

Alpine Shire Land Development Strategy: Future Directions Paper

Community Consultation Report

Prepared for Alpine Shire Council

October 2022





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Acknowledgement

Alpine Shire Council acknowledges the Dhudhuroa, Gunai-Kurnai, Taungurung, Waywurru and Jaithmathang as the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of the Alpine Shire. We pay our respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	6
1.1	Project context and purpose.....	6
1.2	Project process	6
1.3	Community consultation process	7
2.	Profile of Alpine Shire in 2021.....	8
3.	The broader context	10
3.1	Drivers of change.....	10
3.2	Policy overview	11
4.	The local context.....	13
4.1	Environmental values and landscape character.....	13
4.2	Natural hazards.....	14
4.3	Heritage 16	
4.4	Transport accessibility	17
5.	Future need for housing	18
5.1	Forecast housing need.....	18
5.2	Land supply for housing.....	19
6.	Future jobs and employment.....	21

6.1	Employment forecast.....	21
6.2	Land supply for employment	23
7.	Where can growth go?	24
7.1	Overview of opportunities and constraints.....	24
7.2	Planning Policy Regarding Environmental Risk.....	25
7.3	The constraints mapping process and urban suitability.....	25
8.	Future development options	27
8.1	Supporting infill development	27
8.2	Incentivising development of areas zoned for urban uses.....	29
8.4	Greenfield development.....	30
9.	Key Findings.....	33
9.1	Overall findings	33
9.2	Findings for key settlements.....	35
10.	Implementation of the LDS.....	38
10.1	LDS Implementation	38
10.2	Partner organisations.....	39
11.	Questions for the community	40

1. Introduction

Alpine Shire Council is preparing the Alpine Shire Land Development Strategy (LDS). The LDS will help to plan for and guide future population and employment growth and change in the municipality to 2041.

1.1 Project context and purpose

Alpine Shire's population is growing, and its demographic profile is shifting. The broader economy is moving towards service-based and knowledge-intensive sectors, and the impacts of climate change are increasingly being felt. The global COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted established population and employment trends, with uncertainty remaining.

While change is inevitable, it is important that it is managed in a way that ensures the ongoing health and prosperity of existing communities, and preserves Alpine Shire's valued historic, cultural, and natural living landscape for future generations. This includes having a clear plan for where people will live, where they will access services, and how the local economy will prosper.

Alpine Shire Council has committed to preparing the Alpine Land Development Strategy to guide growth and change in the municipality to 2041

The purpose of the LDS is to:

- Facilitate orderly development of urban land uses in appropriate locations.
- Protect areas of agricultural productivity and environmental significance and sensitivity, and areas subject to natural hazards.
- Enable change that appropriately responds to the valued character and qualities that distinguish each of the municipality's townships and settlements.

1.2 Project process

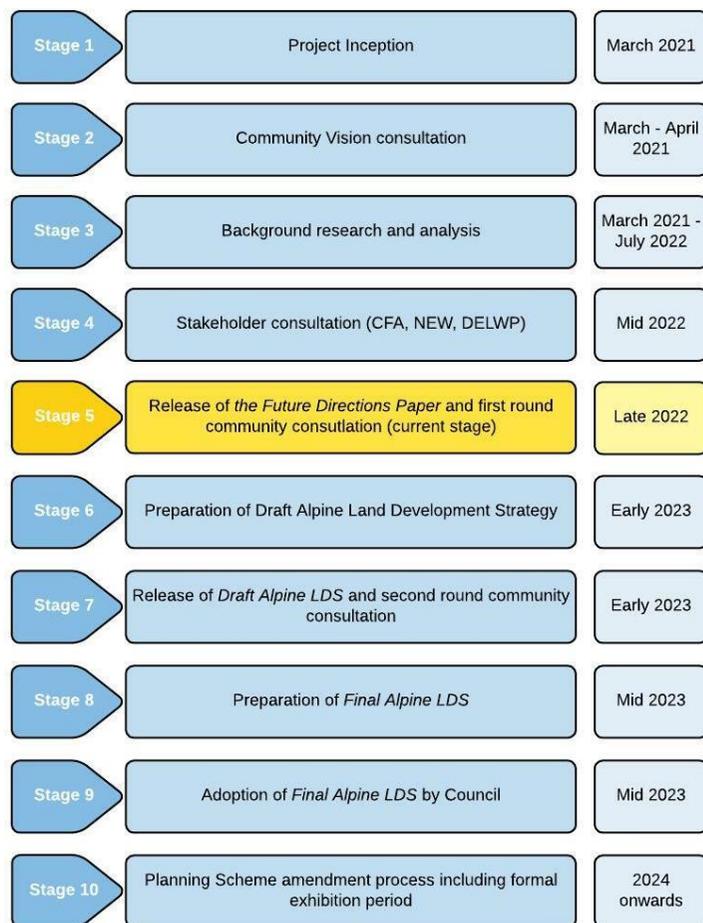
This project is a significant undertaking for the municipality and will be completed over several stages. An overview of the project process is shown in Figure 1.

The project commenced in March 2021. Since this time council has been undertaking detailed background research:

- Population and employment trends and forecasts
- Estimates for future demand for housing and employment land.
- Environmental hazards, natural values and urban development constraints
- Town character and heritage
- Infrastructure and transport networks
- Supply of residential and employment land

This report presents a summary of this research and discusses potential options for managing growth over the long term.

FIGURE 1: PROJECT PROCESS



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022

1.3 Community consultation process

Council is keen for the community to share ideas and provide feedback on the Alpine Shire LDS as it is being prepared.

The project has been staged to allow two opportunities for people with an interest in the future development of the Shire to learn about the project and to provide feedback and input.

The first stage of community consultation is to review this **Future Directions Paper: Community Consultation Report**. Submissions received through this consultation process will inform development of the **draft Alpine Land Development Strategy (LDS)**. The draft LDS will be made available for a further round of community consultation.

Once the LDS is finalised and adopted by Council, it will be implemented via an amendment to the Alpine Planning Scheme. The planning scheme amendment process includes a period of public exhibition, providing an additional opportunity for comment and submissions.

An overview of key consultation questions and ways to provide feedback are provided in Section 11 of this report.

Community input to the Community Vision consultation process undertaken in March 2021 has been considered in the preparation of this report.

2. Profile of Alpine Shire in 2021

Alpine Shire is located in Victoria's picturesque alpine region, in North East Victoria.

The municipality is a desirable location for residents and visitors alike due to its proximity to snowfields and mountains, a wide range of food and wine outlets, and myriad of recreational activities including hiking, camping, fishing, mountain biking and snow sports.

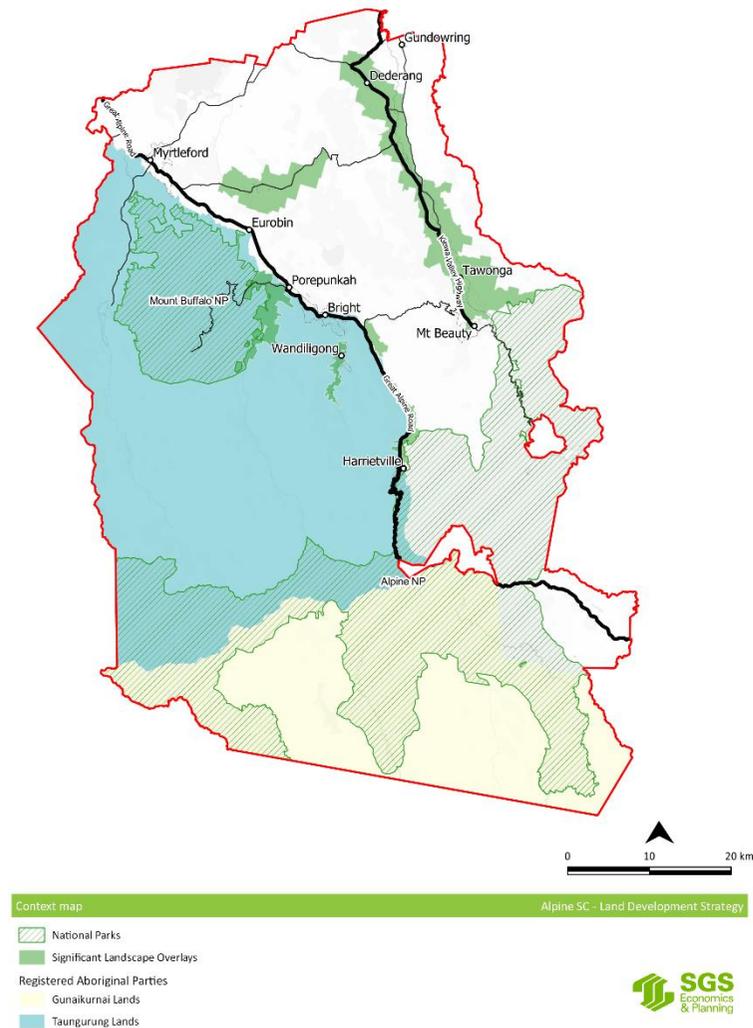
The Alpine Shire is approximately 300 kilometres north-east of Melbourne and 70 kilometres south of Albury-Wodonga, located within the North East Victoria Region and Hume sub-region.

The Shire's main towns are Bright, Myrtleford and Mount Beauty with further settlements at Harrietville, Porepunkah, Dederang and Tawonga, amongst others.

The Shire covers 4,790 square kilometres, with approximately 92 percent of land declared public land, containing parts of the Alpine National Park and Mount Buffalo National Park. The designated alpine resorts of Falls Creek and Mount Hotham are located entirely within the Shire boundary (although not managed by local government).

The Alpine Shire is situated on Dhudhuroa, Gunaikurnai, Taungurung, Waywurru and Yaitmathang Country (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: LOCAL CONTEXT



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022

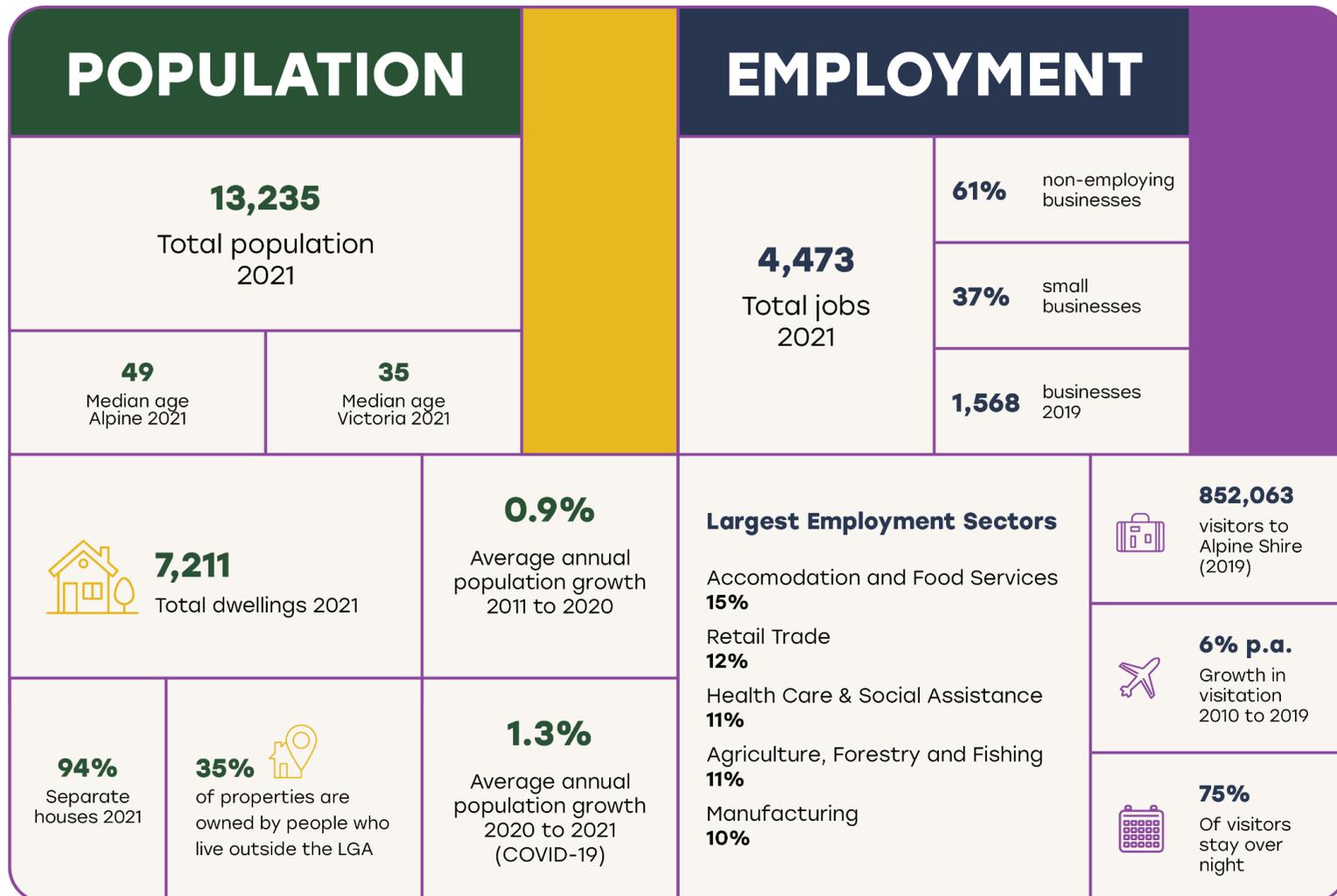


FIGURE 3: 2021 SNAPSHOT

3. The broader context

Land use planning in Alpine Shire is influenced by broader population and economic trends, and state government policy.

3.1 Drivers of change



In March 2020, the **COVID-19 pandemic put the world in a state of economic uncertainty** as social distancing restrictions shut down large parts of the economy. Economic recovery in Victoria has been setback by the emergence of new COVID-19 strains. The state economy has recovered rapidly, however key employment sectors in Alpine – hospitality and tourism – were significantly impacted by social distancing and stay-at-home orders.



The **COVID-19 pandemic stalled Australia’s population growth** and impacted population movement. Capital cities saw a downturn in population while regional areas continued to grow. In 2018-2019, 9,900 people moved to Regional Victoria, which increased to 15,200 in 2020-21.¹



Australia’s **population is ageing**, and the proportion of people aged over 65 is increasing. In Alpine Shire, the median age is 49, which is high compared to the Victorian average of 37, and retirees made up 16 percent of the population in 2021.



Housing affordability is recognised as a state-wide issue that requires increasing choice in housing type, tenure, and cost to support diverse communities. Alpine Shire also recognises issues of housing availability and affordability within the LGA.



There is increasing tension between **short-term and long-term accommodation**, where an increasing number of homes are leased for short-term rental accommodation on platforms such as Airbnb. The increase in the cost of residential accommodation particularly impacts key workers.



Climate change is one of humanity’s greatest challenges. Globally, temperatures are rising, and extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severe. Climate change will result in greater fire danger, more extreme heat days, long term drought, and more frequent incidence of flooding. In response to climate change, Australia has a target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and this is supported by a range of state and Federal government policies.

¹ SGS Economics and Planning, (2022), *New data demonstrates how Australia’s population growth is responding to the pandemic*. Accessed April 2022 at URL:

<https://www.sgsep.com.au/publications/insights/new-data-demonstrates-how-australias-population-growth-is-responding-to-the-pandemic>



Global economic trends are driving **shifts in the structure of the national and state economies**. In particular, the economy is continuing to shift towards creative and population-led sectors and away from traditional industries, such as manufacturing.



The **forestry and agricultural sectors** are key industries in the Alpine Shire, the latter of which is driven by sheep, grains, beef, and dairy cattle output.² Across Australia, the output for sheep and cattle remain high, driven by export demand and there is a trend towards larger farm size and concentration of agricultural output on larger livestock businesses.



Tourism is a significant and growing industry in Australia, with strong growth in international visitation. Domestic overnight trips have been increasing since 2013. Alpine Shire is the highest performing municipality within the High-Country Region, both in visitation and total visitor expenditure.



In recent years, there has been a **trend towards remote working**, which has attracted new residents to Alpine Shire who are able to work remotely, either part-time or full-time. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated remote working trends, particularly for professionals and those in some service sectors.

3.2 Policy overview

State and regional planning policy set the direction and provide background for local government to prepare plans at the local level, in Alpine Shire this includes:

- **The *Planning Policy Framework (PPF)*** outlines state strategy and policy directions for land use planning. The PPF establishes a direction for local government to prepare plans at the local level, such as the *Alpine Planning Scheme*. Key objectives include ensuring sufficient supply of residential and employment land, promoting sustainable growth and development, protecting and conserve biodiversity, minimising the impacts of natural hazards and climate change, and protecting natural resources.
- The ***Hume Regional Growth Plan (2014)*** highlights that most growth in the region will be directed into Wangaratta and Benalla, as larger service centres. Bright is identified as a ‘moderate growth’ location. The Plan identifies regional issues, many of which affect the Alpine Shire: climate change, the need for residential, commercial and industrial land, protection of agricultural industries, transport and community connectivity, environmental protection, natural hazard management and economic diversification.
- The ***Hume Regional Adaption Snapshot (2018)*** reviews the regional impacts of climate change and existing adaptation projects and strategies, to identify any gaps in climate change adaptation projects. The analysis identifies over 160 climate action projects currently or recently implemented in Hume, focusing on renewable energy, community resilience, climate

² Alpine Shire Council (2021) Economic Development Strategy.

modelling and risk assessments, water cycle management, biodiversity, agriculture, and improving emergency management and preparedness.

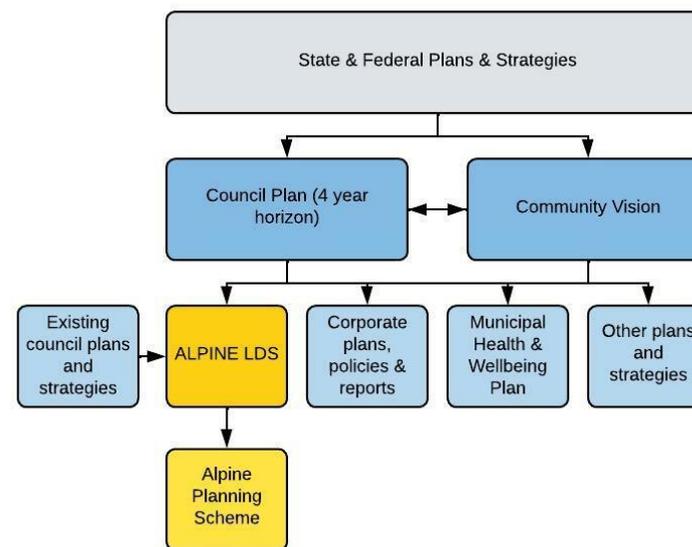
- **Climate Ready Hume (2015)** assesses the potential impacts of climate change across the Hume region, noting that the region has already started to experience the impacts of climate change through warmer and drier weather trends. The assessment reveals key sectors in Alpine Shire that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including Alpine Shire’s tourism industry, especially snow sports, which will face significant challenges because of the warming climate.
- **Hume Bushfire Management Strategy (2020)** assesses the fuel and bushfire management for the Hume Region and provides useful background detail on bushfire risk.

Local plans and strategies

Local plans and strategies have been reviewed to understand key elements of Alpine Shire’s local economy, settlement hierarchy and other key planning directions that are relevant to planning for urban land in the Shire, including:

- The *Economic Development Strategy (2021)*
- The *Municipal Emergency Management Plan (2021-2024)*
- The *Upper Ovens Flood Study (2021)*
- The *Rural Land Use Strategy (2015)*
- The *Myrtleford Resilience Strategy (2019)*
- The *Alpine Shire Climate Action Plan (2021)*
- The *Alpine Shire Planning Scheme Review (2021)*

FIGURE 4: POLICY HIERARCHY



4. The local context

Accommodating growth in Alpine requires consideration of the unique natural and cultural features of the Shire including environmental values, landscape character, natural hazards, heritage, neighbourhood character and transport accessibility.

4.1 Environmental values and landscape character

Containing much of Victoria's alpine country, Alpine Shire's meandering rivers and dramatic views provide a picturesque location. Public land makes up 92 percent of Alpine Shire, in areas identified as State and National Parks, State Forests and Nature Reserves, including part of the Alpine National Park and the Mount Buffalo National Park. The remaining 8 percent of land consists of towns, villages and farming land in the major river valleys: Ovens, Buffalo, Buckland and Kiewa valleys.

Located in Victoria's High Country, Alpine Shire contains over 100 named mountains and boasts the highest and second-highest mountains in Victoria, Mount Bogong and Mount Feathertop, located in the Alpine National Park. The region's mountains are home to some of Victoria's major snow and ski resorts including Falls Creek, Mt Hotham, Mt Buller, Mt Stirling, Lake Mountain and Mt Baw Baw. These landscape features provide a picturesque and iconic scenery that is of environmental and cultural significance to residents in Alpine Shire and the broader Victorian community.

Alpine Shire contains significant rivers including the Kiewa, Ovens, Buffalo and Buckland. The Ovens and Kiewa rivers and their tributaries are important wildlife corridors. Alpine Shire is home to many flora and fauna species, some of which are classified as critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable.

Alpine forms part of a declared water-supply catchment that supplies water to both the North and East Gippsland regions for domestic use and ultimately contribute to the Murray Darling System.

The Alpine Shire Planning Scheme recognises the potentially damaging impact of urban expansion and aims to avoid impacts of land use and development on important areas of biodiversity landscape character.



4.2 Natural hazards

The impacts of climate change pose a significant threat to the health, wellbeing, and liveability of our natural environment, people, and communities. An important principle underpinning the preparation of the Land Development Strategy is to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities and prioritise protection of human life.

Bushfire

Over the past 20 years, Alpine Shire has suffered the devastating effects of bushfires on their community and economy. The bushfires of 2019-20 caused significant damage to agricultural and residential land, property, lives, and the local economy.

Council has undertaken extensive bushfire mapping and a landscape bushfire risk assessment of Mt Beauty, Myrtleford, Tawonga, Tawonga South, Wandiligong and Porepunkah to identify the level of bushfire risk. Harrietville was not included in the assessment as it was considered as not having potential for further urban rezoning due its high-risk location.

This bushfire mapping completed for Council defines the boundary between areas above and below BAL 12.5 which is the cut off for areas that can be considered for higher intensity urban use.

Flooding

Flooding in Alpine Shire is often caused by heavy rainfall causing a breach of the Ovens and Kiewa Rivers. The flooding is felt most severely in the town of Myrtleford and surrounding areas due to its location on and adjacent to the Ovens River floodplain.

North East Catchment Management Authority (NECMA) has undertaken flood modelling and mapping of the Upper Ovens River

Valley with regard to Climate Change scenarios. The mapping of the upper Ovens River has now available to Council and identifies areas that are subject to dangerous flooding (absolute constraint) and nuisance flooding (discretionary constraint). There is no such flood modelling available for the Kiewa Valley at present. However, flooding is a less significant issue in the Kiewa Valley due to most existing and potential urban development being established away from areas of significant flood risk

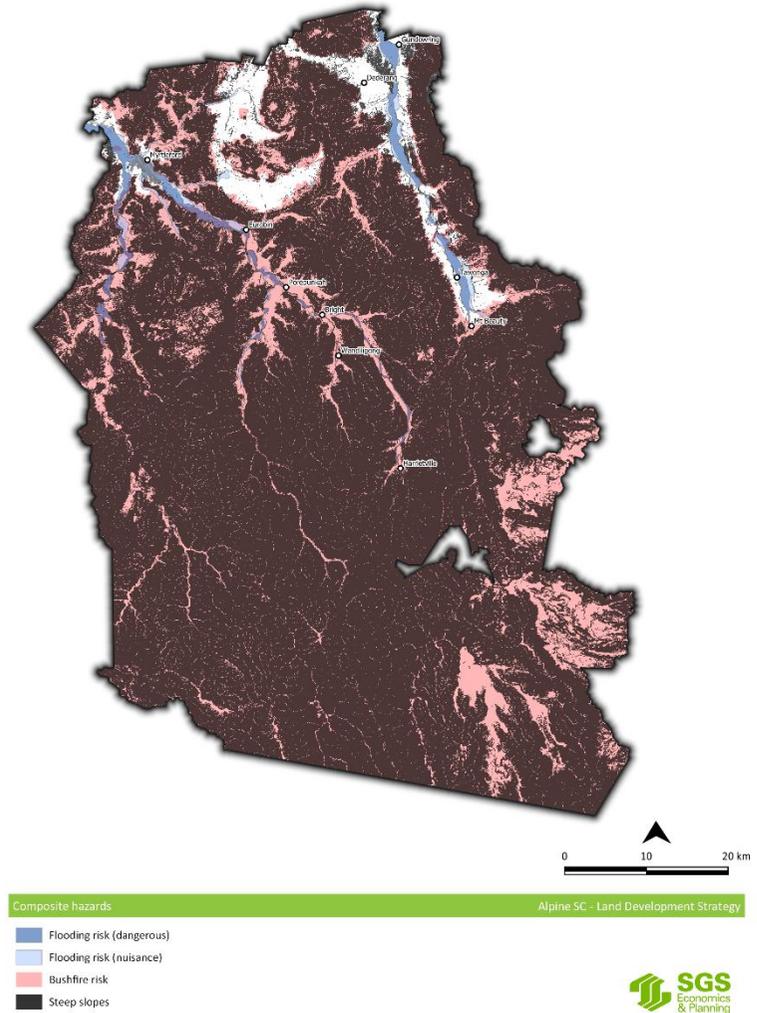
Whilst it is preferred that areas subject to all types of flooding be excluded from development, in some cases engineering works to a subdivision development can reduce the areas subject to nuisance flooding.



Slope

Excessive slopes make the provision of infrastructure and construction of buildings prohibitively expensive or unfeasible. Where the slopes coincide with unstable soils development can be unsafe due to landslip and erosion. Development on steep slopes can also impact landscape values. The *Alpine Shire Planning Scheme* indicates that residential development should not be located on land with a slope greater than 20 percent.

FIGURE 5: NATURAL HAZARDS, ALPINE SHIRE



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022

4.3 Heritage

Aboriginal cultural heritage

Both the Taungurung Country Plan and the GLaWAC Whole of Country Plan note that there exists extensive cultural heritage on Country, including art sites, rock art, natural resources, flora and fauna, birthing trees, scar trees, burial sites, waterholes, our rivers and waterways and post colonisation massacre sites and missions. However, both plans acknowledge the significant amount of cultural heritage has been damaged, destroyed, removed or lost. Detailed cultural mapping is required to identify and protect cultural heritage sites.

Areas of 'cultural heritage sensitivity' include registered Aboriginal cultural heritage places, as well as landforms and land categories that are generally regarded as more likely to contain Aboriginal cultural heritage. These include land within 200 metres of named waterways and land within 50 metres of registered Aboriginal cultural heritage places.



Heritage in the built form

Many places, natural areas and buildings hold heritage significance across the Alpine Shire LGA. The heritage significance of several places and features within the Shire have been recognised through registration on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) or through the application of the Heritage Overlay in the Alpine Shire Planning Scheme.



Town character

The character of Alpine's built environment varies across the municipality. Documenting neighbourhood character helps in forming an understanding of built form challenges and opportunities within the municipality. It is important to have a reference for the feel of a place, influenced by its buildings and street networks, to ensure that new development in Alpine feels like it belongs, reflecting local values and features.

4.4 Transport accessibility

Alpine Shire is reliant on access to larger regional centres (primarily Wangaratta and Albury-Wodonga) for a range of higher order services, education, and employment. Private vehicles are predominately used for travel to these key destinations. However, our towns are relatively compact and walkable, and despite a lack of pedestrian facilities in some places, a high proportion of residents and visitors use walking and bike riding for transport and recreation. The Shire's shared path and rail trail network provides important transport and recreational links between communities.

Limited public transport services and reliance on key routes, including the Great Alpine Road and Kiewa Valley Highway, result in limited accessibility for many members of the community who don't or can't drive. Bus services provide access two to three times per day between Wangaratta and Bright, and Mount Beauty and Wodonga. Private coach services provide access to the alpine resorts during winter season. There are some limited community transport options available through Alpine Health for transport disadvantaged people needing to access health services in the Shire or nearby regional centres.

5. Future need for housing

While there remains some uncertainty about long-terms trends because of COVID-19, the population of Alpine Shire will continue to grow. More housing will be needed to accommodate this growth.

5.1 Forecast housing need

Demand for housing in Alpine is created by:

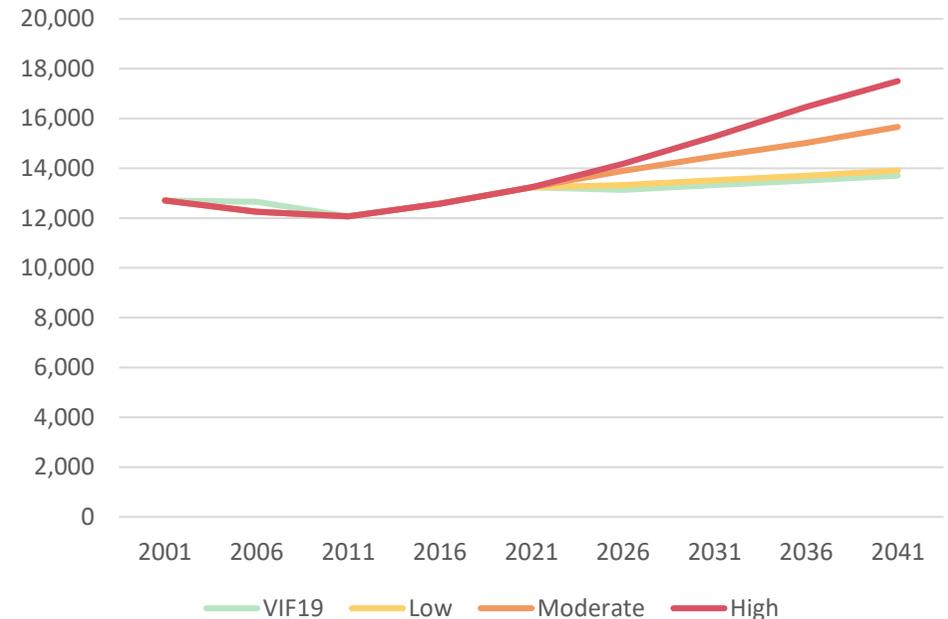
- New residents moving into the Shire permanently.
- Temporary and seasonal workers.
- Shifts in average family and household sizes.
- People who purchase homes in Alpine for investment purposes (for example, short stay accommodation).
- People who purchase homes in Alpine for leisure reasons (for example, holiday homes).

Historically, Victoria in Future projected population growth has been consistently lower than actual growth in regional areas. Growth will be higher again because of recent trends towards remote work and shifts in migration to regional towns. Due to this, SGS has adopted a higher growth rate than ABS and Victoria in Future to accommodate a more realistic projection of population growth for the Alpine Shire.

Taking all these factors into consideration it is expected that there will be need for an additional 2,523 houses across the Shire by 2041. Much of the future demand for housing is expected to be

concentrated in Bright- Porepunkah and Myrtleford, with lower (but still significant) demand forecast for the upper Kiewa Valley.

FIGURE 6: POPULATION GROWTH SCENARIOS



5.2 Land supply for housing

An assessment of the potential of all land currently zoned for residential uses to accommodate expected future housing growth was undertaken.

The results show that there is existing capacity for approximately 1,681 dwellings across the Shire, including:

- 738 dwellings in Bright-Porepunkah
- 455 dwellings in Myrtleford
- 352 dwellings in Mount Beauty- Tawonga South, and
- 136 across the remainder of the Shire.

The largest share of total capacity is available through large-scale subdivision of greenfield areas in Bright-Porepunkah and Myrtleford.

TABLE 1: HOUSING CAPACITY ASSESSMENT RESULTS BY TOWN

Town/ settlement	Large-scale subdivision	Infill	Vacant	Total
Bright-Porepunkah	571	130	37	738
Myrtleford	375	60	20	455
Mount Beauty-Tawonga South	293	45	14	352
Other	80	6	50	136
Total	1,319	241	121	1,681

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2022)

Comparison of expected demand and current capacity for each town is shown in Table 2. It shows that:

- There is an undersupply of land for residential development across Alpine Shire Council totally 842 dwellings
- The greatest share of future housing demand (50 per cent or 1,254 dwellings) will be in Bright-Porepunkah, where there is an anticipated capacity of 738.
- Mount Beauty and Tawonga South have capacity; however it is expected that as an established centre with existing infrastructure, some of the demand in other parts of the shire may be taken up here.
- There is expected to be a smaller shortfall in Myrtleford (32 dwellings) and other townships of -374.

TABLE 2: HOUSING DEMAND VS CAPACITY BY TOWN

Town	Expected share of housing growth	Total demand for housing 2041	Housing capacity estimate	Difference (demand vs capacity)
Bright-Porepunkah	50%	1,254	738	-516
Myrtleford	19%	487	455	-32
Mount Beauty-Tawonga South	11%	272	352	80
Other	20%	510	359	-374
Total	100.0%	2,523	1,681	(842)

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2022)

Housing capacity results by zone are shown in Table 3. It shows that the largest amount of available capacity is within the General Residential Zone (capacity for approximately 1,000 dwellings). There is capacity for approximately 300 in both the Low Density Residential Zone and Township Zone.

TABLE 3: HOUSING CAPACITY ASSESSMENT RESULTS BY ZONE

Town/ settlement	Large-scale subdivision	Infill	Vacant	Total
General Residential Zone	794	199	42	1,035
Low Density Residential Zone	263	0	46	309
Township Zone	260	27	30	317
Other	2	15	3	20
Total	1,319	241	121	1,681

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2022)

Based on past development activity, it is expected that 55 per cent of future demand for housing will be within the General residential zone (representing 1,300 dwellings), while roughly 15 per cent of demand will be directed towards the Low Density Residential and Township zoned areas (380 dwellings respectively). There are low to moderate shortfalls in supply across each of the zoning categories.

6. Future jobs and employment

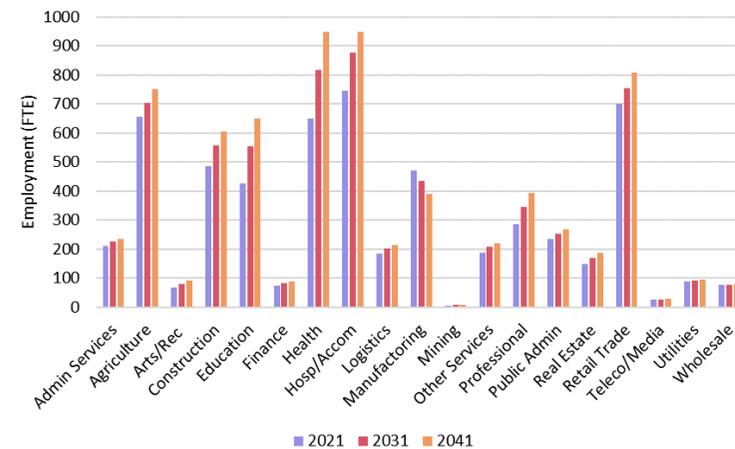
The number of jobs in Alpine Shire will also grow to 2041 and there is need to plan early to ensure there is enough employment land, particularly for town centres and key industrial areas.

6.1 Employment forecast

A key driver of employment land demand in Alpine Shire is municipal-wide jobs growth. The key sectors for employment growth in Alpine Shire are forecast to be:

- Health Care and Social Assistance (+334 jobs)
- Education and Training (+174 jobs)
- Construction (+154 jobs)
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (+126 jobs).
- Financial and insurance services (+18 jobs)
- Rental, hiring and real estate services (+42 jobs)
- Arts and Recreation Services (+30 jobs)
- Administrative and Support Services (+82 jobs)

FIGURE 7: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, ALPINE SHIRE, 2021-2041



Source: SALUP, 2019

Different types of employment have requirements for different types of land based on land use zoning, location, business size and transport networks, for example.

Five policy relevant Broad Land Use Categories (BLUC) relevant to land use planning were defined to help translate future jobs numbers to an estimate of requirements for employment land.

Council needs to ensure that there is an adequate supply of land for industrial activity and employment within centres. Employment in other locations, particularly rural areas, is likely to be less constrained and to require less monitoring or intervention.

TABLE 4: BROAD LAND USE CATEGORY AND RELEVANT ZONING, ALPINE SHIRE

Land use category	Definition
Local centre	The commercial core of larger towns, designated by the Commercial 1 Zone.
Industrial/services	Areas containing industrial activity, designated by Industrial 1 Zone, Industrial 2 Zone, and the Mixed Use Zone. While the Mixed Use zone allows a broad range of land uses (including residential), it generally supports light industrial and urban services uses in Alpine Shire.
Dispersed accommodation	Accommodation and hospitality uses in non-employment zones.
Large Town	All other urban areas outside of defined commercial and industrial zones. This category includes employment uses (other than hospitality and accommodation) such as schools, medical uses, health and recreation facilities, public administration uses etc.
Rural/other	All non-urban zoned areas.

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022

Table 5 outlines the additional floorspace needed per BLUC in the future.

Greatest demand is expected for Industrial/Services, while Local centres are expected to require 14,502 sqm of additional floorspace.

Large town is also expected to require a large amount of additional floorspace, but much of this would be expected to be provided in dispersed facilities like schools and hospitals meaning that this demand would not represent widespread and largescale change within towns.

Additional demand for Rural/Other is likely to be spread between existing smaller towns and agricultural uses, and so may represent minimal change in most rural areas and is not likely to require substantial planning work to be accommodated.

TABLE 5: FLOORSACE DEMAND BY INDUSTRY CATEGORY ACROSS ALPINE, FROM 2021 (SQM)

	2031	2041
Local centre	+8,259	+14,502
Industrial/services	+12,118	+19,756
Dispersed accommodation	+5,918	+9,125
Large town	+10,469	+18,288
Rural/other	+7,036	+12,851
Total	+43,801	+74,522

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022

6.2 Land supply for employment

Industrial/Service and Local Centre BLUC were the focus for assessment of land supply as they align with areas zoned for industrial and commercial activity, which are most constrained for employment growth.

Table 6 presents results, excluding land to the Myrtleford North industrial area (zoned INZ2), as this site accommodates the Mill and is not available for development for other industrial uses.

The results show that there is expected to be a shortfall in supply of approximately 21,968sqm of employment floorspace across the Shire to 2041. This includes an undersupply of around 8,406 sqm for Local Centres and 13,652 for Industrial/ Services areas.

There is greater potential for redevelopment and intensification of use in commercial centres due to the higher value of land uses in these locations. Therefore, future employment is likely to be absorbed within the extent of existing Commercial 1 Zone areas without the need to rezone further land.

A modest rezoning of land for industrial uses could be supported to accommodate the projected increase in industrial/Services floorspace.

Myrtleford has been identified as having the most potential for market lead industrial growth, however opportunity across each township will be addressed through further detailed assessment as required to determine suitable locations to satisfy forecast demand.

TABLE 6: NET EMPLOYMENT FLOORSPACE DEMAND VS CAPACITY, ALPINE SHIRE - 2041

Employment land type	Net demand (sqm)	Net capacity (sqm)	Gap (demand vs capacity)
Industrial/service	19,756	6,194	-13,562
Local centres	14,502	6,095	-8,406
Total	34,258	12,290	-21,968

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022

7. Where can growth go?

This section considers factors restricting development (constraints) and those that would support suitable urban development (opportunities). These factors can be physical in nature or based on policy, cost, environmental or cultural preferences. Evaluation of these factors results in a map of urban suitability that can be used to assist decision making about where growth should go.

7.1 Overview of opportunities and constraints

Taken as a whole, Alpine Shire is heavily constrained for urban development, the major factor being the high percentage of Crown Land in the Shire. Around 92 per cent of the Shire is public land, including the Mount Buffalo National Park, important elements of the Alpine National Park, and extensive forests.

The remaining 8 per cent of land is freehold and mostly occupies the valleys, which are subject to extensive flooding, and are also fringed by steeply sloping land subject to landslips and landslides and vulnerability to the impacts of bushfire in adjacent forests.

The Ovens Valley, where most the Shire's population is located, is particularly subject to these constraints due to its narrowness compared to other valleys in the Shire.

In addition, significant areas of the Ovens Valley floor are devoted to forestry or Crown Land that was dredged during the gold rush era.

This land is disturbed and of low value for agriculture but also suffers from geotechnical constraints, caused by the ground disturbance, that make urban development potentially problematic.

In contrast, the Kiewa Valley is a wider valley than the Upper Ovens Valley and was not subject to extensive dredging. However, it is subject to extensive flooding and has the highly valued vistas and views of the alpine landscape, including some of Victoria's highest peaks. It also has a very high value agricultural resource value.

The location of urban land in the Kiewa Valley has been largely determined by public policy, with the establishment of Mount Beauty itself being a government project in support of the Snowy Hydro Scheme. Planning policy for other urban land in the vicinity has been shaped by the identification of the Kiewa Valley as a National Trust Heritage Landscape and the inclusion of planning controls to protect the valley from development that may compromise views from (mainly) the western side of the valley. Hence development has occurred and is planned to occur on the western side of the Kiewa Valley Highway as one moves north from Mount Beauty.

Opportunities for development are those areas that are not subject to constraints, but also satisfy government policy regarding urban growth and are able to be provided with urban services and facilities in an affordable manner.

7.2 Planning Policy Regarding Environmental Risk

Much of the approach to determining constraints is guided by State Government planning policy as expressed in the Alpine Planning Scheme.

Clause 13 of the Alpine Planning Scheme Planning Policy Framework addresses Environmental Risk, and at an over-arching level supports **risk-based planning** as a fundamental approach to planning. It places particular emphasis on bushfire, flooding risk, and climate change, but also refers to soil degradation, landslip and erosion, floodplain management, landscape protection, and environmentally sensitive areas.

Local Policy addresses environmental risk at Clause 21.040-4 of the Alpine Planning scheme by providing further local context and detail applicable to Alpine Shire. It addresses risk associated with bushfire, flood, climate change, land slip, erosion, steep slopes, land contaminated by activities associated with mining, tobacco and timber production.

7.3 The constraints mapping process and urban suitability

A primary purpose of the Land Development Strategy is to identify areas with urban development potential to justify rezoning where zoned urban land supply is insufficient.

A decision was made at the outset of the study to exclude the towns of Dederang and Harrietville as neither of the towns is fully serviced, and Harrietville is considered inappropriate for expansion because of its extreme landscape bushfire risk exposure.

The identification of land most suitable of urban development involves determining the land most capable of fully serviced urban

development (usually adjacent to existing fully serviced urban areas) and least subject to urban development constraints.

Urban development and land use constraints can be classed into two broad categories:

- *Absolute constraints*, which are often technical in nature and are unable to be remediated or removed, and
- *Partial/discretionary constraints*, which impose a limitation on use or development, but which can be overcome either by appropriate engineering or policy decisions involving trading off less than perfect planning options against each other. Also, other “soft” constraints can be applied, such as visual impact evaluation, heritage values and the like.

An example of both *absolute* and *discretionary* constraints can be illustrated regarding flooding risk. Dangerous flooding risk is a policy driven *absolute* constraint whereby the State provisions of the Planning Scheme and other legislation require that land subject to *dangerous* flooding not be developed for urban purposes. However, lesser *nuisance* flooding risk can be addressed by planning for appropriate floor levels and engineering works. This is an example of a *discretionary* constraint, where there is a choice as to whether land with lesser flooding risk should be developed or not, and whilst a perfect outcome may not result, it could provide the best choice available.

The following constraints were mapped as part of the analysis:

Stage 1 Technical/Absolute Constraints

- Land over 12.5 BAL bushfire rating
- Flooding (dangerous)
- Flooding/drainage (nuisance)

- Excessive Slope
- Erosion risk/geotechnical
- Unserviceable land
- Crown Land
- National/State Parks
- Forest Reserves
- Poor/unsafe/expensive transport access
- Contaminated Land
- Environmental Buffers

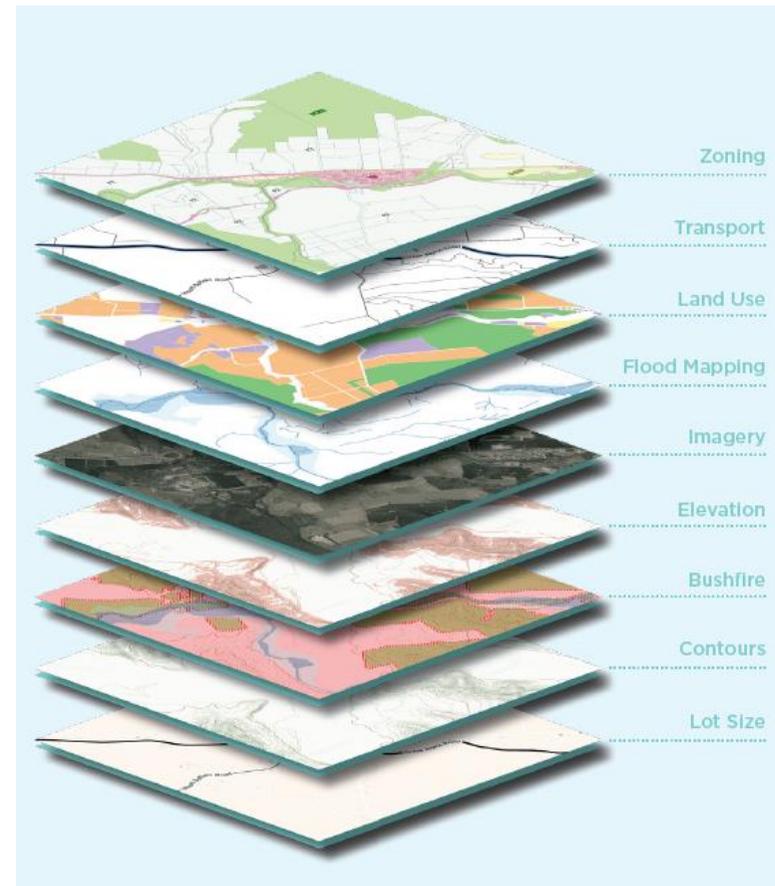
Stage 2 Partial/Discretionary Constraints

- Sufficiency of zoned land
- High Value Habitats/Ecological Significance
- Sites of cultural, heritage and scientific significance
- Landscape Significance
- Potable Water Catchments
- Aquifer recharge areas
- High quality agricultural land

Combining all of these factors into layers of a map provides clear guidance as to where it is appropriate to accommodate urban growth.

This analysis has informed discussion of development options in the following chapter.

FIGURE 8: LAND & POLICY CONSTRAINTS



8. Future development options

It is important that future population and housing growth are accommodated in a way that supports the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of the Shire.

There are a range of options for accommodating housing and employment growth in Alpine Shire to 2041. These are:

- Supporting realisation of more diverse housing types through **infill development** in established areas (i.e townhouses, dual occupancies, shop top housing).
- **Incentivising development** of existing urban zoned land holdings.
- Rezoning **greenfield land** for residential and employment uses.

Each of these development options presents a range of challenges and opportunities that must be considered and weighed by the community. The emphasis on each will likely vary by each town and settlement depending on the local context, constraints, and community preferences for development outcomes.

A summary of relevant opportunities and constraints for each of the Shire's major settlements (Bright, Porepunkah, Myrtleford, and the Kiewa Valley) is provided further below.

8.1 Supporting infill development

Infill relates to the use of land in established housing areas for further development. Townhouses and units, low scale apartment buildings, and shop-top housing are examples of infill development.

Infill can also occur in employment areas through intensification of commercial development (for example, single story shops and offices in the main street being re-developed for multi-story buildings).

Supporting infill development offers a range of benefits:

- Providing greater housing choices for the community in locations with good access to transport and services.
- Reducing the need to accommodate growth on the fringe of settlements through greenfield development and 'sprawl' (i.e rezoning farming land for urban uses).
- Making better use of and encouraging increased investment in existing infrastructure networks (such as footpaths, cycle networks, roads, reticulated services).
- Increasing the vibrancy and activity of settlements through a greater mix and density of uses and people.

Bright and Myrtleford offer the greatest potential for infill development as these towns are well serviced by transport networks, shops and other services, and community infrastructure.

There are several examples of infill development occurring in Bright and Myrtleford, typically in the form of dual-occupancy or villa units. Infill in areas within walkable access of town centres would best support diverse and sustainable housing outcomes.

In the past, infill development and intensification of low density areas has been modest, however could be advanced through actions such as:

- Policy guidance around preferred areas for infill development.
- Assessment of statutory planning processes to ensure there are no undue barriers to infill development.
- Illustration of a preferred layout and design for infill development that supports integration with the public realm.
- Promotion of pilot projects with landowners and developers, to identify Council’s preferred approach to infill development.

An important consideration for future infill development and medium density housing will be to ensure this type of development provides a high level of amenity for residents, with high quality buildings designed in a way that reflects the country town setting of Alpine Shire’s townships and landscape outcomes.

TABLE 7: INFILL DEVELOPMENT: SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Opportunities
<p>Infill development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supports housing diversity in well-serviced locations, making better use of existing infrastructure. ▪ Reduces the need to rezone greenfield land to accommodate growth. ▪ Increases the vibrancy and activity of settlements through an increased mix of uses and people. ▪ A municipal-wide Development Contributions Plan can assist in funding essential infrastructure. ▪ Bright and Myrtleford present are best placed to support infill development as these towns provide good access to services and infrastructure. ▪ Examples of infill development already occurring in Bright and Myrtleford, indicating market demand and development feasibility. ▪ Will provide for growth in a location that is otherwise constrained, particularly in Bright.
Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council has limited direct mechanisms to encourage infill development. It is largely reliant on the market to deliver. ▪ There is a need to ensure infill development contributes positively to the character of settlements. ▪ Increasing densities in established areas will require investment in infrastructure to ensure growth is appropriately supported. For example, there will be need to address drainage issues in Bright and Myrtleford to support higher density development, requiring considerable capital works expenditure.

8.2 Incentivising development of areas zoned for urban uses

It is a common phenomenon in many regional areas that available zoned, suitable and 'in sequence' land is withheld from development because of a range of factors, such as:

- Property management or investment aspirations of landowners.
- Active use of the land for other purposes (such as farming).
- Landowners seeking to maximise returns through progressive land sales ('drip feeding').
- Lack of knowledge about development potential.

Land withholding can result in ad-hoc development patterns, and the leap-frogging of development frontiers to areas that may not have the necessary support infrastructure in place.

There may be potential to incentive development in zoned areas to facilitate supply of dwellings and/ or employment floorspace, encourage consolidation of townships and better use existing infrastructure networks. Some examples of these measures may be:

- Development partnership opportunities with local and government.
- Variable rating initiatives.
- Promotion of development opportunities amongst landowners and developers.
- Increasing the number of active developers in the local market.

It will be useful to understand from the community in greater detail where zoned land is currently being withheld from the market, the reasons for this and potential options for bringing forward supply in appropriate locations.

TABLE 8: EXISTING ZONED AREAS: SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is potential to accommodate a large share of future growth in areas that are already zoned for urban uses. Bright has the largest potential to accommodate growth in existing zoned areas (450 dwellings), followed by Myrtleford (370 dwellings) and Kiewa Valley (300 dwellings). ▪ Incentivising development of urban land will reduce the need to accommodate growth through rezoning of greenfield land ('sprawl'). ▪ Development of urban zoned areas will make better use of existing infrastructure networks and reduce need for significant capital expenditure by council. ▪ A municipal-wide Development Contributions Plan can assist in funding essential infrastructure.
Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many areas zoned for urban uses are held in multiple ownerships, which can make co-ordination of development difficult. ▪ Responsibilities for delivery and funding of catalyst development infrastructure (roads, drainage etc.) can be unclear. ▪ Incentivising development of urban areas will require collaboration between council, landowners, and other stakeholders (such as state government).

8.4 Greenfield development

Future housing and employment growth may be accommodated through rezoning of greenfield land (land previously undeveloped for urban uses), however the following points should be considered:

- **State planning policy** promotes urban growth close to transport corridors and services, efficient use of infrastructure and protection of the state’s agricultural base by preserving productive farmland.
- **Local planning policy** supports consolidation of the Shire’s population in main towns and villages through increased development densities and a greater mix of uses.
- **Funding and provision of development infrastructure** (such as roads, drainage, footpaths etc.) are important for catalysing development in growth areas. However, responsibility for funding this essential infrastructure is not always clear.
- **Development staging:** a preferred development staging program will be required to ensure orderly development of new greenfield land in line with long term housing demand.

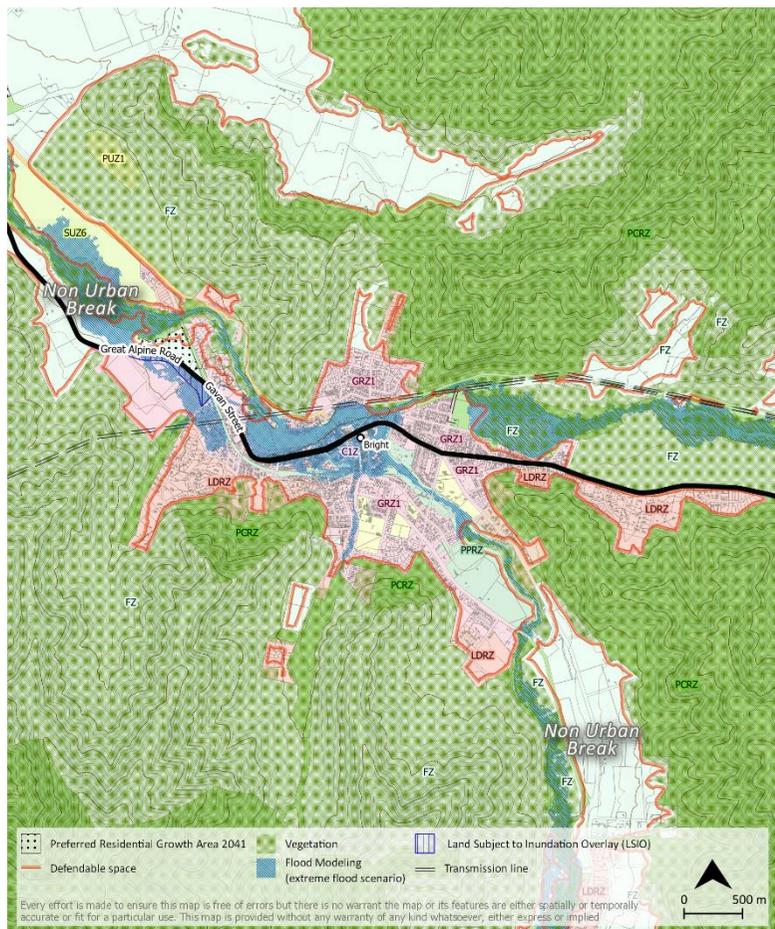
Several greenfield growth areas have been identified in Porepunkah, Myrtleford and Mouny Beauty for discussion with the community. These areas have been selected based on the suitability mapping process described in the previous chapter.

Preferred greenfield areas are shown in Figure 9 to 12.

TABLE 9: EXISTING ZONED AREAS: SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

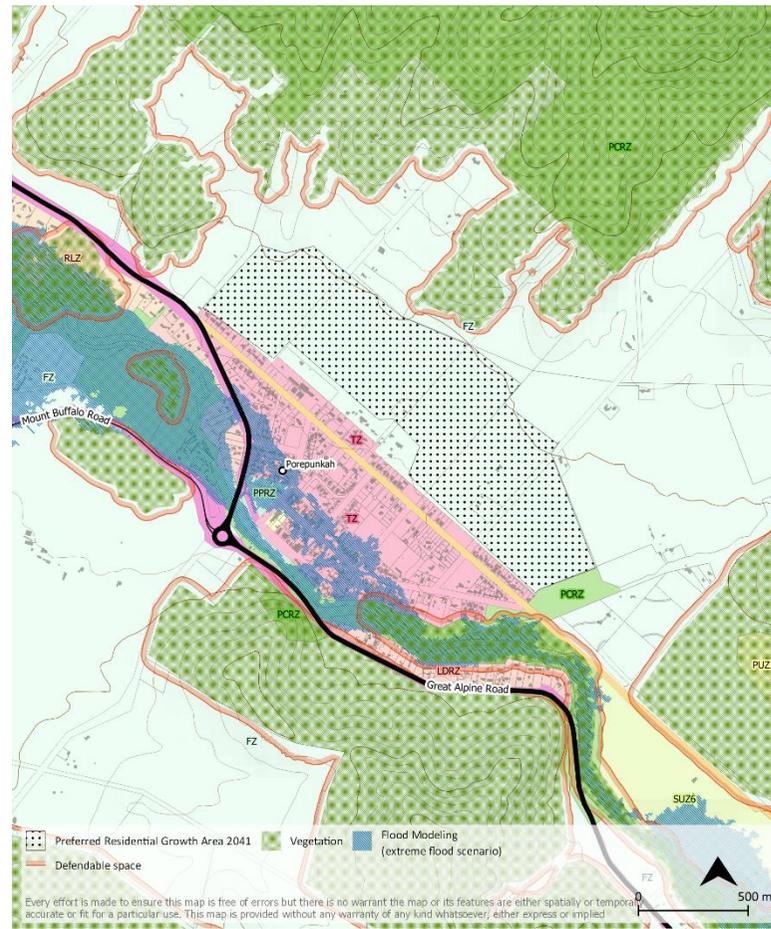
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greenfield development provides opportunity to accommodate projected future growth. ▪ There are fewer barriers to development of greenfield land once rezoned than other development options (infill development, incentivising development in existing zoned areas). ▪ A municipal-wide Development Contributions Plan can assist in funding essential infrastructure. ▪ There are opportunities for rezoning of greenfield land in Porepunkah, Myrtleford and Mount Beauty and the Kiewa Valley.
Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rezoning of non-urban land for urban development contributes to patterns of urban sprawl and does not support the consolidation of existing townships - an objective of state and local policy. ▪ There will be a need extend infrastructure networks to service new greenfield areas. The cost of this investment will be considerable for council, developers and other agencies (water authorities, telecommunications providers etc.). ▪ There are no opportunities for greenfield rezoning in Bright, where housing demand is expected to be greatest.

FIGURE 9: GREENFIELD AREAS - BRIGHT



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022

FIGURE 10: GREENFIELD AREAS - POREPUNKAH



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022

FIGURE 11: GREENFIELD AREAS - MYRTLEFORD



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022

FIGURE 12: GREENFIELD AREAS – MOUNT BEAUTY



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022

9. Key Findings

The following section provides a summary of the key findings of this paper for consideration by the community through consultation.

9.1 Overall findings

Growth and change to 2041

- The population of Alpine Shire is expected to grow by 4,300 over the next 20 years, at an average rate of 1.4 per cent per year under a high scenario.
- More housing will be needed to accommodate this growth. Analysis shows that there will be demand for 2,253 additional dwellings in the Shire to 2041
- The number of jobs in Alpine Shire will also grow, particularly in town centres and industrial areas. There is expected to be 1,300 additional jobs in the Shire by 2041, requiring 74,000sqm of additional employment floorspace.
- Accommodating population growth in the Shire is influenced by a range of broader trends: population ageing, declining household sizes, housing affordability, climate change, impacts of COVID-19, shifts in the structure of the economy, impacts of short term and holiday accommodation, and trends towards remote working,

Policy direction

- State government policy provides the overarching framework for managing population growth and change across the state. It requires that local governments plan to accommodate projected population growth over at least a 15 year period and provide clear direction on locations where growth should occur.
- Key objectives of state policy include promoting sustainable growth and development, protecting and conserve biodiversity, minimising the impacts of natural hazards and climate change, protecting natural resources, and facilitating housing to meet community needs.
- Bright is identified as a 'moderate growth' location in regional policy. Further direction is not provided for the region's smaller towns and settlements.
- Local policy supports sustainable development by encouraging the management of town boundaries, increasing housing diversity, addressing housing affordability, supporting emerging agricultural business, maintaining vibrant retail hubs, responding to climate change, and balancing development and conservation outcomes.

Constraints for growth

- Taken as a whole, Alpine Shire is heavily constrained for urban development, the major factor being the high percentage of Crown Land in the Shire. Around 92% of the Shire is public land, with only the remaining 8 per cent being freehold.
- Large areas of the Shire are unsuitable or unavailable for development due to absolute constraints (for example, flooding and bushfire risk, excessive slop, contamination and environmental buffers etc.).

- Other areas are subject to partial constraints where development may be possible but there are barriers which require remediation or removal.
- Land suitability mapping was undertaken to identify areas unavailable for development, potentially available for development, and those areas that are preferred for development.

Capacity to accommodate growth in zoned areas

- A capacity assessment was undertaken to identify how much potential there is in areas currently zoned for urban uses to accommodate forecast housing and employment growth. Areas subject to absolute constraints were excluded from this analysis.
- Overall, there is potential for 1,700 dwellings within existing towns and settlements, this includes capacity for 1,300 dwellings through further subdivision of under-developed areas, 121 vacant lots, and 240 infill dwellings (based on past infill development trends). The largest share of total capacity is available through large-scale subdivision of greenfield areas in Bright-Porepunkah and Myrtleford.
- This analysis shows that there is a shortfall of around 800 dwellings to meet population needs to 2041. The greatest share of future housing demand will be in Bright-Porepunkah, where there is an anticipated shortfall in capacity of 738. There is expected to be a smaller shortfall in Myrtleford is (62 dwellings) and Mount Beauty-Tawonga South (113 dwellings).
- There are key differences regarding the amount of land available for residential development in the Ovens and Kiewa Valleys. The Kiewa Valley has a significant supply of vacant Low Density Residential zoned land, however the amount of vacant General Residential zoned land available is very limited. The Ovens Valley has limited available vacant Low Density

Residential Land overall. Availability of vacant General Residential zoned land is variable between Myrtleford, Bright and Porepunkah.

- According to our analysis, there is expected to be shortfall of approximately 17,000sqm of floorspace in industrial and commercial zones to accommodate job growth to 2041.

Options for accommodating growth

- There are several options for accommodating growth in the Shire to 2041. These relate to:
 - Supporting realisation of more diverse housing types through **infill development** in established areas (i.e townhouses, dual occupancies, shop top housing).
 - **Incentivising development** of existing urban zoned land holdings.
 - Rezoning **greenfield land** for residential and employment uses.
- These options are not mutually exclusive (i.e council can pursue all options simultaneously); however, a range of trade-offs must be considered that relate to:
 - Potential to support growth within the extent of existing towns (i.e reducing sprawl).
 - Potential to support housing and employment diversity.
 - Infrastructure provision and funding to support growth.
 - Protection of settlement character.
 - The feasibility of development.
 - Ability of council to facilitate outcomes.

9.2 Findings for key settlements

Bright

- State and regional policy supports Bright as the main location for growth in the Shire. Bright will continue to function as the civic, administrative, and tourism centre, as well as providing services to Harrietville, Smoko, Freeburgh, Germantown, Porepunkah and Wandiligong.
- Bright has a significant amount of land zoned for urban development that has potential to accommodate growth through further subdivision. Barriers to development of this land are fragmented land ownership, active use of land for other purposes (for example, hobby farms), lack of awareness of development potential amongst landowners, property management and longer-term investment aspirations.
- There is potential to encourage development of smaller and more diverse housing in the established areas of Bright to provide more housing choice, reduce the need for rezoning productive farmland, and make better use of existing infrastructure.
- The process of densification is already happening under existing market conditions, and it is important that the implications of this trend on the character and infrastructure capacity of Bright are understood and managed.
- There are limited opportunities to rezone further land in Bright without compromising some of the key things that make Bright such an attractive place to live and visit.
- Investment in infrastructure, particularly drainage, will be required to support densification of Bright.

Myrtleford

- Myrtleford is the largest town in Alpine Shire, predominantly residential and characterized by scenic views. It will continue to be a prominent location for business and industry in the Shire and service hub for nearby communities in the Upper Ovens Valley.
- As in Bright, Myrtleford has a significant amount of land zoned for urban development that has potential to accommodate growth through further subdivision. Infill development has been occurring in Myrtleford, albeit to a lesser extent than in Bright.
- There are two potential greenfield areas for growth in Myrtleford which could accommodate housing or employment growth. However, both areas would require extensive feasibility investigations, and may require significant up-front infrastructure costs.
- There is a sufficient supply of industrial land in Myrtleford and this land represents the bulk of existing and potential industrial land in the Shire.
- The potential for higher density residential development in Myrtleford is complicated by drainage and flooding issues yet to be fully assessed.

Porepunkah

- There is significant potential for the urban growth of Porepunkah to the north-east. Specifically, the land north-east of Station Street has been identified as having potential to be rezoned, as well as continuing to develop existing subdivisions within the town.
- It is highly desirable, should a decision be made for Porepunkah to expand, that a fully detailed Structure Plan/Development Plan, setting out the full infrastructure requirements for the town and associated costs, preferred urban character, and a detailed proposed zoning plan with a defined town centre; be prepared prior to any rezoning.
- Growth in Porepunkah would require considerable investment in supporting infrastructure (such as drainage and footpaths) and development of a greater range of commercial and community services in the town centre.

Mount Beauty and Kiewa Valley

- There is limited potential for unconstrained growth in Mount Beauty and Tawonga South. All options involve some degree of constraint whereby certain community values may be compromised.
- The potential for urban consolidation and higher densities is constrained by:
 - The smaller lot sizes in large parts of the original Mount Beauty town settlement.
 - Lack of a flooding and drainage strategy indicating the capacity for urban consolidation.
- Flooding and drainage issues to the south side of the Kiewa Valley highway in the area already designated in the planning scheme for potential future urban need to be investigated before the land can be identified as suitable for urban development.
- Mount Beauty and Tawonga South have enough land supply based on current demand forecast; however, it is expected that as an established centre with existing infrastructure, some of the demand (~374 dwellings) in other parts of the shire may be taken up here.
- There is the potential for small incremental rezonings in some areas to be investigated, to accommodate this gap in land supply.
- There is a current proposal for a residential subdivision and rezoning of some 200 lots in Tawonga South. This proposal would fill in the current non-urban break between the northern and southern parts of Tawonga South. It is subject to extreme landscape bushfire risk and landscape impacts.

Other towns and settlements

- There is also a forecast for growth in areas outside the four key settlement areas. Wandiligong, Freeburgh, Harrietville, Dinner Plain, Eurobin and others have been areas of organic growth over previous years.
- These areas remain constrained, as they have higher bushfire risk, fewer sewer and water services and a town character that is reflective of their rural or special use zoning.

10. Implementation of the LDS

The LDS will present a suite of detailed objectives, strategies to guide land use and development outcomes over the next 20 years.

10.1 LDS Implementation

Each of the proposed objectives and strategies in the LDS will be supported by implementation actions, many of which will relate to updates to the Alpine Planning Scheme.

While the Planning Scheme is an important tool in guiding growth and change in the Shire, Council also has several other roles and levers in influencing land use and development outcomes. These are overviewed in Figure 13.

The Implementation Plan reflects Council’s potential role and influence in implementing actions, identify partner organisations, nominate priorities, and indicate timing.

Community Engagement of the Implementation Plan and LDS will allow for confirmation of the community’s preference for Council to take more active roles in executing findings and actions from the LDS. Review of the Implementation Plan will ensure ongoing alignment between Council budgets, resources, and funding opportunities.

FIGURE 13: COUNCIL’S ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING THE LDS



10.2 Partner organisations

Some actions identified in this Strategy may involve participation and collaboration with State, regional and local organisations to enable their realisation. These include but are not limited to the agencies listed below.

- Taungurung Land and Waters Council
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
- Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DJPR)
- Regional Development Victoria
- Environmental Protection Authority Victoria
- Department of Transport
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Goulburn Valley Water
- Goulburn Murray Water
- Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
- Various Alpine Shire Council departments
- Councils for adjoining local government areas (LGAs)
- Regional tertiary and other education providers.

11. Questions for the community

Council is undertaking an extensive community engagement program to test and refine the outputs of this project as it unfolds.

The discussion above has revealed that there are several development pathways available to accommodate population and employment growth in Alpine Shire to 2041. Council is seeking feedback from the community on the following questions:

Bright

- How can Bright successfully accommodate growth within the existing township area?
- What are the things that new housing in Bright needs to provide (e.g. accessibility, affordability, different housing types)?
- What do you value most about the character of Bright, and how can it best be protected as the town becomes more dense?
- What infrastructure would be needed to support ongoing infill development and densification in Bright?

Myrtleford

- Is the identified area to the west appropriate for accommodating industrial growth? Why or why not?
- Is the area identified to the north-west appropriate for accommodating residential growth? Why or why not?
- What do you value most about the character of Myrtleford, and how can it best be protected if the town expands?
- What are the things that new housing in Myrtleford needs to provide (e.g. accessibility, affordability, different housing types)?
- What infrastructure and services would be needed to support the growth of Myrtleford?

Porepunkah

- Is the identified area to the northeast appropriate for accommodating residential growth? Why or why not?
- What are the things that new housing in Porepunkah needs to provide (e.g. accessibility, affordability, different housing types)?
- What do you value most about the character of Porepunkah, and how can it best be protected if the town expands?
- What infrastructure and services would be needed to support the growth of Porepunkah?

Mount Beauty and Kiewa Valley

- Are the identified areas around Mount Beauty Tawonga South appropriate for accommodating residential growth? Why or why not?
- What do you value most about the character of the Upper Kiewa Valley, and how can it best be protected if the towns expand?
- What are the things that new housing in the upper Kiewa Valley needs to provide (e.g. accessibility, affordability, different housing types)?
- What new or improved infrastructure and services would be needed to support the growth in the Upper Kiewa Valley?

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