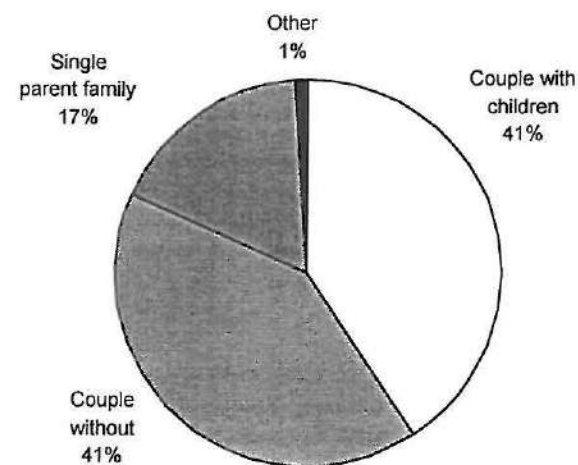
Table 2 Households and Household Size, 1991-2001

	Households			Average Size		
	1991	1996	2001	1991	1996	2001
Castlemaine*	3047	3121	3425	2.61	2.54	2.42
Harcourt	140	136	155	2.76	2.82	2.72
Newstead	190	197	217	2.58	2.56	2.43
Maldon	482	502	506	2.44	2.24	2.43
Balance	1,203	1,799	2,241	4.43	3.34	2.55
Total	5,062	5,755	6,544	3.03	2.77	2.47

*includes Chewton, Campbells Creek

Areas including Campbell's Creek, North Castlemaine-Barker's Creek, Harcourt and rural areas between Taradale and Chewton have higher proportions of *Couple Families with Children* (and consequently larger household sizes). More established areas, and central Castlemaine in particular, are characterised by other family types.

Fig. 5 Family Structure: Mt Alexander, 2001



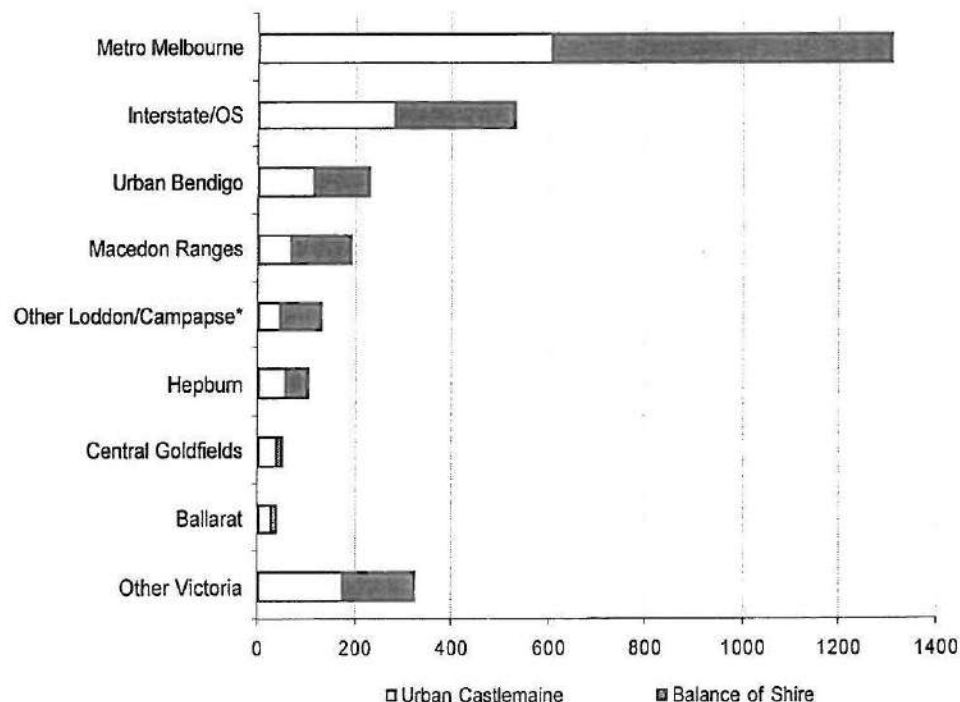
Over the past decade, rates of household (and housing) growth have exceeded population growth, particularly outside of the established urban areas. In general this concurs with trends in population ageing, smaller household sizes, and the general characteristics of newer households, including the declining proportion of younger people in the Shire.

This pattern is generally consistent across the municipality, although a number of rural and rural residential areas exhibit a higher proportion of "couple families" and fewer couples without children. Again this pattern is also consistent with broader trends outside of Mount Alexander, however the particular features of the population in this community are exhibited through the dominant family types, specifically an older population living in smaller households.

4.3 Migration to the Shire

Anecdotally, trends in this Shire and other similar areas suggest population movement from metropolitan Melbourne and rural areas in north-central and north-western Victoria. It is generally considered that people move to the area for family reasons, for the lifestyle advantages of a rural community with proximity to larger centres, and for the comparative housing affordability offered outside of metropolitan Melbourne.

Fig. 6 Inward Migration (1996-2001) by Usual Residence in 1996

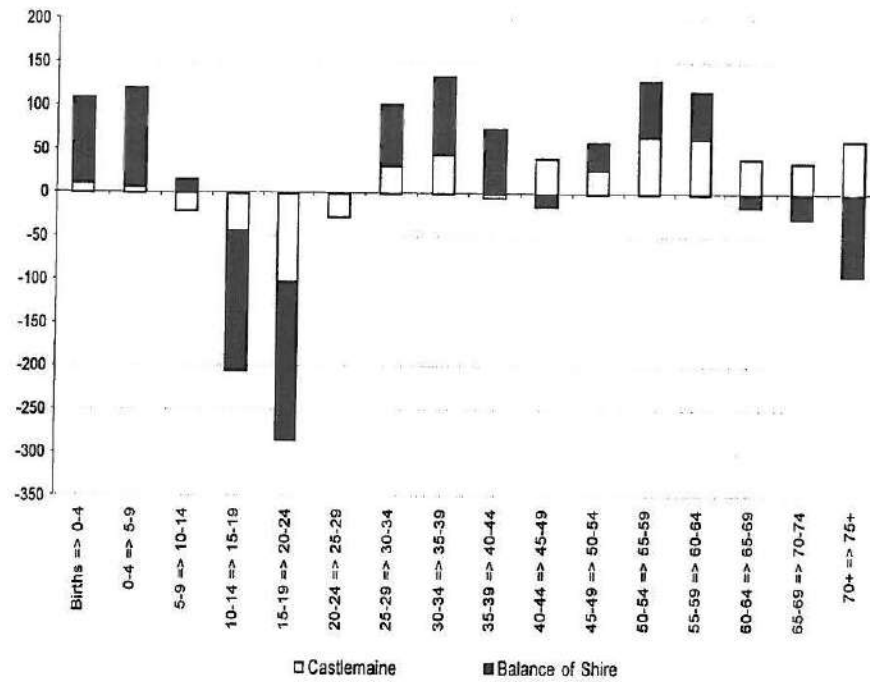


Currently, some primary research is being undertaken by Council into the motivations and characteristics of new residents in the Shire, and the following data (sourced from the census) provides some broad details of the migration trends between 1996 and 2001.

Net migration to Mount Alexander between 1996 and 2001 is estimated at 354 persons. This included 2966 people moving into the municipality, and obviously a significant number of people leaving. The geographic and age group pattern of new arrivals and those leaving the Shire reflect and provide insight to a number of the assumptions regarding changes to the population of the area, and the drivers for relocation to and from Mount Alexander.

The pattern of the age structure of net migration reinforces general trends in the population structure, specifically, that the area has a declining proportion and number of younger people, and a growing population aged over 45 years. The following *implied migration*⁷ graph reinforces age structure diagrams provided, and shows those age cohorts experiencing decline and those growing beyond the natural growth within the population.

Fig. 7 Implied Migration by SLA 1996-2001



Source ABS Estimated Population and other demographic data

¹ This graph is based on data which measures the difference between the estimated population in individual age cohorts in 1996 and the population in the next 5-year cohort by 2001. It also accounts for births and deaths. The difference is presumed to be a net gain or loss in population.

5. Population Growth Scenarios

It is evident that Mount Alexander Shire is beginning to experience population and housing growth at a more accelerated compared to the 1980's and 1990's. This is confirmed by Council building activity rates and by local real estate agents. Local agents estimate that in 2002, 45-60% of people buying into the local Housing market are from outside of the Mount Alexander Shire (Mount Alexander Housing Advisory Group, Briefing Paper October 2002).

Recent years of this growth will in all likelihood be the commencement years of a period of growth with impetus for growth sustained by the Melbourne to Bendigo Regional Fast Rail Service and upgrading of the Calder Highway to Freeway status.

Population growth scenarios are a useful starting point in planning for future urban growth. A timeframe to the year 2021 has been used for the following scenarios. Projected population totals for the year 2021 should not be considered as targets. The total may in fact be reached five years earlier or later than 2021. For planning purposes it is important to gain an understanding of the magnitude of population increase that can be reasonably expected and sustainably supported in the future. From this understanding decisions can be made about where new housing and services need to be located to accommodate a population increase, of say, 5,000 persons.

Recent population growth rates that have occurred in Macedon Ranges Shire are useful indicators for population growth scenarios in Mount Alexander Shire. There is a correlation between population growth and travel time to Melbourne. This correlation for towns in Macedon Ranges and other towns beyond the fringe of Melbourne is shown in Figure 8. Clearly the shorter the travel time (road and rail) the higher the population growth rate.

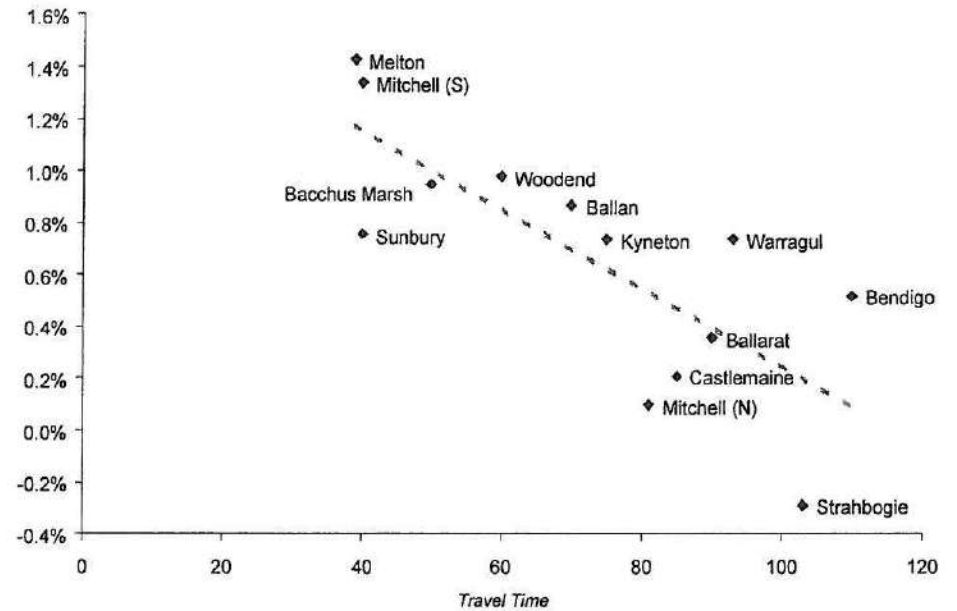
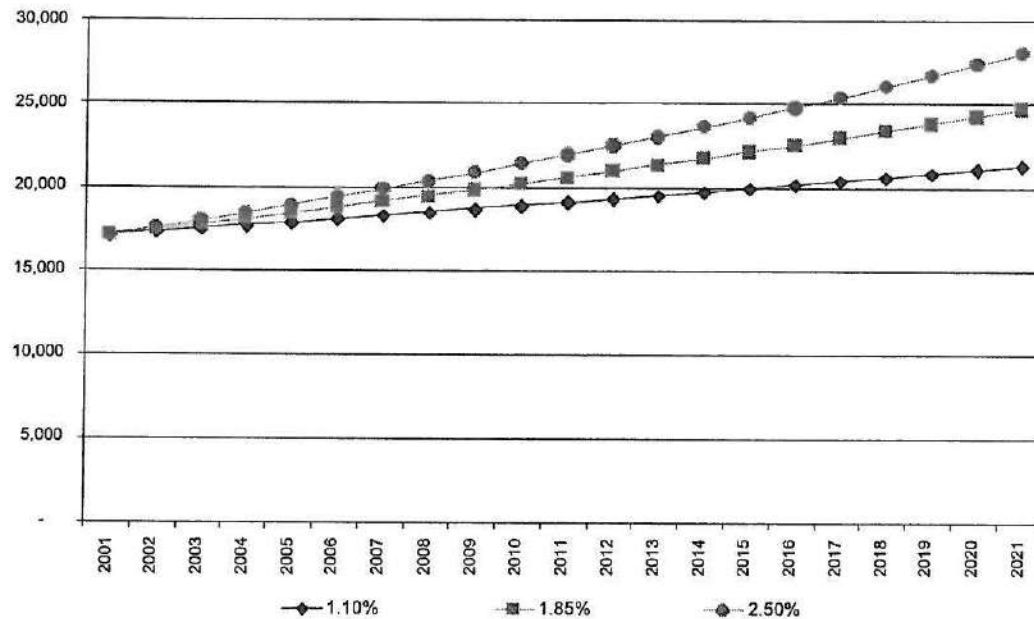


Fig. 8 Travel Time (Rail to Melbourne) and Projected Population Change 2001-2021

Growth rates in the north Macedon Ranges, (around Kyneton) have been comparable to Mt Alexander, while southern areas have grown at a greater rate. The following scenarios show growth at a modest rate of 1.1% (the average in Mount Alexander since 1976), 1.85% (the average for the Kyneton area) or 2.5%, still well short of the high growth rates in the Macedon Ranges. Each of these provides a larger increase than the Department of Sustainability and Environment's projections.

The Urban Living Study has adopted the middle range population growth scenario of around 20,000 by 2011 and 25,000 by 2021.

Fig. 9 Population Growth Scenarios – Mount Alexander Shire 2001-2021



6. Physical and Environmental Constraints

The urban living options in Chapter 10 allow for expansion and consolidation within townships. This would occur in most cases within existing Township or Residential zones. The Mount Alexander Planning Scheme has policies and controls to contain development within defined boundaries. Township boundaries will be reviewed as part of Stage Two of the Urban Living Study. Study Areas proposed for township plans are shown in Chapter 8.

There will be constraints to future development. They include:

- heritage sites, places and areas
- significant native vegetation
- protection of water quality in catchment area and watercourses
- land subject to erosion risk
- land subject to inundation
- important cultural and scenic landscapes

Constraints and opportunities will be identified in Stage 2 as the planning process focuses at the township level establishing framework plans for future urban use.

Mount Alexander Planning Scheme

The Mount Alexander Planning Scheme has several overlays (overlays to land use zones). These overlay areas identify environmental, heritage landscape and vegetation constraints to future development. Schedules to the overlays specify objectives to be achieved, planning requirements and decision guidelines for new development.

Vegetation Protection Overlay

VPO to protect vegetation and control its removal.

The Urban Living Options (Plans 1-4) show vegetation cover identified in the Department of Primary Industry's Ecological Vegetation Classification System. It comprises endangered, vulnerable and depleted vegetation. The Plans also show land within national, State, Regional Parks and reserves.

Environmental Significance Areas

Lake Eppalock and Lake Cairn Curran Catchments

Environmental Significance Overlays (ESO 1 & 2) apply to these catchments to protect and maintain water yield and quality.

Mount Alexander and Surrounds

Environmental Significance Overlay 4 (ESO 4) - to protect landscape and conservation importance of Mount Alexander and surrounding landscape.

Rivers and Watercourses

Environmental Significance Overlay 5 (ESO 5) - to maintain water quality and quantity within the Loddon and Campaspe Rivers and other watercourses and manage land adjacent to watercourses to reduce erosion, maintain vegetation, habitat and improve water quality.

Highway Environs

Environmental Significance Overlay 6 - to enhance visual character of highways, preserve and improve scenic views.

Significant Landscape

SLO1 Maldon Landscape Area

SLO2 Castlemaine Significant Landscape Area

SLO4 Vaughan and Glenluce Mineral Springs Reserve

Significant landscape overlays to protect bushland, significant vegetation, landscape values, and landform.

SLO3 Significant Landscape Area (Approach to Maldon)

Overlay to protect the unique gold mining landscape surrounding Maldon.

Erosion Management

Erosion Management Overlay - to protect areas prone to erosion, landslip or other land degradation.

Land Subject to Inundation

Land Subject to Inundation Overlay – to ensure that development maintains free passage and minimises flood damage, and protect water quality.

Wildfire Management Overlay

Identify areas and ensure that development does not significantly increase threat to life and property.

7. Services and Infrastructure

The recent sewerage of townships and Campbells Creek brings with it opportunities to plan and design future urban forms for townships. Some of the urban living options propose considerable population increases for currently unsewered towns (Elphinstone, Taradale). These options are dependent on the provision urban sewerage systems.

Recent and proposed regional transport improvements (Calder Freeway, Regional Fast Rail) can potentially influence future settlement patterns in the Shire. One of the urban living options (Option 1) proposes significant expansion at Calder Corridor towns Harcourt and Elphinstone in addition to Castlemaine. Longer term light rail possibilities that connect these towns to Castlemaine and Bendigo can be considered under this option.

Community services and facilities in the Shire are concentrated in Castlemaine with shire wide services such as home care and district nursing are available in all towns. Table 3 indicates the basic range of services that are available in towns. Generally towns in the Shire experience some difficulty in retaining or gaining services. All options include population growth in towns at varying levels. Population increases in towns. Population increases in towns is a positive strategy for improving levels of service including retail. For instance primary school enrolments will increase in towns requiring expansion to existing schools, or the town may be able to support a new medical service.

As towns grow so will the needs of an ageing population. Accommodation, aged care and good access to services in Castlemaine will be required.

All urban living options support Castlemaine's role as a centre providing regional and sub-regional services.

The existing settlement pattern, in a context of future growth, offers two basic models of service delivery. One to concentrate services in Castlemaine with delivery to outlying towns of some centrally managed

services. The other is concentration with dispersal of some services that are located in the towns. The Urban Living Strategy incorporates elements of both.

7.1 Urban development services

Sewerage

All towns in the Study Area have reticulated sewerage with the exception of Taradale, Elphinstone and Guildford. A decision to sewer these townships by Coliban Water would follow a request from Council. The Castlemaine sewerage district has in recent years been extended and now includes Campbells Creek and areas further west of the existing urban boundaries in the McKenzies Hill area.

Reticulated water supply

All towns in the Study Area have reticulated water supply with the exception of Guildford. There are water supply elevation limitations in some townships and urban areas. Satisfactory water supply can only be provided to areas below the Australian Height Datum levels (AHD) indicated below:

- . Elphinstone 435 metres
- . North Castlemaine 325 metres
- . Taradale 430 metres
- . Golden Point 375 metres
- . Harcourt 360 metres
- . Chewton 350 metres
- . Barkers Creek 340 metres
- . Maldon 385 metres

7.2 Access and Transport

The network of towns Mount Alexander Shire is closely settled compared to other areas of regional Victoria. Travel distances between Castlemaine and surrounding towns varies is not excessive. All towns are located on the State Highway system, five towns are situated on

the Melbourne – Bendigo Rail line (Castlemaine now the only remaining station in use). The unused Maryborough rail line connects with Newstead and the Maldon rail line now operates as a tourist service. The access network (road and rail) is definitely a positive feature of the Shire's settlement pattern.

Road transport

Calder Freeway

The upgrade of the highway to freeway status is a major infrastructure project for the Shire and region. All towns along the Calder Corridor (Harcourt, Elphinstone and Taradale) are to be bypassed. This will change the role and amenity of these towns. Township Framework Plans will be prepared for the towns in Stage 2 of the Urban Living Study. Existing and future highway alignments will be important determinants for the future arrangement of land uses and direction for township development.

The two sections of new freeway affecting Mount Alexander Shire are proposed to be completed by 2006. This includes the Malmsbury to Faraday and Faraday to Fogarty's Gap sections. VicRoads are currently undertaking further investigations in the vicinity of the originally exhibited FR4 alignment. It is expected that these investigations will be completed by the end of 2003. The Independent Panel will re-convene in early 2004.

Midland Highway

VicRoads will be completing a 15-year plan for the Midland Highway in June 2003. VicRoads has no proposal to upgrade any section of the Midland Highway other than to carry out maintenance for traffic safety reasons.

Heavy vehicle use of the Barker Street section of the highway through the Castlemaine Central Area has been raised as a significant issue in terms of amenity disruption, safety and commercial viability of the precinct. A key recommendation of the Castlemaine Central Area Urban Design Framework (adopted by Council February 2003) is

" to plan for a longer term bypass of the Castlemaine Central Area..."

Pyrenees Highway

VicRoads will be completing a 15-year plan for the Pyrenees Highway in June 2003. VicRoads has no proposal to upgrade any section of the Pyrenees Highway other than to carry out maintenance for traffic safety reasons.

Rail and Bus Services

Existing Bus Services

VLine bus services operate between Castlemaine and the following towns:

Maldon	Twice daily return service
Newstead	Three times daily – return service
Harcourt	Daily service to Castlemaine
Guildford	Twice daily service with three daily return services

Castlemaine Bus Lines provide a daily bus service from Castlemaine to Chewton.

Melbourne to Bendigo Rail Service

The service timetable provides eleven weekday and five/six weekend train services in both directions from Castlemaine to Melbourne. The number of people commuting to Melbourne for work has increased steadily since the 1980's.

Timetabling of services from Castlemaine to Bendigo do not reflect business hours with the earliest train arriving in Bendigo at 10.00 am.

Regional fast rail service

Works on the Regional Fast Rail from Melbourne to Bendigo are scheduled to commence in June 2003. Castlemaine will be a stopping station with reduced travel time to Melbourne. It can be expected that

the level of commuting to Melbourne will increase. This level could eventually be similar to levels now experienced from Kyneton. Currently there are eighteen train weekday and nine weekend train services, in both directions, operating between Kyneton and Melbourne.

Victorian Goldfields Railway -Maldon-Castlemaine

The Victorian Goldfields Railway trains operate between Castlemaine and Maldon. Trains operate on all Sundays, Wednesday, public holidays, Scholl holiday Saturdays, and special events.

Taxis

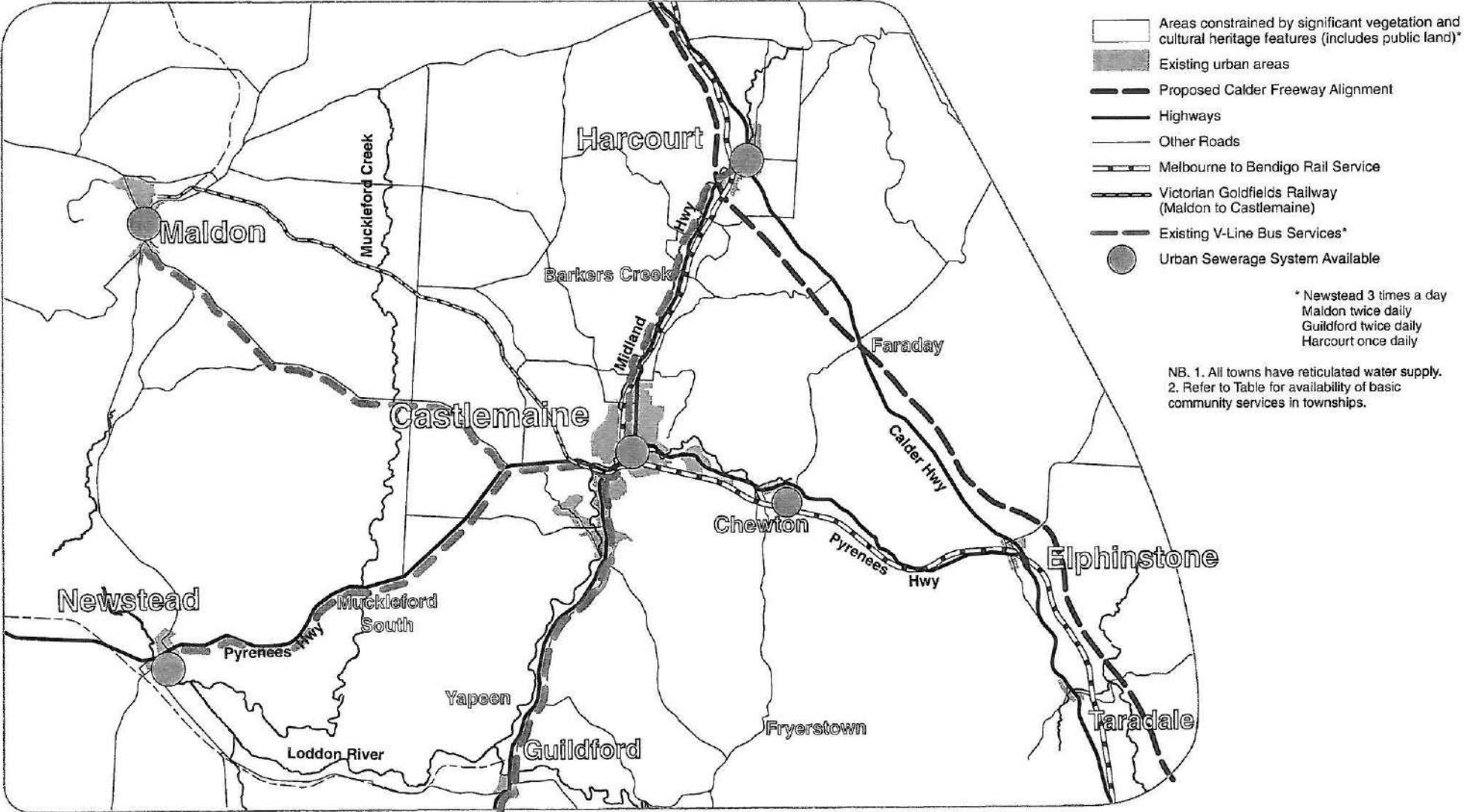
An existing private taxi service operates in Castlemaine and services the outlying towns.

Community transport

Apart from HACC funded services there are limited community transport options. A community bus service will soon be operating between Guildford, Newstead and Castlemaine.

Community transport would be a part of all urban living options. Population increases in towns will increase opportunities for community transport such as transport brokerage schemes, which provides transport by pooling pool vehicles from community organisations when vehicles are not in use.

PLAN FIVE: Services and Infrastructure



This plan is indicative only.

7.3 Community and business services

Table 3 Availability of basic services in Shire's urban centres

	Sewerage	Reticulated Water	Hospital	Primary School	Supermarket	Library facility	Public Internet access	Bus service to Castlemaine	Community/Neigh'd Centre	Nursing home care	Senior Citizens Club	After School care	Pre School - Playgroup	Population - 2001
Castlemaine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	8,280
Maldon	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1,231
Newstead	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	527
Harcourt	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓				✓	422
Chewton	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓		✓			367
Taradale				✓									✓	102
Guildford								✓						
Elphinstone				✓									✓	

NB. Services such HACC (Home and Community Care) and district nursing services are available in all towns.

The provision of community and business services in the Shire is concentrated in Castlemaine. The townships generally provide a level and range of services that is commensurate with the population and number of households in the town.

Urban living options that propose significant population increases in townships will lead to increases in the level of service provision in those towns. As the town grows so too does the demand for retail, business and community services. Maintaining and improving levels of service provision in towns can best be achieved by encouraging higher levels of population and household in the towns.

Basic services currently available in the Shire's urban centres is shown in the Table 3.

Availability of other services such as retail and business is discussed in Chapter 8.

8. Land Availability

This chapter looks at the availability of land that has existing services or services potential for urban development. Mount Alexander Planning Scheme makes provision for urban growth in Castlemaine and the main towns. The zoning and town structure plans in the planning scheme do need to be reviewed to clarify town boundaries particularly as sewer is now available towns and additional areas in Castlemaine. These reviews are also required in order to establish the main elements of future urban form for the towns.

The investigation in this Stage One report is as broad as is necessary to consider whether a town has the supply of suitable land for future urban growth described in the urban living options.

General discussion about the major land use types (residential, industrial, retail and business) is included in this chapter. Council has recently completed studies that assessed the supply of industrial land and retail and business sites in Castlemaine.

Detailed land use plans for Castlemaine and the townships will be prepared during Stage Two.

8.1 Residential Land Use

It is not since the mid 1980's that a comprehensive land use plan was prepared for Castlemaine. Land use planning for other towns (excepting Maldon) has generally occurred with planning scheme reviews and usually with little strategic planning background.

Castlemaine

Residential expansion

Most residential expansion opportunities are available to the west of the urban area and south and north of the Pyrenees Highway. Some of the land that is at or adjacent to the urban edge and within the sewer

district is zoned Rural Living or Rural Zone. The Stage Two Study Area map (see page 20) includes these areas as possible new residential areas. Rezoning to Residential 1 zone would be required. A review is also needed as housing demand is now stronger than it was when existing zoning was put in place.

Other residential expansion or infill areas are located at Happy Valley/ Moonlight Flat and land in the vicinity of Chapman's Road and Watson Road. These areas can be sewerred and are also included in the Study Area for Stage Two of the Urban Living Study. Council is currently in the process of preparing development plan overlay for Happy valley and Moonlight Flat area.

Residential infill

There are considerable infill opportunities in Campbells Creek in areas with an existing Township zoning. These include areas south of Princess Street and areas on the east side of the Midland Highway and rail line.

There are opportunities for infill development within Castlemaine township. Urban consolidation in Castlemaine is proposed in all urban living options.

There has been community debate about the creation of small town lots and medium density housing and its potential impact on heritage and neighborhood character. Heritage provisions of the Planning Scheme give protection to identified sites or overlay areas. Outside of these sites and areas there are no localised design standards, policies, or guidelines.

Heritage and neighborhood character

A major review of the Castlemaine Architectural and Heritage Study (1979) is needed. Twenty-five years on with development pressures on the township it would be prudent to extend the Heritage Review study area beyond the existing Castlemaine Central Conservation Area.

Protection of neighborhood character has become a planning issue in Castlemaine. A neighborhood character study implemented through the Planning Scheme would provide more certainty for Council and the community about the design, form and style of housing that can be absorbed into the existing fabric without compromising or adversely affecting character.

Growth Estimates

This Stage One Study estimates that an additional 1,000–1,500 residential lots (housing for 2,000-3,000 persons) could be provided Castlemaine by expansion and consolidation at its current edges, within a residential or township zone.

Estimates of potential residential infill will be undertaken in the Stage Two Castlemaine Residential and Urban Framework Plan.

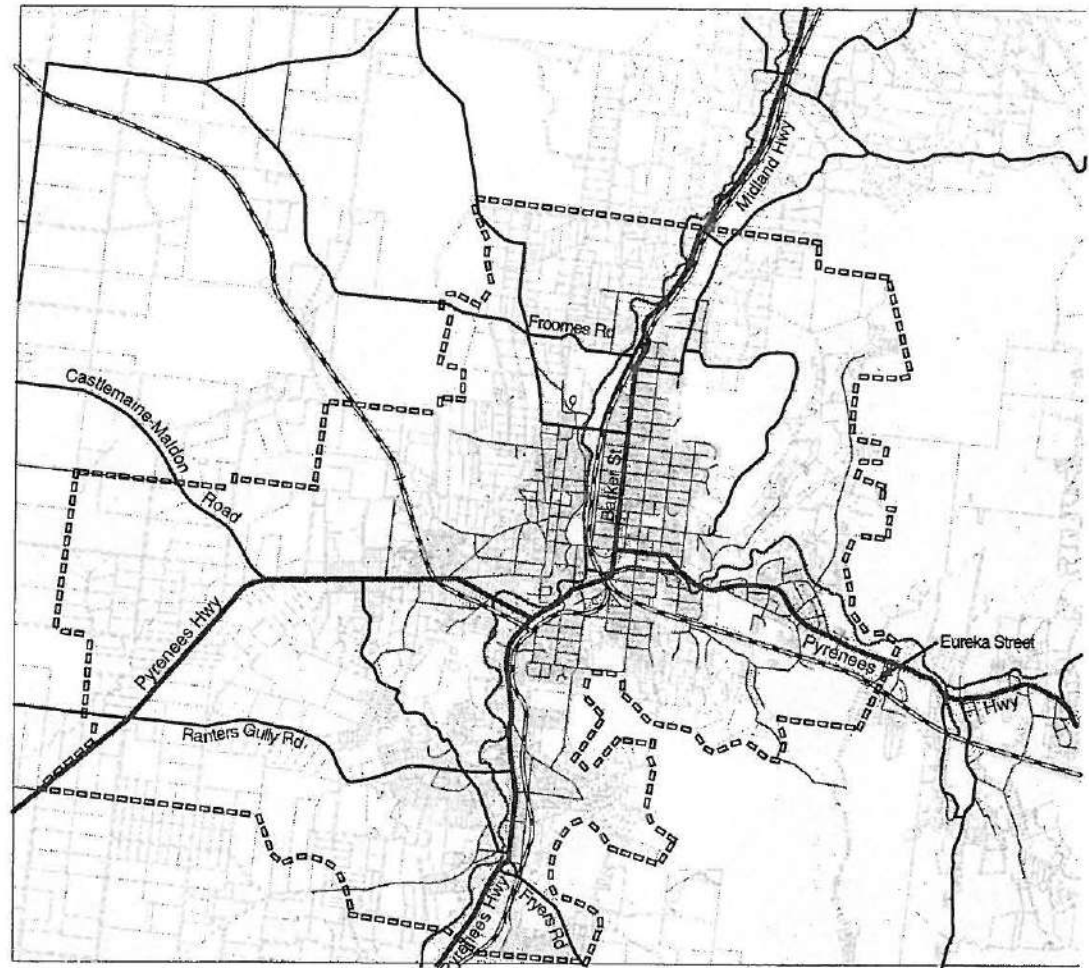
Townships

An assessment of existing undeveloped and residential zoned land in the townships indicates that there is a sufficient supply of serviceable land for the townships to grow to the sizes described in the urban living options.

There are considerable opportunities for urban development in the Harcourt, Maldon and Newstead now that reticulated sewerage is available. Chewton also has reticulated sewerage but has considerable constraints relating to historic urban form and layout.

Limited growth can occur in the other townships. Without reticulated sewerage, residential development can only occur at a lower density. Stage Two land use framework plans for these townships (ie Elphinstone, Guildford, Taradale) should allow for potential reticulated waste water systems.

Castlemaine Residential Strategy and Urban Framework Plan Study Area ~ Urban Living Study ~ Stage Two



- Study Area
- Railway Line
- Highways
- Other Roads
- Rivers

This plan is indicative only.

Maldon Land Use Framework Plan

Study Area ~ Urban Living Study ~ Stage Two

(includes existing Residential and Low-Density Residential zoned land)

Maldon

The Mount Alexander Planning Scheme recognises the national significance of Maldon as one of the most intact of any nineteenth century town in Australia. The Statement of Local Significance refers to " ... a unique combination of many individual elements which contribute to its integrity as a whole."

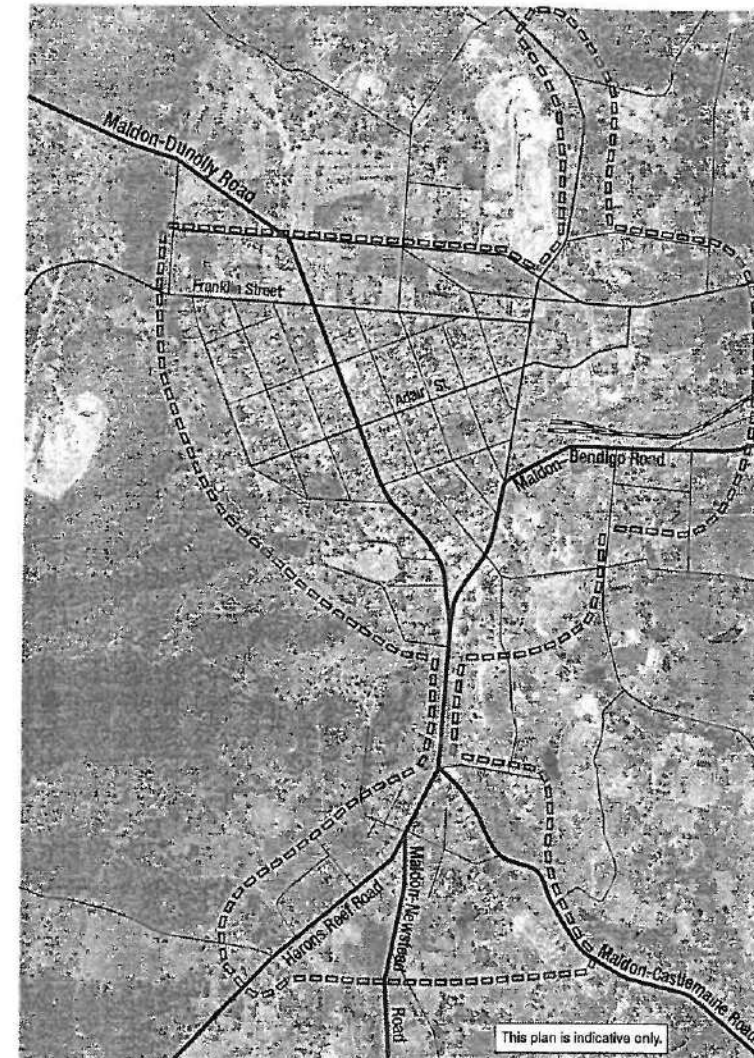
The Planning Scheme (Heritage Overlays and Local Policy 22.02) requires new development to accord with historical context and character statements. Protection of heritage places, buildings and landscapes will be an overriding planning consideration for the land use framework plan in Stage Two.

There are some expansion opportunities at and adjacent to the existing town edge. These edge locations are zoned either Residential 1 or Low density Residential Zone.

The Maldon Urban Design Framework (Arup 2003) now in draft form is identifying appropriate design guidelines for new and infill developments.

A preliminary assessment undertaken in this Stage One study estimates that about 20 to 30 hectares of undeveloped land with a residential zoning and within the township sewerage district is available for new residential development. This potential supply of serviced land would provide 250 new lots or housing for around 500 persons.

Capacity for infill housing is more difficult to determine and will be included in the Stage Two land Use Framework Plan.



- Study Area
 Highway
- Railway Line
 Other Roads

This plan is indicative only.

Harcourt

All urban living options allow for significant urban growth possibilities at Harcourt. This potential for growth is due to the sewerage of the town, Calder Highway duplication and the reduced travel time to Bendigo. The alignment of the new Calder Freeway will define an edge to the town.

The Study Area for the Stage Two land use framework plan includes land currently zoned for residential purposes and some land at the northern and southern edges that currently has a Rural Zoning. The Stage Two plan will recommend any zoning changes.

Preliminary assessment of land generally available for urban growth estimate that Harcourt has growth capacity to accommodate 500 to 700 additional households or an additional 1,000 to 1,500 persons.

The potential new areas for town growth are located on the east side of the Calder Highway and Barkers Creek north of the town to Elys lane. This land falls below the 350 metre contour level considered to be the threshold for agricultural production (below 350 m is frost prone). This land is within the declared sewerage district.

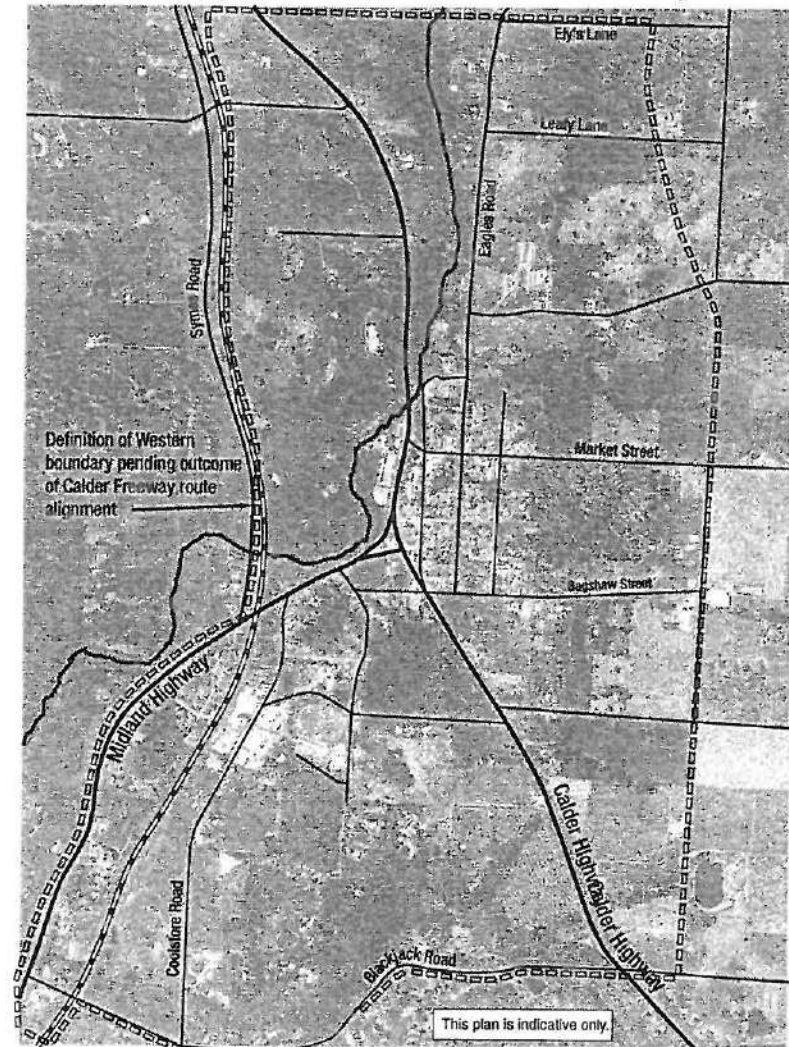
Other land also within the sewerage district to the east of the existing highway at the southern end of the township is included in the Stage Two Study Area.

Important land use planning issues that need to be considered in the Harcourt Land Use Framework Plan include:

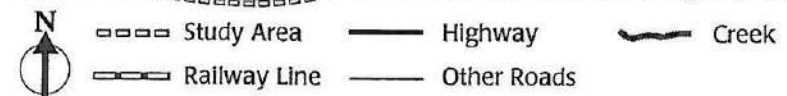
- land subject to flooding and poor drainage
- protection of land with good agricultural and horticultural quality
- potential conflict between residential and horticultural and use.
- expansion and design of the town centre
- potential to establish an industrial node adjacent to the alignment of the Calder Freeway
- visual amenity of town entrances.

Harcourt Land Use Framework Plan
Study Area ~ Urban Living Study ~ Stage Two

(includes existing Township Zone and some outer areas with an existing Rural Zone)



This plan is indicative only.



Newstead Land Use Framework Plan

Study Area ~ Urban Living Study ~ Stage Two

(includes existing Township Zone)

Newstead

All urban living options propose urban growth at Newstead. Two options (Options 3 and 4) propose higher levels of population and housing growth.

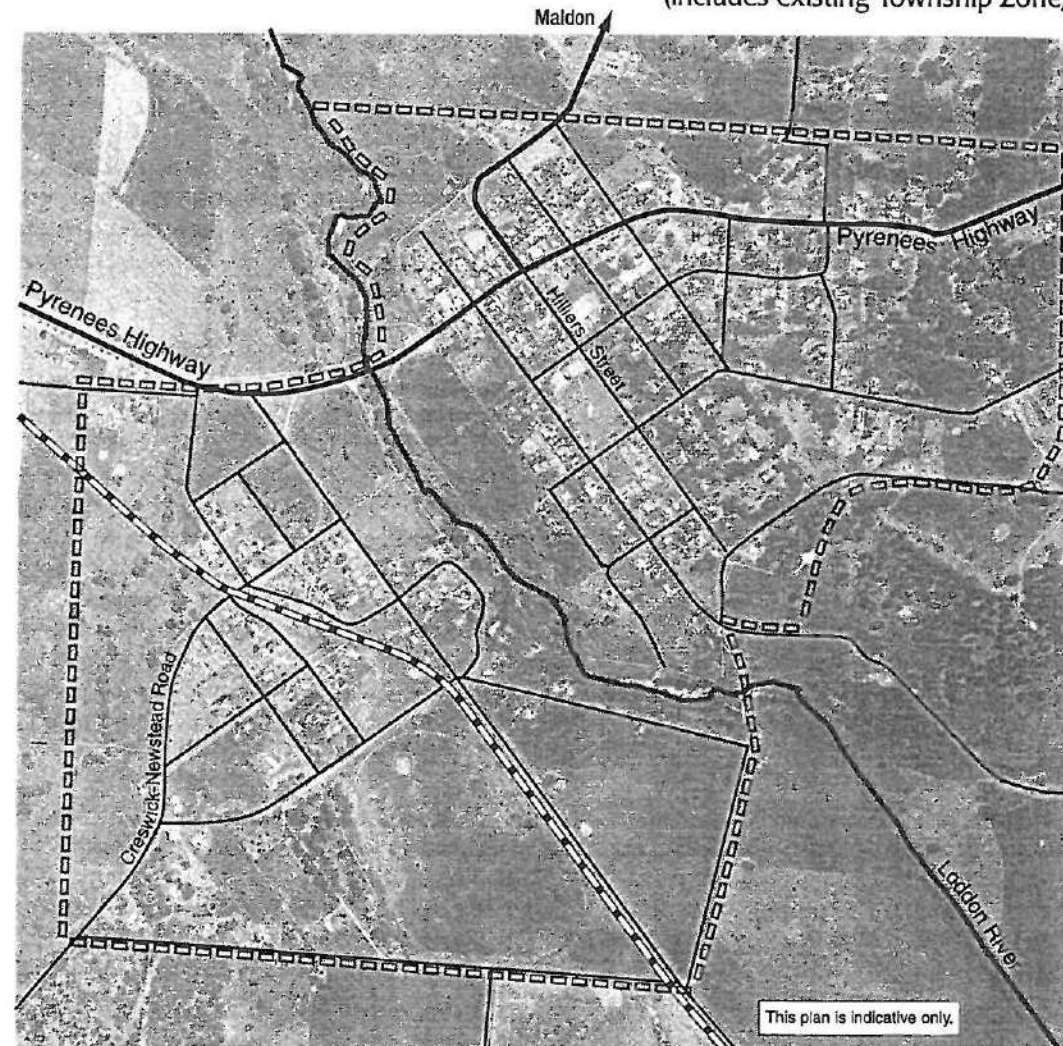
The Planning Scheme makes provision for the growth of the township to the south and south-west and includes policies about protecting heritage and town character, flooding constraints, infill housing and improvement to town entrances.


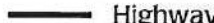


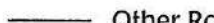
The Study Area for the Stage Two land use framework plan includes land that currently has a Township zoning. This includes land south of the Pyrenees Highway on both sides of the Loddon River.

A preliminary assessment of available land that is currently zoned Township and within the Newstead sewerage district estimates that approximately 70 to 80 hectares of land could be available for urban growth providing housing for an additional 1,500 persons.

Important planning issues in addition to those listed in the planning scheme that need to be addressed in the Stage Two land use framework plan include:

- incorporating natural features such as Loddon River, adjacent bushland area, and avenue roadside plantings
- future expansion of the town centre
- staging of future township growth



- | | | |
|--|---|---|
|  Study Area |  Highway |  River |
|  Railway Line |  Other Roads | |

Elphinstone

Elphinstone is not sewered and a proposal to sewer the town is not listed on Coliban Water capital works program. The duplication of the Calder Highway presents some urban growth possibilities for Elphinstone especially as travel times to Melbourne and Bendigo are reduced.

Two of the urban living options (Option 1 and 4) propose relatively high levels of population and housing growth. A town sewerage system is integral to these options.

The Study Area for the Stage Two land use framework plan includes land with an existing Township zoning.

Preliminary assessment of land availability estimate a supply of approximately 50 to 70 hectares of land that has an existing township zoning. This land is situated adjacent to the existing town south of the Pyrenees Highway and west of the existing Calder Highway. Based on this estimate, Elphinstone with reticulated sewer would yield between 500 and 700 residential lots.

An unsewered scenario for Elphinstone would yield about 200 low-density residential lots.

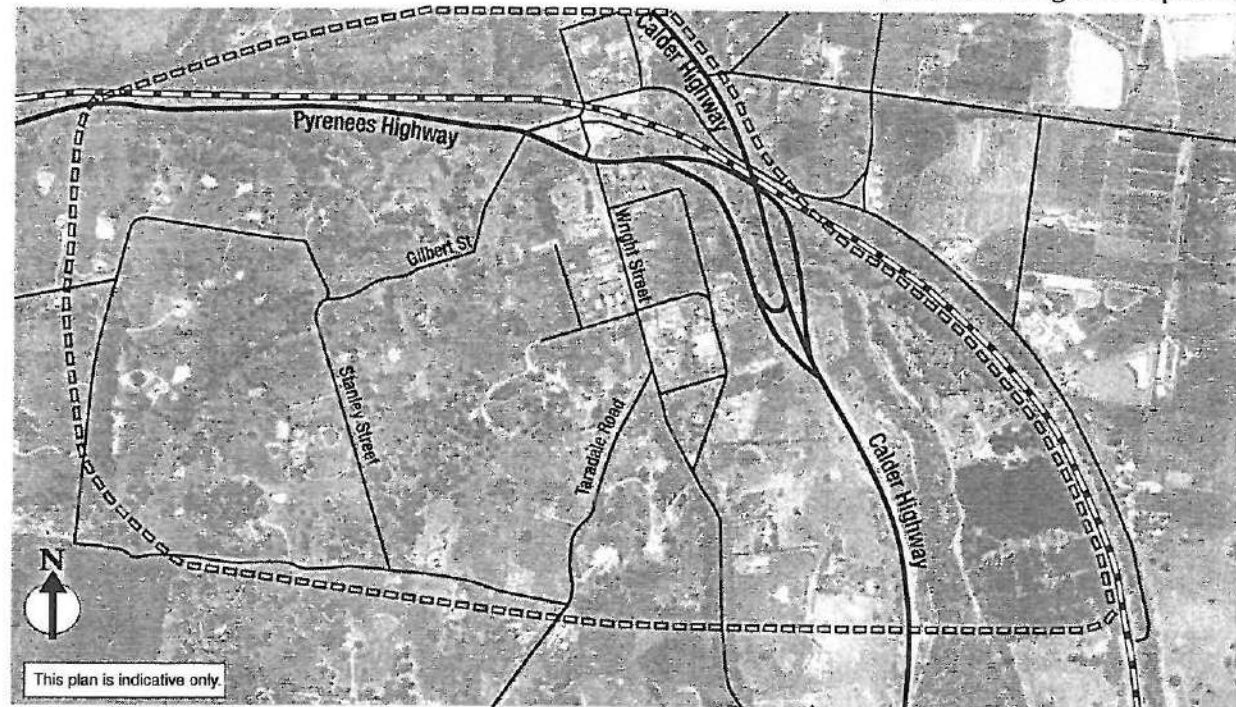
Important planning and town design issues that need to be considered in the Stage Two land use framework plan include:

- need for a design concept for consolidation and possible future expansion of the town centre
- change in status of the existing Calder Highway to a tourist route
- planning and designing residential growth taking account of the potential sewerage of the town
- identification of a future industrial or service business area

Elphinstone Land Use Framework Plan

Study Area ~ Urban Living Study ~ Stage Two

(includes existing Township Zone)



Study Area
 Railway Line
 Highways
 Other Roads

Chewton

Chewton is an historic gold mining town containing outstanding examples of nineteenth century architecture. Features of the town also include the meandering nature of the highway, organic road layout and visual and physical connection to heritage reserves and goldfields bushland. The Planning Scheme provides for some town expansion and infill within the Township zone. The urban living options assume that Chewton will grow as an urban community with levels of growth remaining the same for all options.

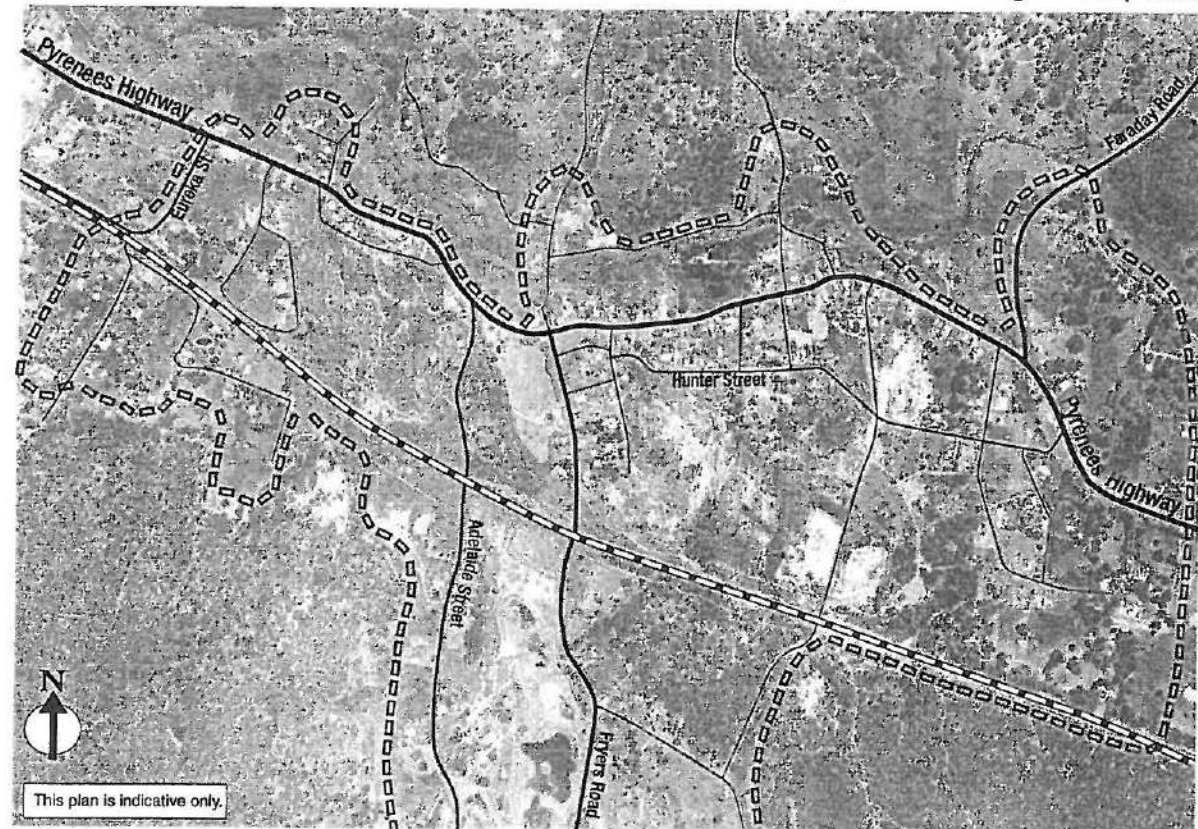
Chewton's urban form, size and layout should determine population size and the amount of new infill development. Council has sought funding under the Pride of Place program for a Chewton. The scope of the project is to provide a strategic and urban design basis for protection of Chewton's village, heritage and landscape character; design guidelines for infill sites; town centre improvement; and treatment of town entries.

Planning issues to be addressed in the Stage Two land use framework plan for Chewton include :

- Where future township boundaries should be located?
- Where infill housing can occur having regard to the protection of heritage and townscape character?
- How the separate identity of Chewton can be retained at its town entrances?
- What new zones should be selected to replace the existing Township zone?

Chewton Land Use Framework Plan Study Area ~ Urban Living Study ~ Stage Two

(Includes existing Township Zone)



Study Area
 Railway Line
 Highways
 Other Roads

Taradale Land Use Framework Plan Study Area ~ Urban Living Study ~ Stage Two

(includes existing Township Zone plus some Rural zoned land at edge)

Taradale

The Planning Scheme makes provision for future growth within a Township zone. The town's landform, landscape setting, heritage character and lack of a reticulated sewer impose limitations to future town development.

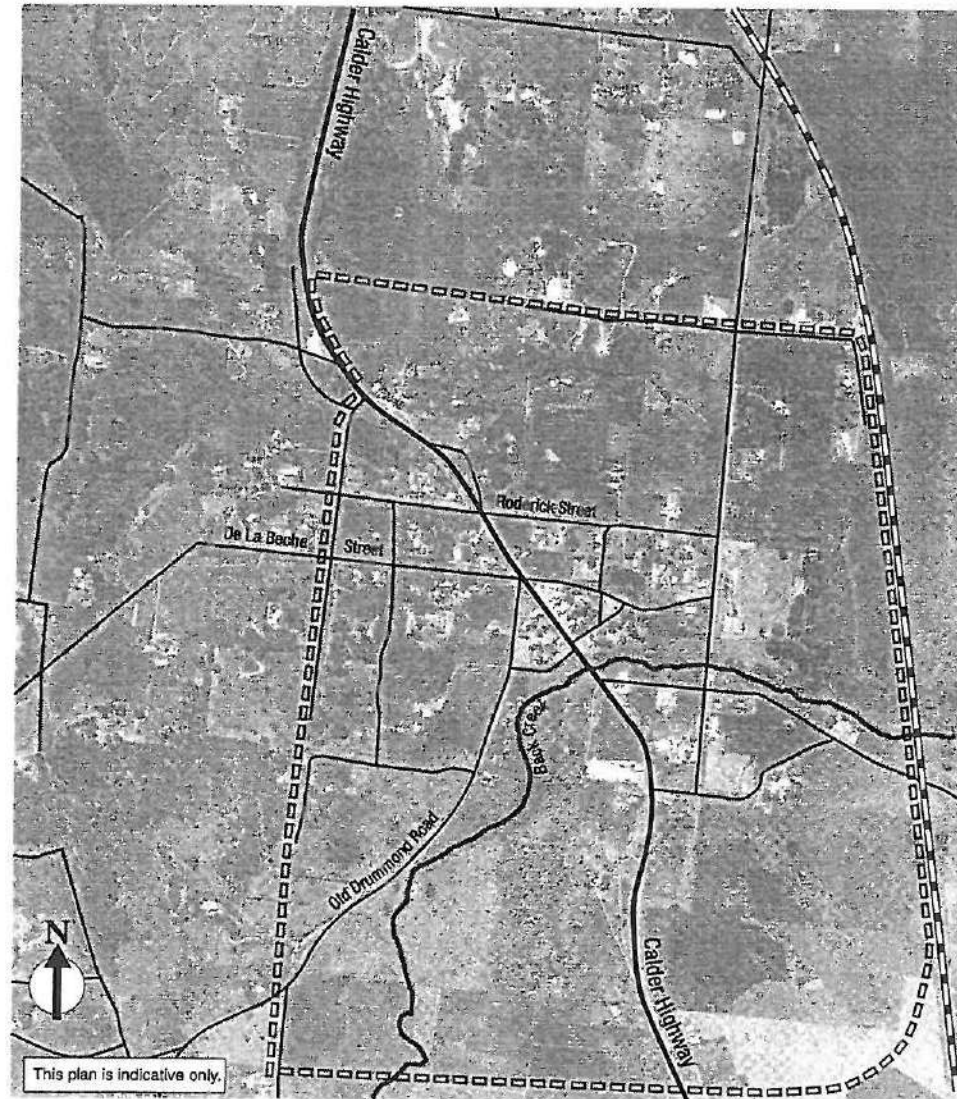
The Planning Scheme (Local Policy 22.08) contains policies to contain development in the town, protect views, protect historic buildings and ensure that new development occurs in accordance with adopted plans.






The Stage Two Study Area for the land use framework plan includes all of the existing township zone and some land zoned Rural at the southern edge of the town.

Taradale will eventually be bypassed by the Calder Freeway with the existing Calder Highway becoming a tourist route to Castlemaine. This is likely to change the role and amenity of the town. It offers planning and design opportunities to reinforce the village character of Taradale.

Preliminary assessment of available land for new housing estimates that the town could grow by approximately 200 residents based on existing zoning. The level of growth would be substantially higher if the town was to be sewered.

The land use plan for Taradale needs to take account of the potential sewerage of the town and the implications this will have on future urban form and layout.



- | | | |
|--|---|---|
|  Study Area |  Highway |  Creek |
|  Railway Line |  Other Roads | |

Guildford

The Township zone in the Planning Scheme provides for future expansion and consolidation of the town. Guildford would grow as a town under all urban living options. Guildford's role and function in the Shire's settlement pattern does not change across the options. It's village scale and character should be preserved.

Guildford is an unsewered township. Residential lot sizes therefore need to be of an adequate size for effluent disposal in accordance with the Septic Tank Code of Practice.

The Planning Scheme contains policies for Guildford (including Local Policy 22.07) to achieve:

- retention of village character
- preservation of historical and landscape character
- protection of heritage
- protection of skyline views to Guildford Plateau
- concentration of commercial type development around the existing village centre

Guildford Land Use Framework Plan
Study Area ~ Urban Living Study ~ Stage Two

(Includes existing Township Zone)



- ▭▭▭▭ Study Area
- ▭▭▭▭ Railway Line
- Highway
- Other Roads
- ~ River

8.2 Industrial and Service Business

Castlemaine

The future supply of industrial land in Castlemaine has been addressed in the Castlemaine Industrial Land Strategy adopted by Council at its February 2003 meeting. The Strategy estimates that approximately 20 to 25 hectares (50 to 60 acres) of industrial land may be required in the next 15 years.

Key proposals of the Industrial Land Strategy:

1. Major strategic focus for the location of new industry is Wesley Hill Industrial Area. A Development Plan Overlay is to be placed over proposed expansion areas and will address issues such as short and longer-term industrial expansion, entry/exit points to the Pyrenees Highway, access route to the industrial area from the Pyrenees Highway and protection of residential amenity.
2. Investigate potential to establish an industrial node at Harcourt. An Urban Design Framework should be prepared for Harcourt following approval of the alignment through Harcourt.
3. Investigate potential for a future industrial area at Elphinstone;
4. Undertake a strategic assessment of future land use options for land with highway frontage in the Ranters Gully area and investigate the potential for an industrial area including discussions with VicRoads regarding the timing and general location of a future Midland Highway Bypass of Castlemaine;

The Castlemaine Urban Framework Plan will combine the recommendations of the Industrial Land Strategy with proposals and recommendations for other land uses ie. residential, retail.

Townships

The Industrial Land Strategy identified the potential for industrial areas or nodes at **Harcourt and Elphinstone**. The location of the industrial area in Harcourt will be decided following a State Government decision on the Harcourt alignment of the Calder Freeway. The location of these towns adjacent to the Calder Freeway provides access advantages to Bendigo and Melbourne. The potential for freight rail service with road interchange are longer term possibilities.

Industrial nodes at the Calder Highway towns is a characteristic of Urban Living Option 1 (Castlemaine-Calder Corridor). The actual size and location of these industrial areas will be decided at detailed planning stages for the townships.

An industrial and service business area in **Newstead** needs to be considered, especially for urban living options 3 and 4 which include larger population increases at Newstead over the planning period to 2021. Irrespective of the selected option, the land use framework plan for Newstead should set aside an area or industrial and service business uses.

Some new industrial development can occur in **Maldon** within the existing Industrial zone. Major new industrial development in Maldon is not recommended due to its location off the State Highway network, the limited population growth that can be supported in Maldon and the physical and heritage constraints imposed by the town's historic urban form and fabric.

8.3 Retail and Business

Castlemaine

Council, through its planning scheme, supports new retail development by consolidation of the Castlemaine Central Area. The Commercial Development Local Policy (22.01) specifies that :

"The primacy of the Castlemaine Central Business District is to be protected and redevelopment of land within the existing retail area is to be encouraged."

The Planning Scheme does not support the location of major stores and concentration of retail stores at suburban locations.

The Castlemaine Central Area Urban Design Framework (November 2002), adopted by Council at its February 2003 meeting, identifies various sites and areas with the Central Area and at its edge that can be developed or redeveloped for future retail and commercial use.

In summary, new retail and business activity can be established within or at the edge of the Central Area to support population increases in the Castlemaine and the Shire.

The Castlemaine Town Entrances Strategy (2002), adopted by Council at its February 2003 meeting, identifies various sites and areas for highway business including Elizabeth Street, Johnstone Street/Maclise Street corner, Barker Street (north end), and sites adjacent the Pyrenees Highway at Duke Street and Forest Street.

Both the Central Area Urban Design Framework and Entrances Strategy will be implemented by planning scheme amendments that rezone identified sites.

Townships

New retail and business services will establish in the townships as the resident population grows. It is important to set aside sites for the expansion of existing town centres.

Allowance needs to be made for expansion of the Newstead and Harcourt town centres. The land use framework plans for these towns will define new town centre boundaries and recommend zoning changes (ie. business zoning) to replace the existing Township zone that covers existing town centres.

Stage Two land use framework plans for Elphinstone and Taradale will define town centres making provision for expansion in the future.

9. Urban Living Objectives

A set of objectives are required to evaluate the urban living options so that a preferred option can be selected. The selected option, which may comprise parts of different options, will be developed into an urban living strategy that will be the strategic foundation for urban planning in the Shire.

The objectives are:

1. Consolidate and strengthen the role of Castlemaine as an important sub regional centre for shopping, business, employment and community life.
2. Reinforce the attractive feature of the Shire's settlement pattern that provides choice in residential location and lifestyle.
3. Protect the heritage significance and character of the Shire's urban settlements and cultural landscapes.
4. Provide for high levels of accessibility and equity of access from the home to places where people shop, work and recreate.
5. Provide for a future urban settlement pattern that promotes energy efficiency and sustainable use of energy resources.
6. Protect and enhance the box-ironbark forests and landscape character and settings of the Shire's towns in the Shire.
7. Protect the valued lifestyle attributes of the Shire's urban environments as attractive alternatives to metropolitan and 'suburban' living.
8. Promote and strengthen Shire's community identity based on its social, cultural, physical and environmental characteristics.

10. Urban Growth Options

The Urban Living Options are described in plan form in the Summary at the front of this report. Four urban growth options are presented for community consultation. The set of options have been formulated taking account of servicing and infrastructure opportunities that are now available or will be available in the immediate term. They include:

- Calder Highway Duplication from Malmsbury to Faraday and Faraday to Harcourt
- Regional Fast Rail project on the Melbourne to Bendigo Line
- Reticulated sewerage provided to the townships of Harcourt, Maldon, Newstead, Chewton, and the suburban area of Campbells Creek

The options have also considered the availability of serviced land in Castlemaine and the townships.

The four options are:

OPTION 1

Castlemaine and Calder Corridor – with the majority of population and new housing occurring in Castlemaine and the Calder Corridor towns of Harcourt and Elphinstone.

OPTION 2

Castlemaine Expansion and Consolidation – where the majority of population growth and new housing occurs in Castlemaine urban area.

OPTION 3

Castlemaine and Pyrenees Corridor – with the majority of new residential areas adjacent to the Pyrenees Corridor to the west of the Castlemaine urban area and at the township of Newstead.

OPTION 4

Cluster and Connect – with population and new housing occurring in Castlemaine and the larger established towns of Harcourt, Maldon and Newstead.

The options are presented for discussion and debate in the community. The preferred option could be a hybrid of two or more options or possibly a new option.

Option 1. **Castlemaine Consolidation and Calder Corridor**

Description

With this option the majority of population growth and new housing occurs in Castlemaine and the Calder Corridor towns of Harcourt and Elphinstone and to a lesser extent Taradale. The main feature of the option is that it takes full advantage of the Calder Highway duplication and reduced travel times to Bendigo and Melbourne.

Under this option Harcourt, Elphinstone and Taradale will increasingly develop as commuter towns to Bendigo and Melbourne. Provision would be made for other land uses such as industry, service business and town centre expansion. Landform and landscape features would limit growth in Taradale. Population estimates for towns are listed in Table 4.

Elements

- Urban expansion and consolidation would occur in Castlemaine consistent with the proposed a Castlemaine Residential Strategy and Urban Framework.
- Town growth in Elphinstone and Taradale would be dependent on the provision of township reticulated sewerage systems.
- Harcourt particularly would develop closer links with Bendigo and could possibly become a satellite town to Bendigo.
- Harcourt could become a transport hub with road-rail interchange facility.
- Industrial nodes would be established in both Harcourt and Elphinstone.

- In the longer term Harcourt, Elphinstone and Taradale would become stopping stations for a light rail service to Castlemaine and Bendigo.
- Planning Scheme would ensure modest growth at Taradale to protect the landscape, heritage and scenic qualities of the township.
- Eventual upgrading of the Midland Highway would be required due to larger population sizes at Harcourt and Elphinstone and the Midland Highway exit to Castlemaine for north bound Calder Highway traffic
- Existing Calder and Pyrenees Highways from Taradale to Castlemaine would become a tourist route with potential tourism benefits for Taradale, Elphinstone and Chewton.
- New residential development would occur in other towns) Maldon, Newstead, Chewton, Guildford) but at a slower rate over the next 20 years.
- Allowance would need to be made for expansion of town centres in Elphinstone, Harcourt and Taradale.
- A site would need to be set aside for a future primary school at Elphinstone.
- Land use framework plans for Harcourt, Elphinstone and Taradale would need to establish future urban form, structure and boundaries, and provide direction for new zones (residential, industrial, business).

Option 1. Castlemaine Consolidation and Calder Corridor**Table 4. Spatial Distribution of Urban Growth and Development**

	Population 2001	Population Estimate 2011	Population Estimate 2021
Greater Castlemaine	7,940	9,500	11,000
Maldon	1,231	1,500	1,700
Newstead	527	700	1,000
Harcourt	422	900	1,800
Elphinstone	150	500	1,200
Taradale	102	300	500
Chewton	367	400	500
Guildford	100	200	300
Total	10,840	14,000	18,000
Other inc.Rural Areas	5,330	6,000	7,000
Totals	16,170	20,000	25,000

NB. Population estimates are not targets. The distribution and proportional share of growth between towns is as important as the estimates themselves.

Option 2. Castlemaine Consolidation

Description

The majority of population growth and new housing occurs in Castlemaine and modest rates of growth (compared to other options) occur in the seweried towns of Maldon, Newstead, Harcourt, and Chewton. Limited growth would occur in other towns such as Taradale, Elphinstone and Guildford.

Under this option Castlemaine could provide higher levels of retail, business and community services by virtue of its larger population size. Services would generally be more centralised with this option requiring more travel from towns to Castlemaine. This option would require improved transport connections (public and community transport) to Castlemaine.

Considerations about the physical extent of expansion and consolidation in Castlemaine are critical with this option in terms of preserving the town's landscape setting, and heritage and townscape character.

Population estimates for Castlemaine and the towns are listed in Table 5.

Elements

- As for other options, residential expansion in Castlemaine would mainly occur in a westerly and south-westerly direction. Residential densities in these area would need to be urban conventional rather than lower density for efficient use of urban land and services such as sewerage.
- Consolidation and infill within the existing Castlemaine urban area would be greater with this option than other options. Heritage reviews and a neighborhood character study would need to be pre-conditions of this option.

- Higher density living areas in Castlemaine would need to be selected. These areas could include locations close to Castlemaine Town Centre and major facilities such as Hospital and local industries.
- Innovative approaches to housing design would be more essential for this option. Housing types would need to match the changes in household structure including increases in single person households and the trend towards a more ageing population. Housing densities would need to increase in identified areas.
- Centrality is a major feature of this option with all new services generally located in Castlemaine.
- Improved access (road and public transport) between Castlemaine and the outlying towns would be essential for this option. The concentration of growth in Castlemaine would increase traffic volumes on major roads such as the Midland Highway.
- Amenity and safety impacts of increased traffic along Barker Street at the centre of the town would need to be carefully considered. Longer term planning for a western bypass of the town centre would need to be addressed with VicRoads.

Option 2. Castlemaine Consolidation**Table 5. Spatial Distribution of Urban Growth and Development**

	Population 2001	Population Estimate 2011	Population Estimate 2021
Greater Castlemaine	7,940	10,000	12,500
Maldon	1,231	1,500	1,700
Newstead	527	700	1,000
Harcourt	422	700	1,200
Elphinstone	150	200	400
Taradale	102	200	400
Chewton	367	400	500
Guildford	100	200	300
Total	10,840	14,000	18,000
Other inc.Rural Areas	5,330	6,000	7,000
Total - Shire	16,170	20,000	25,000

NB. Population estimates are not targets. The distribution and proportional share of growth between towns is as important as the estimates themselves

Option 3. Castlemaine - Pyrenees Corridor

Description

Majority of population and household growth occurs in Castlemaine generally in a westerly direction along the Pyrenees Highway Corridor. The future western boundary of Castlemaine would be extended over McKenzies Hill into Ranters Gully. This western corridor of Castlemaine has less heritage and servicing constraints than other highway corridors.

With additional housing in the western sector the urban consolidation of Castlemaine would be a lesser requirement compared to Option 2.

Significant residential growth would occur in the town of Newstead under this option. Urban growth would occur at other major towns such as Maldon and Harcourt but at a lesser rate than for Options 1 and 4.

Population estimates for towns are listed in Table 6.

Elements

- An urban structure plan would be required for the western corridor growth area showing the broad arrangement and layout of land use areas, proposed new road access and open space areas. The structure plan would coordinate and integrate land use, services and activities and guide development of this proposed urban area.
- An industrial or service business area could be located within the proposed new urban area discussed above.
- As a larger centre, Newstead could draw on the advantages of its equidistant location to Bendigo and Ballarat and its proximity to other larger towns such as Castlemaine, Maryborough and Daylesford.

- A comprehensive land use plan would be required for Newstead indicating staging for residential development, future urban form and structure, town centre expansion, and a service business/industrial area.
- Newstead would become more self-reliant in terms of the services it offers. Town centre services would expand in Newstead however typical weekly shopping trips would be made to Castlemaine.
- Improved access (road and public transport) would be required between Castlemaine and Newstead also servicing the residential area along the Castlemaine-Pyrenees Corridor.
- Serious consideration would need to be given to a longer-term western Midland Highway by-pass of Castlemaine. The alignment for a by-pass could establish the future western boundary. The location of a new industrial or service business area in the Ranters Gully area could be considered in the context of the longer-term by-pass.
- Services in the western sector of Castlemaine would need to keep pace with the progressive increases in households. Enrolment numbers would rise at Winters Flat Primary School and the Castlemaine Steiner School. Open space and recreation facilities in this area of Castlemaine would need to be improved as new housing areas are established.
- Harcourt would also experience population growth driven by its proximity to Bendigo and Castlemaine. Other towns would experience modest population and household growth.

Option 3 Castlemaine and Pyrenees Corridor

Table 6. Spatial Distribution of Urban Growth and Development

	Population 2001	Population Estimate 2011	Population Estimate 2021
Greater Castlemaine	7,940	10,000	12,500
Maldon	1,231	1500	1,700
Newstead	527	800	1,500
Harcourt	422	700	900
Elphinstone	150	200	300
Taradale	102	200	300
Chewton	367	400	500
Guildford	100	200	200
Total	10,840	14,000	18,000
Other inc.Rural Areas	5,330	6,000	7,000
Totals	16,170	20,000	25,000

NB. Population estimates are not targets. The distribution and proportional share of growth between towns is as important as the estimates themselves.

Option 4. Cluster and Connect

Description

With this option future urban growth and development is shared between Castlemaine and the surrounding townships of Harcourt, Maldon and Newstead which grow to a size where they are relatively self-contained urban entities. Castlemaine would continue to be the primary focus for shopping, business and community facilities and for the delivery of Shire-wide services.

The smaller towns or villages would experience only incremental growth.

With this option a more defined urban hierarchy will develop:

Regional city	Castlemaine
District towns	Harcourt, Maldon, Newstead
Villages	Taradale, Chewton, Elphinstone, Guildford

Population estimates for towns are listed in Table 7.

Elements

- This option, more than any other option, builds on the existing urban settlement pattern and will therefore offer greater choice in lifestyle and residential living environments.
- This option utilises recently provided sewerage infrastructure in the towns of Harcourt, Maldon and Newstead.
- Projected population increases in the three larger towns would reduce the growth pressures on Castlemaine however as for other options urban expansion in Castlemaine would occur at identified outer locations. The need for increased urban consolidation in Castlemaine would be reduced under this option.

- Levels and range of services in the three outer towns would increase in line with population increases. As population increases so will the demand for in-town services. Provision would need to be made for expansion of the existing town centres in Harcourt and Newstead.
- Improved transport connections would be required with this option. Whilst the larger towns would become more self-reliant, travel to Castlemaine would be necessary for comparison shopping and some regional and sub-regional level services.
- The 'connect' part of this option refers to better access connections between the urban clusters. Better connections would include improved public transport and innovative community transport services between Castlemaine and the three towns.
- An industrial node would be established at Harcourt to take advantage of the town's strategic location on the regional and State highway and rail network. A relatively smaller industrial or service business area could be established at Newstead.
- With a considerable share of the future growth occurring outside of Castlemaine there are opportunities to plan and design responsive living environments and residential communities based on good design and energy efficient principles. Planning for the future of the larger towns, especially Newstead and Harcourt, also presents opportunities to incorporate natural features (watercourses, landscape view, native vegetation areas) into town design.

Option 4. Cluster and Connect

Table 7. Spatial Distribution of Urban Growth and Development

	Population 2001	Population Estimate 2011	Population Estimate 2021
Greater Castlemaine	7,940	9,500	11,500
Maldon	1,231	1,500	1,700
Newstead	527	900	1,500
Harcourt	422	900	1,500
Elphinstone	150	300	500
Taradale	102	300	500
Chewton	367	400	500
Guildford	100	200	300
Total	10,840	14,000	18,000
Other inc.Rural Areas	5,330	6,000	7,000
Total- Shire	16,170	20,000	25,000

NB. Population estimates are not targets. The distribution and proportional share of growth between towns is as important as the estimates themselves.

11. Discussion about Options

The following discussion is by no means exhaustive. It is intended only to commence and aid discussion about the options.

Discussion of the options in the context of the urban living objectives (See Chapter 9) will assist debate and discussion in the community. These objectives relate to:

- Strengthening of Castlemaine's regional role.
- Providing choice in residential location and lifestyle.
- Protecting heritage resources and cultural landscapes.
- Accessibility to services and equity of access.
- Sustainable and energy efficient settlement and urban form.
- Protecting box-ironbark forests and significant landscapes values.
- Protecting valued lifestyle attributes.
- Promoting and strengthening the Shire's community identity.

Strengthening of Castlemaine's regional role.

Castlemaine's role will be strengthened under each option.

Option 2 (Castlemaine Consolidation) would see more concentration of services (shopping, employment, community services) in Castlemaine and a further strengthening of its role.

Option 3 (Castlemaine Consolidation & Pyrenees Corridor) would strengthen Castlemaine's role more so than Options 1 and 4 due also to the larger population increase and potentially more concentration of services in Castlemaine.

Providing residential lifestyle choice

Cluster and Connect (Option 4) would provide the most choice. The system of towns would move towards a hierarchy of settlements with populations of 11,000, 1500, and 500 persons.

Option 2 would provide more choice in urban residential environments. Increased consolidation of Castlemaine will see more medium density housing and therefore more choice.

Option 3 (Castlemaine-Pyrenees Corridor) would provide more choice within Castlemaine including medium density housing at selected locations and new planned residential communities at areas within the Pyrenees Corridor identified under this option.

Option 1 (Castlemaine & Calder Corridor) is likely too provide less choice, however the Calder Corridor towns will provide choice in terms of easier access to Bendigo and Melbourne.

Protecting of heritage resources and cultural landscapes

Increased pressure will be placed on Castlemaine's heritage with more urban consolidation. Protection may be more difficult to achieve with Option 2.

Option 3 (Castlemaine-Pyrenees Corridor) would have the least impact on heritage buildings and environments. Area to the west of Castlemaine (McKenzies Hill, Diamond Gully, Ranter's Gully) are less constrained by heritage than other fringe localities in Castlemaine.

There would be less pressure on heritage resources with options that share and distribute urban growth between towns (Option 4 Cluster and Connect).

Expansion of towns at urban fringes are more likely to have an impact on adjacent cultural landscapes, particularly in Castlemaine and smaller towns like Taradale. In relation to Castlemaine, this objective is more likely to be satisfied with options that propose less outward urban expansion and consolidation at town edges.

Accessibility to services and equity of access

Options 2 and 3 would provide for increased access to services because population and household growth will mostly occur in the larger centre of Castlemaine.

Cluster and Connect (Option 4) will provide higher levels of access to day to day services. The three outer urban clusters (Maldon, Harcourt, Newstead) will support more services (shops, business, community facilities) with projected population growth. Travel to Castlemaine would be required for services other than convenient services.

Option 1 would potentially score well with this objective with growth in Castlemaine and Harcourt, the closest outer town to Castlemaine. Harcourt will also have improved access to Bendigo with the completion of the Calder Freeway. Elphinstone and Taradale will also benefit from an access point of view with better links to Bendigo. These towns will have better access to metropolitan level services upgraded road access to Melbourne.

Option 1 also proposes industrial nodes at Harcourt and Elphinstone which would provide potentially better access to employment opportunities for residents in the Calder Corridor towns.

Sustainable and energy efficient settlement and urban form.

Energy efficiency and sustainable living environments can be achieved with all options through residential neighborhood design, building design and home living improvements. The settlement pattern and the distribution of people within settlements will influence energy efficiency levels. Options that generally are less reliant on the motor car will be more energy efficient.

Options 2 and 3 have the advantage of more public and community transport possibilities. due to the larger population sizes in Castlemaine.

Potentially Option 1 (Castlemaine – Calder Corridor) would be the most energy efficient urban living options as the three towns to receive the majority of population growth (Castlemaine, Harcourt and Elphinstone)

are located on the Melbourne to Bendigo rail line. Longer-term commuter rail services to Bendigo and Castlemaine can be considered with this option. With significantly larger populations the towns of Harcourt and Elphinstone could become stopping stations for a commuter rail service.

Protecting box-ironbark forests and significant landscapes values.

The current Mount Alexander Planning Scheme includes zones, overlays and policies to protect areas with native vegetation and high landscape values. It is at the more detailed planning level that protection is an issue. Whilst the urban living options stage is broad in its scope it is possible that varying degrees of pressure would be placed on existing native forest and bushland areas depending on the urban living option.

Under Option 2 (Castlemaine Consolidation) residential densities may increase at some of the fringe urban areas of Castlemaine that are adjacent to State Parks and other important native bushland areas. This could potentially threaten environmental values of these native bushland areas.

Options that spread or share growth between Castlemaine and surrounding towns (eg Option 4 Cluster and Connect) could reduce the overall potential threat to existing native vegetation.

Option 3 (Castlemaine-Pyrenees Corridor) proposes urban growth in a westerly direction. There are significant areas of native vegetation on both public and private land in this part of Castlemaine. Notwithstanding that there are existing planning controls to protect native vegetation, the potential threat in these areas needs to be understood.

Protecting valued lifestyle attributes and community identity

The Shire and its towns are a desirable alternative to highly urbanised areas of Melbourne and larger regional centres. This lifestyle preference is related to more relaxed living conditions, the range of urban living environments (large and smaller towns), heritage

environments, strong community identity, attractive rural and bushland landscapes, and relative proximity to Bendigo and Melbourne.

The impact on existing lifestyle attributes will differ among the options. Option 2, which proposes the largest population increase in Castlemaine, could potentially alter the character of existing residential areas. On the other hand larger population increases could add to the vibrancy of the town and Shire.

The existing character and lifestyle of the townships are valued. Options 1,3 and 4 proposing significant population increases in the townships (eg, Harcourt, Newstead, Maldon, Elphinstone) will change this character and town atmosphere. Future land use outcomes can however assist in retaining existing character through implementation of the Planning Scheme and the proposed township land use framework plans (Stage Two).

Option 4 (Cluster and Connect) could be viewed as an option that builds upon the existing settlement pattern offering alternative residential environments (large town, small town, village).

Promote and strengthen the Shire's community identity.

The Shire's community identity is amalgam of features related to lifestyle, heritage character, arts and culture and population diversity. The Shire's geographic area and network of towns, with Castlemaine at the centre, represents a community of interest.

The Shire's community identity is more likely to be strengthened with Option 4 (Cluster and Connect) as this option builds upon the existing network and hierarchy of towns.

Community identity could also be strengthened with Options 2 and 3 which propose larger population increases in Castlemaine, however increased urban consolidation could potentially diminish existing lifestyle qualities.

Option 1 is less likely to satisfy this objective as the larger residential communities at Calder Corridor towns could potentially develop economic, social and cultural alliances with Melbourne and Bendigo.

12. Next Step – Consultation and Selection of Preferred Option

The next step in the study process is to invite public comment on the urban living options. The report has been prepared as a document for discussion in the wider community. Each option has its own comparative advantages and disadvantages. The next step involves evaluation of the options to determine which option is more able to satisfy the urban living objectives and the aspirations of the Shire community.

Comments are sought from residents, local interest groups and the business community with an interest in the future of the municipality.

Written submissions are invited and should be addressed to:

Ivan Gilbert
Chief Executive Officer
Mount Alexander Shire
PO Box 185
Castlemaine 3450

Following receipt of submissions Council consider all submissions and undertake its own evaluation of the options based on comments raised during the submission period.

The selected option will provide the strategic foundation for the preparation of the Mount Alexander Urban Living Strategy which will comprise residential and land use plans for Castlemaine, Harcourt, Maldon, Newstead, Taradale, Elphinstone and Guildford.

The selection of the preferred urban living option is an important step in the process of planning for the short and long-term future of the Shire and its urban communities.