

YOUR TOWN, YOUR FUTURE

Community Engagement Report

May 2023

REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision description
16 February 23	1	Draft for SGS
2 May 23	2	Draft
5 June 23	3	Community Engagement Release

1. Executive Summary

The community engagement process completed for the *Your Town, Your Future – Land Development Strategy* reflected a robust and agile approach that responded to community requests for additional sessions throughout the process.

Due to the nature of the Land Development Strategy there are a number of competing views that will be presented in a balanced view within this report. Where appropriate clarification from the relevant authorities will also be sought. In most instances there was a broad appreciation of the growth challenge, particularly from parents with kids who have been forced out of the area due to housing shortages.

It is noted a key outcome of Community Engagement was ensuring there is a clear understanding of time frames and priorities associated with rezonings and planning amendments. There was also clear feedback from the community on what needs to be protected, including natural environments and landscape character, whilst growth occurs. This needs to be captured in the Strategy with clear milestones for completion of relevant controls prior to rezoning.

There were also a number of one-on-one meeting with landowners to discuss the Strategy - some of these key concerns have been raised via FAQ at the end of this document.

The balanced response across the Alpine Shire highlights further work is required and needs to be identified in the draft Strategy to ensure implementation captures community input whilst also addressing our obligations to plan for the future of our towns.

2. Quick Facts

2.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Survey

Opened 18 October 2022

Close date extended to the 12 February 2023

Total Respondents	244
Bright	63
Myrtleford	70
Mount Beauty	64
Porepunkah	47

Acknowledgements:

It was noted by a community member that the wording of one survey question relating to the Industrial area in Myrtleford was possibly misleading. Refer to the asterisk on this question - qualitative data and Community Reference Group feedback will be utilised for assessment.

2.2 COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP

The Community Reference group purpose was to seek more qualitative feedback on the strategy from community members. This Community Reference Group was put out to Expression of Interest and through a review criterion a group of 25 individuals were chosen to participate in these sessions. This gave opportunity to unpack issues and discuss regarding constraints mapping, growth challenge and possible solutions for consideration.

Workshops

3x 2-hour workshops – the last requested by the CRG group to present back findings
Follow up workshop completed in Mount Beauty

Group Make-Up

There was a mix of Community Reference Group members of age, township and gender within the group (refer appendix 1)

2.3 TECHNICAL REFERENCE GROUP

The Technical Reference Group was extended to Planners, Sales Agents, Engineers and specialist consultants who work in the region to unpack key issues particularly relating to infill challenges. This group was also provided a distribution of draft annexures and supporting documentation for review and feedback.

2.4 LANDOWNER ENGAGEMENTS

A number of one-on-one meetings at Myrtleford Library and Council Offices were conducted with various Landowners for various properties.

We also received formal submissions for alternative properties (Bright & Mount Beauty).

We received a number of formal email responses to Councillors of varying degrees to address key concerns for certain land parcels.

2.5 COMMUNITY POP UPS

Location	Date	Attendance/Reception
Myrtleford Farmers Market	22 October 2022	15 visitors, it was a very wet day with a lot of attendees at Myrtleford show
Porepunkah Main Street	4 November 2022	20-30 visitors, many there upon set up of the stall. Most in attendance had
Mount Beauty Community Market	5 November 2022	30+ drop ins over the day with a mix of feedback and demographics attending the market
Myrtleford Main Street	11 November 2022	10-20 attendees
Mount Beauty Main Street	18 November 2022	5-10 attendees over the course of the two hours
Bright Make it Bake It Grow It	19 November 2022	15-20 members over the course of the day with some residents coming from Porepunkah and Myrtleford.

3. Key Findings by Township

3.1 BRIGHT

The sentiment in Bright was a mix of the desire for growth particularly with regard to a local economy, whilst also feeling the impacts of tourism on amenity and infrastructure at peak periods.

Below highlights some of the key outcomes of the survey and Community Reference Group:

- ➔ **59% of respondents** reflected that the growth challenge should be addressed by a **combination of infill and greenfield**. There were comments relating specifically to limited land available that is appropriate for greenfield development however given constraints.
- ➔ **Fear of becoming an inner-city** style suburb, and desire to maintain planting, screening, vegetation and development appropriate to regional backdrop.
- ➔ Acknowledgement that densification is likely to require less new infrastructure and more upgrades of existing infrastructure. A greater **acceptance of higher density living if it is coupled with infrastructure, parks and playgrounds**.
- ➔ A key consideration for Bright in particular is a greater need for control on **Short Term rentals** to address housing availability issues.

Infrastructure and sustainability of growth needs to be considered particularly as it relates to:

- Health Care
- Childcare & Education
- Roads & traffic infrastructure

Top three priorities for Housing in Bright include

- Affordable Housing
- Sustainable Housing outcomes
- Aged Care Facilities

Key considerations to protect in any new development

- Connectivity to natural places (design to key places)
- Nature walks (Canyon walk)
- Attractive street trees

3.2 POREPUNKAH

The sentiment in Porepunkah was on the rural nature of the area and the focus on maintaining larger lot sizes reflective of the existing character of the area. This was balanced with a strong sense of the need for amenity, childcare is a major focus for residents. The balance for quiet and rural living, was also raised as needing to be balanced with diversity of housing and issues.

Below highlights key outcomes of the survey and Community Reference Group:

- ➔ **Preference for infill development (61%)** with only 16% of respondents for Greenfield, and 23% supporting a combination of infill
- ➔ There was also a strong sentiment that the **area nominated for growth is large even over of 20 year period**, and staging would need to be considered to address this. A secondary access was raised as in particular to ensure Station St does not become the major thoroughfare.
- ➔ **Rural feel, views, natural places** and quiet nature of the community is important to local residents.
- ➔ **Amenity and access to services** is a key concern for Porepunkah residents

Infrastructure and sustainability of growth needs to be considered particularly in below areas:

- Road and Traffic Infrastructure
- Childcare and Education
- Healthcare and Medical

Top priorities for Housing in Porepunkah were more specific:

- Sustainable Housing (57%)
- Other (54%)
 - Community infrastructure
 - Issues with encroachment on farming zone, and loss of rural feel
 - Public transport

Key considerations to protect in any new development in Porepunkah

- Connectivity to natural places (design to key places)
- Nature walks (Canyon walk)
- Attractive street trees
- "Other" also included
 - Rural feel and close proximity to farming
 - Views to buffalo

3.3 MYRTLEFORD

The sentiment in Myrtleford was in much greater support for a combination of infill and greenfield development. This will need to be balanced with landowner feedback. There are significant constraints in Myrtleford also particularly for flooding, topography, drainage and bushfire. Further work is outlined in the Implementation strategy that notes work to proceed prior to rezoning.

Below highlights key outcomes of the survey and Community Reference Group:

- ➔ **65% of respondents support a combination of greenfield and infill development**, a further 23% were in support of majority greenfield development, with a smaller 13% supportive of infill
- ➔ Impact **to visual landscapes**, conflict with **farming land** of key concern
- ➔ Concern regarding **industrial land** for truck movements, **impact** to the Great Alpine Road and collocation of uses for industrial area
- ➔ Feedback regarding more **township/localised approach to Industrial land** across Porepunkah, Bright and Tawonga.

Infrastructure and sustainability of growth needs to be considered particularly in below areas:

- Healthcare and Medical
- Childcare and Education
- Road and Traffic Improvements

Top priorities for housing:

- Affordable Housing
- Sustainable Housing and Subdivisions
- Aged Care Facilities

Key considerations to protect in any new development

- Connectivity to natural places
- Attractive street trees
- Walkability

3.4 MOUNT BEAUTY/TAWONGA

The sentiment in Mount Beauty was also a mix of greenfield and infill development. There was feedback regarding the possible positive outcomes from an economic perspective that may occur with additional population growth and what that may mean for services and hospitality. There was also key consideration for the quality of housing in Mount Beauty given many were previously installed as demountable homes.

Below highlights key outcomes of the survey and Community Reference Group:

- ➔ **58% of respondents in support of a combination of greenfield and infill**, 30% would prefer to see infill of existing areas
- ➔ **Redevelopment of existing homes**, with a key issue of the poor quality of demountable homes from AGL era raised. This seemed favourable to sprawling development.
- ➔ Need to localise growth to areas that also encourage business growth and walkability
- ➔ Key concerns raised for **NEW water and sewer infrastructure** impeding development of particular areas

Infrastructure and sustainability of growth needs to be considered particularly in below areas:

- Road and Traffic Infrastructure
- Pedestrian Connectivity
- Healthcare and Medical

Top priorities for Housing in Upper Kiewa Valley:

- Affordable Housing
- Sustainable Housing and Subdivisions
- Aged Care Facilities

Key considerations to protect in any new development in Upper Kiewa Valley:

- Connectivity to natural places (design to key places)
- Nature walks (Canyon walk)
- Attractive street trees
- "Other" also included
 - Issues with Flood Prone land near rockpool road

- Issues of Environmental and wildlife consideration in rockpool road as only
- Management of Significant Landscape Overlay in Rockpool road
- Issue of managing powerlines in area behind existing shopping strip
- Support for new development in walking distance to certain locations
- Consideration for bottle-necked highway in new developments including enforcement of on and off street parking requirements
- Consideration for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage on these sites in further investigate

4. Planning & Implementation

The below tables reflect the key issues raised through community engagement and possible outcomes to address these as well as the relevant authorities that need to be involved with written responses in decision making.

Each area is noted within the context

4.1 FEEDBACK - SUPPORTED

Key issues raised by Community **supported** from a Planning perspective

Area	Issue	Authority	Outcome
Implementation	The Community Reference group noted the Strategy needs to include clearly specified list of work required prior to proceeding with rezoning and must note things that are a priority to protect including Character and landscape	ASC	Included in Draft LDS Implementation Plan
Infrastructure	Key issues with roads and parking in Bright were voiced, similarly issues in Station St in particular need to be considered.	VicRoads	Included in Draft LDS Implementation Plan
NEW Infrastructure	Issues and limitations have been raised regarding North East Water not currently having capacity to support existing development in the main townships.	NEW	Included in Draft LDS Implementation Plan Letter to the Minister noting this key constraint in achieving objectives of diverse housing
Scale of Rezoning	It is noted in multiple cases the scale of each hashed area was considerable. These areas have been reflected as possible growth areas for the purpose	ASC	Included in Draft LDS Framework Plan

Area	Issue	Authority	Outcome
	of consultation, not final areas for rezoning. Further refinement will occur at the draft strategy noting community engagement work and other inputs.		
Cemetery	Myrtleford Cemetery Trust discussed with Council noting their plans to grow the cemetery to also reflect their demand.	Health Victoria	Area noted in Framework Plan but sits outside this strategy
Sustainable Housing	Sustainable housing outcomes	ASC	Included in Draft LDS Implementation Plan of preferred design outcomes.
Planning Timeframes	Council need to improve their processes and communication regarding permits.	ASC DTP	Key issue also highlighted in the Planning Scheme Review.

4.2 REQUIRING FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Key issues for **further investigation**.

Area	Issue	Authority	Outcome
Growth vs Farming	Concern regarding loss of productive farming land and the need to provide sustainable economic outcomes.	DTP ASC	Included in Draft LDS Implementation Plan including Framework Plan reflects reduced footprint based on rationalised
Bushfire Risk	Noted all areas identified are still Category 4.	CFA	Areas have been nominated picked due to lower relative bushfire risk due to runs, slope and emergency egress. Bal 12.5 mapping has been completed across the broader area. CFA response reflects a lack of support in Category 4 Zones and further work requirements highlighted now reflected in the Draft LDS Implementation Plan in the

Area	Issue	Authority	Outcome
			form of a Bushfire Management.
HVP Land	Areas of HVP forestry both in Bright as part of a previously implemented Structure Plan were nominated as possible growth area. An area in Myrtleford has also been identified by the public for a preferred industrial area in HVP land.	DTP, ASC, HVP	HVP Land not included in LDS Framework Plan due to inherent risk of bushfire, Bright location, long term lease arrangement giving rights to this land and
Upzone Low Density Res	Bright – there is a lot of low density residential that can be rezoned to allow for greater density and infill.	ASC	Areas reviewed, noting these locations pose significant bushfire risk and would not be supported from a constraint perspective.
Neighbourhood Character	It is noted throughout most areas, and in particular Bright that there is a sense of Character and Landscape in each township that needs to be protected as we grow.	ASC	Included in Draft LDS Implementation Plan including
Drainage & Flooding	Residents have raised issues relating to flooding and drainage on some of the proposed growth areas. Work has commenced on Drainage and flooding by ASC and NECMA to ensure infrastructure, drainage strategy and planning are considered for future growth areas. Work in Porepunkah and Myrtleford has commenced by ASC and further work by NECMA is underway for the Kiewa Valley to address these concerns.	ASC NECMA	Included in Draft LDS Implementation Plan including

4.3 FEEDBACK - CLOSED OUT

Key issues that have been queried and addressed below

Issue	Review	Outcome
Community members noted that Bright and the	Without a Land Development Strategy it will not allow us to	The Regional Growth Plan is not an indication of localised growth

Issue	Review	Outcome
Shire has not been earmarked in the Regional Growth Plan to cater for growth. Direction from State Government on balancing these priorities is needed.	adequately support projected growth with infrastructure, housing and jobs. Without a plan there are likely greater concerns that will occur for the shire regarding economic development and access to services.	projections and Council's obligations to address 15year of land supply. The Regional Growth Plan also notes Myrtleford and Brighth as "Key Sub-regional Settlements" without guidance on more localised approach. The LDS resolves this local element. DTP raised through stakeholder engagement the Regional Growth Plan will likely be reviewed in due course by State Government given 2014 date.
<u>Rural Land Strategy 2015</u> Community members have noted concern that the rezonings are in direct juxtaposition to the outcomes of the Rural Land Strategy siting protection of agriculture and farming in the region.	The Rural Land Strategy also reflects key areas to investigate rezoning due to relativities in agricultural value and clash of uses in more urbanised areas. Some of the areas that have been carried forward into the LDS that were also noted in the RLS include: - Investigate area to the north of Porepunkah for rezoning - Investigate expansion of industrial land to the northeast of Carter Holt Harvey	Council has worked to ensure findings and recommendations for rezonings through the Rural Land Strategy have been consistent with the Land Development Strategy. There is also need to review the RLS policy for 2023-2024 to address relevance and more specific land use issues that have been highlighted in certain farming areas.
Short Term Rental	Short Term Rental poses an issue for housing security and increases prices of rental accommodation for local residents who contribute to the economy.	Council has completed an Affordable Housing Action Plan to understand this problem. The issue of Short Term rental (STR) is an advocacy issue with State Government. STR needs to be better defined under the Victorian Planning Scheme initially for better local capacity to implement policy to govern this appropriately at a local planning level. This is reflected in the LDS Implementation Plan.

Issue	Review	Outcome
Community members have raised that at some point growth is unsustainable and townships cannot continue to grow.	In Bright the question of capacity is correct with minimal capacity for further growth beyond infill. Based on constraints the township is largely at capacity in terms of greenfield development. Other areas however have been assessed based on constraints and there is potential to accommodate housing and employment land in these areas. Consideration for infrastructure and services needs to be considered in future masterplanning.	DTP has reflected support of the LDS through continued engagement with the Hume Office and acknowledgement of the Implementation Plan including further work required and review of the strategy on a regular basis.

4.4 IMPLEMENTATION

The Community Reference Group voiced concern regarding the need to ensure the Land Development Strategy captures controls and protections that need to be in place prior to rezonings occurring. This should allow transparency with community on further work and guidance on timeframes for implementation of this Strategy and prioritisation of particular land parcels.

The Land Development Strategy Implementation Plan reflects further work program that requires completion prior to rezoning occurring.

The strategy and implementation framework needs to be **monitored and reviewed every 5 years** to ensure population forecast and employment need by township is accurate, and Council is delivery on its obligations regarding managing growth.

4.5 ALTERNATIVE PROPERTIES

A number of sites were raised by landowners and community at community reference group as options that should be reviewed for further investigation. Key sites noted below and key considerations that may implicate the viability of these options.

Location (Use)	Constraints/Resolution
Lower River Road (Industrial)	Currently in a proposed Floodway and Land Subject to Inundation, which is not a preferable location for new development. This is a key challenge for much of the Farming zone in Myrtleford and Gapsted that will require further review and Rural Land Strategy.
Mount Buffalo Road near round about (Residential)	This area was considered in the assessment. However this location is less favourable for growth due to potential to block views to Mount Buffalo detracting from The locations nominated in Porepunkah have also already been highlighted through the Rural land Strategy for growth (2015) and would also allow for more organic growth of the existing township and development pattern. This would allow for Structure Planning
Scrap Yard, Myrtleford (Industrial)	This area is deemed not appropriate for industrial given flooding overlay.
Buffalo River Road (Residential)	As Rural Living and Farm Zone in this area, these locations will be revisited with the Rural Land Strategy.

4.6 LANDOWNER ENGAGEMENT

4.6.1 Key Questions

Why are the areas so large compared to growth projections?

The areas nominated in the first Draft LDS document (Nov 2022) are areas in which we could grow based on constraints outlined within each township. These have now all be refined and rationalised based on further regional data and community input. This will be reflected in the updated Land Development Strategy Framework Plans.

Will there be forced acquisition of our land if the area is rezoned?

There is no intention that the Land Development Strategy will result in acquisition given the land use is not for public use but for industrial and general residential use. The Land Development Strategy identifies the preferred areas of growth with the expectation that the rezonings will then be land owner or proponent lead once these locations have been identified, and further work program is progressed including Structure Planning.

Will Council rezone land despite a lack of landowner support?

For development to be realised there is a reality that needs to be considered in the likelihood of land owners developing their property for the intended use. However, given Land Owners can shift on a regular basis we cannot be lead independently by landowner sentiment, particularly due to the unique constraints within the Alpine Shire. A balanced approach to landowner, community feedback and necessity to plan for projected population density is important. The strategy will also be **reviewed every five years to re-evaluate the pace and need for particular rezonings** to ensure projections align with actuality.

What is the impact of Windfall gains tax on properties?

From June 2023 Windfall Gains Tax applies to land that is subject to a government rezoning resulting in a value uplift to the land of more than \$100,000. It is advised to review the [State](#)

[Revenue Office](#) to reflect possible implications of Windfall Gains tax should rezoning result in an uplift to property values. Again given these rezoning will be proponent lead

Why can't pine plantation land be used instead?

Due to the nature of the long-term lease arrangement and the stringent contracts with State Government it is not a realistic outcome to rezone areas that hold such a long-term standing arrangement. Council has engaged with DTP on this issue through

Can you consider other land sites that will not impact (quarry, Lower River road, sale yards, Mount Buffalo Road etc)?

Council and specialist consultants have highlighted the key areas for growth based on detailed constraints mapping. These areas are the few locations that can be considered for development based on bushfire, flooding as well as consideration for preferred location based on infrastructure and amenity capacity. Areas that have been proposed by landowners and community members have been reviewed again against the same framework.

What is the impact on rates?

Rates are dictated by the Capital Improved Value of your property, this is assessed external to Council by the Valuer-General Victoria. As such where rezoning results in an increase in the Capital Improved Value of the property this will also implicate rates. If you want to review how this may apply to your property, please refer the [Calculation of Rates](#) council page.

Acronyms & Definitions

ASC	Alpine Shire Council
CFA	Country Fire Authority
NECMA	North East Catchment Management Authority
NEW	North East Water

DTP	Department of Transport and Planning