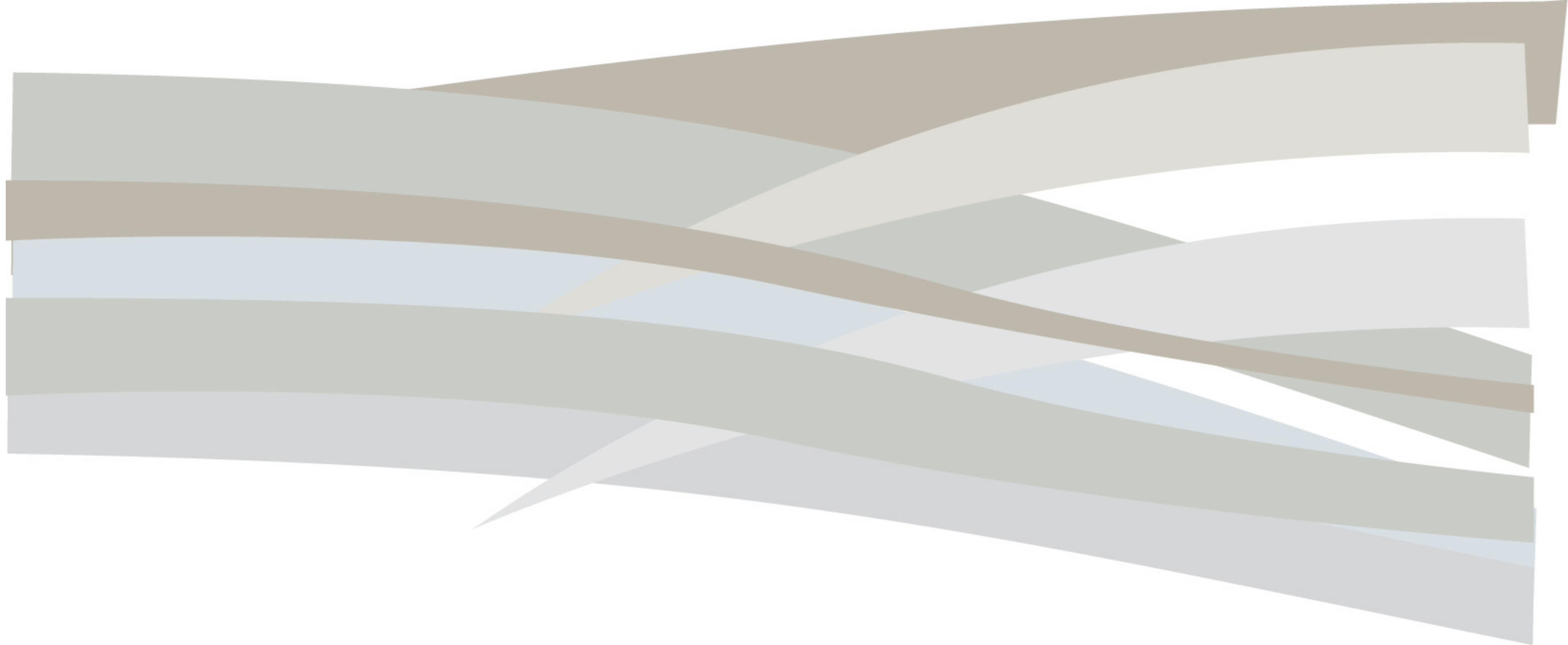


MELBOURNE @ 5 MILLION I NORTHERN INVESTIGATION AREA I FEBRUARY 2009



© City of Whittlesea 2009

This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission from the Manager, Strategic Planning and Design, City of Whittlesea, Locked Bag 1, Bundoora MDC 3083.

Disclaimer

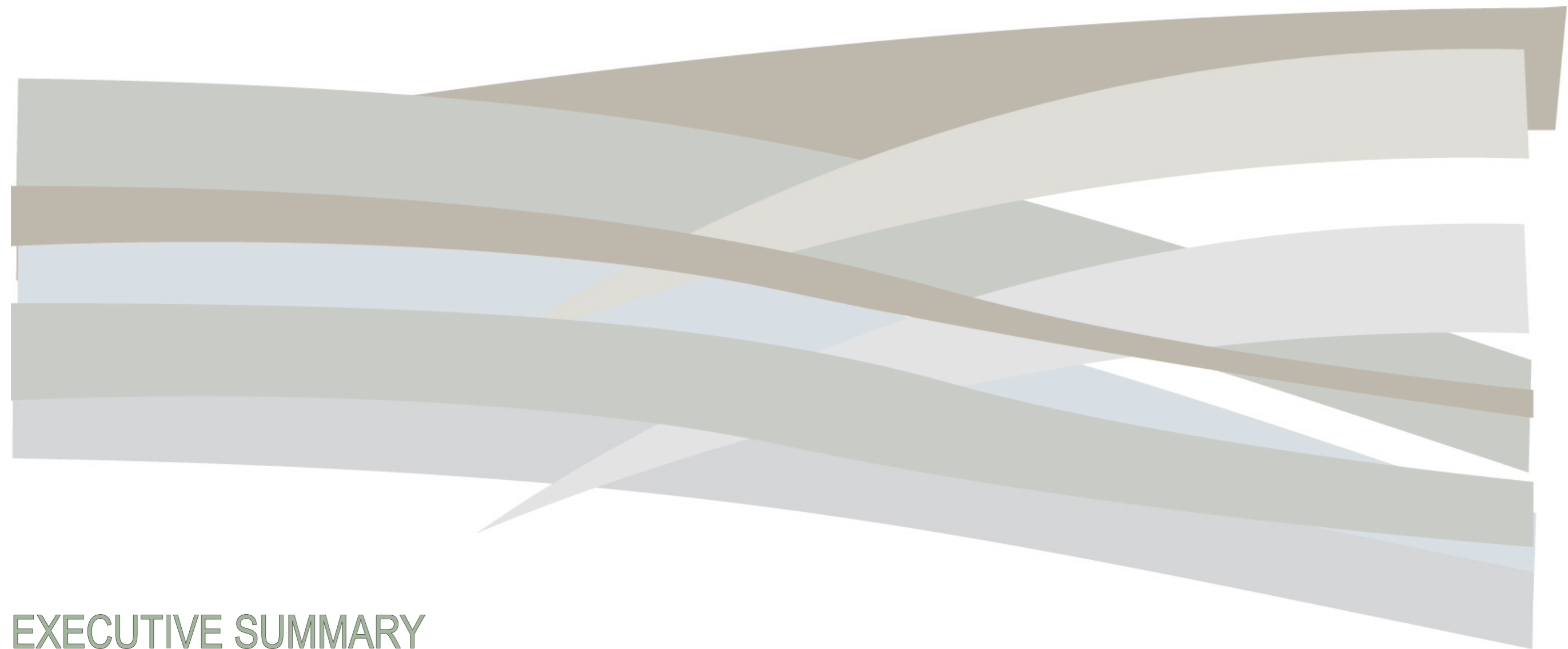
Any representation, statement, opinion or advice, expressed or implied in this publication is made in good faith but on the basis that the City of Whittlesea, its agents and employees are not liable (whether by reason of negligence, lack of care or otherwise) to any person for any damages or loss whatsoever which has occurred or may occur in relation to that person taking action in respect of any representation, statement, or advice referred to above.



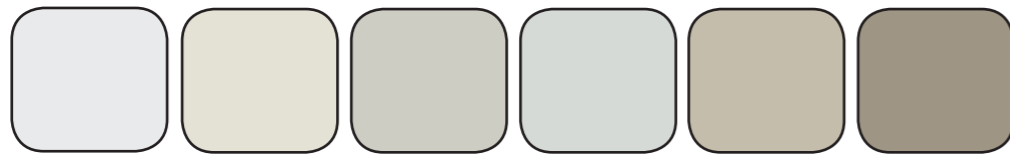


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	04
Introduction.....	06
State Government Context.....	10
Whittlesea Context.....	16
Current Strategic Planning Projects.....	22
Guiding Principles for New Growth.....	30
Site Conditions.....	36
Site Analysis.....	54
Potential Development Precincts.....	60
UGB Alignmnet.....	70
Key Issues.....	74
Conclusion.....	80



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This document is the first in a number of submissions by the City of Whittlesea to the Victorian State Government in response to the *Melbourne @ 5 Million* document (December 2008). Released as a revision to *Melbourne 2030, Melbourne @ 5 Million* designates an area to be investigated as possible locations for significant urban growth. This submission explores the approximate 11,000ha of land within the City of Whittlesea that is included in the investigation area, examining its capacity to accommodate the urban growth.

The ultimate purpose of this submission is to state the City of Whittlesea's position on the new Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), adopting a holistic approach to justify its decision on where it should be drawn.

Consistent with the Whittlesea Council's thorough method of decision making, this submission outlines the context of both the State Government and Whittlesea Council, including its current strategic planning projects, before conducting an examination of the site's conditions and an analysis of the area, and it's potential for a balanced and sustainable development outcome.

As a result of the City of Whittlesea's investigation, Council has identified five potential development precincts:

- Cooper Street
- Quarry Hills
- Wollert
- Donnybrook
- Beveridge

In the final chapter of this submission, Council's preferred UGB alignment is discussed. Council has identified that more land exists in the City of Whittlesea's investigation area than is required by DPCD. Key to this conclusion is the influence of the freight terminal to be located in the Beveridge Precinct, which effectively 'drags' development up to the northern-most point of the investigation area. In accepting this outcome, Council emphasises the principle that not all land within the UGB is equally developable.

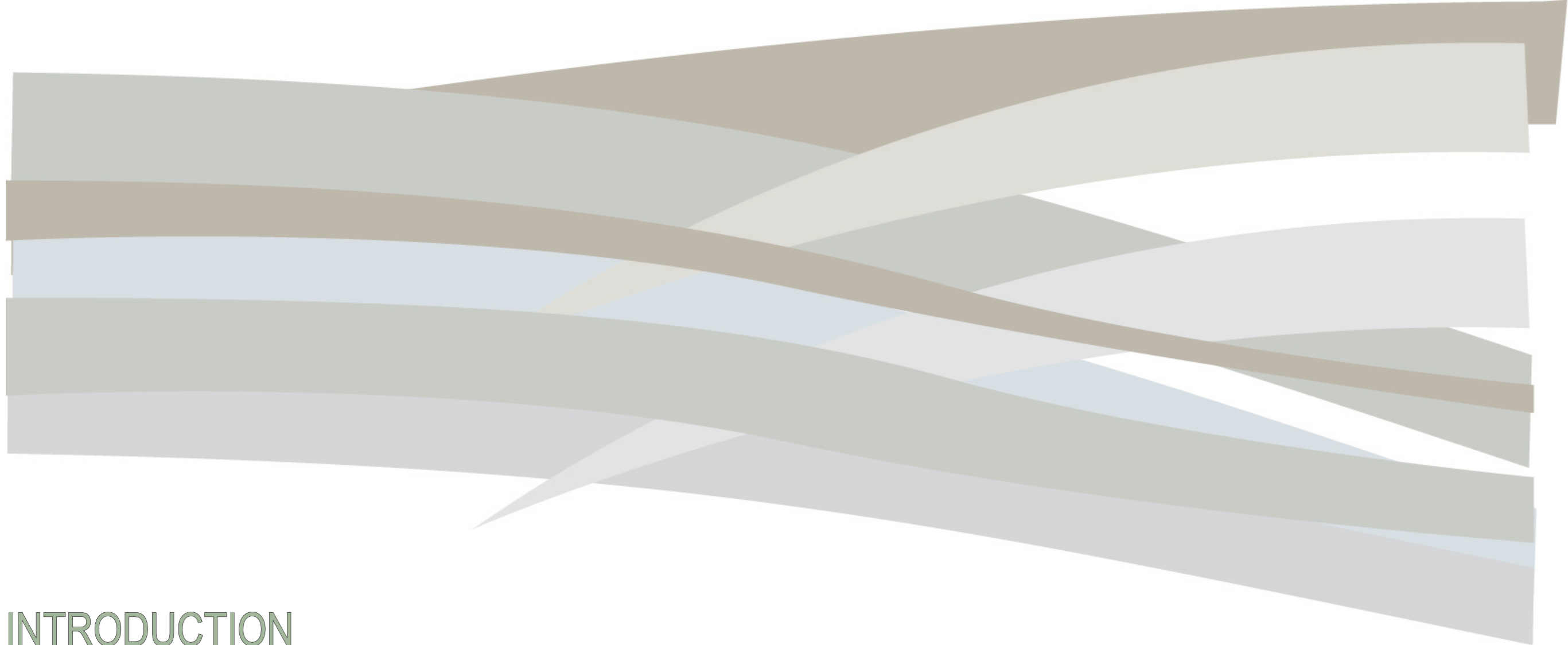
In order to ensure this principle is not undermined, and that the land within the new UGB is properly planned, a thorough and enforceable planning tools for development must be implemented. These include appropriate use of zones and a clear and enforceable framework plan. These tools will be essential in ensuring that the key issues identified by Council are addressed. These key issues include:

- How the sequence of development will be appropriately managed;
- The need to provide infrastructure, particularly the Epping North rail line, to existing, planned and proposed communities;
- How the underlying principles of Council's current strategic plans, including the Quarry Hills Project, will be maintained throughout this process.

The emphasis of this submission is that the *Melbourne @ 5 Million* investigation offers the opportunity to make a step-change to urban planning and development practices; to achieve genuinely sustainable, affordable and liveable communities in Melbourne's new growth areas. Council has emphasised the need for a set of guiding principles to be developed, that will achieve these ambitions, common to State Government and the City of Whittlesea. These guiding principles are outlined in the submission, and it is important to note that none of the principles outlined are new concepts. They are concepts that are embodied in many Council and State Government policies, including *Melbourne 2030*. Notwithstanding, none of the principles are being implemented in any genuine way in growth area development in Melbourne at present. The new growth areas are an opportunity change tis situation and deliver something that achieves the common goals we have set for ourselves.

Whittlesea understands this is the first of many discussion papers in relation to the UGB investigation, but encourages dialogue with the State Government so that a conclusion can be reached that satisfies the needs and ideals of both parties.





INTRODUCTION

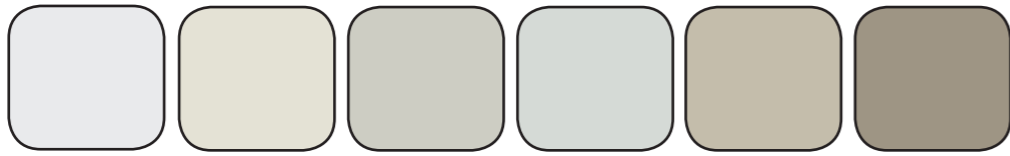


Figure 01: Northern UGB Investigation Area

Overview

The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) released an update to *Melbourne 2030*, titled *Melbourne @ 5 Million*, in December 2008. In this document, an investigation area for significant expansion to Melbourne's growth areas was identified, which incorporated substantial land within Melbourne's west (Wyndham, Melton), north (Hume, Mitchell and Whittlesea) and a small portion within the east (Casey). Approximately 11,000 ha of land within the City of Whittlesea has been identified within this investigation area.

Following release of *Melbourne @ 5 Million*, and the investigation areas, DPCD have called for submissions from affected Councils and landholders with regard to defining an appropriate draft realignment of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

This document forms the City of Whittlesea's first submission to *Melbourne @ 5 Million*. It discusses Council's position with regard to an expansion to greenfield development in Whittlesea, and outlines guiding principles for any development that does occur. The submission also provides a preferred UGB alignment, based on a broad level site analysis

Additional submissions will be made throughout the process on other components of the document. The City of Whittlesea has committed to growth area planning excellence in the past and will continue to do so in the future. As such, the City of Whittlesea notes that it intends to continue to act as Planning Authority for any new growth areas within this municipality arising from this process.





T H I S P A G E H A S B E E N P U R P O S E L Y L E F T B L A N K



Structure of the Submission

The ultimate intention of this submission is to define Council's preferred UGB alignment for the Whittlesea component of the northern investigation area. However, defining a UGB involves a number of complex and interrelated components and features that must be carefully considered before the boundary of urban growth can be defined. These include:

- The currently released state government documents (*Melbourne @ 5 Million*, *The Victorian Transport Plan*, *Freight Futures* and *Melbourne 2030*)
- Council's current strategic planning work and policies
- Council's position in relation to the form of growth (guiding principles)
- A broad level site assessment and analysis
- Consideration of any key issues or knowledge

As such, the structure of this document broadly follows the outline listed above and is summarised in Figure 02. This figure demonstrates that each level of analysis flows from the previous, and therefore it can be seen that no one level should be privileged above the other; that they must be considered holistically.

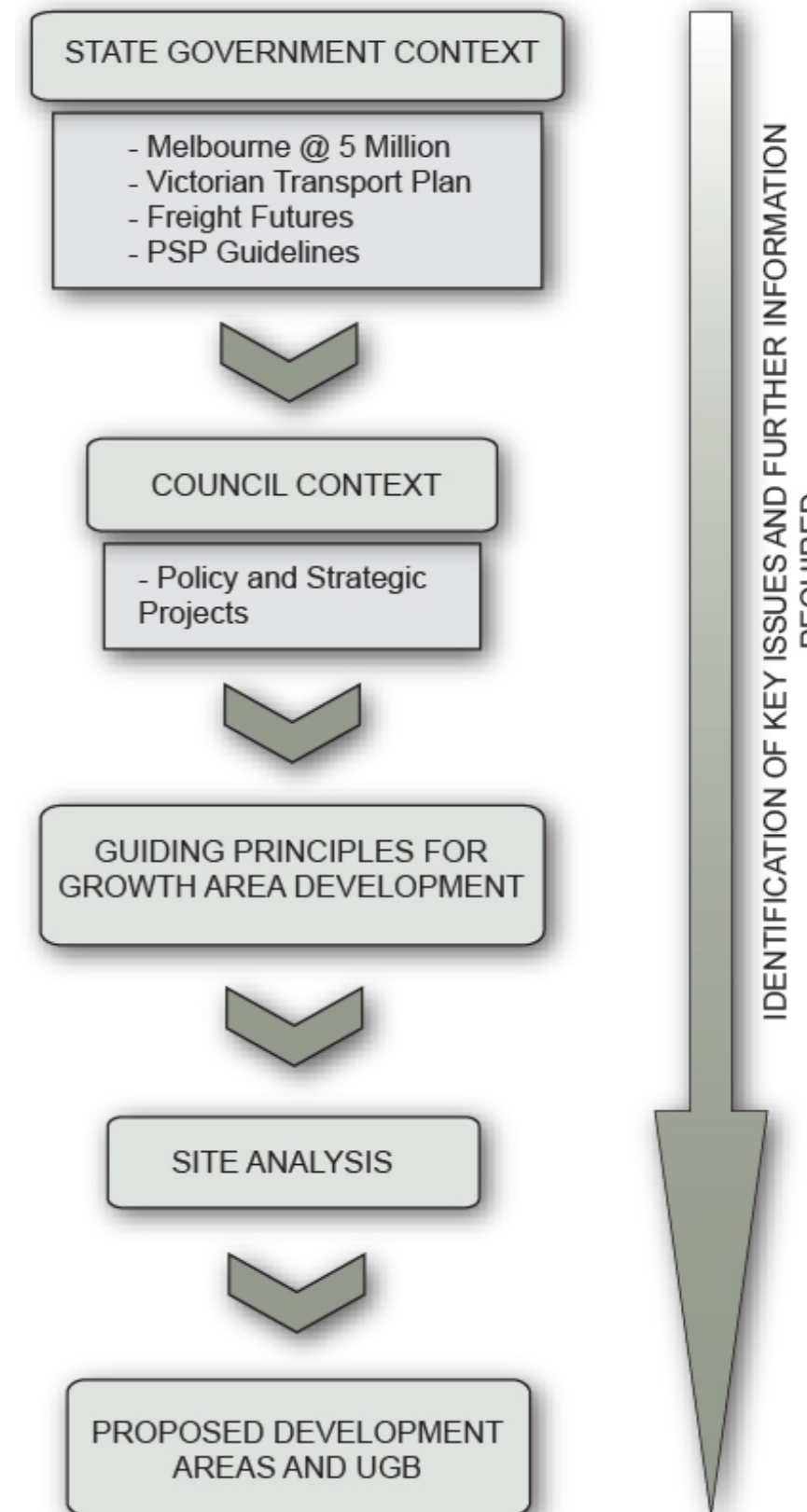
To this end, the purpose of this document is not merely to define the preferred UGB, but to also present Council's initial position in relation to the *Melbourne @ 5 Million* document, and to identify the key principles that Council intends as guiding principles for urban development in the new growth areas.

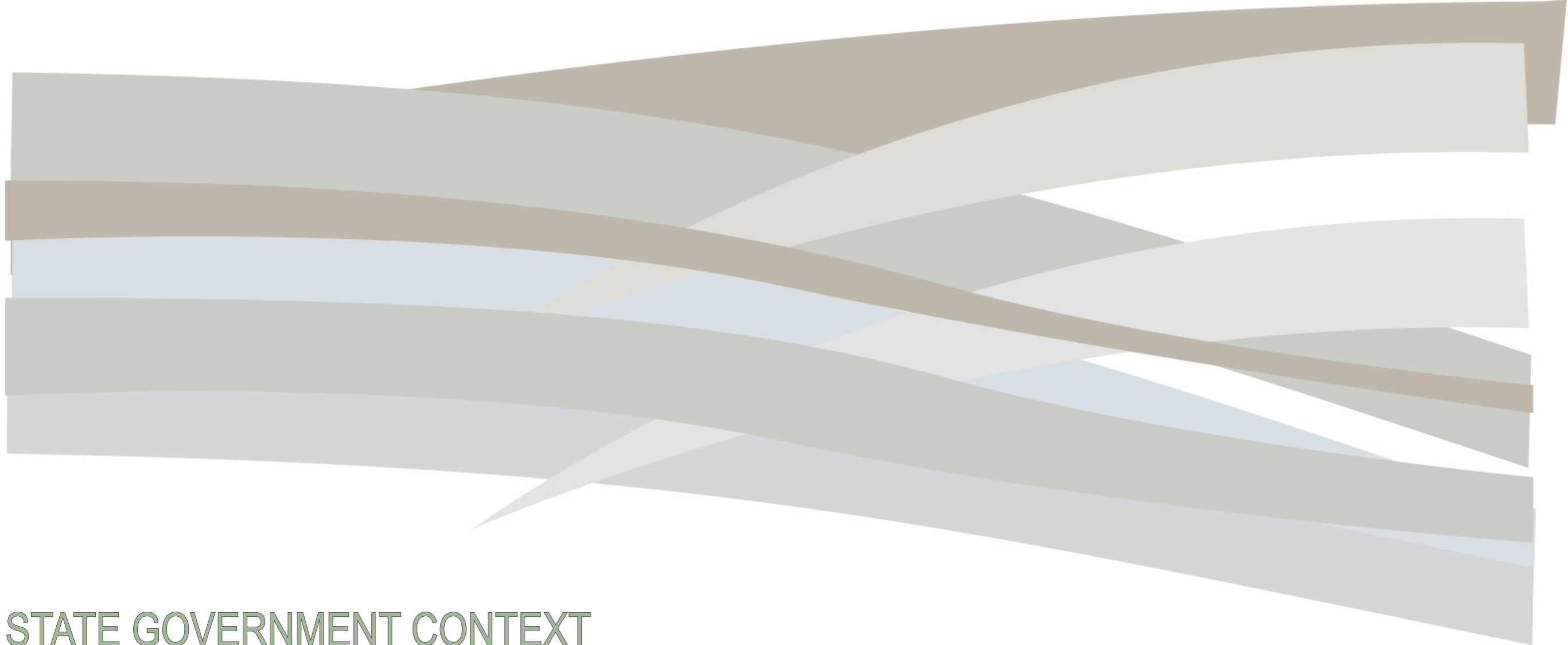
A key component of this submission is to outline work that Council was already in the process of undertaking on the fringes of the existing UGB, this includes the Cooper Street West area and the Quarry Hills Investigation area. In particular, it has set a precedent with regard to UGB expansion. It is a key priority of Council to ensure that the Quarry Hills Investigation is not compromised by the UGB Investigation, and that the principles established through previous the amendment to the UGB in Whittlesea are maintained.

It is noted that Council's submission is limited to a desk top analysis based on data readily available at Council, and does not include any detailed "ground truthing". It is also noted that much data, particularly in relation to the extent of features of environmental significance, is not comprehensive enough to provide accurate figures. As such, all figures provided in this submission are approximate only, and must be further refined via detailed and targeted technical assessment and site analysis.

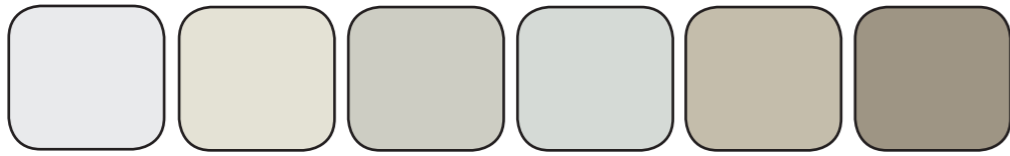
Of principal importance is that this document represents Council's submission in relation to the UGB Investigation areas, and the call for submissions regarding a preferred UGB alignment. This submission does not represent Council's sole submission in relation to the *Melbourne @ 5 Million* document. Further submissions regarding additional features of *Melbourne @ 5 Million*, including proposed Central Activities Districts, proposed employment corridors and infrastructure contribution reforms will be provided in due course.

Figure 02: Structure of Submission





STATE GOVERNMENT CONTEXT



Introduction

This chapter of the submission provides a brief summary of recently released State government documents that are relevant to the study of the investigation area. These documents are:

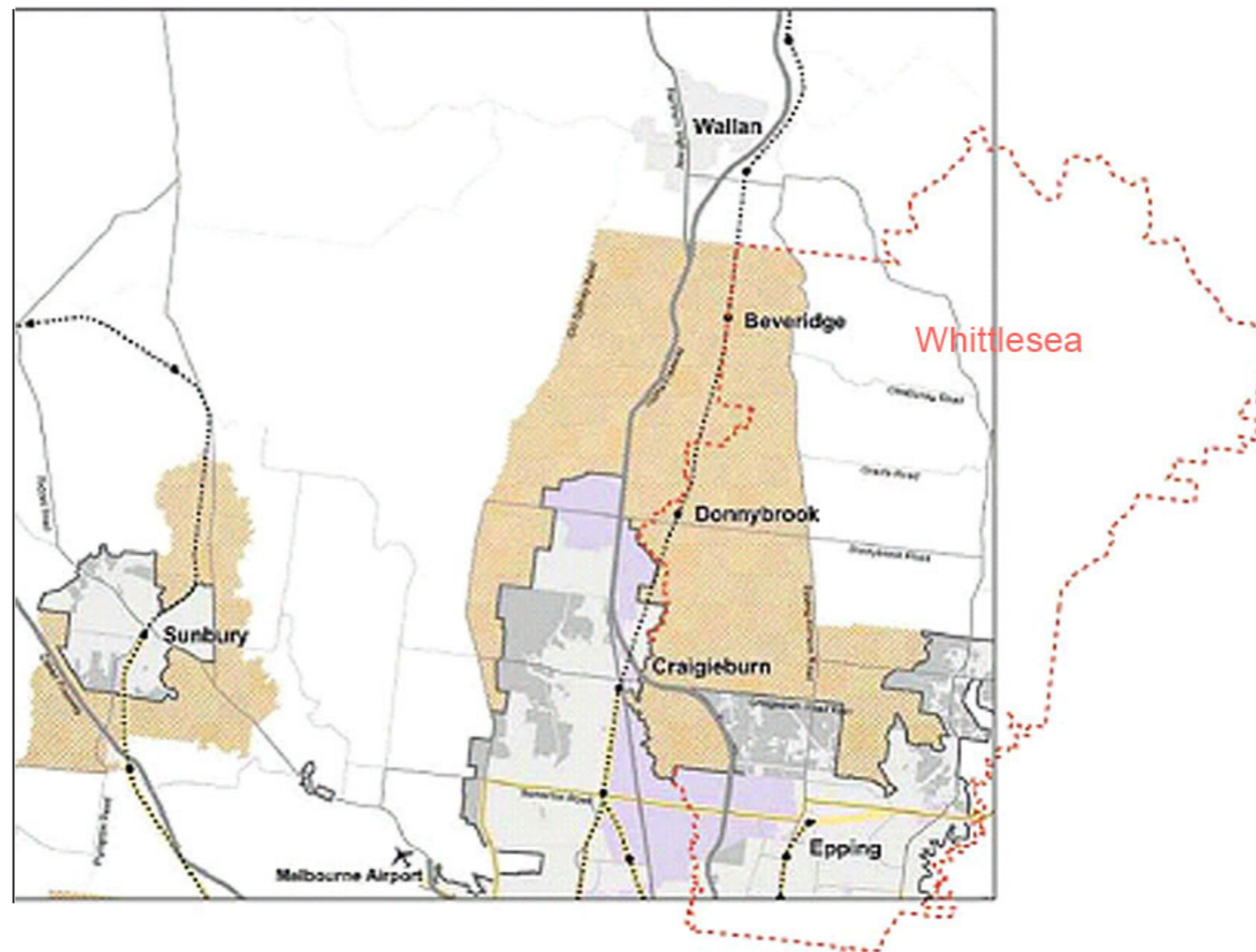
- Melbourne @ 5 Million
- Victorian Transport Plan
- Freight Futures
- Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines

Each document is briefly summarised in terms of its relevance to this submission, and a broad level discussion of Whittlesea's response to these documents is provided at the end. However, it is noted that this chapter does not represent Whittlesea's sole submission to these documents.

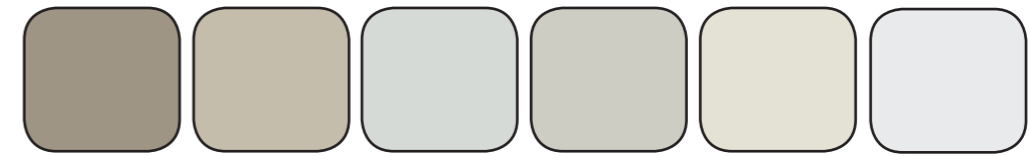
Melbourne 2030 and Melbourne @ 5 Million

It is understood that *Melbourne @ 5 Million*, released in December 2008, has been prepared as an update to *Melbourne 2030*. *Melbourne 2030* seeks urban development within a defined urban growth boundary, maximising opportunities in Activity Centres for a wider range of uses including employment, retail, housing and leisure that are well served by public transport. The goal, which Council supports in principle, is to achieve a more compact city to promote sustainable development and developing areas that are best able to be supplied with appropriate infrastructure, including public transport access and services, whilst protecting the green wedges from inappropriate development.

Figure 03: Northern Investigation Area



STATE GOVERNMENT CONTEXT



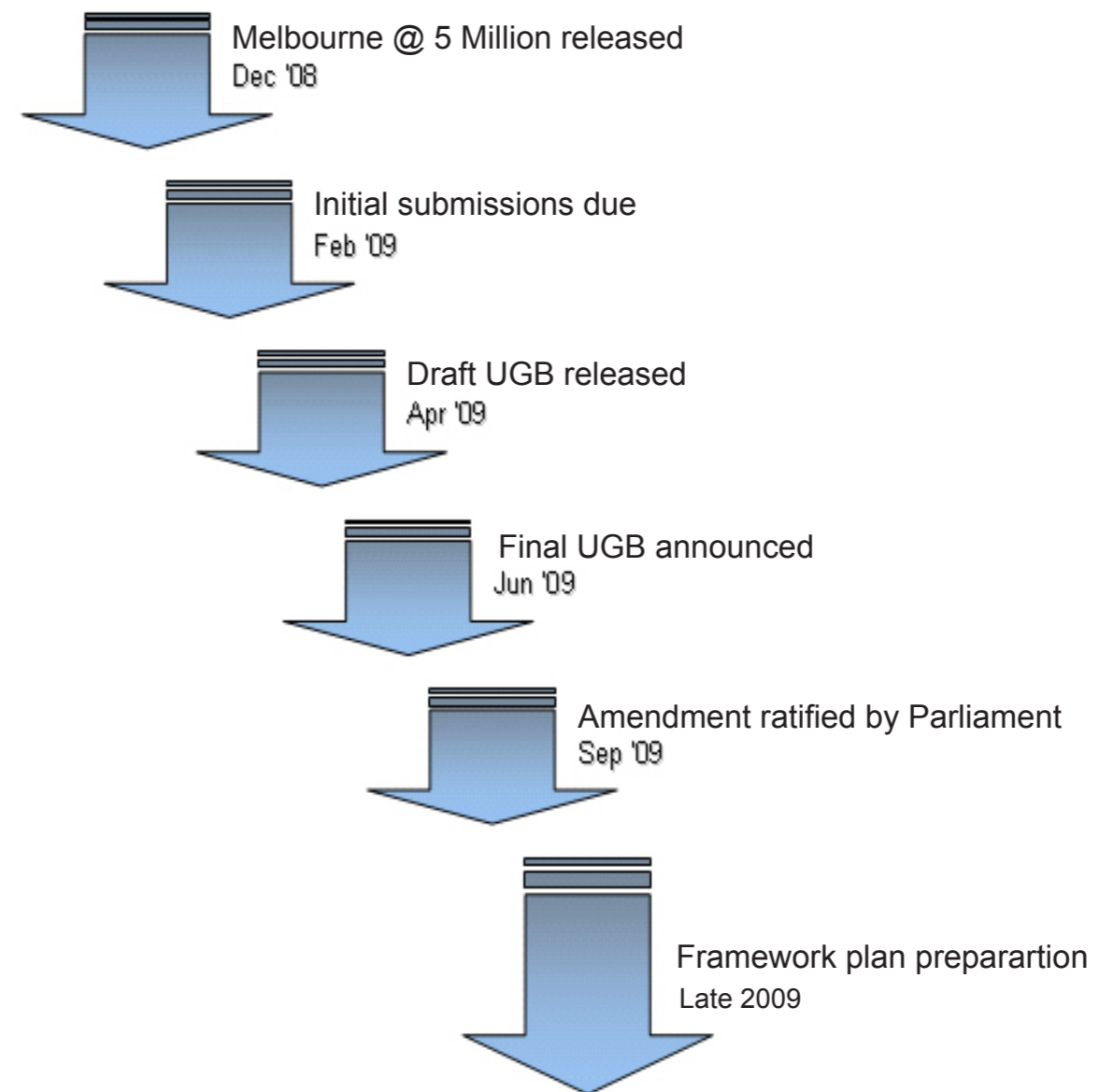
Melbourne @ 5 Million is described as providing policy initiatives to support *Melbourne 2030*. It seeks:

- A more compact city: designating six new Central Activities Districts with CDB-like functions, with Broadmeadows as the northern CAD
- Better management of growth: growth areas are to accommodate 47% of new dwellings (as opposed to the 31% under *Melbourne 2030*)
- Networks with the regional cities: efficient and effective links between Melbourne and Victoria's regional centres
- A greener city: creation of two grassland protected areas in Melbourne's west.

Melbourne @ 5 Million notes that Melbourne's south-east, previously the focus of greenfield development in Melbourne, is reaching capacity, and further growth is constrained by natural features. As such, the focus of future growth will need to shift to the north and the west, with Whittlesea expected to accommodate a large proportion of that growth. The DPCD have embarked on an ambitious schedule in which to deliver additional developable land supply in these areas, as it is considered that the substantial increase in population growth, coupled with limited greenfield land supply, requires an urgent response.

With specific regard to the growth areas, the document:

- Proposes investigation areas for extensions to the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)
- Highlights the importance of adequate land supply in maintaining housing affordability within Melbourne
- Encourages housing densities at 15 dwellings per hectare
- Proposes to utilise the Precinct Structure Planning Process to ensure co-ordinated and efficient delivery of infrastructure
- Reaffirms the Government's commitment to serving growth areas with high capacity public transport
- Notes that native red gum forests will be among the issues considered in the northern investigation area





The Victorian Transport Plan

The Victorian Transport Plan, also released in December 2008, outlines the key initiatives and investment in transport planning and infrastructure for Victoria. Key aspects of the plan relevant to Whittlesea's submission are:

- **Rail construction:** up to 70 new six car trains and more than 100km of new rail tracks, including a rail extension from Epping to South Morang and the duplication of single track between Keon Park and Epping stations.
- **Freeway construction:** construction of freeways including the 'missing link' between the Eastern Freeway and the Western Ring Road and construction of the Outer Metro Ring Road and the E6 transport corridor. VicRoads advice has been that the E6 will take the form of a six lane freeway.
- **Shaping Victoria:** attracting jobs and services to six new Central Activity Districts in Melbourne, including Broadmeadows as the northern CAD.

Freight Futures

Freight Futures, released in December 2008, aims to provide for a blueprint for a secure and properly planned freight network for Victoria. Key aspects of the plan relevant to Whittlesea's study are:

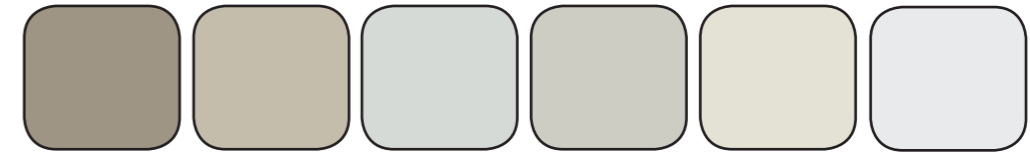
- A new interstate freight terminal at Donnybrook/ Beveridge, assisting to shift unnecessary truck trips from the Dynon Road area and inner suburbs
- Planning for the Port of Hastings expansion, to become Victoria's supplementary container port when the Melbourne Port reaches capacity

Figure 04: Transport Plan



Figure 05: Freight Futures





Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines

The Draft Precinct Structure Planning (PSP) Guidelines were released by the Growth Areas Authority in October 2008 for comment.

The Guidelines seek to set a consistent framework and range of principles for preparation of Precinct Structure Plans to be prepared within the growth areas affected by the Urban Growth Zone.

Council has prepared a submission in response to the Draft Guidelines, which will be forwarded to the GAA separately. In summary, Council's submission to the PSP Guidelines notes that the Guidelines do not offer anything new with regard to the practice of growth area planning, but rather set a "business as usual" approach to urban land development. As will be explained in this submission, this is an approach that Melbourne can't afford to continue.



Discussion

When considered together, the four documents outlined in this chapter demonstrate a concerted shift in focus for Melbourne's growth from the established areas to the growth areas

The proposal to accommodate 47% of new dwellings within growth areas is concerning. This figure represents a considerable increase to the percentage growth for greenfield areas under *Melbourne 2030* (31%). It is Council's understanding that a key principle of *Melbourne 2030* is that percentage growth in greenfield areas would decrease over time, not increase. It is Council's position that a revision of this nature seeks to fundamentally alter the principles embedded within *Melbourne 2030*, more specifically, the intention to focus growth within established areas; around activity centres and public transport.

Council notes that the latest *Victoria in Future* population forecast advises that the assumptions underpinning *Melbourne 2030* are no longer accurate, that is, the population growth is expected to substantially exceed the growth originally anticipated by *Melbourne 2030*. However, while this matter is important, it does not appear to be adequate justification for abandoning key principles within *Melbourne 2030*. Rather, a more rapidly growing population than expected is considered to be an opportunity to refocus on established areas, in terms of service and infrastructure investment, as a means of capitalising on increasing demand.

Notwithstanding, the issue of how to maintain and improve housing affordability in Melbourne appears to be a key driver of current State Government documents, and in particular, *Melbourne @ 5 Million* and the Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines. While addressing housing affordability is critical it must be considered holistically. The alteration of one aspect, such as to increase land supply on the fringe, has the potential to significantly impact on other areas, such as development within existing growth areas.

In addition, it is noted that the current *Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines* seek to formalise the status quo with regard to growth area planning. As such, they are entirely insufficient for achieving any improvements to the manner in which urban development on the fringe occurs, i.e. in terms of sustainability or affordability. Further detail on these guidelines has been provided in a separate submission prepared by Council.

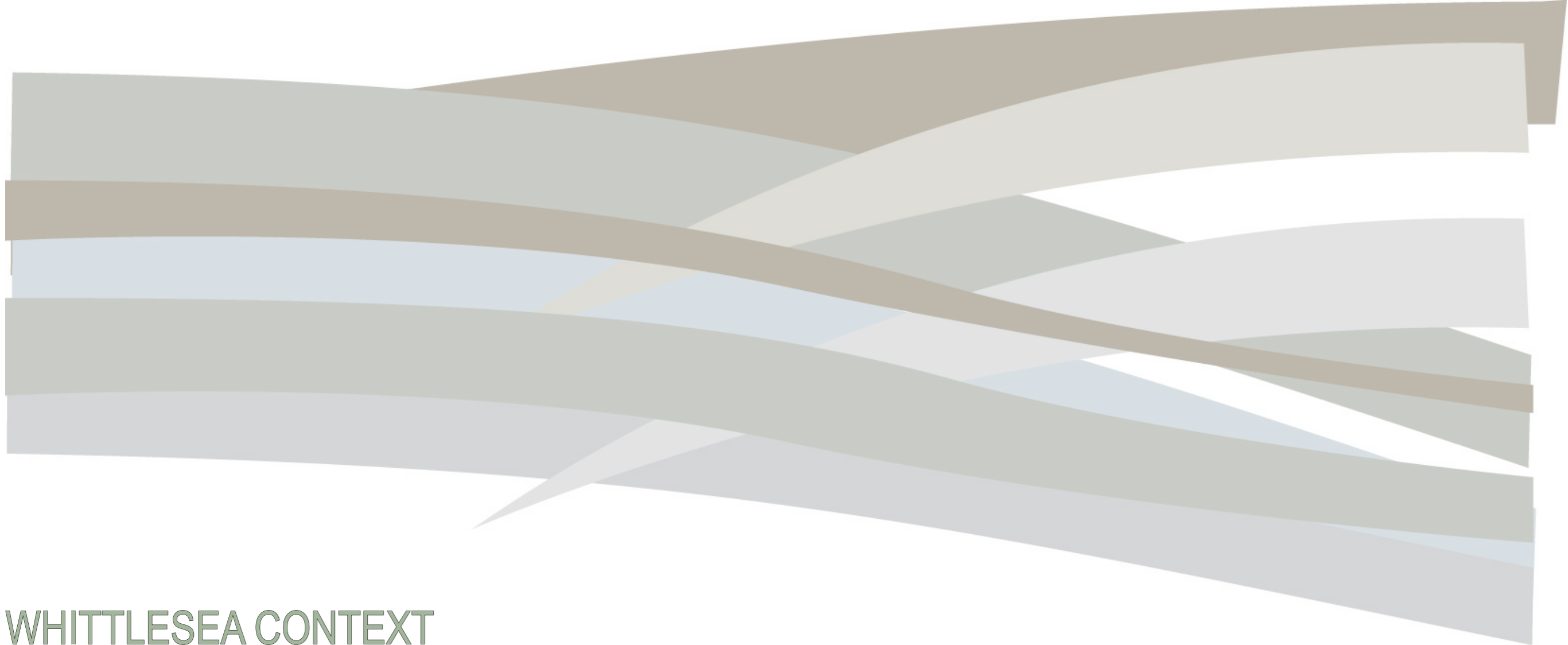
The plan for transport infrastructure investment within the Victorian Transport Plan is considered to improve the current situation (i.e. South Morang rail extension), but does not adequately cater for growth planned within the current UGB, because the rail does not extend into the Mernda growth area, let alone the magnitude of growth expected within the investigation areas. For this reason, the Plan does not achieve what *Melbourne @ 5 Million* seeks, that is, to "re-affirm its *Melbourne 2030* commitment to growth areas being served by high-capacity public transport". Specifically, the Transport Plan provides no detail on plans for public transport within the existing Epping North area, let alone the future expansion of this area to the north under the *Melbourne @ 5 Million* document.

It is noted, however, that, significant road infrastructure is being planned within the investigation area, including plans for the outer metropolitan ring road, and its extension via the E6 (also planned to be a freeway). Presumably this road infrastructure has been prioritised in order to service the freight terminal proposed for the Donnybrook/Beveridge area, noted in *Freight Futures*. This type of planning again highlights the precedence given to road infrastructure over public transport.

Given the above discussion, it is Council's position that a response to a more rapidly growing population should involve a complete review of *Melbourne 2030* implementation, rather than the current narrow focus contained in *Melbourne @ 5 Million*. A more targeted and active response to increasing growth within established areas is considered to be a more appropriate direction for the Government's attention at this time, particularly in the context of an economic downturn and increasing pressure from climate change. This response should include an infrastructure delivery plan that focuses on public transport service delivery and improvements in the established and existing growth areas as a priority.

Thus, Council acknowledges that the State Government has chosen to investigate development outside the UGB, and to this end, this submission articulates Council's position in relation to locations, conditions and forms that may be appropriate for new greenfield development.

It is Council's strong opinion that development should not occur at any cost. The following sections of this submission outline important site and structural features (both opportunities and constraints) that need to be considered before development should be entertained.



WHITTLESEA CONTEXT



Introduction

Before conducting an analysis of the potential UGB, it is necessary to have a firm understanding of the context of Whittlesea's decision makers and residents. This section of the submission will include a discussion on the municipality's current community and health program, stance on urban growth, on the environment and sustainability, housing and employment and on transport.

Community and Health

The municipality is bound by the mission statement, vision and values contained with the **2008-2012 Community Plan**. It seeks to deliver equity, growth and choice through responsive community leadership and quality services whilst respecting the natural environment and encouraging a sustainable local economy. The key priorities for the community include:

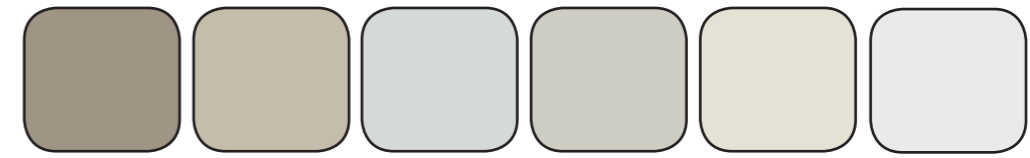
- **Transport** – particularly provision of public transport
- **Environment** – protection of natural environment, sustainable development
- **Facilities and Infrastructure** – timely provision, utilise existing community spaces
- **Youth** – housing, education, public safety, mental health services
- **Community Services** – range of service needs for all of the population
- **Sporting and Leisure Facilities** – increased range of sport and leisure facilities

It is noted that a new Community Plan is currently being prepared for Council endorsement in June 2009.

A draft **Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan 2009 – 2012** has been prepared, that includes a draft Action Plan. The City of Whittlesea Health and Wellbeing Profile 2008 shows that the municipality is ranked 27 in level of disadvantage among the 79 Municipalities of Victoria. Social exclusion, caused by relative poverty, is potentially experienced by 29% of families where 10,000 families are earning 60% less than the national median weekly income. The established suburbs have higher levels of disadvantage.

The proposed Action Plan is underpinned by four principles which cut across all priority areas, and are reflected in all objectives:

- To achieve better outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- Acting to reduce health inequalities
- Building sustainability into programs and planning
- Working in collaboration and integrating planning across Council, agencies and the community.



Urban Growth

The approach to new urban development in the municipality, has been to capitalise on existing and future community and physical infrastructure to ensure an integrated strategic planning approach to develop land in a co-ordinated manner. There has been a need to ensure access to jobs and community and public transport infrastructure, high quality urban design and landscape values and the creation of a sense of community.

This approach has resulted in the designation of employment land in the Cooper Street precinct to accommodate a diversity of lot sizes, built form and uses to support local employment and economic activity in the municipality. Recent commitments for new employment in the precinct include the re-location of the Melbourne Wholesale Food Market to the Cooper Street Employment Area which will bring up to 6000 jobs to the area.

The protection of natural environment and landscape qualities are important assets to retain, for example, non-urban breaks between Mernda and Whittlesea Township to delineate between urban development and protection of rural landscape character. New estates have been designed to service the community with appropriately sized Activity Centres, Community Activity Centres, education and medical facilities and open space requirements for active and passive recreation.

Environment

The municipality contains significant natural features including remnant native grasslands and River Redgums, headwaters of several significant water catchments, and rural landscapes that form the valued features of the Green Wedge Zone and Rural Conservation Zone. In Epping North, the Golden Sun Moth is prevalent and is a protected species under the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

The rural landscape is a visual resource that creates the ambience of the green wedge and therefore requires protection to continue to contribute to the liveability of the municipality. It is highly valued by the community. This protection needs to ensure that the impacts of extractive industry on green wedge values are minimised and landscape values are maintained. This can be achieved through property management outcomes such as weed control, native vegetation protection and increased productivity of land. Controls on the division of land may prevent land banking and help maintain the rural landscape qualities into the future. Investigations into the extension of the Urban Growth Boundary are likely to put pressure on the rural landscape qualities from land speculators resulting in properties being maintained inadequately.

The municipality contains productive agricultural land such as grazing for meat production, fibre industry, horse breeding studs and chicken and egg production. These agribusinesses contribute to the area's scenic rural character and economic growth and are well placed to expand and service the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market when it relocates to Epping in 2011. They play an important role in reducing food miles, contributing to the local community socially and through employment generation. However, agribusinesses are faced with pressures of development speculation relating to future urban expansion.

Sustainability

The municipality is committed to the development of sustainable communities as demonstrated by:

- **City of Whittlesea Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme:**
 - Council is committed to a reduction goal of 25% below 1999 levels by 2010
 - Actions include applying renewable energy technology to buildings, street lighting, reducing landfill, sustainable transport modes, to community education
- **Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA)** consists of 9 northern Melbourne municipalities with the goal to achieve significant greenhouse abatement. For example, the **'Towards Zero Net Emissions'** project commenced in July 2008 to investigate a regional zero net emission target. Whittlesea is focusing on emissions from industry as the manufacturing sector contributes 53 percent of emissions within the municipality. The project will seek to identify opportunities for reductions through energy efficiency, renewable energy generation and offsetting.



Housing and Employment

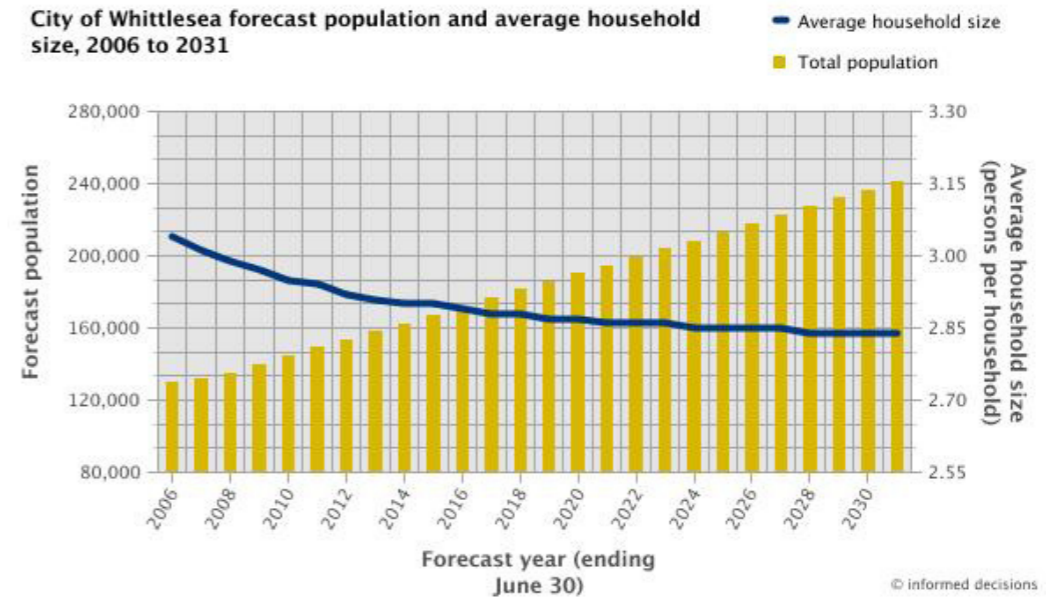
Population growth in the municipality between 2001 and 2006 was 2% per annum with an Estimated Residential Population of 129,525 in 2006 compared to 118,118 in 2001 (Census data). An average of almost 1,800 new households per year are expected to be established between 2008 and 2012 with an expected population of 240,000 by 2030 within the existing urban growth boundary (City of Whittlesea, 2009).

Household sizes are expected to decrease in size from 2.99 per household to 2.84 per household from 2008 to 2030. There will be a decrease in the proportion of couples with dependent children from 47.2% to 41.9%, an increase in couples without dependents from 23.6% to 27.6% and an increase in lone person households from 13.9% to 16.9%, from 2008 to 2030. The population is expected to age with a decrease in the 20-29 and 30-39 year age cohorts and an increase in those aged 60 and over. The changes in household size and the ageing of the population will increase demand for a range of dwelling types, including the number of non-private dwellings that is expected to increase by 73.2% from 2008 to 2030 (City of Whittlesea, 2009).

The creation of jobs within the municipality is important so as to foster sustainable communities. At the 2006 Census there were 58,700 residents (44%) working or looking for work and the number of residents working in the municipality was 14,125 or 26%. The municipality seeks more localised employment for residents and has adopted a policy aim that for every new household there should be the creation of one new job.

Most areas in the City of Whittlesea are expected to increase in population to 2031, with the largest gains expected in the areas of Mernda-Doreen, Epping North, South Morang (West) and Lalor (West) (City of Whittlesea, 2009). Principal forecast land assumptions 2007-2031 for additional dwellings within the existing Urban Growth Boundary is 39360 (City of Whittlesea, 2009). The majority of these additional dwellings will be located in Mernda-Doreen - (14,210 additional dwellings) and Epping North - (12,210 additional dwellings)

Figure07: Forecast Population



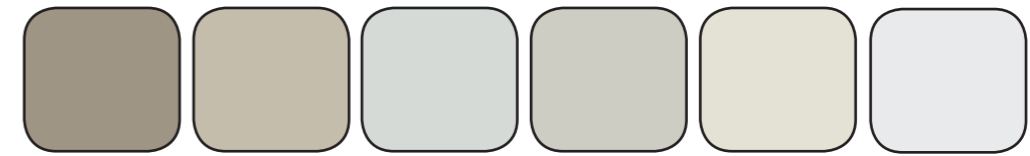
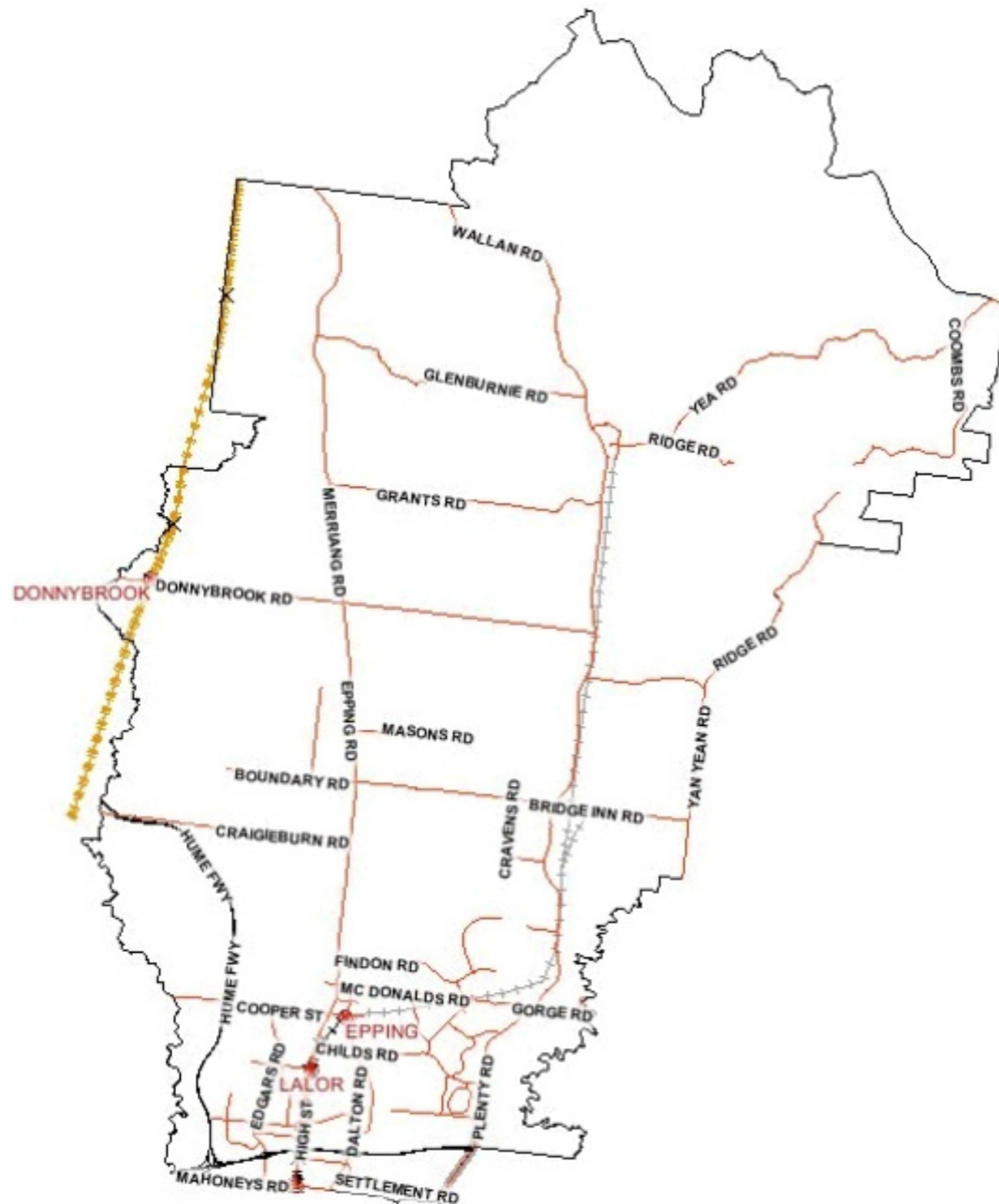


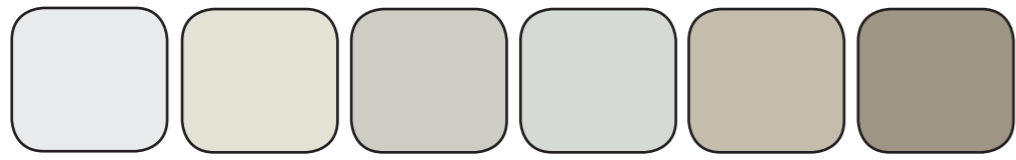
Figure 08: Existing Road Network



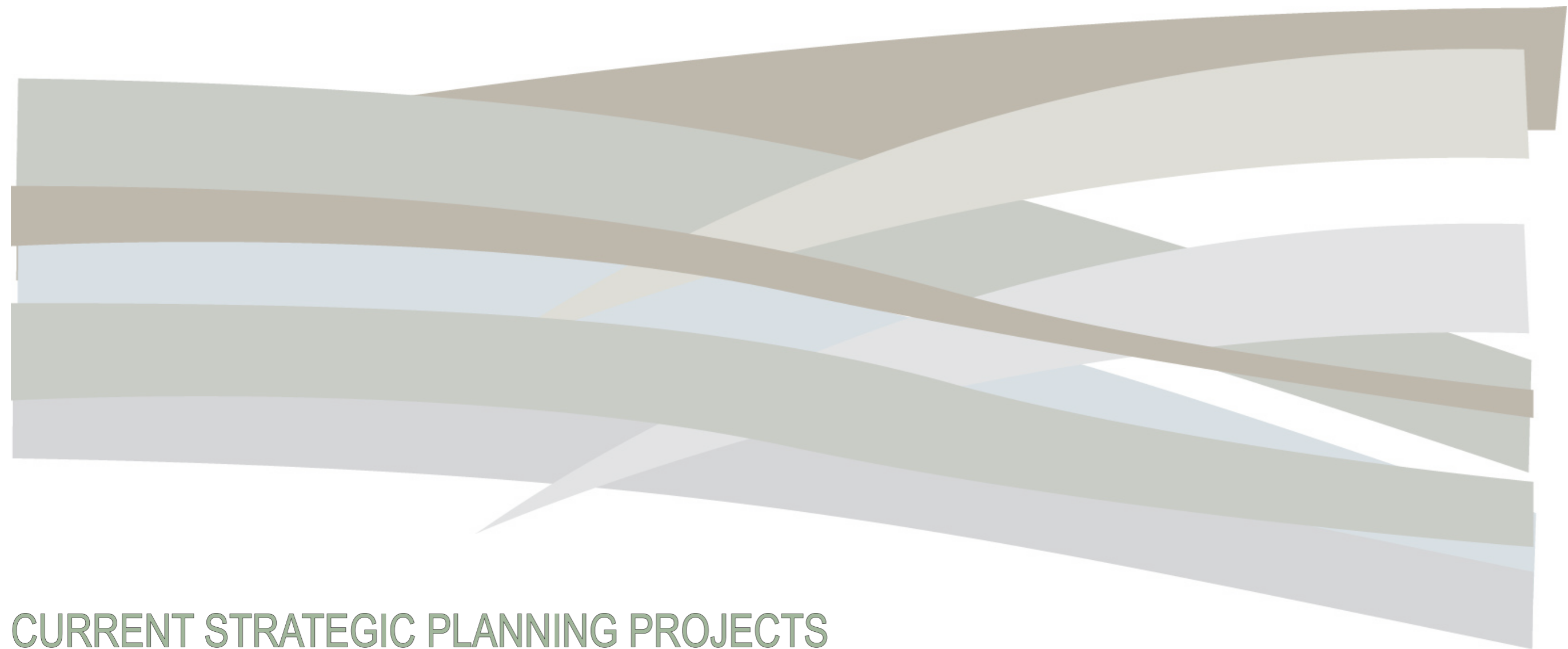
Transport

The community is heavily reliant on private vehicles to travel to work, educational institutions, shops and services. Journey to work data from 2006 shows 75% of workers travelling by car. This trend has been increasing since 2001. Similarly, the proportion of students travelling by car to educational institutions has increased. The proportion of residents who used public transport as a mode of travel to work was 7.4% in 2006 compared to 11.7% for the Melbourne Statistical Division. This figure has remained unchanged since 2001.

There is a reliance on High Street and Plenty Road corridors for north-south movement and capacity issues along the east-west road network such as McDonalds Road and Childs Road. The development of new estates at South Morang and Epping North has put additional pressure on the transportation system and will require the need for investment in new arterial roads and duplication of existing roads within the existing urban growth boundary. In addition, there is a need for greater investment in public transport infrastructure to service these new estates including the extension of the Epping railway line to South Morang and Mernda and the rail extension from Lalor to Epping North. In December 2008, the Victorian Government committed to the extension of the Epping line to South Morang with construction to begin in 2010.



T H I S P A G E H A S B E E N P U R P O S E L Y L E F T B L A N K



CURRENT STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECTS



CURRENT STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECTS

Figure 09: Current Strategic Planning Projects

Introduction

The City of Whittlesea is in the process of undertaking a number of strategic projects that are either located within the investigation area, or may be potentially affected by a substantial increase in the size of Whittlesea's growth areas. Discussion about the City of Whittlesea's current strategic planning projects contributes to a holistic context for the UGB investigation. Exploring these projects grants an understanding of the municipality's current strategic project and decision making culture. Thus, the Quarry Hills Project, the Cooper Street Project, Epping Central and the Green Wedge Management Plan are each examined. While all projects are important, the investigation area has the potential to impact most significantly on the Quarry Hills project.

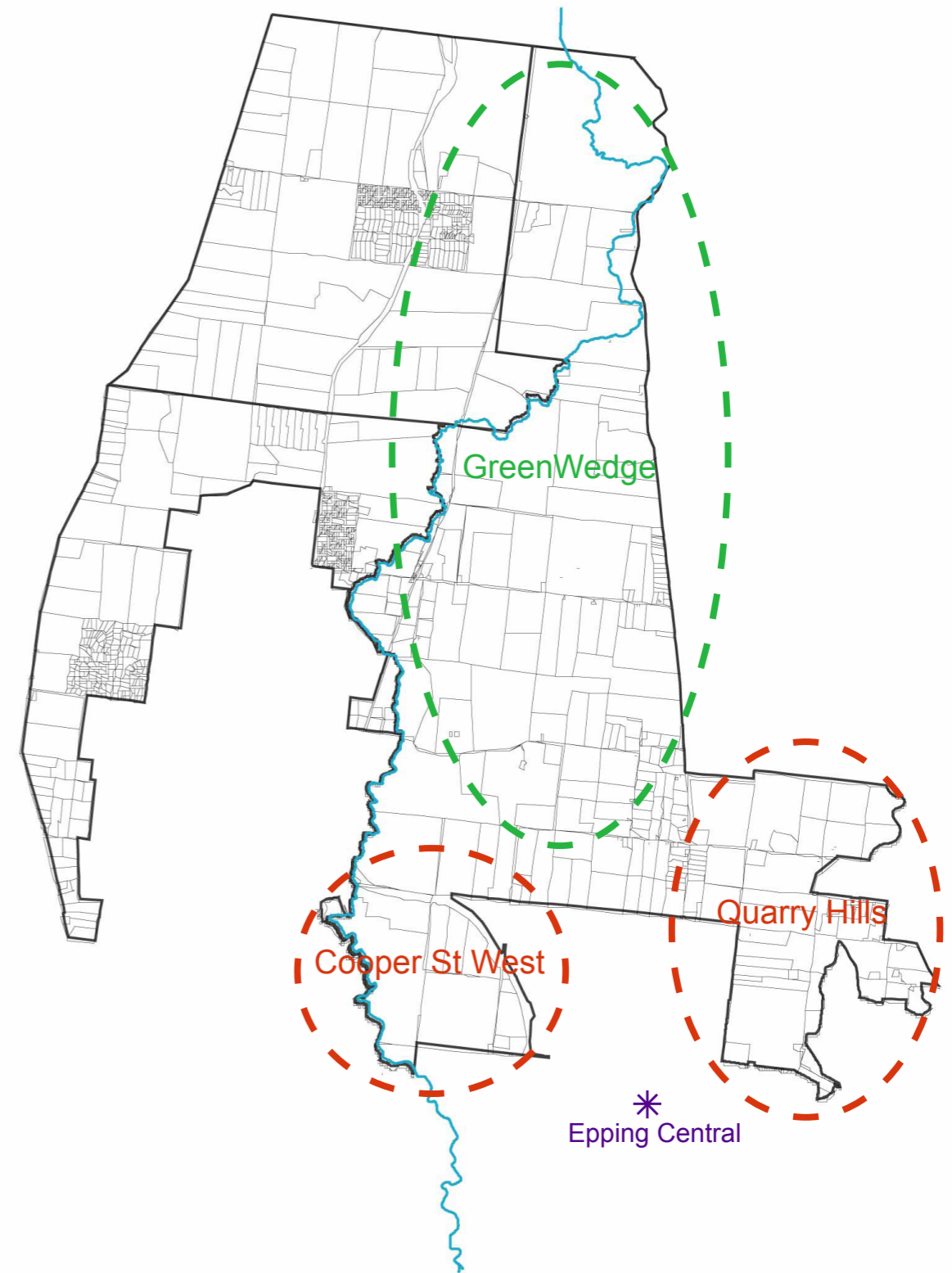
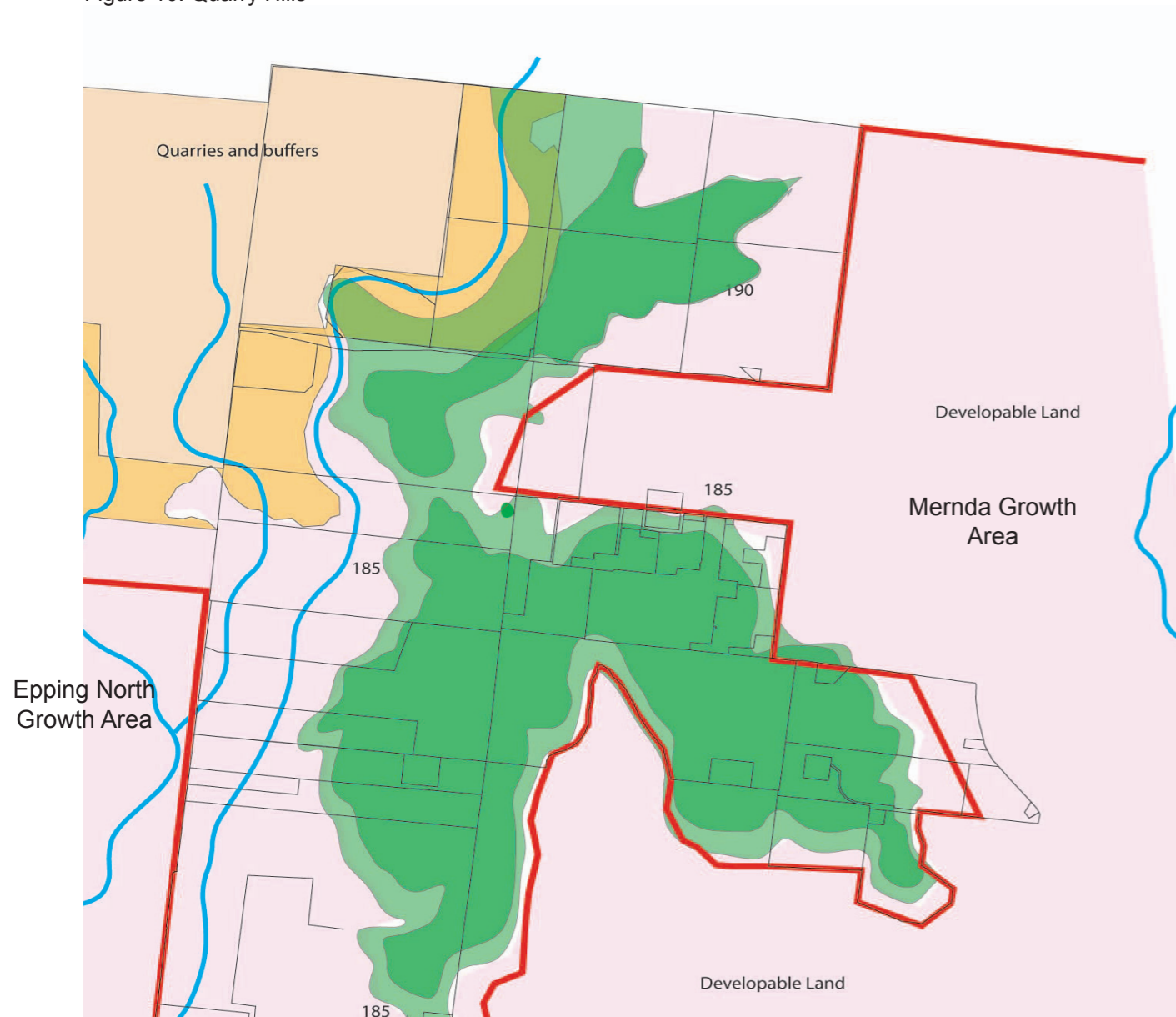




Figure 10: Quarry Hills



Quarry Hills

The Quarry Hills occupy a strategically important location in the context of the northern metropolitan region. They extend from South Morang to the north, forming a natural divide between the Epping North and Mernda growth corridors.

The Hills, together with the adjacent Darebin Creek valley, form complementary landscapes that contain flora, fauna and habitat values of regional significance. The landforms are also of cultural significance to the Aboriginal community.

The combined values of the Quarry Hills has inspired the City of Whittlesea to commence a bold long term plan to bring this land into the public realm for the benefit of existing and future generations. It is the City of Whittlesea's view that the vision will distinguish the region as an area of high amenity where future communities will have access to a recreation and open space resource of regional significance.

The most important element of the parkland concept relates to the need to provide a more sustainable urban form which provides a seamless transition between the growth areas of Epping North, Mernda and South Morang. It seeks to continuously integrate and interface these areas with open space and at the same time conserve and enhance intrinsic environmental and landscape values.

The City of Whittlesea intends to pursue an expanded regional parkland through a process of negotiated planning outcomes in which additional urban development concessions will be supported by Council around the less elevated and less environmentally significant periphery of the Hills, in lieu of the transfer of the balance of land to the City of Whittlesea for permanent open space purposes. With regard to the current structure of property ownership, this will involve no acquisition costs to either the City of Whittlesea or the State Government.

A number of other benefits are to be derived from pursuing an extended regional parkland. They include:

- To facilitate the metropolitan extension of the Darebin Creek Parklands and lineal open space network to the northern termination of the Mernda Strategy Plan area
- To complement and diversify the range of potential visual and recreational open space experiences for future communities
- To preserve open space opportunities prior to speculative land acquisition and fragmentation

Critical to this process is the premise that modifications to the UGB and the granting of limited development concessions will only be justified where there is a demonstrated net community benefit for both the local and regional community (existing and future). The creation of a regional parkland and open space network and the protection of regional environmental features is legitimately viewed as providing such net benefits. It is stressed that development around the Quarry Hills is a means to an end (creation of the parkland) not the end itself.

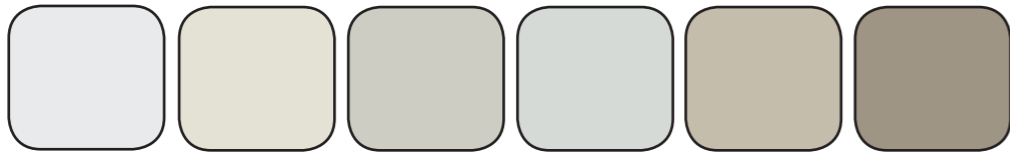


Figure 11: Twin Peaks

Twin Peaks Precedent

In accordance with the above process, a minor adjustment to the UGB was made in South Morang, known as the Twin Peaks development, in 2005 by the Minister for Planning under Amendment C64. This adjustment was the first step in realising the transfer of the Quarry Hills to Council ownership. Amendment C64 comprised

- Adjustment to the UGB to include 22ha of land
- Rezoning of the 22ha to the Residential 1 Zone
- Rezoning of the balance of the land (approximately 110ha) to Rural Conservation Zone

In association with this adjustment, the landholder entered into a Section 173 agreement that stated that the balance of the landholding would be transferred to Council at no cost. In addition, the landholder agreed to pay development contributions on the residential land component.

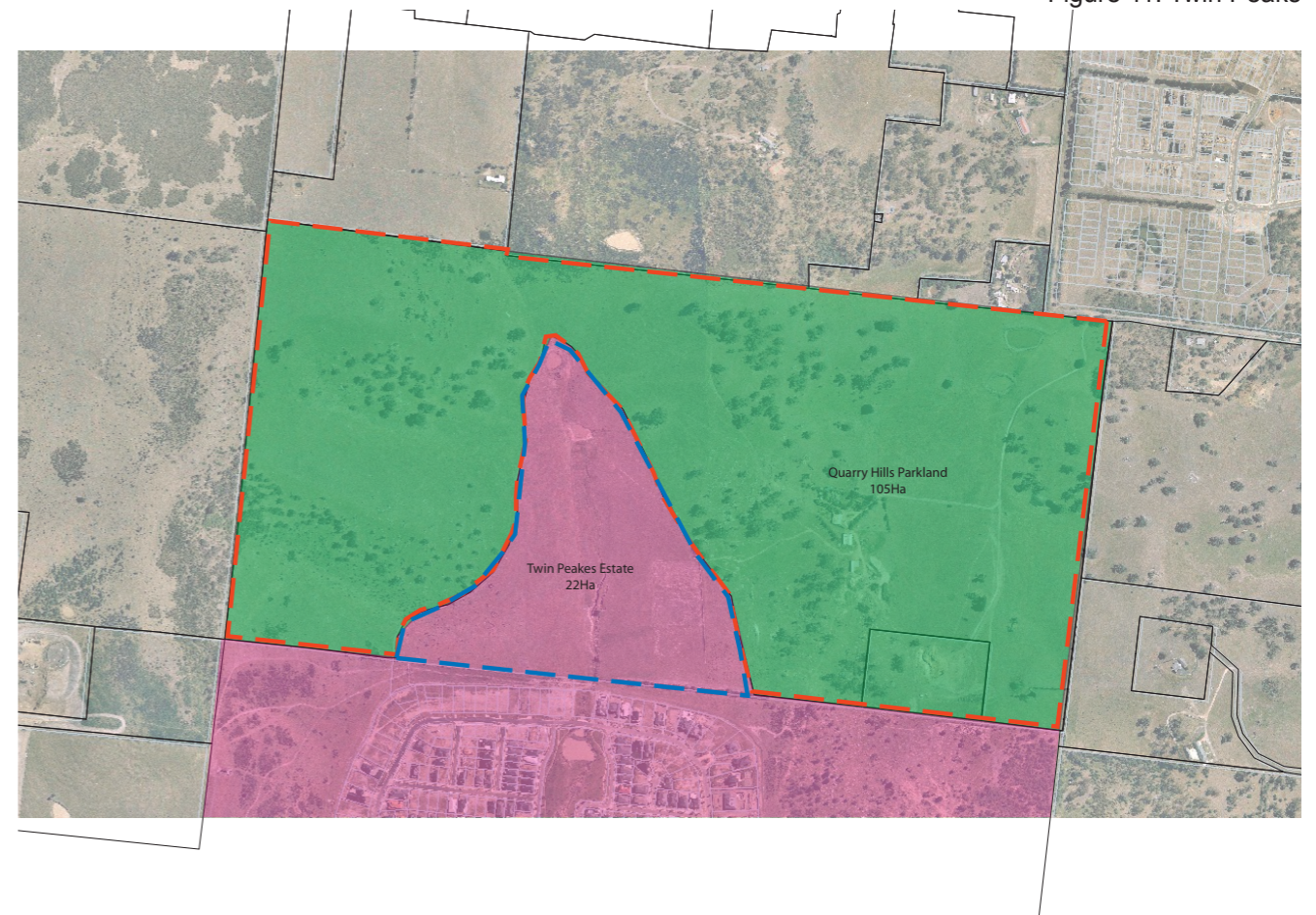
Council, in providing its support for this amendment, was satisfied that the UGB adjustment provided overwhelming community benefit to current and future residents of the municipality, and the wider northern Melbourne community.

Melbourne @ 5 Million Implications

The Quarry Hills Project is a key project that the City of Whittlesea has been pursuing as a means of achieving a regional parkland of high community value at no cost to Council or the State Government. This project has been progressing with the general in principle support from the GAA and DPCD, and Council stresses that the implementation of the current *Melbourne @ 5 Million* project must not undermine its continuation.

It is noted that the increase in developable land as a result of this project will be negligible when compared to other potential areas for UGB expansion in Whittlesea, and as such, the Quarry Hills area will not play a pivotal role in increasing developable land supply. Rather, the primary purpose of the Quarry Hills project is to provide a mechanism for achievement of the parkland. High quality public assets such as the Quarry Hills regional parkland will gain greater importance in the context of a substantially increased population within Melbourne's north as proposed by *Melbourne @ 5 Million*. Therefore, it is considered to be of key strategic significance and both a State and Local Government level to preserve Council's ability to negotiate for the transfer of this land at no cost.

Recommendations with regard to how the Quarry Hills should be treated under the *Melbourne @ 5 Million* investigation are provided in a later section of this submission.



CURRENT STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECTS



Figure 12: Cooper Street West



Cooper Street West

Cooper Street West is defined as the area between the Craigieburn Bypass of the Hume Freeway and the Merri Creek and Craigieburn Grasslands. It extends as far north as Craigieburn Road, and as far south as Barry Road. The southern portion of the site (south of O'Herns Road) is contained within the current UGB, while the northern portion is outside the UGB, (but within the current investigation area).

Council has been undertaking a project to define a vision for the area. This project includes an investigation of the precinct, including an examination of the current land use and ownership patterns, an examination of the relationship of the study area with the surrounding context, and an exploration of potential development options for the land.

This project aims to then translate the vision into a plan based structure, which would then form the basis for a PSP.

Key site features

Key features of the study area include:

- Active and disused quarries are concentrated to the south of O'Herns Road
- The Yarra Valley Water sewage treatment plant in the northern portion
- Complex conservation and environmental features including Red River Gums, growing grass frogs, grasslands, stony knolls, stone walls etc
- Sensitive interfaces to the Merri Creek and the Craigieburn Grasslands
- Interface issues with the Craigieburn Bypass
- Locational context with the bypass and future interchanges

Council currently considers that the land would be suitable for employment uses, as an extension of the Cooper Street Employment area (to the east).

However this would need to be investigated in the context of the detailed site conditions and overall framework plan to be prepared for the new growth areas.

Melbourne @ 5 Million Implications

Council considers that the work completed on the Cooper Street West Precinct can be used as the foundation for preparation of a Precinct Structure Plan in this area. It is council's position that an adjustment to the UGB in this location would be appropriate. Further details regarding this precinct are provided in a later section of this submission.



Figure 13: Whittlesea Green Wedge

Green Wedge Management Plan

Council is in the process of preparing the Whittlesea Green Wedge Management Plan for the area of land north of the existing UGB. Two rounds of community consultation have been completed including consultation on a Discussion Paper and a Community Views Paper.

Responses identified the most important features of the Whittlesea Green Wedge as:

1. water supply catchments, natural landscapes and vegetation communities; and
2. aspects that deliver value, including scenic rural vistas and biodiversity present in the green wedge.

Other outcomes of community consultation that are relevant to the investigation area revealed the importance of:

- the creation of habitat links between significant sites;
- the diversification of agricultural activities;
- the enforcement of land management issues;
- the preservation of our local heritage places; and
- the location of extractive industries in areas of low environmental significance.

Melbourne@5 Million Implications

The amendment to the UGB has the potential to substantially reduce the size of the Whittlesea Green Wedge. Impacts on rural and scenic qualities, heritage and recreation and environmental assets are also possible in interface areas between the new growth areas and the adjacent green wedge.

Council is proceeding with its Green Wedge Management Plan, however, given the potential impacts of Melbourne @ 5 Million are unknown at this time, the Plan will not be finalised until such time as the UGB is resolved.



CURRENT STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECTS

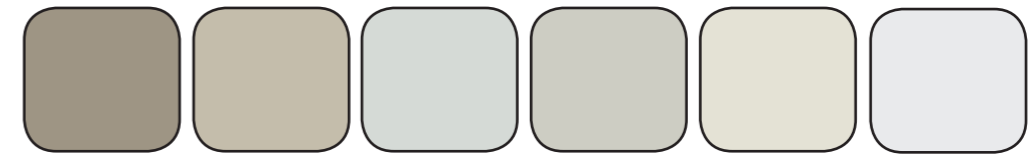


Figure 14: Epping Central Study Area



Epping Central

Epping Central is a Principal Activity Centre that sits within a strategic public transport corridor including the South Morang, Lalor and Thomastown Activity Centres. It comprises the core area of the Principal Activity Centre and encompasses the 400 metres radius of the Epping Train Station to the east, the 400 metre radius of the potential Epping Plaza Train Station (proposed between the Northern Hospital and the Activity Centre) to the west, and the area in between, 200 metres either side of Cooper Street.

Council is currently in the process of proposing the Epping Central PSP. The Epping Central Structure Plan focuses on developing an integrated, high density mixed use development around public transport and high quality amenity for the public and private realm that will encourage greater investment from a range of public and private sectors.

SGS Economics and Planning reported in 2008 that the demand of office and retail floorspace in Epping Central is potentially 495,639m² and 476,374m² respectively until 2031. The supply of medium to high density dwellings is potentially 9688m². However, Council's forecasting based on based on development trends shows that demand for office is likely to be substantially less than potential supply (between 42,608m² and 83,039m² and retail between 29,430m² and 113,420m²). The market demand for additional dwellings in Epping Central is expected to be between 2163 and 4537.

Melbourne @ 5 Million Implications

This project is seeking to consolidate a diverse range of uses within the Epping Central area in accordance with *Melbourne 2030*. This aspect, the impact of additional development land, its thinking and sequencing on this area should be considered.



T H I S P A G E H A S B E E N P U R P O S E L Y L E F T B L A N K



GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR NEW GROWTH



Need for Guiding Principles

The release of *Melbourne @ 5 Million*, is set to substantially change the shape and development of Melbourne from that envisaged in *Melbourne 2030*. It is considered that should this change take place, changes of equivalent magnitude must also occur in all aspects of planning to ensure that population growth occurs in a manner that continues to advance the goals of sustainability, affordability and liveability. To this end, the change to the way urban development occurs, should be considered not only in fringe areas, but across all of Melbourne and its surrounding regional centres.

This section provides an outline of how Whittlesea envisages development within the fringe areas, and what Council considers is required to effect positive change in urban development practices. In order to express this, a set of guiding principles for development in new greenfield areas has been developed by Council. It is noted that none of these principles are new concepts, they are principles embodied within the ideals of current planning thought, and largely, are represented within *Melbourne 2030*. However, to date, none of these principles are being holistically delivered in any genuine way in urban development on the fringe of Melbourne.

Development within the City of Whittlesea's revised UGB provides a unique and timely opportunity to design an entire community - businesses and services as well as homes - to achieve a cohesive, innovative, stable and healthy community. The broad principles that are defined in this chapter reflect the holistic approach to planning taken by Council, which focuses on sustainability, affordability and good urban design. From this approach stems principles for development that, if executed with commitment and support, will produce radical changes to the current standards, requirements and practices of development planning. Such changes also have the potential to position Victoria as a leader in the field of sustainable urban development around the country.

Sustainability, affordability and good urban design are each vital aspects of successful, innovative urban development. Although each are often discussed individually, they must be viewed holistically, as affordability cannot be properly realized independently of concepts of sustainability, which in turn cannot be achieved without good urban design.

Affordability

As noted earlier, it appears that housing affordability is a key driver for the revision of the UGB. Affordability in Melbourne has deteriorated over the last 25 years, with at least three quarters of a million households paying more than 30 per cent of their income on housing. However, simply extending the UGB, and thus increasing Melbourne's developable land supply, will not address the stressors contributing to a lack of affordability. Affordability is a complex issue that cannot be manipulated by simply adjusting the supply lever in the supply/demand price equation. Increasing land supply on the fringe without significant investment in infrastructure, particularly public transport and community infrastructure (health, education etc) will only redistribute the high cost of living from housing to other areas, such as transport. Genuine commitment to addressing the complexity of affordability is vital before additional development on the fringe of Melbourne should be encouraged.

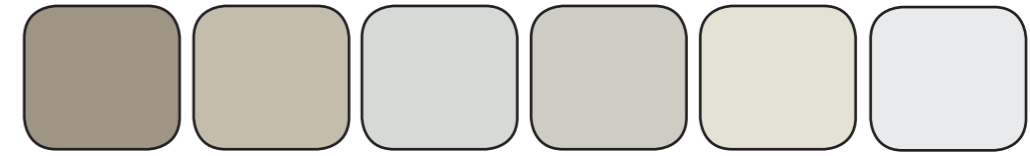
Sustainability

Sustainability is commonly defined by four pillars: economic viability, environmental responsibility, social equity and cultural vitality. This comprehensive approach requires communities to be genuinely self contained and self sustaining, with good connections, physically and virtually, to surrounding centres.

Good Design

Finally, good urban design is a key driver for the City of Whittlesea when undertaking any growth area planning. Practical and well considered urban design is pivotal to the success of a development's sustainability, affordability and reation of unique sense of place. Good design, both at the neighbourhood level and at the household level, is a key implementation tool that must be exercised in order make the new growth areas liveable – to ensure they are affordable places in which people want to live, and that they are sustainable, in all senses of the word.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR NEW GROWTH



Self Contained Communities

New growth areas should be **self contained communities**, with:

- A wide range of housing – types, cost and tenure
- A range of jobs and employment opportunities, including working from home
- High quality services (shopping, health, community services etc)
- Education, including primary, secondary and tertiary
- Various open space and recreation opportunities

Self Sufficient Communities

New growth areas should be **self sufficient communities**, in terms of:

- Energy (efficiency and production)
- Water (efficiency, harvesting and re-use)
- Waste (disposal and re-use)
- Food (local production)
- Biodiversity (protection and enhancement)
- Heritage (protection, enhancement and interpretation)

Good Connections

The new communities in the Whittlesea investigation areas must have **good connections** physically to surrounding communities, including Epping Central, the Broadmeadows CAD and the CBD via high quality sustainable options such as:

- Rail
- High capacity buses and local buses
- Cycling and walking
- A well connected road network

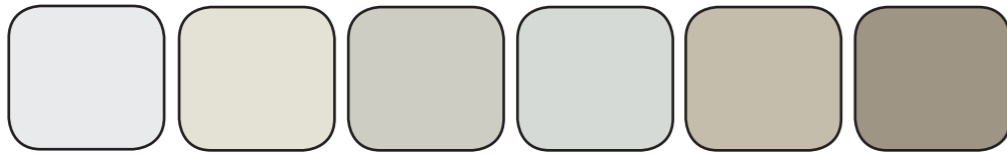
Virtual connections, via high-speed broadband, are also now crucial in ensuring communities are equitably serviced and sustainable participants in an increasingly global community. As such broadband must be considered a standard service, such as water, electricity, sewerage etc.

Good Design

Good design is a key tool for the delivery of self-contained, self-sufficient and well connected communities. Key aspects include:

- Appropriate land use distribution
- Efficient use of land
- Well designed public realm
- Diversity
- Well designed built form

Given the City of Whittlesea's emphasis on good design in growth area planning, these design principles and their relevance to the Draft PSP Guidelines, will be elaborated further in the next section.



Good design

High quality urban design is a vital tool to ensure that many of the above elements are appropriately delivered, in a structure that is robust, yet flexible. While this submission does not intend to detail an urban design framework for the investigation areas, it is worthwhile noting the key urban design concepts that should be demonstrated in framework, structure and subdivision planning:

Appropriate land use distribution

At a structural level, this involves planning a suitable ratio of residential land versus land for employment and other non-residential uses; but also planning for an appropriate balance between developable and environmental and heritage conservation land. Activity centres and public open space must be appropriately distributed to enable the development of genuine self-contained, sustainable neighbourhoods.

Efficient use of land

Any discussion of efficient use of land must be framed in terms of substantially increased residential densities. The *PSP Guidelines* and *Melbourne @ 5 Million* both seek residential densities of 15 dwellings per hectare. Considered to be ambitious for Melbourne; 15 dwellings per hectare is significantly short of densities sought around the world, and will likely undermine any efforts to develop genuine sustainable communities. While it is appreciated that efficient use of land is a key concern of the *PSP Guidelines*, this is primarily in regard to use and distribution of open space. This focus is considered too narrow, and should be widened to reconsider the matter of residential densities on Melbourne's fringe.

Well designed public realm

A well designed public realm is a vital element in delivering neighbourhoods in which people want to live and participate. Good design involves a myriad of elements, that come together as a whole to provide liveable communities. Examples of such elements include but are not limited to:

- Defined neighbourhood precincts that have homes in walking distance to local shops, services, public transport and local open space (unencumbered)
- Streets that are connected (gridded) and interesting (diverse streetscapes)
- Open space that is linked in to a wider network, including conservation open space, linear open space and active open space

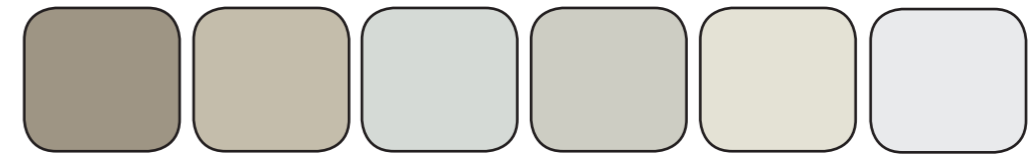
Diversity

Diversity is key to providing places where people want to live. Current land use practices tend to develop "what the market wants", with a very narrowly defined view of the market, at a particular point in time i.e first home buyers seeking a 3 bedroom detached house. To ensure new neighbourhoods are able to evolve over time, and able to accommodate changes in demographics, preferences and as a response to climate and economic change, they must be diverse. Examples of areas where diversity is vital are:

- Diverse lot sizes and building products,
- Diverse streetscape design and access arrangements,
- Open space types and experiences,
- Uses within activity centres i.e. not solely focused on retail
- Diverse transport options, from walking and cycling to public transport, as well as private vehicle.

Well designed built form

Built form must be well designed to provide active and attractive interfaces with the public realm. Further, environmental standards must be significantly increased, via passive design of buildings and energy and water efficient features.



Requirements for success

While, none of the above concepts are new, it is considered that none are being delivered in any genuine manner in growth area development at present. Council sees the *Melbourne @ 5 Million* review of *Melbourne 2030* as an opportunity for a step-change and for a genuine commitment in these complex and interrelated areas. Such commitment, it is acknowledged, will not be achievable under the current planning standards/requirements and under current land development practices.

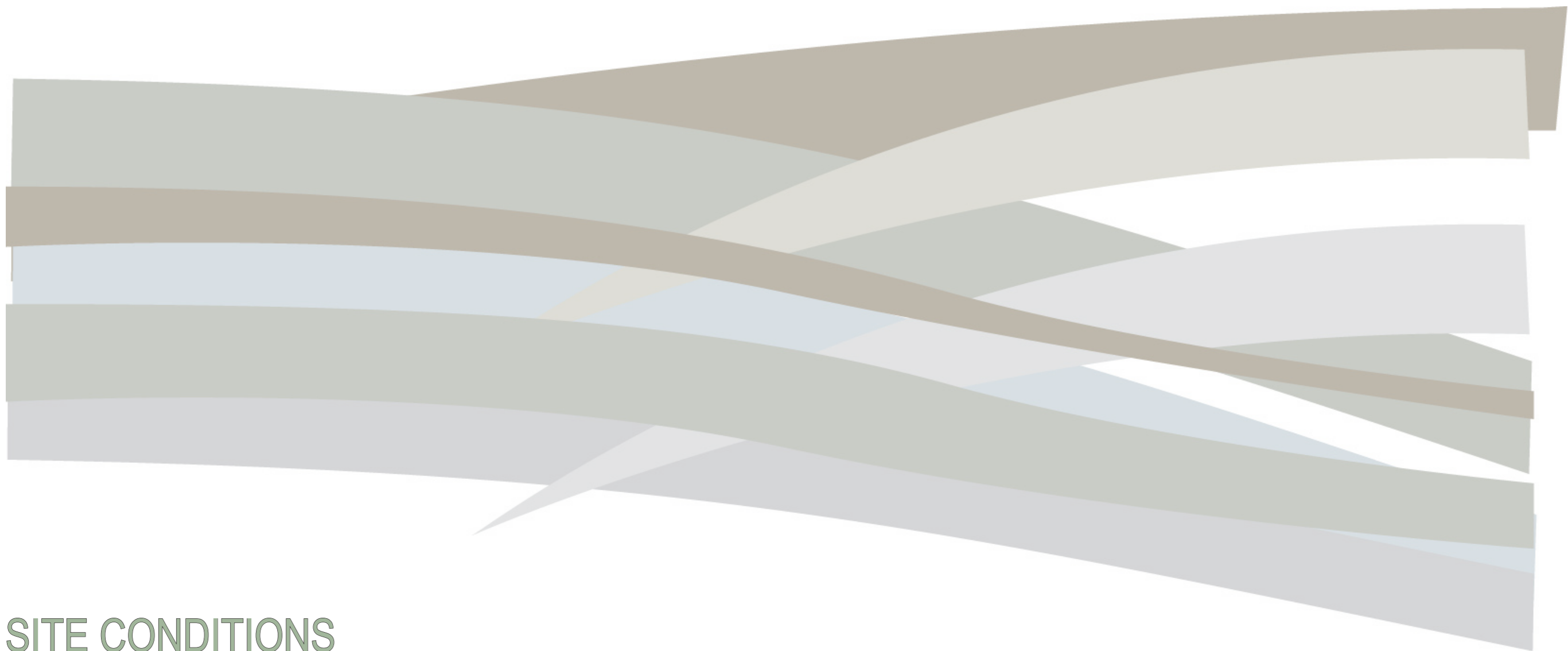
Rather, the following are considered to be some of the elements that will be required to achieve successful sustainable development in the new growth areas:

- Early provision of key infrastructure, that is integrated with land use planning – rail extensions and upgrades, bus routes etc
- Enforceable density and affordable housing controls
- Changes to building and subdivision design standards - higher quality urban design, energy/ water efficiency standards, energy and water production and use etc
- Investment in sustainable energy, water and waste infrastructure
- Appropriate and innovative planning controls to ensure holistic planning and sequential development

As noted earlier, it is considered that the PSP Guidelines are inadequate for achieving the required step-change.



T H I S P A G E H A S B E E N P U R P O S E L Y L E F T B L A N K



SITE CONDITIONS



Figure 15: Investigation Area

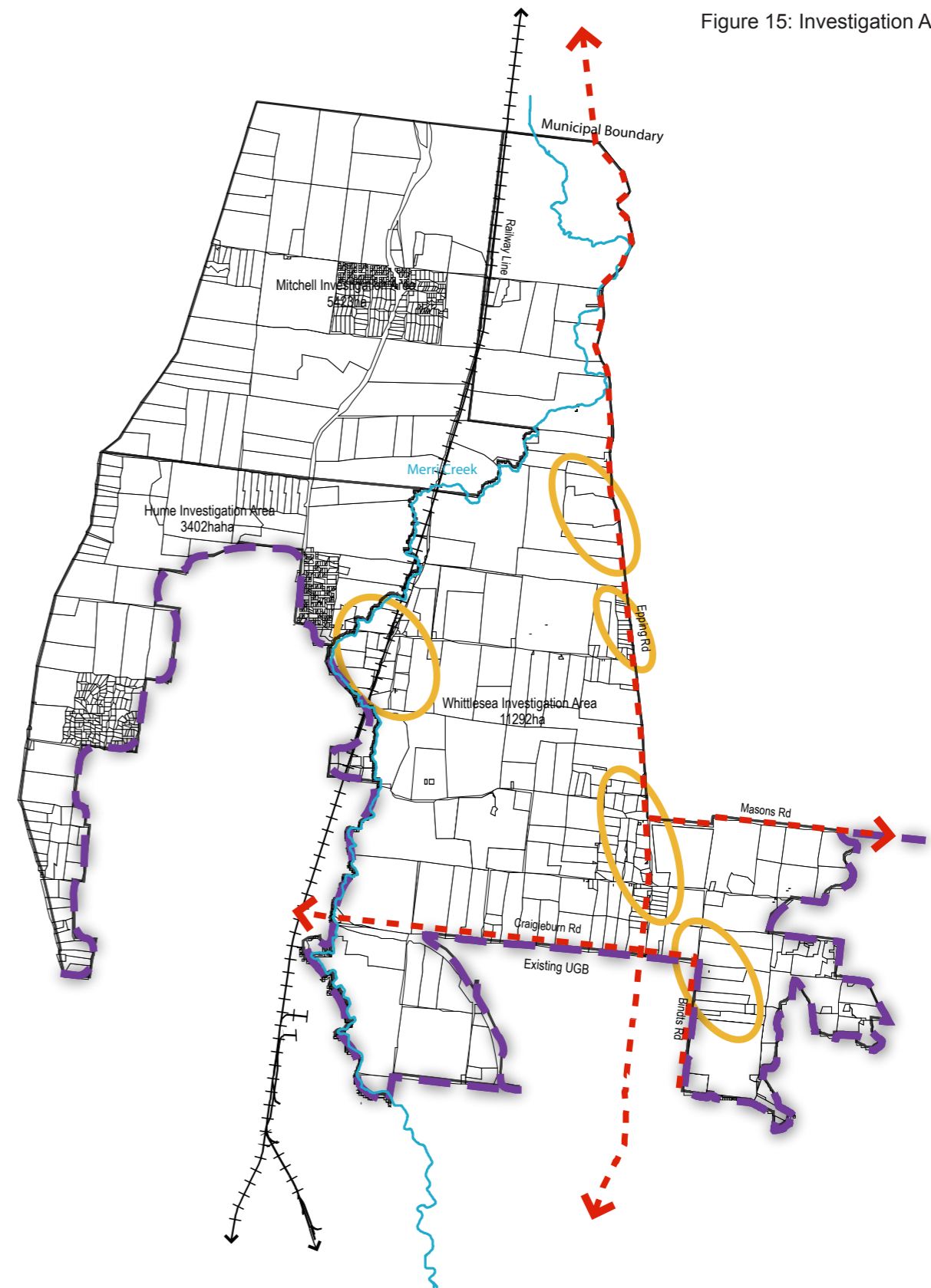
Introduction

A description of the current and proposed conditions of the City of Whittlesea and its surrounding areas provides an important basis for deciding where to place the Urban Growth Boundary. Before entering into an analysis, this chapter describes the current and proposed physical characteristics and values of the land.

Investigation area

The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) has identified 20,000ha of land in the Northern metropolitan region as potential areas for urban growth. The municipalities that make up the Northern Investigation Area are Whittlesea, Hume and Mitchell. DPCD have advised that a minimum of 10,500ha of land will be required in the revised Urban Growth Boundary, comprising approximately 51,000 dwellings and 2,300ha of employment land.

Whittlesea makes up more than half of the investigation area. This is bound by the existing UGB alignment to the south, Epping Rd to the east, Merri Creek and the Melbourne to Sydney rail line to the West, and the Hadfield Rd municipal boundary to the north. Particular to the Whittlesea investigation is the varying degree of land fragmentation, which makes land assembly, and thus development co-ordination more difficult. Smaller landholdings are generally located on the edges of the investigation area and around existing townships. Larger holdings are concentrated through the central and northern parts of the investigation area.



SITE CONDITIONS

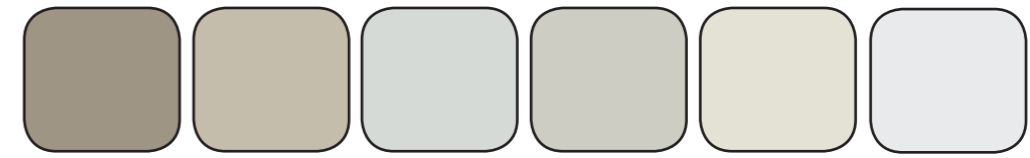
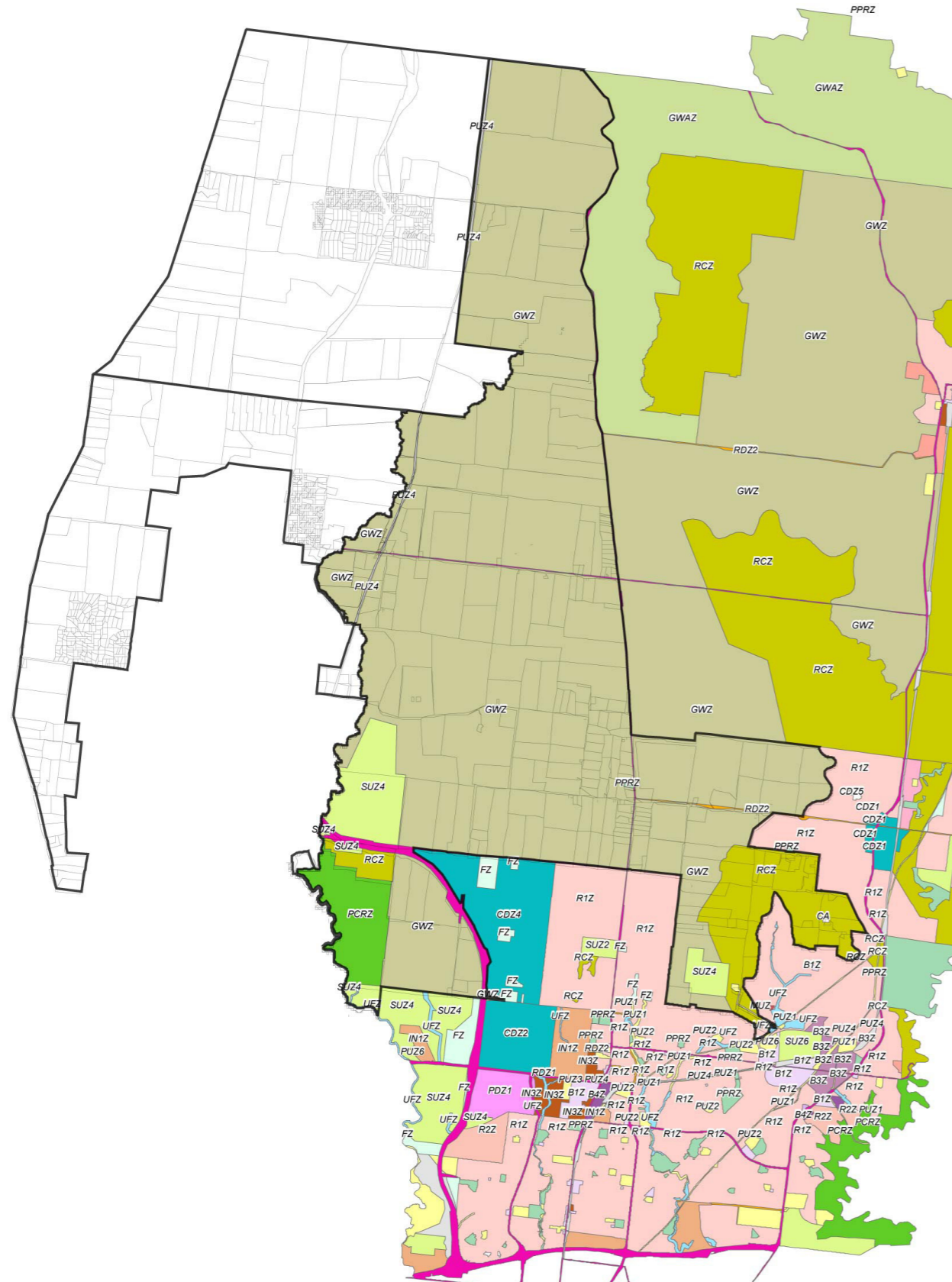


Figure 16: Planning Zones

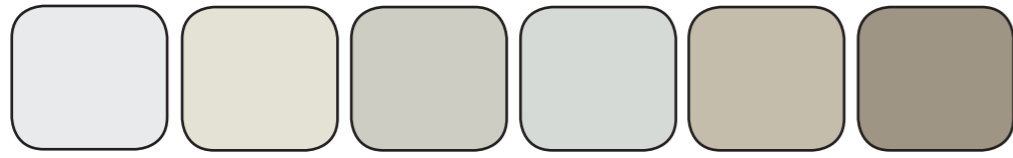


Planning zones

A number of zones affect the investigation area, and although they are important in deciding where the UGB will be placed, it is understood that they will most likely be altered once the new urban boundary is drawn. The **Green Wedge Zone (GWZ)** currently makes up a dominant section of the UGB Investigation area. The purpose of this zone is to protect and conserve the agricultural, environmental, historic, landscape, recreational and tourism opportunities in the area, as well as mineral and stone resources.

Some discrete areas are identified as **Special Use Zones (SUZ)**, which mainly identify existing and future quarrying activity. This zone may need to be extended to cover future quarry extensions and existing licenses. Or alternatively, when a quarry is decommissioned in the future, the zone will need to be removed.

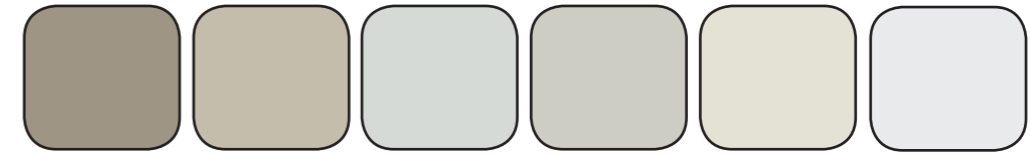
There are also a number of zones that identify environmental features and sites. These include the **Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ)** for the existing parts of the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland. The purpose of the RCZ includes protection of the natural environment and processes for their historic and cultural values. This zone may need to be extended, or replaced by an alternative zone, if the Quarry Hills parkland is extended. The **Public Conservation Recreation Zone (PCRZ)** identifies and protects the Craigieburn Grasslands, however the zone may need to be extended to apply to other sites of environmental significance in the future.



Planning Overlays

A number of overlays affect land within the investigation area, which collectively seek to protect known environmental assets and guide design outcomes.

SITE CONDITIONS



The **Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO)** currently exists along the creeks, and over most of Wollert and some of South Morang, as a means of protecting some identified Red Gum Grassy woodland communities. It also covers the grassland in the southern section of the investigation area, however does not include any potential sites of environmental significance to the north.

The **Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)** coincides with the current Rural Conservation Zone. The purpose of this overlay is to maintain and enhance the rural landscape character of the Quarry Hills. The overlay notes that the hills provide visual relief and interest and have high aesthetic, flora and fauna and heritage conservation values.

The **Rural Floodway Overlay (RFO)** identifies areas that have the greatest risk and frequency of being affected by flooding. From the north, the RFO is located along the Merri Creek and the significant floodplains that lie at its head waters. Maintaining these floodways and retaining the natural features is of prime importance to Council, it is generally accepted that the floodplains up to the 1 in 100 year level are undevelopable. There is opportunity for a linear open space link along the floodway (creek), which captures the Merri Creek in a regional network of open space beginning at the headwaters and extending to the CBD.

The **Design and Development Overlay (DDO)** applies to the surrounds of the Hume Freeway. This overlay guides the design along the freeway to ensure that appropriate noise attenuation measures which minimise the impact of traffic noise and noise sensitive activities.

Figure 17: ESO

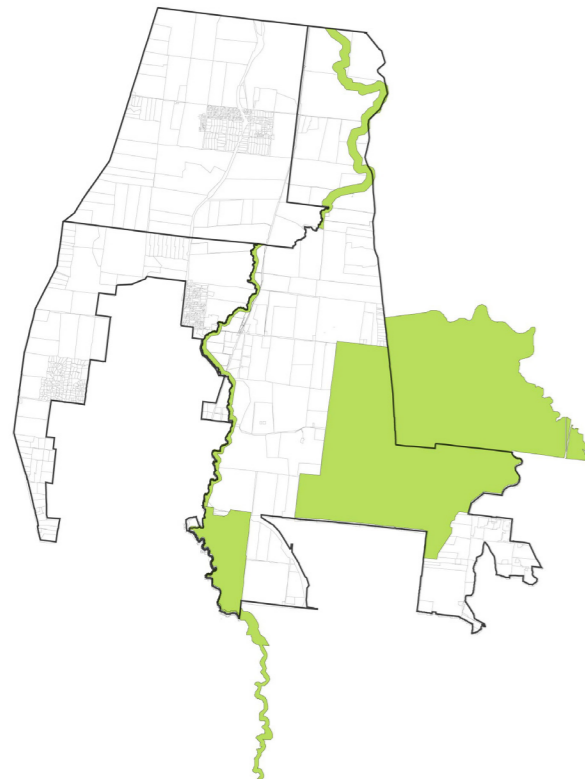


Figure 18: SLO

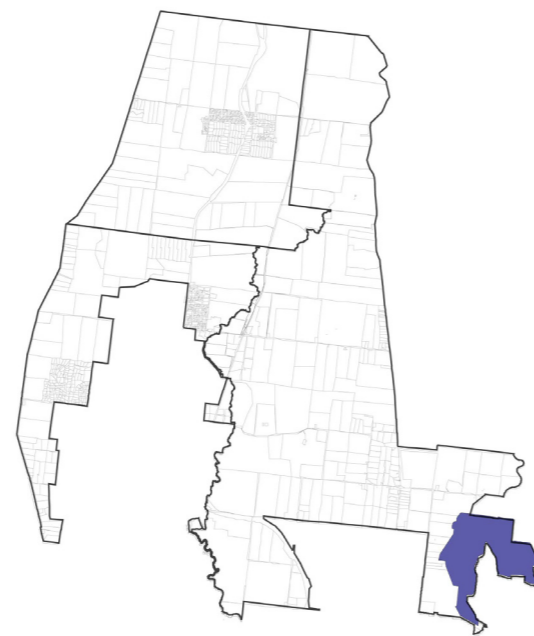


Figure 19: RFO

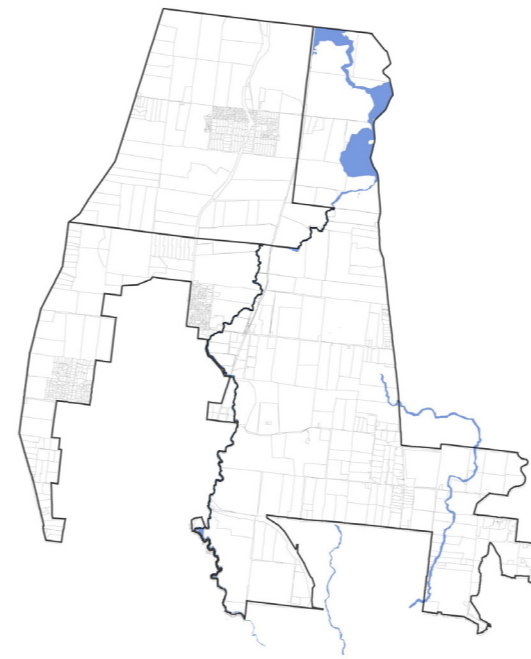
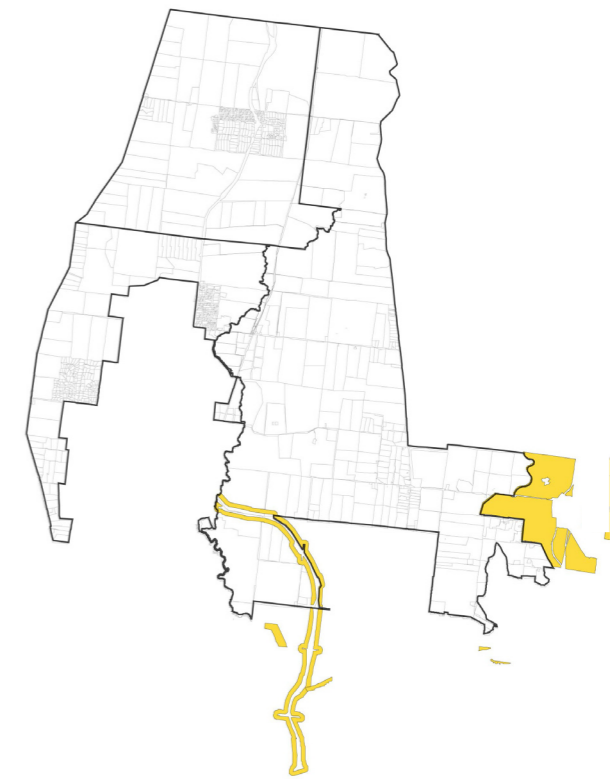
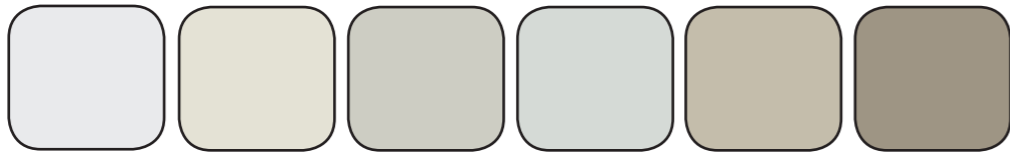


Figure 20: DDO





Existing Access and Circulation

The investigation area in Whittlesea is currently served by fairly evenly spaced east-west and north-south roads.

In a north-south direction, the existing access to the northern investigation area is provided by the Hume Freeway and Epping Road/Merriang Road. The Hume Freeway is built to a freeway standard, with interchanges at:

- Donnybrook Road
- Craigieburn Road
- O'Herns Road (future)
- Cooper Street

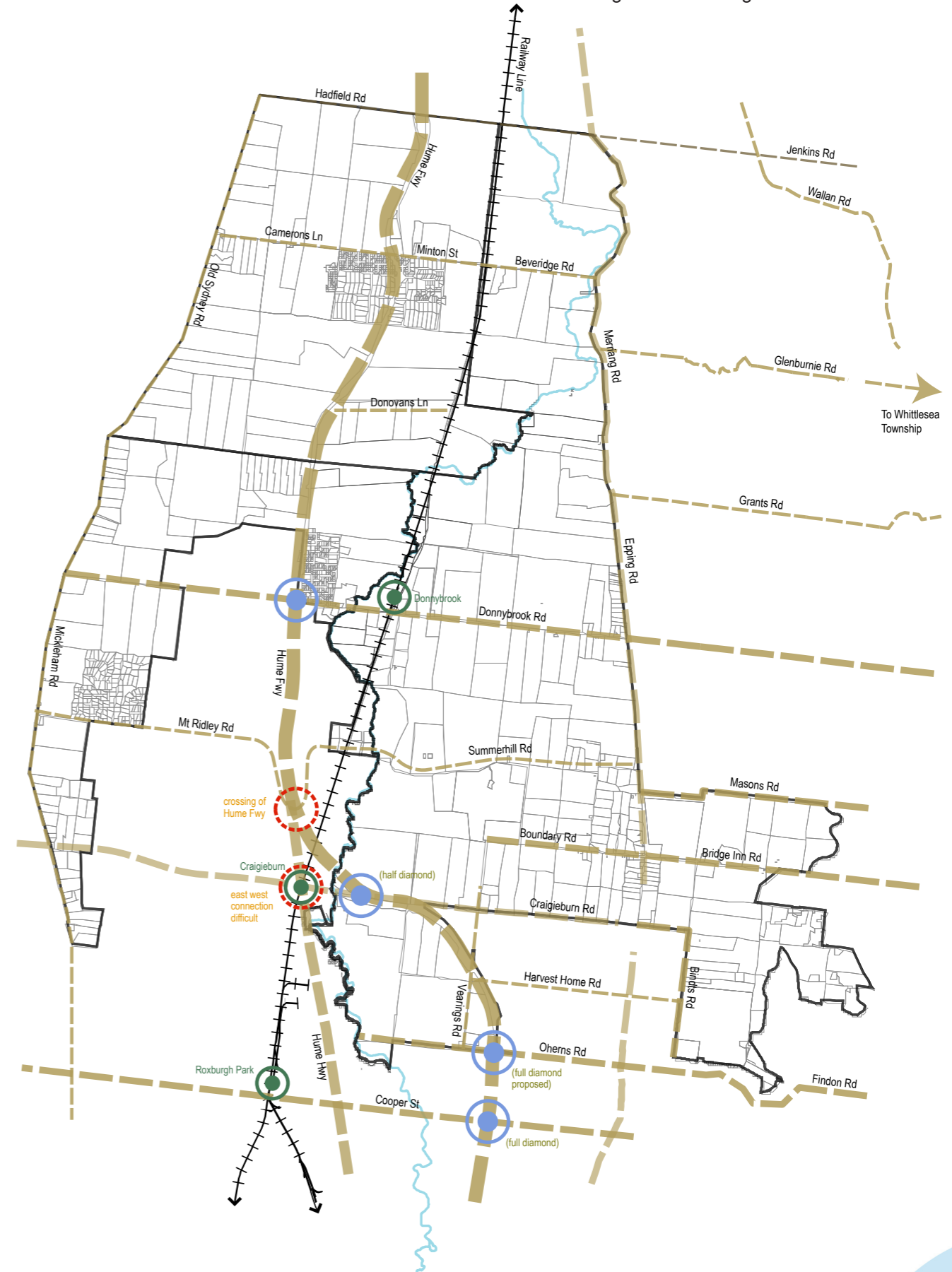
Epping Road/Merriang is a two lane arterial road, constructed to a rural standard and controlled by VicRoads.

The east-west road network consists of a variety of sealed and unsealed roads, constructed to a rural standard. East-west access from the Whittlesea investigation area across to Hume and Mitchell is provided by Craigieburn Road, Summerhill Road, Donnybrook Road and Beveridge Road. Of these, only Donnybrook Road and Beveridge Road provide easy through connectivity. Craigieburn Road and Summerhill Road are both diverted at the Hume Freeway, to create indirect connections. As illustrated in Figure 21, existing roads are concentrated in the southern parts of the investigation area, with few east-west roads in the northern portion. East-west connectivity has been a long standing issue within the City of Whittlesea, with O'Herns Rd/Findon Rd the only planned east-west connection. This issue must be given careful consideration in any new growth area.

Connections to the east are provided by Bridge Inn Road, Masons Road and Donnybrook Road (to Mernda) and Grants Road (to Whittlesea Township). Donnybrook Road is an important link in providing direct access from the Mernda corridor to Donnybrook and on to the Hume corridor.

By rail the area has limited accessibility to the CBD via the Melbourne to Sydney V-Line route that stops in Craigieburn and Donnybrook. It is noted that a train station is currently not provided in Beveridge. Under current timetabling, this V-Line route provides the opportunity for commuters to travel into the CBD in 36 minutes. However, it is noted that services are limited within the peak periods, due to metropolitan rail congestion in North Melbourne.

Figure 21: Existing Access and Circulation



SITE CONDITIONS



Figure 22: Proposed Access and Circulation



Proposed Access and Circulation

Proposed transport connections affecting the Whittlesea investigation area include:

- The proposed **Outer Metropolitan Ring Road (OMR)** that is understood to extend from Geelong and into Whittlesea north of Bald Hill (along the Donovans Lane alignment). The OMR is also proposed to include a high-speed freight rail line.
- The **E6**, which was originally planned as an arterial road. It is understood that consideration is being given to the development of the E6 as 6 lane freeway connecting to the Western Ring Road, generally utilizing the alignment of Epping Road within the investigation area.
- The **Epping North Rail Line**, is proposed (under current structure planning for the Epping North growth area) to spur off the current Epping line north of Lalor station and to travel through the Epping Central principal activity centre, through to the northern boundary of the Aurora Estate. It is understood that there are long term plans to extend this rail line further north, potentially connecting with Donnybrook township.



Figure 23: Existing Surrounding Developments

Existing Surrounding Developments

Development surrounding the investigation area consists of a variety of land uses.

The southern portion of the Whittlesea Investigation area consists of:

- The Epping North growth area
- The South Morang growth area
- The Mernda/Doreen Growth area

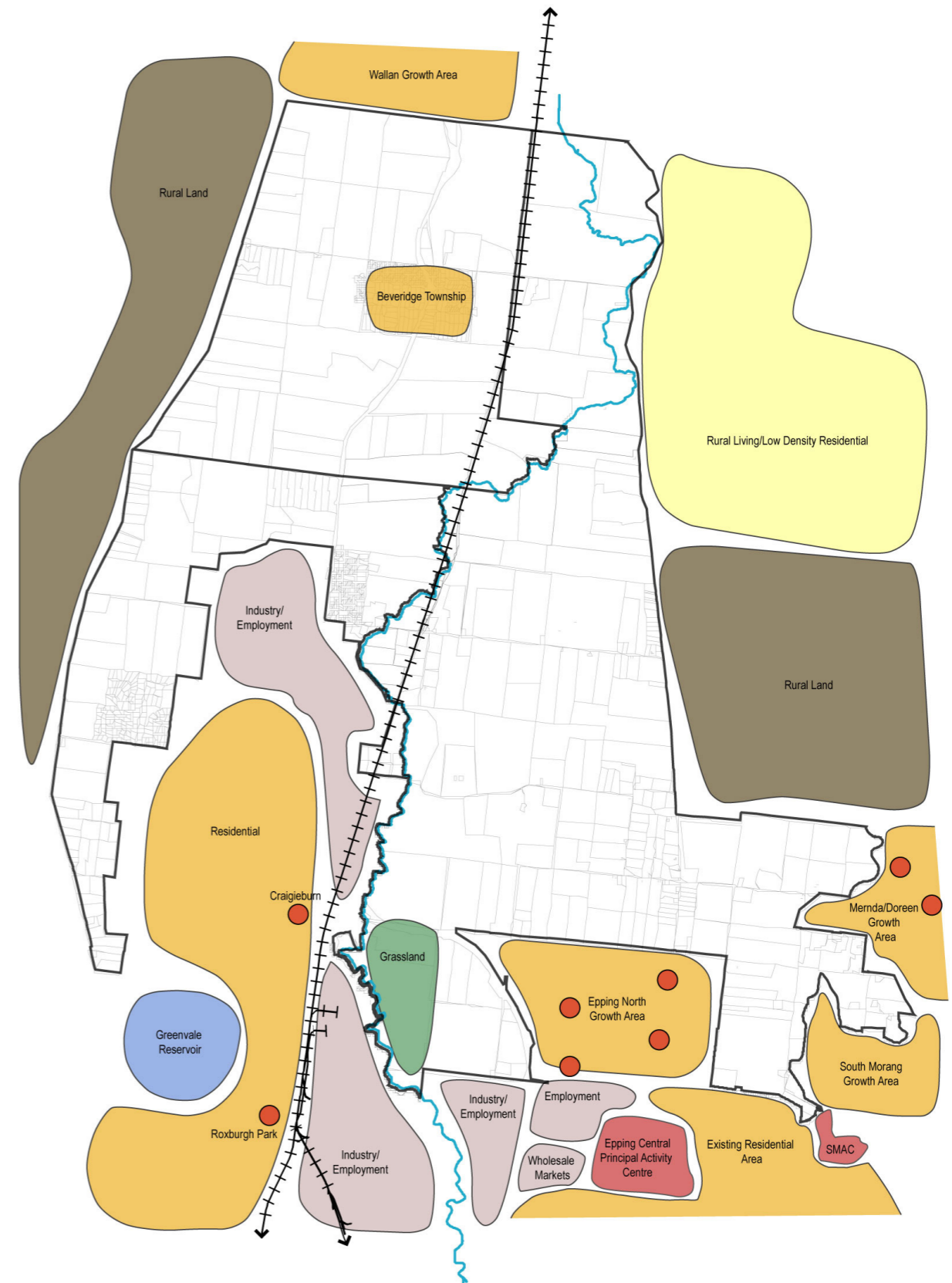
Each of these growth areas comprises mainly residential development of varying densities, with a network of activity centres located across the growth areas.

The principal activity and employment centres are Epping Central and the Cooper Street Employment Area (servicing the Epping corridor) and the South Morang Activity Centre, incorporating the Plenty Valley Town Centre and McDonalds Road employment area (servicing the South Morang and Mernda corridor).

To the east of the investigation area are rural areas contained within Whittlesea's Green Wedge. To the north-east is a large rural living precinct, which comprises allotments of around 8ha, within the hills.

To the west of the investigation area is rural land located within Hume, and to the north, is the proposed extent of the Wallan growth area (not currently developed).

The existing Beveridge township is located within Mitchell Shire's investigation area. Beveridge Township is a small township at present, bisected by the Hume Freeway, with a population of approximately 300 people. The township is proposed to significantly expand as part of this process. It is understood that it is Mitchell Shire's position at this stage, that the current "green break" between Beveridge and Wallan Townships is to be maintained.



SITE CONDITIONS



Figure 24: Proposed Surrounding Developments



Proposed Development

As Whittlesea was planning for the area within its investigation area as a green wedge, there are currently no large scale developments proposed. Much of the area falls within the Department of Primary Industry's "extractive industry interest area" and it is understood that some large quarrying companies have purchased land within the area north of Donnybrook.

In contrast to Whittlesea, it is understood there are quite significant developments proposed within Hume and Mitchell's investigation areas, including:

- An extension to Beveridge to the west and south (known as Lockerbie), including a town centre near the Hume/Mitchell boundary. Train stations at Lockerbie and Beveridge are both planned
- Residential extension west of Merrifield.



Figure 25: Existing Activity Centres

Existing Activity Centres

Epping Central

Epping Central is the City of Whittlesea's Principal Activity Centre and will be a strategic focus for development and investment into the future. While Epping Central has the capacity to accommodate 476,374m² of retail floor space, population demand projects that it is more likely that 113,420m² will be used. There are 9 established bus routes that directly service the Epping Central area, and the Epping North is planned to extend through the heart of Epping Central.

Broadmeadows

Broadmeadows is considered the City of Hume's principal Activity Centre. It currently has 66,723m² of retail space and it is proposed to reach 33,105m² within 20 years. The activity centre will comprise a public transport interchange incorporating bus and rail services.

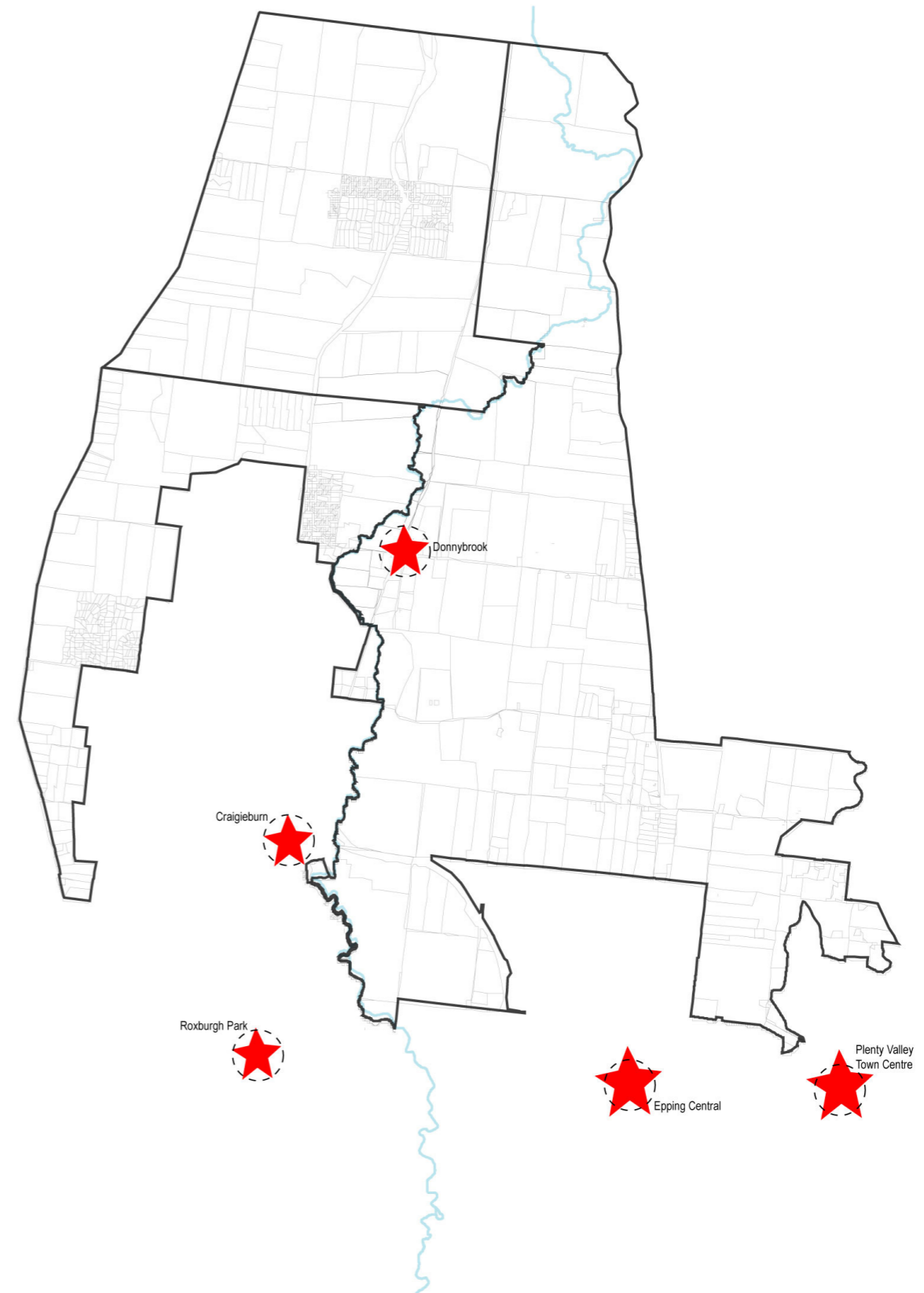
Plenty Valley Town Centre

The Plenty Valley Town Centre (PVTC) is considered a Major Activity Centre, and is located in the eastern section of the City of Whittlesea, bounded by McDonalds Road to the north, Civic Drive to the west, the proposed extension of Civic Drive to the south and the Yan Yean Pipe Track to the east. It was anticipated that there would be a total of 50,000m² – 70,000m² of retail floor area. A development plan is currently being prepared for this project by Westfield which should address the ultimate floor space issue.

A public transport interchange is proposed within this precinct which will essentially create a hub for future bus and train services with ancillary retail activities and services to meet the needs of commuters and visitors. As well as providing public transport opportunities to the immediate and wider areas, the transport hub will also ensure legible and convenient access to all areas of the PVTC.

Donnybrook

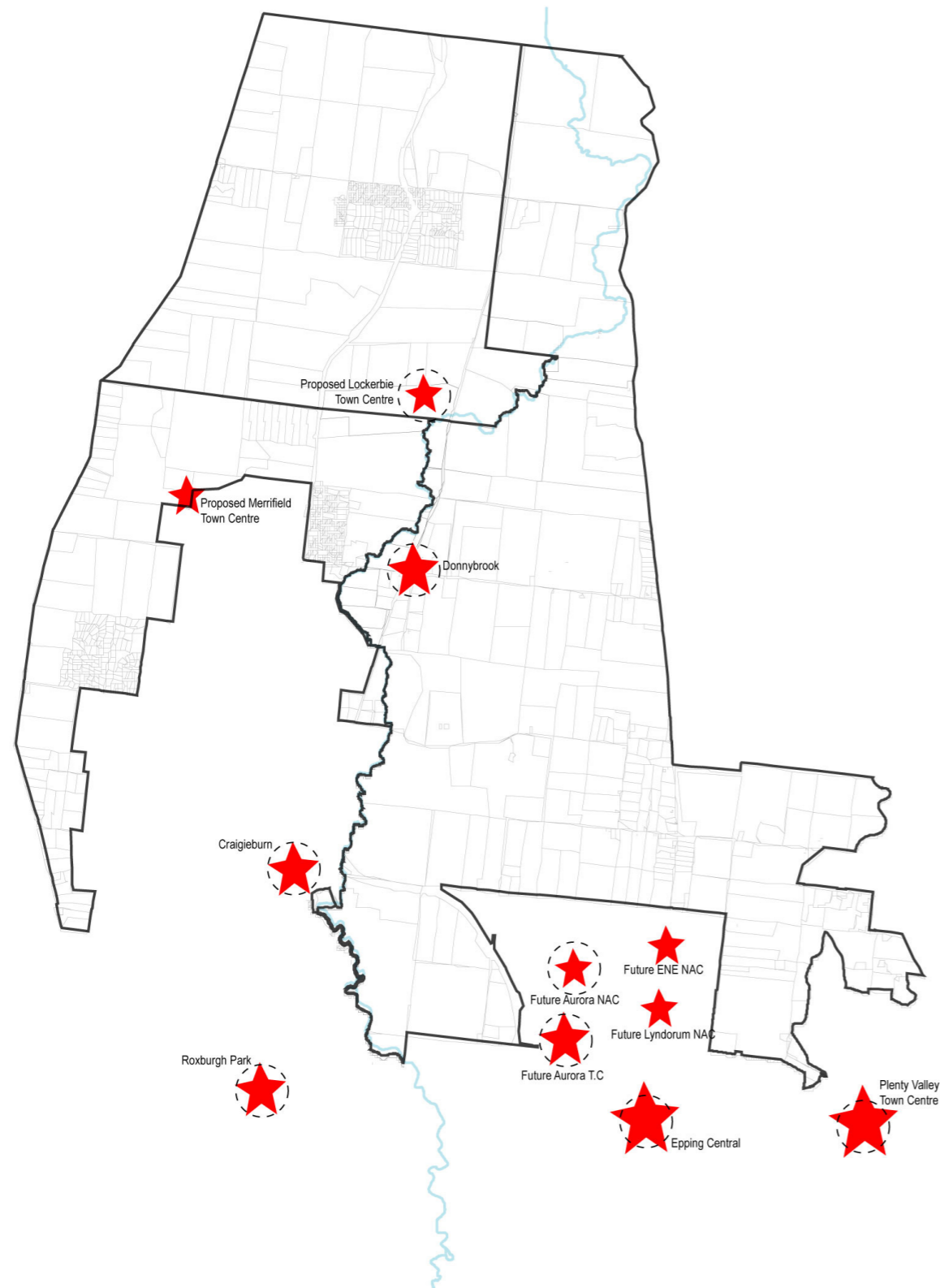
The Donnybrook township currently consists of a general store, a hotel/pub, a number of dwellings and a V-Line service.



SITE CONDITIONS



Figure 26: Proposed Activity Centres



Proposed Activity Centres

Aurora

Aurora contains two major activity centres, a Neighbourhood Activity Centre (NAC) and a Town Centre (TC).

The Neighborhood Activity Centre is proposed to accommodate approximately 6000m² of retail and non-retail space and is planned to include a supermarket. In its south a Community Activity Centre incorporating a pre-school and community services/facilities and a primary school will be provided. This will be focussed around a proposed public transport station/interchange as part of the extension in the future of the Epping North Transport Corridor.

The Town Centre is proposed to accommodate approximately 14,000m² of retail and non-retail floor space, which is expected to include a discount department store, a full scale supermarket and additional retail and non retail specialties. This activity centre will be served by public transport station/ interchange, and is immediately north of O'Herns Roads which will be the main east-west link through Whittlesea.

Merrifield Town Centre

The proposed Merrifield activity centre is a mixed use activity centre, which will accommodate employment, services and transport. Given this is still early in the development phase the extent of floorspace for specific uses within the activity centre has to be finalised. It is limited in proximity to the E14 transport corridor which links with the Craigieburn Town Centre.

Lyndarum Neighborhood Activity Centre

The Lyndarum Neighborhood Activity Centre is to be located on Lyndarum Drive, at its intersection with Epping Road. The majority of retail and commercial floor space is to be situated north of Lyndarum Drive. The total Gross Leasable Area of the retail and commercial precincts is anticipated to be around 6,500m², which will include a full line supermarket of 3,200m². Around 3,300m² of specialty shops and services will also be located within the centre, including 1,840m² of retail specialty stores and 1,450m² of non-retail floor space, including a tavern, commercial space and medical centre.

Public transport services to Epping North are currently limited to a bus route along Epping Road and Harvest Home lane.

Epping North East Neighborhood Activity Centre

The Epping North East Neighborhood Activity Centre (NAC) will be a main street development accessed off Epping Road. The NAC is intended to be developed as a main street based activity centre and incorporate a mix of designated areas which include retail, commercial and community facilities, and is planned to accommodate residential or business uses on a second level. The maximum retail floor area is 3,000m², with limited line supermarket and minimum of 2 storey built form. The NAC provides for bus access and on the main street.

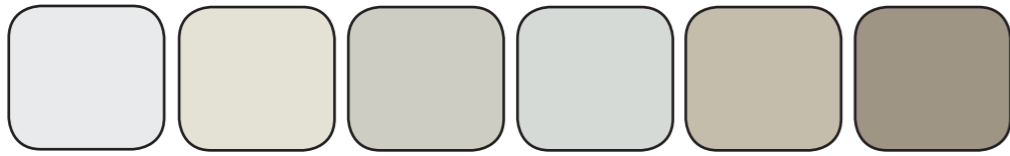
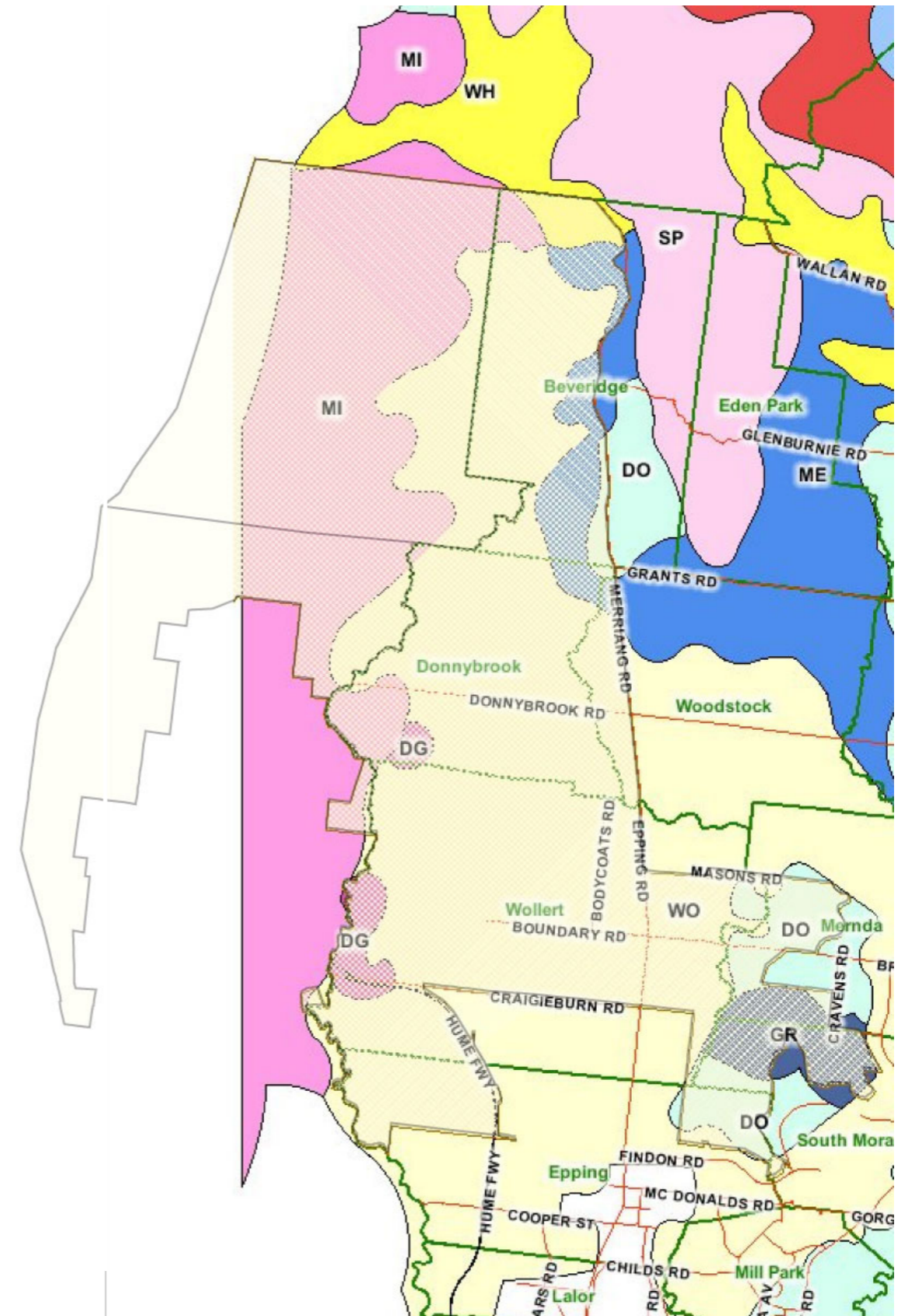


Figure 27: Land Systems

Agricultural value

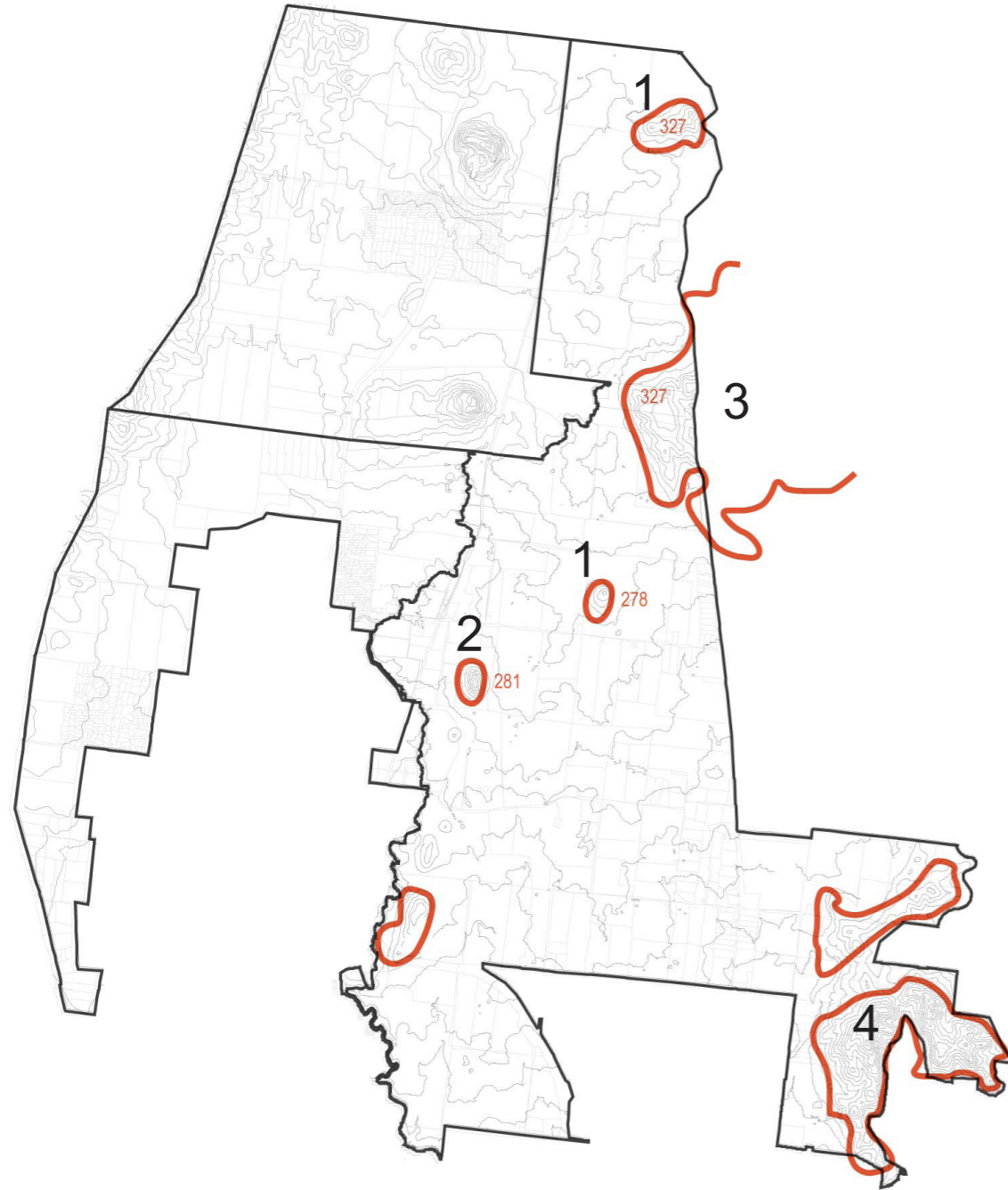
The majority of the UGB is classified as being within the “Wollert” land system, which is dominated by undulating volcanic plains with stony rises. This area currently supports livestock grazing including beef and sheep and limited cash cropping. The land is characterised by increasing weed and pest populations and is suffering in part from declining land management particularly with encroaching urban development; an issue that is likely to become more pronounced over time.



SITE CONDITIONS



Figure 28: Hilltops



Topography

The majority of the UGB investigation area is predominantly flat, however, there is a gentle slope from the northern part of the investigation area to south that has the potential to provide uninterrupted views to the city.

(1) Two small hilltops are located within the investigation, and given the flat surrounding land, are quite prominent, and should be protected from development. (2) A third hilltop is located in the investigation area, but is currently being quarried, and is expected to be exhausted (leveled) within ten years.

(3) The area to the east of Epping Road, in the northern portion of the investigation becomes quite steep, which forms a scenic backdrop to the investigation area. (4) In addition, the Quarry Hills area in the south is elevated and steep in parts. Its topographic characteristics and site context provide an opportunity for the area to be a regional parkland within the municipality.



Figure 29: Drainage and Waterways

Drainage and Waterways

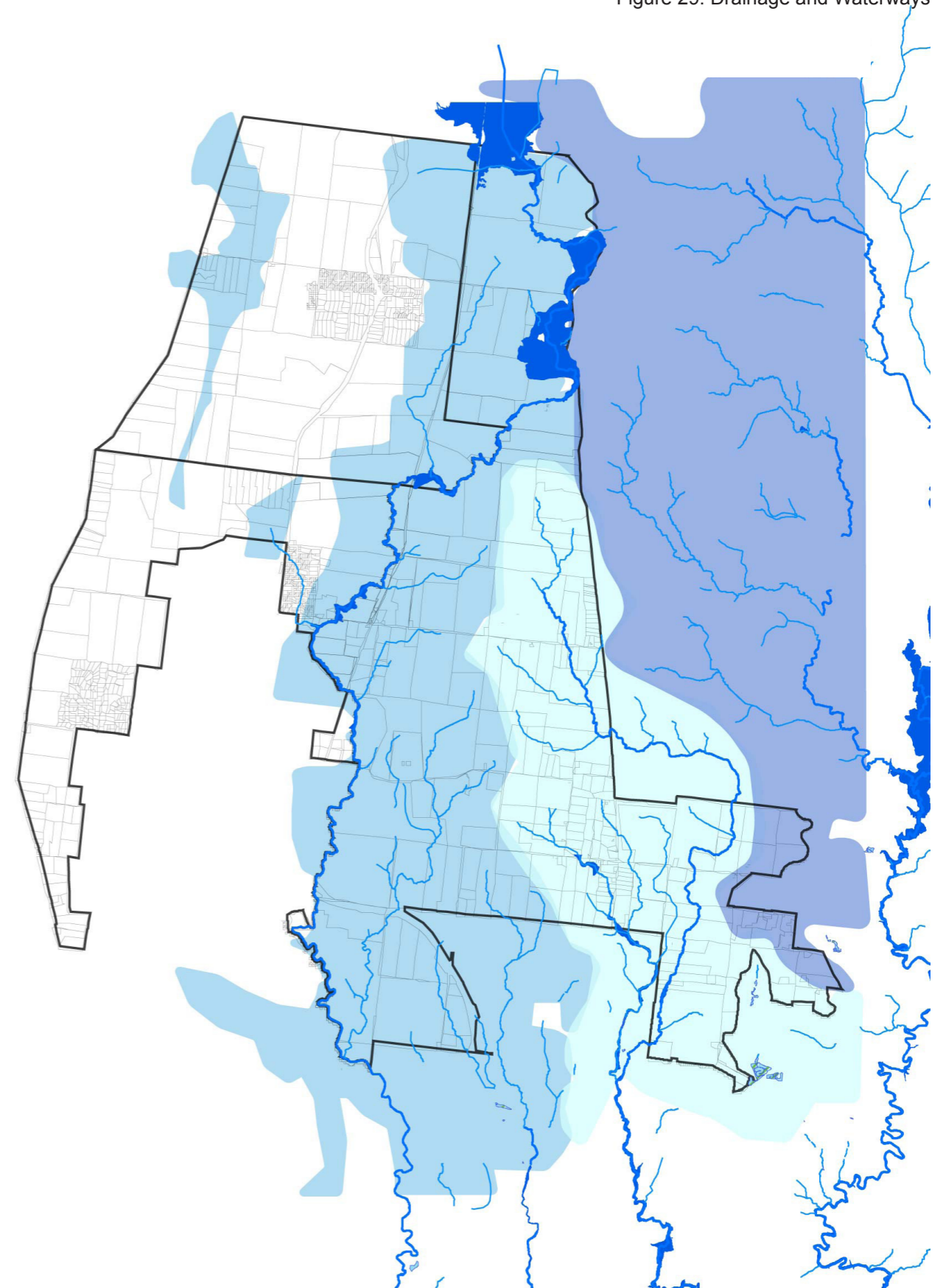
Three catchments exist within the Whittlesea investigation area: the Merri Creek Catchment to the west; the Darebin Creek Catchment, to the east; and a small portion of the Plenty River Catchment in the east around the northern parts of the Quarry Hills.

The Merri Creek and Darebin Creek catchments both have their headwaters located within the investigation area, which presents opportunities, but also responsibilities regarding responsible catchment management, and management of urban stormwater flows.

With regard to opportunities, it is Council's position that creeks and waterways should be reinstated to their natural form, and protected during development. These creeks can then be used as habitat corridors, and linear open space links for pedestrians and cyclists. Merri Creek in particular offers the opportunity to create a green link from the headwaters of the creek to the CBD (refer to the Merri Creek and Environs Strategy prepared by the Merri Creek Management Committee).

Merri Creek also provides a clear definition between the different characteristics of the Hume corridor and the Whittlesea corridor. However, the creek also presents barriers to movement due to the ecological sensitivities for the creek.

The Darebin Creek also presents as a break between the Quarry Hills to the east, and potential developable land to the west, and could be used as a natural definition of the UGB in this regard.



SITE CONDITIONS

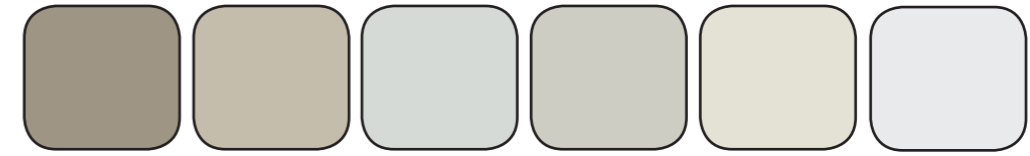
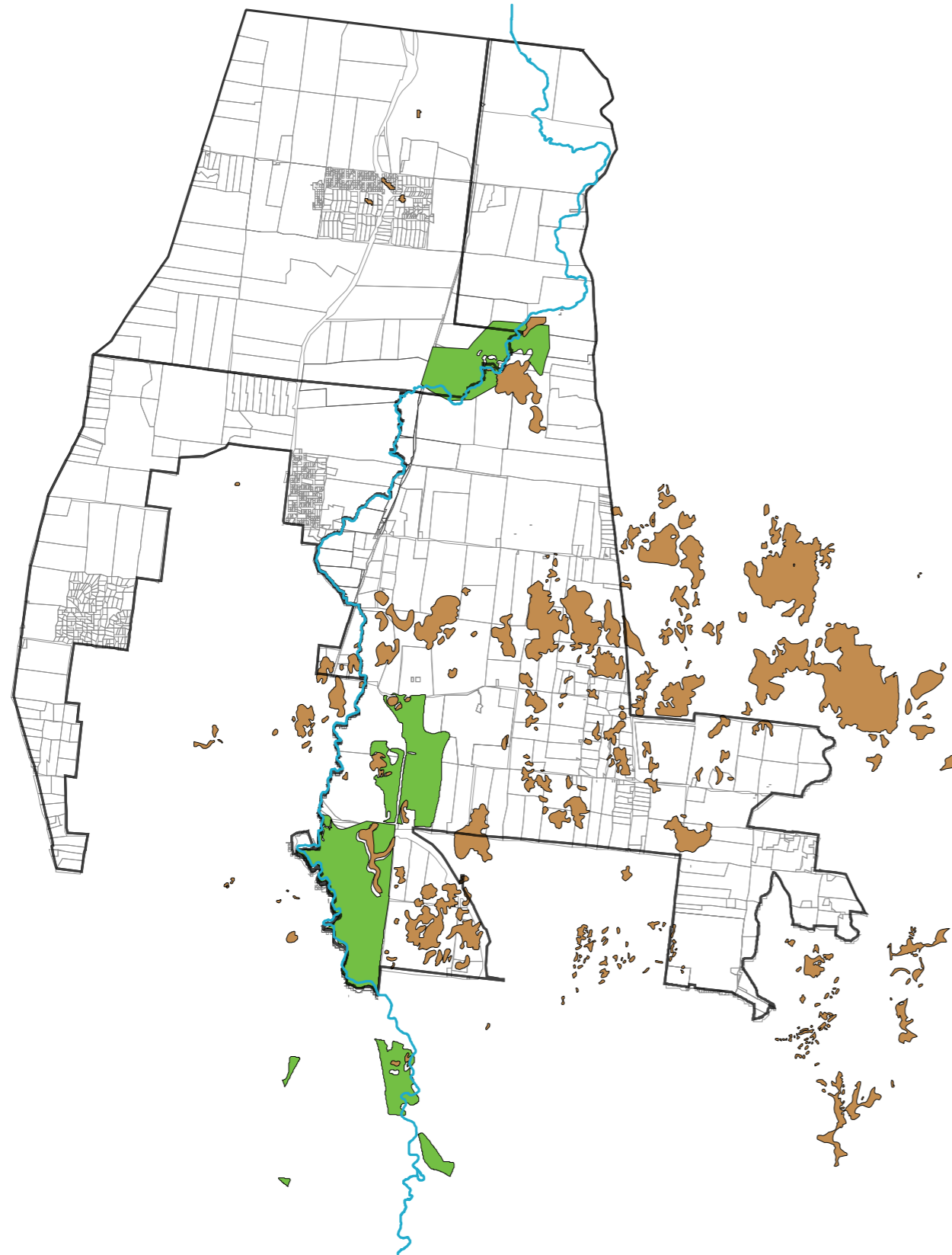


Figure 30: EVC's



Ecological Vegetation Classes

Two main ecological vegetation classes (EVCs) can be found within the Whittlesea investigation area; the Plains Grassland and Plains Grassy Woodland (characterized by an overstorey of River Red Gums). Both EVCs are critically endangered, and are of high ecological significance. It is Council's strong position that these EVCs must be protected and enhanced as part of any proposed extension of the UGB.

Two key areas of grassland are located adjacent to Merri Creek, and the woodlands are currently concentrated within the investigation area and are also scattered throughout the south. A potential grassland also exists east of Donnybrook. Maintaining and protecting these areas is critically important for their environmental and aesthetic value.

In contrast to the above, the northern and central parts of the investigation area not affected by EVCs.

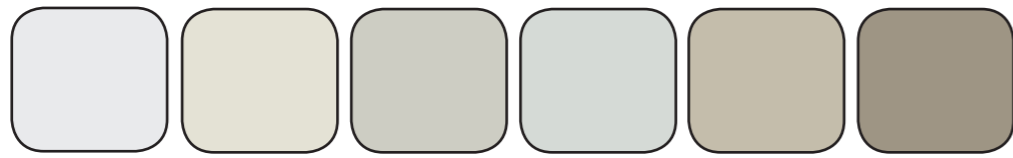


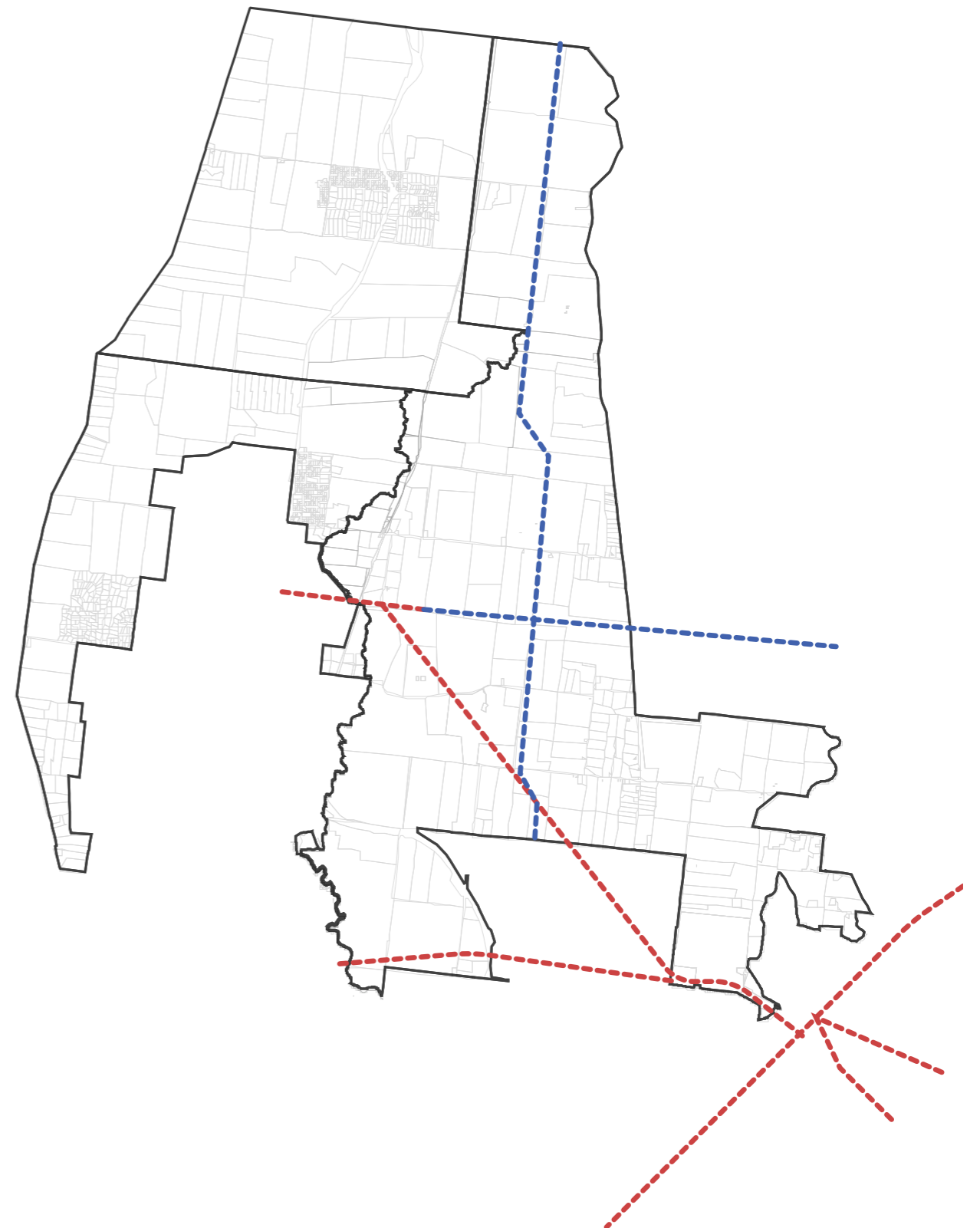
Figure 31: Transmission Easements

Easements

There are two main easements that affect the investigation area- a transmission easement and a gas main.

The transmission easement bisects the investigation area diagonally, and is approximately 110m wide. Transmission lines, and in particular, the pylons, are a significant visual constraint. Due to its diagonal alignment and size, the transmission easement will constrain standard north-south east-west block and road alignments. However, it will also provide an opportunity for a linear open space connection with existing development to the south and to Hume.

The gas main is approximately 20m wide. Unlike the diagonal alignment of the transmission easement, the gas main is less restrictive as it will not compromise north-south and east-west road connections, but still constrains development as it is unable to be developed upon. This easement also offers potential as a linear open space link.



SITE CONDITIONS

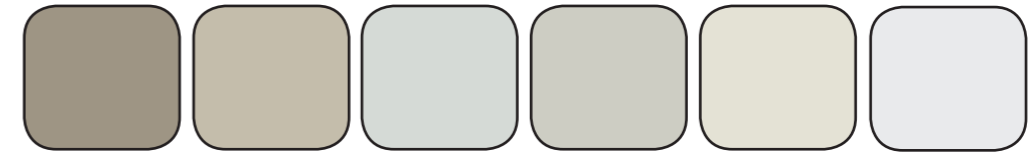
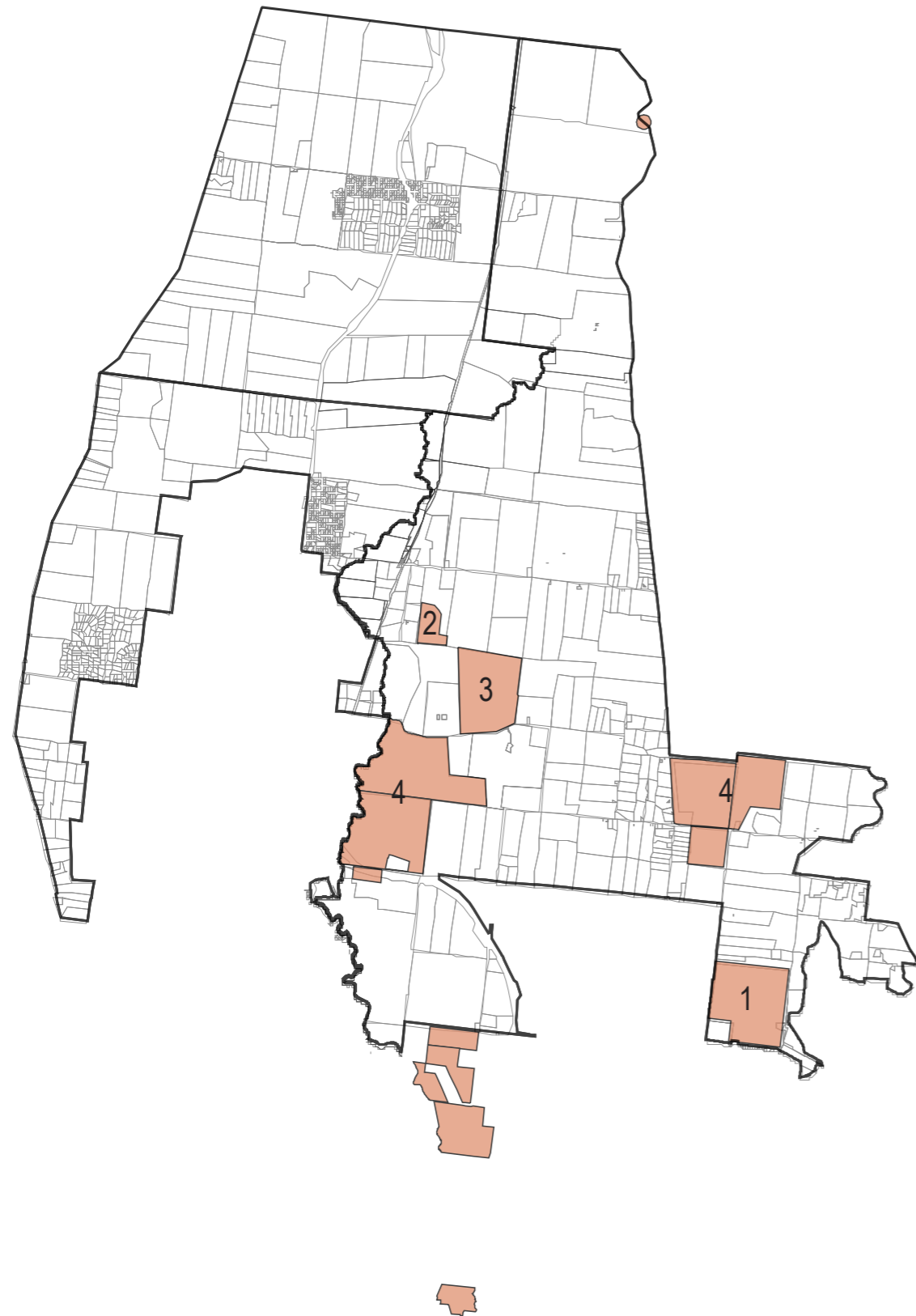


Figure 32: Quarries



Quarries

There are several existing and planned quarries located within the investigation area. Quarrying, and associated landfill operations are an important industry within the City of Whittlesea, and must be protected throughout this process.

1. This quarry is planned to be decommissioned and remediated in the near future, offering potential to be redeveloped for urban purposes
2. This quarry is to be exhausted within 10 years, thus also offering future development opportunities
3. A license has been issued for this quarry, however, is yet to be acted upon. The license is due to expire shortly, and its appropriateness for renewal will be considered in the context of this study
4. Both these existing quarries are considered to be viable in the long term, and to this end, have planned extensions which will allow the operators to quarry for approximately another 70 years. The eastern quarry is also a key landfill site for the City of Whittlesea



Figure 33: Views

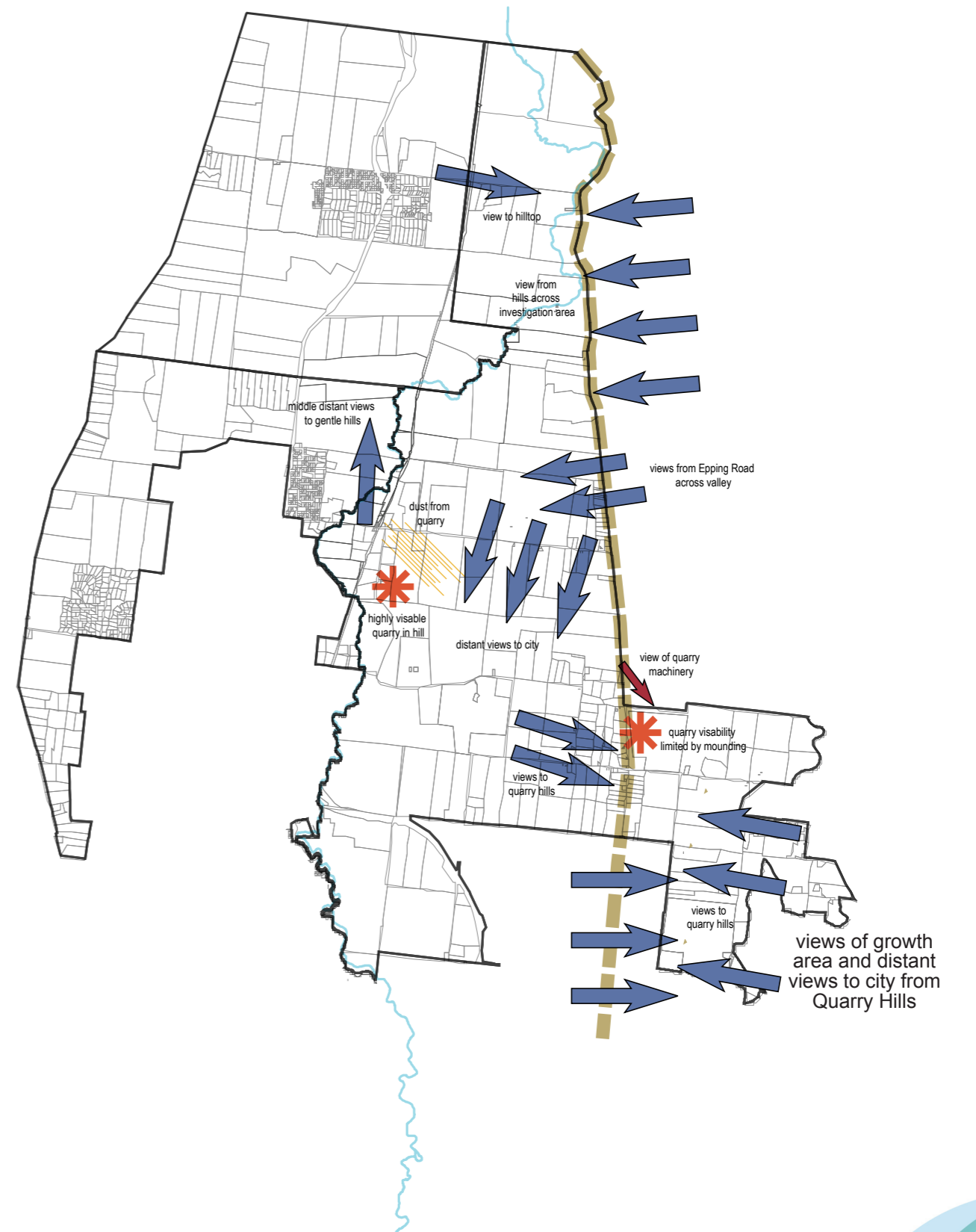
Views and Landscape Characteristics

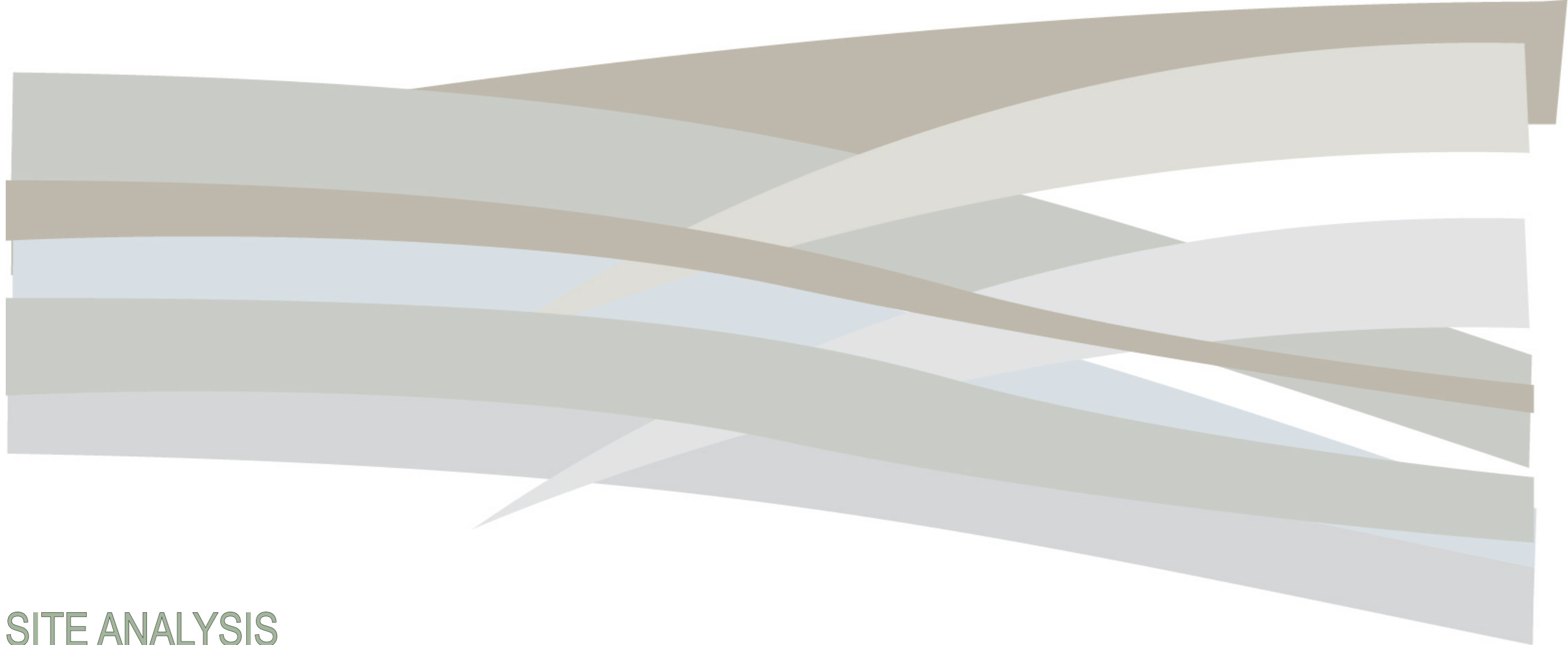
The land within the investigation area offers a diverse range of views which will need to be taken into account and protected in the context of any future development.

When travelling south along Epping/Merriang Road, the hills to the east provide a backdrop to the flatter land within the investigation area. These hills also provide a number of existing walking tracks for recreation purposes.

To the south, there are clear, distant views of the skyline of the Melbourne Central Business District. Continuing south down Epping Road, the road elevates to provide views across the valley to the south, while the hills either side of the road gives a sense of enclosure that cannot be experienced in other parts of the area. In the hills opposite Epping Road are located a number of rural/lifestyle lots, from which there are views that stretch across the investigation area.

However, from some vantage points in the area, machinery from the quarry is clearly visible and represents a visual constraint that should be considered in detailed design of any future developable areas.





SITE ANALYSIS



Figure 34: Development Constraints

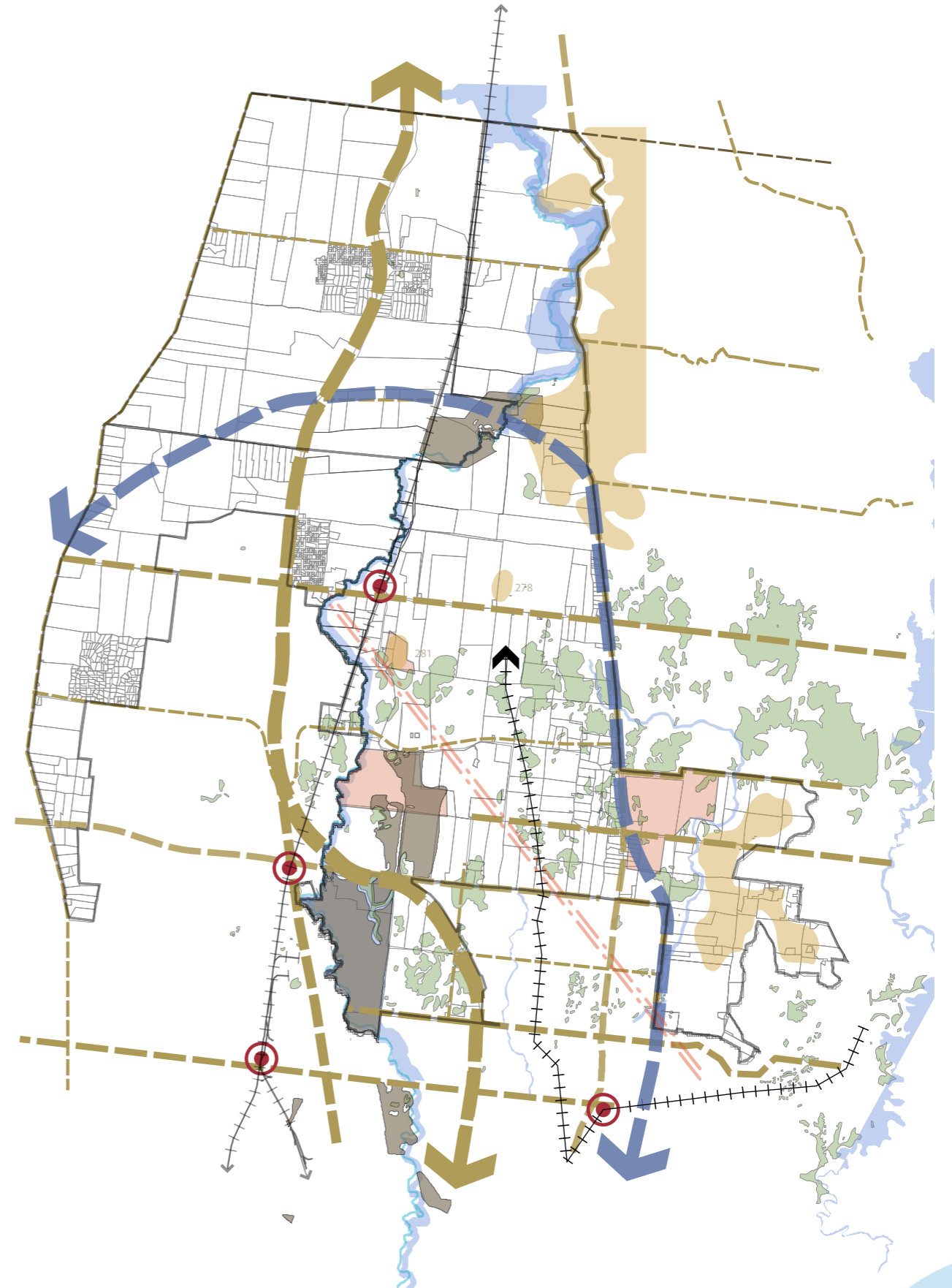
Introduction

Having described the existing conditions within the investigation area boundary, this chapter evaluates by way of site analysis the area's potential for urban development. The strengths and weakness of the investigation area are analysed, focusing on the key themes of development constraints; green breaks; the development framework and development precincts and fronts.

Development Constraints

Based on the site assessment from the previous chapter and a review of the site constraints and opportunities, the first step of analysis seeks to identify the land not suitable for development. Figure ** indicates the broad level development constraints across the investigation area, including:

- Creeks and floodways,
- Significant vegetation (EVCs)
- Quarries
- Easements
- Hilltops, and
- Key infrastructure, such as existing and proposed roads and rail.



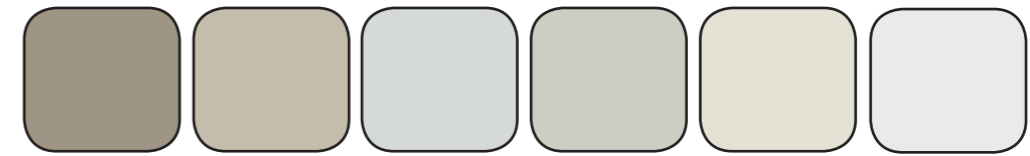
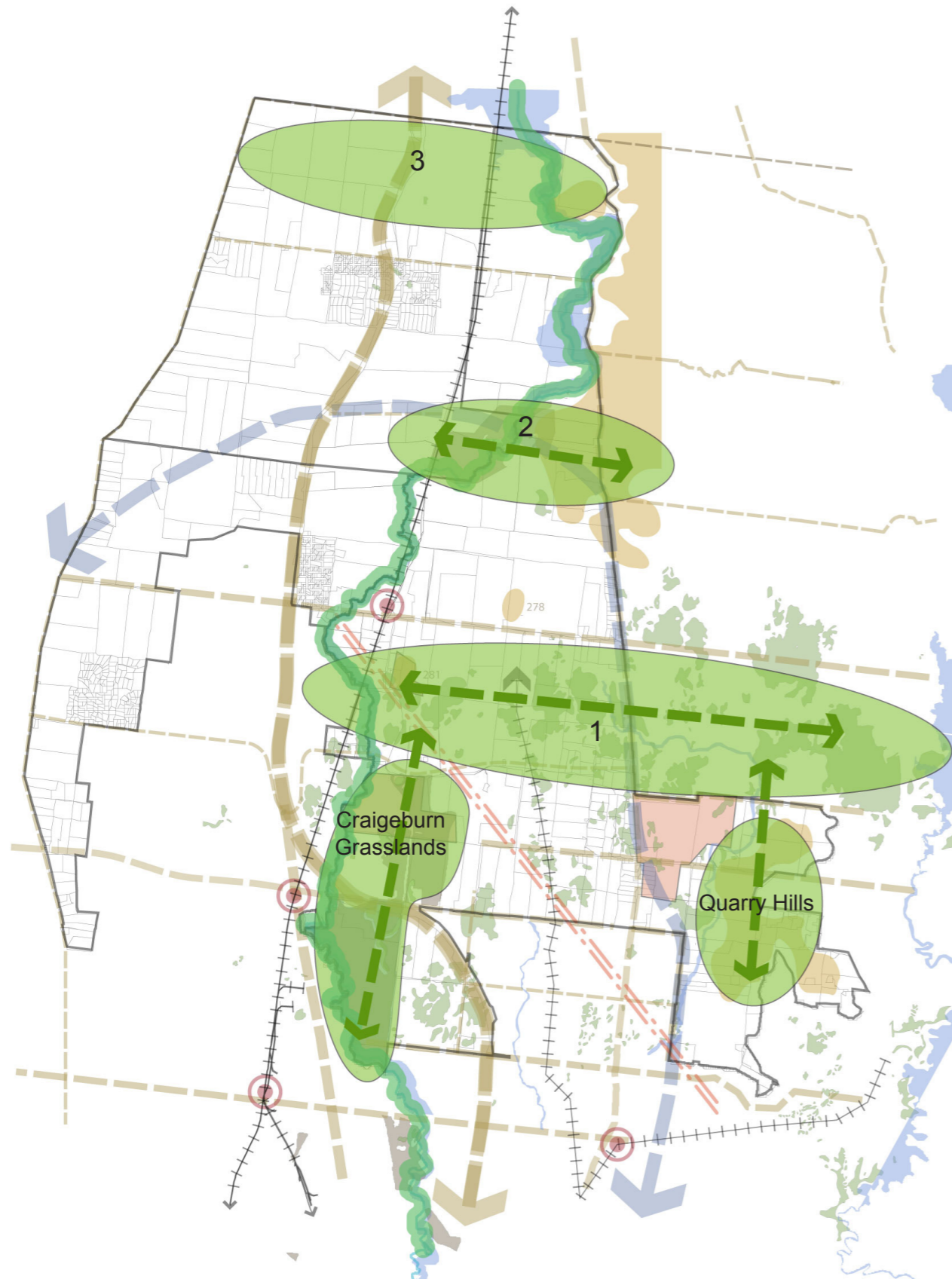


Figure 35: Green Breaks



Green breaks

It is a Council priority to ensure protection of our ecological heritage, and in particular, endangered EVCs. When reviewing the development constraints posed by the EVC areas, potential for a series of east-west green breaks and spaces emerge, which connect to the linear green break of the Merri Creek.

Green breaks provide the opportunity to preserve the habitat and ecological features of these rare EVCs, within an urban setting, to achieve the desired balance between developable land and land for environmental conservation, as articulated in the Guiding Principles section of the submission. The desire to achieve this balance is also evident within the Melbourne @ 5 Million document, where it is specifically stated that native red gum forests will be among the issues considered.

The green breaks noted in this section are conceptual only, and their extent would need to be more accurately defined at the more detailed planning level.

1. The size of the southern green break, while requiring refinement, makes it viable for conservation purposes, in contrast to isolated pockets in the existing growth areas. Smaller areas, while important, are limited in their ability to serve a genuine conservation function. An east-west green break between Summerhill Road and Donnybrook Road would represent a genuine commitment to conservation of the critically endangered Grassy Woodland EVC, and will provide habitat corridors from the Merri Creek to the rural land to the east. In addition, the green break would provide habitat and visual linkages between the future Quarry Hills Regional Parkland (see Quarry Hills section) in the east and the Craigieburn grasslands in the west.

2. The northern green break consists of a rare grassland, adjacent to the Merri Creek, and

a ridgeline that would be unsuitable for development from a cost and visual intrusion perspective. This green break will also serve as a break between potential residential development to the south and potential freight uses to the north.

3. A potential third green break is noted in Mitchell Shire's investigation area, between Beveridge Township and Wallan. The potential for this green break to extend into Whittlesea is unclear at this time, as it would be dependant upon requirements of the freight terminal and targeted ecological studies. With regard to the latter, it is noted that the headwaters of the Merri Creek are likely to contain significant ecological values, however this has not been determined to any degree of accuracy at this time.

While ideally the green breaks would be in public ownership for conservation purposes, it is unlikely that there will be a mechanism available to acquire this land (excluding the Quarry Hills, which is proposed to be treated differently – see Quarry Hills Section). As such, it is recommended that the land remain in private ownership, with strict protection in the planning scheme. It may be possible for this area be used for native vegetation offsets, or enabling developments, such as institutional uses in a "campus" style environment.

Issues to consider:

- EVC mapping is outdated and hasn't been ground truthed. Detailed assessments need to be undertaken before green breaks and EVC protection areas can be confirmed.
- How can green breaks be treated to ensure their ongoing protection from development pressures but still enable uses complementary to environmental protection, such as campus style institutional uses?



Development Framework

Figure 36 overlays the key components that will form the structure for the future growth within the investigation area. These components include:

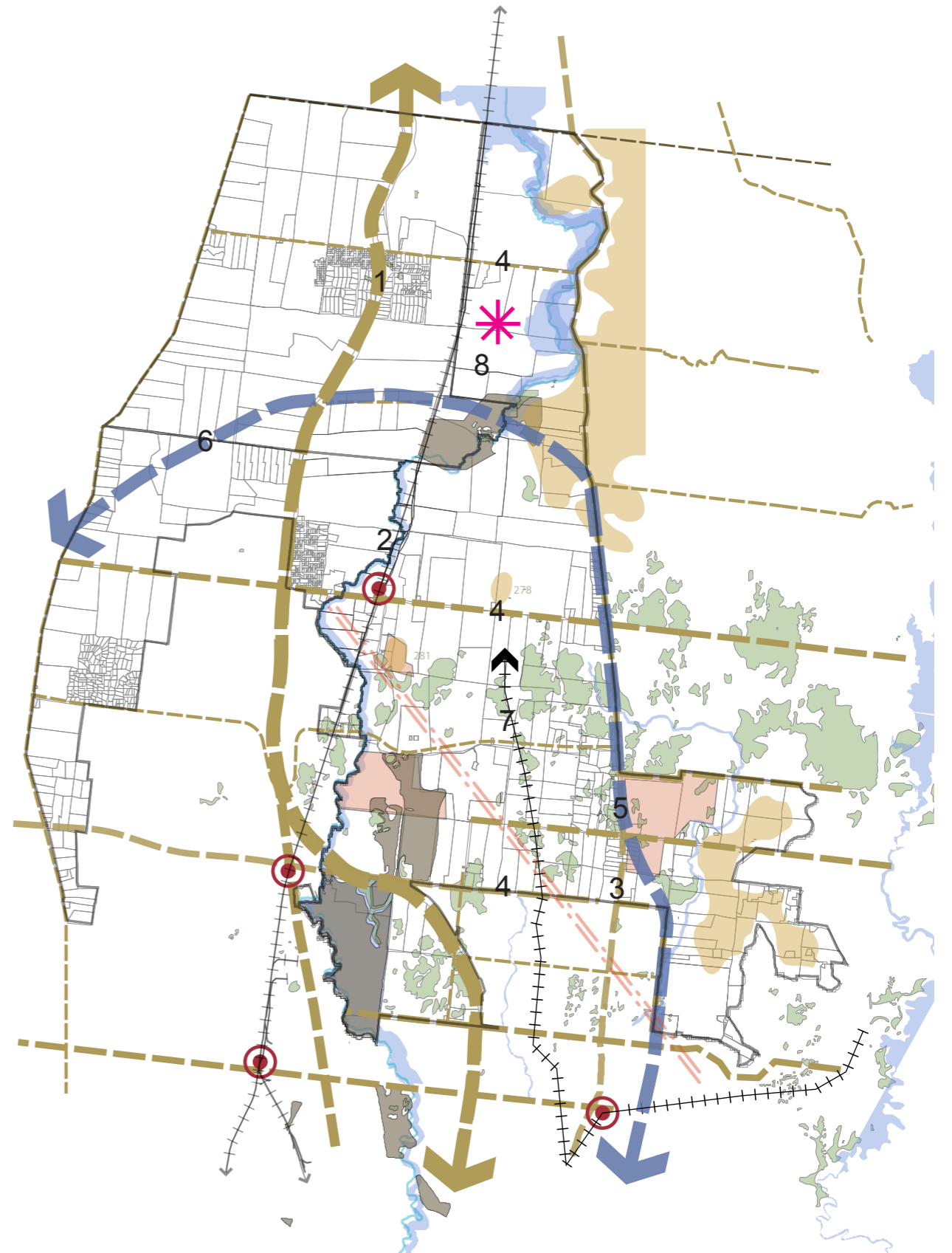
EXISTING
1. Hume Fwy
2. Melbourne – Sydney Rail and Train Station at Donnybrook
3. Epping Road
4. Key East-West Connections – Craigieburn Road, Donnybrook Road and Beveridge Road
PROPOSED
5. E6 Fwy
6. Outer Metropolitan Rign Road
7. Epping North Rail Line Extension
8. Freight Terminal

This infrastructure, particularly, the proposed E6 and freight terminal, have the potential to largely define the outcome of this investigation. That is, it appears that the E6 as a freeway, will form the eastern most 'edge' to development, and the freight terminal, will define the northern boundary. It is considered that more information/justification be provided, given the large-scale impacts of these two key elements.

Issues to consider:

- Justification should be provided for the requirement of the E6 to be constructed as a freeway, rather than an arterial road.
- More information about the freight terminal and associated uses is required, in order to determine the land use impacts of the facility.
- Genuine commitment to delivery of the Epping North rail line, and it's extension into the investigation area is required to service the new communities.
- How can development capitalise on existing infrastructure in the area, such as Donnybrook station and connections to the Hume Freeway?

Figure 36: Development Framework



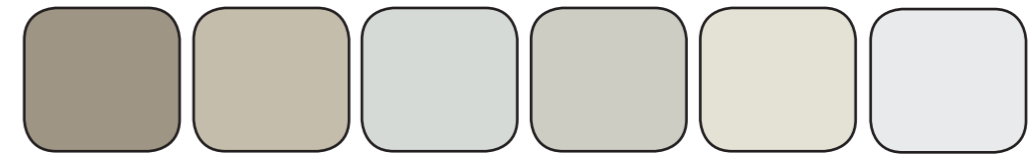
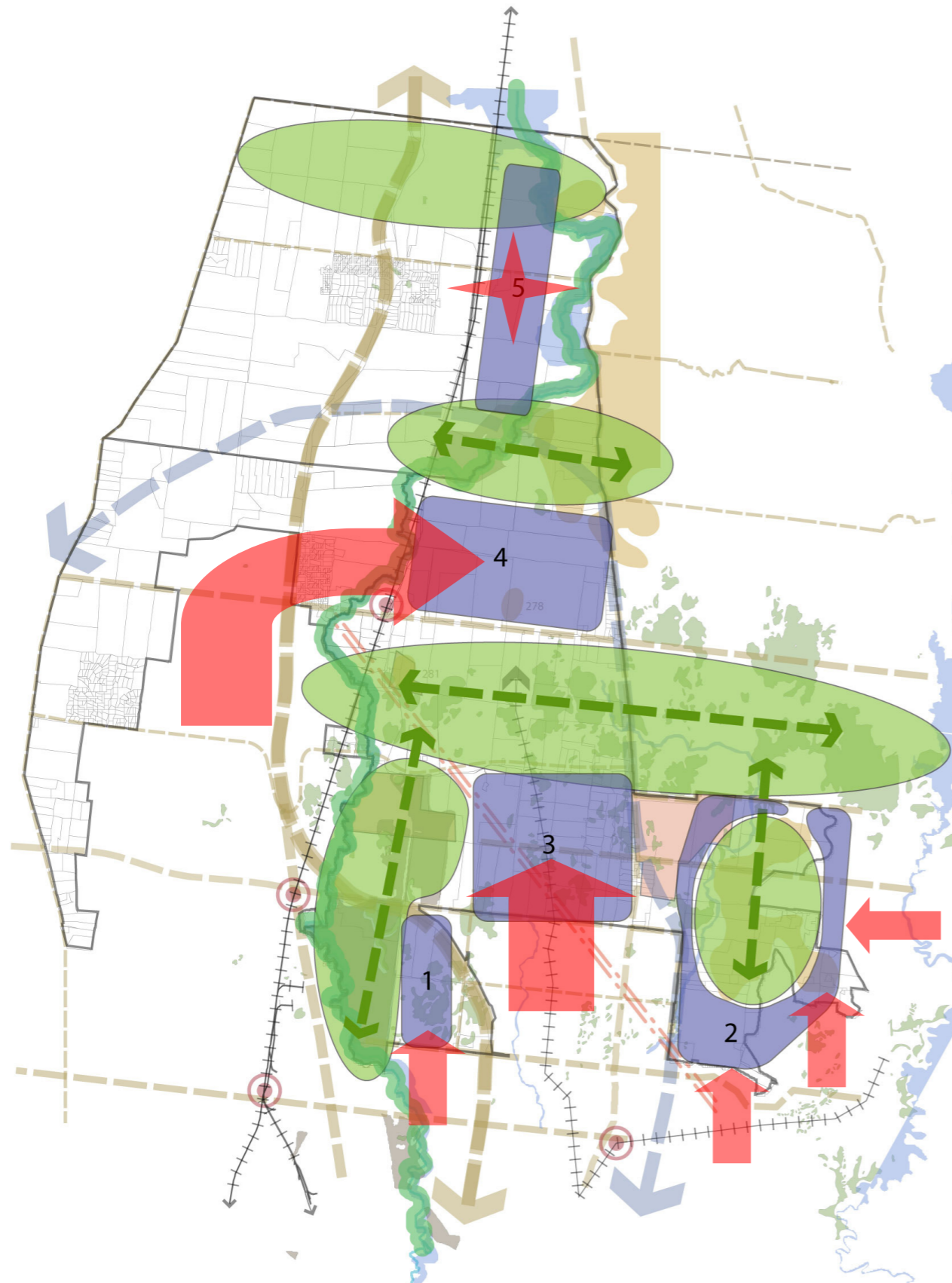


Figure37: Development Precincts and Fronts



Development Precincts

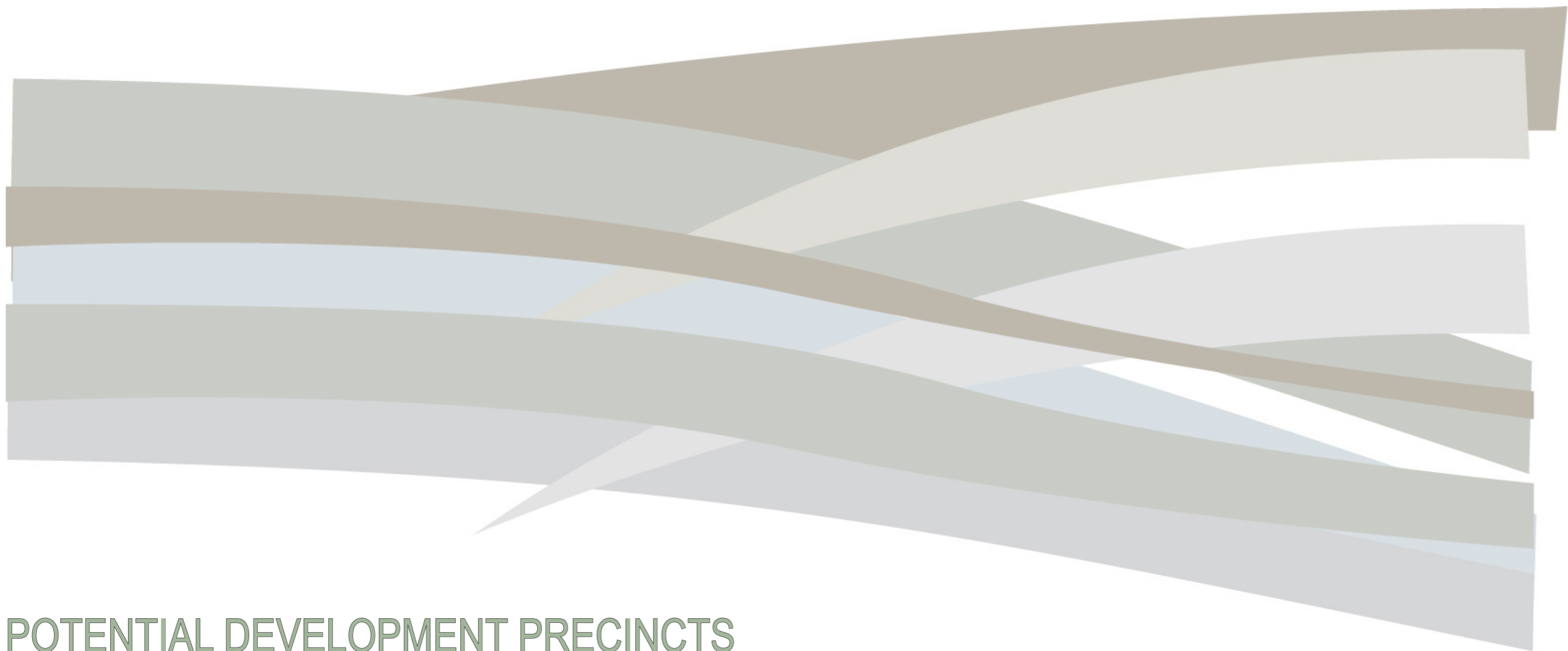
Figure 37 highlights the potential development precincts taking account of the green breaks and development frameworks. These are summarised as follows:

1. **Cooper Street West** – Extension to the north of the Cooper Street Employment Area;
2. **Quarry Hills** – Small extensions of the Mernda and South Morang growth areas into the foothills of the Quarry Hills;
3. **Wollert** – Extension to the north of the Epping North growth area;
4. **Donnybrook** – Extension to the east of the Craigieburn growth corridor;
5. **Beveridge** – isolated development in Beveridge between the rail line and the Merri Creek.

Each of these precincts, and their associated issues and implications are discussed in turn in the following section.



T H I S P A G E H A S B E E N P U R P O S E L Y L E F T B L A N K



POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PRECINCTS

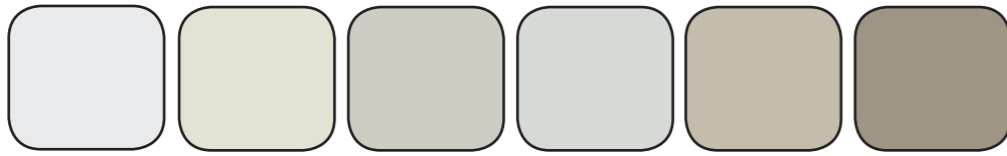


Figure 38: Cooper Street West

Precinct 1 – Cooper Street West

The Cooper Street West Precinct, as discussed earlier, is already subject of a current Council run strategic investigation. The precinct, located between the Craigieburn Bypass and the Craigieburn grasslands north of O’Herns Road, is considered to be the logical extension of the Cooper Street Employment Area, located to the south east.

The area is considered to be a key location for additional employment land within the City of Whittlesea. This will ensure jobs are provided locally for new residents within the existing and future growth areas, consistent with Council and the State Government’s aims of creating an appropriate jobs and housing balance.

The precinct enjoys good access to the Hume Freeway (Craigieburn Bypass) and is co-located with other employment land to the east and south (the Northpoint business Park and the Melbourne Wholesale Markets site within the Cooper Street Employment Area). To maximise these locational advantages it is considered that the majority of the precinct would be appropriate for employment uses. To the extent to which the area can accommodate other uses such as residential, needs to be further reviewed and assessed against the objectives of *Melbourne 2030*. As previously discussed, Council has already commenced preliminary structure planning for the Cooper Street West area, with the intention of addressing these and other specific issues.

A number of key constraints are noted, that will impact on the development yield of the precinct. These include:

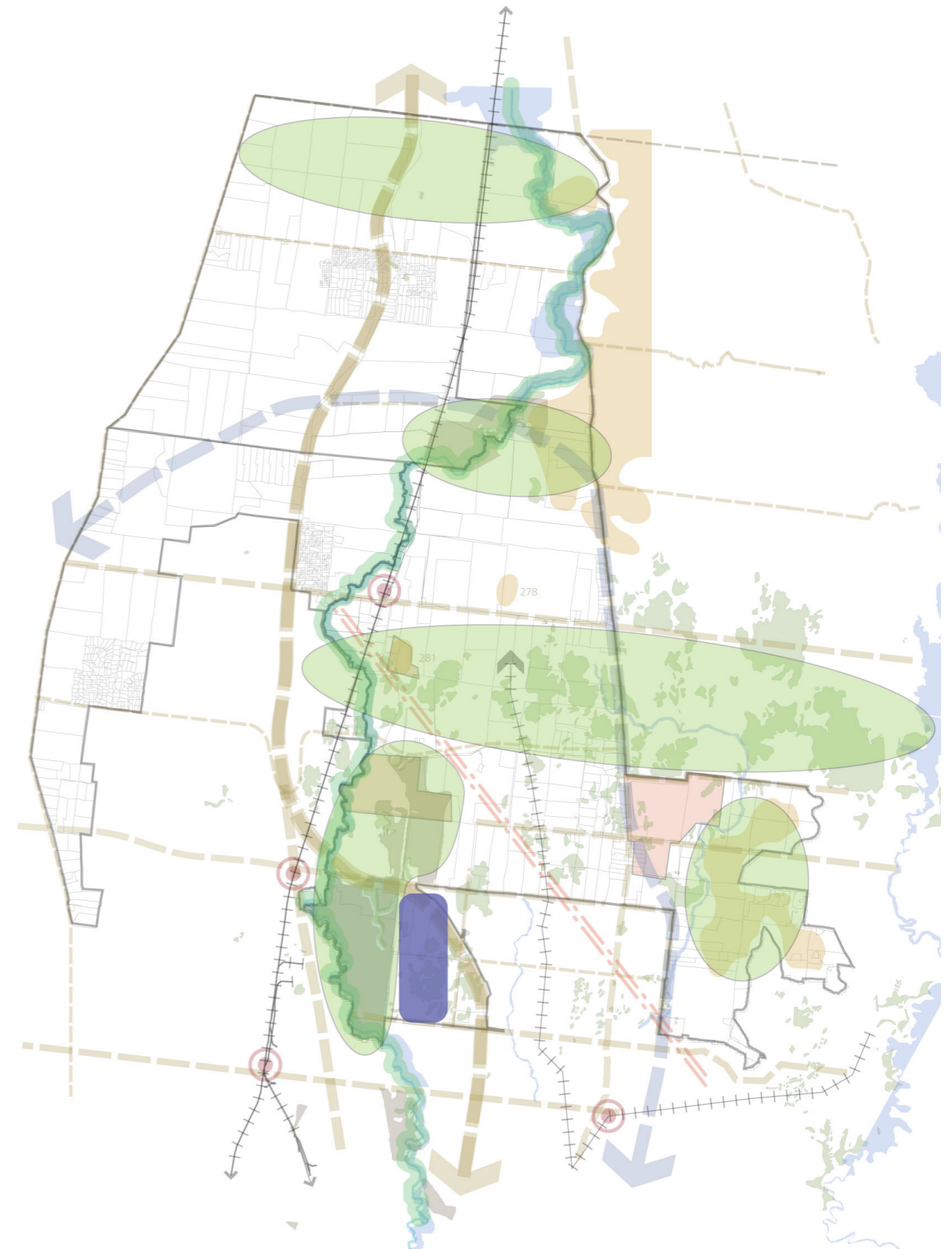
- A large area of grassy woodland EVC
- Yarra Valley Water’s Aurora Sewage Treatment Plant is located in the northern part of the precinct. This plant requires buffers, that must not be compromised. In the context of further expansion to the Epping North Growth Area, this plant may need to also be expanded to service the new growth.

While not technically within the investigation area, the land to the south of O’Herns Road within the existing UGB is being considered with the land to the north. This land is more constrained than the land to the north, by current and previous quarrying activity. As such, it is most likely to be contain employment uses.

By considering these two areas together, Council is seeking to ensure a coordinated and holistic plan is prepared for this future employment precinct. Of key importance at this point in time is facilitating the waste recycling plant in the southern part of the Cooper Street West area (within the existing UGB).

Issues to be considered:

- Further strategic work needs to be undertaken to prepare a holistic plan for the Cooper Street West precinct (both land in and outside the current UGB alignment)
- Further detailed site assessments, including ecological and geotechnical assessments, need to be undertaken to ensure environmental values are accurately documented and considered.
- Coordination with Yarra Valley Water is required to accurately define the needs of the Aurora Treatment Plant in an extended growth area context.





Precinct 2 – Quarry Hills

It is considered that while the Quarry Hills is defined as a precinct for the purposes of this submission, it is substantially different from the other precincts in terms of its form, purpose and how it should be addressed under the UGB investigation.

The Quarry Hills area, as noted in previous sections, is currently the subject of detailed strategic planning work that has been underway for a number of years. In summary, the Quarry Hills Precinct would consist of small extensions into the Quarry Hills from the fringes of the Mernda, South Morang and Epping North growth areas. These small extensions would be permitted, potentially up to the 185-190 contour level, in exchange for the balance of the landholding being transferred into Council ownership at no cost. This transferred land would then be set aside as parkland, to form the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland.

The primary purpose of the Quarry Hills study is to obtain a high quality regional parkland for the community of Melbourne’s north, similar in scale and function to Jells Park in Melbourne’s south east, without substantial Council or State government outlay of funds for acquisition. With this as the starting objective, any gain in developable land is seen as a benefit to the landowner as a means of achieving the net community benefit offered by the parkland offset. It is considered that this gain in developable land is also a benefit in terms of accommodating a portion of the anticipated growing population of Melbourne, but should not be seen as the sole reason for an adjustment to the UGB in this location. There is no benefit to be gained by extending the UGB into the Quarry Hills without the land transfer component. Without this aspect the extension of the UGB into the Quarry Hills should not be entertained.

It is not practical in today’s economic climate to achieve investments in large scale regional public open space, such as this, through standard acquisition practices. Thus, it is Council’s submission that the opportunity the Quarry Hills Precinct presents in obtaining a regional open space area at no acquisition cost to State or Local Government, and the substantial benefit this offers the community, must not be undermined by the current UGB investigation.

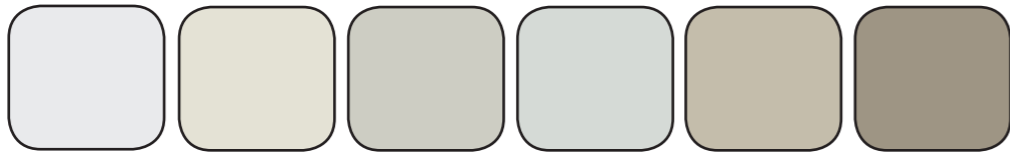
Options for the Quarry Hills:

Defer realignment of the UGB in this location, with acknowledgement that at a later date, once the strategic planning work for the Quarry Hills precinct has been done, that a realignment of the UGB in this location will occur. The realignment will be based on:

- site assessments that determine where development should extend based on slope, visual and environmental characteristics; and
- the landholder entering into an agreement to transfer the balance of the landholding to Council as open space.

or

Include the entire Quarry Hills within the UGB, but with specific conditions that protect the underlying rationale of the project, i.e. the transfer of land as open space at no cost in exchange for developable land. This could include as a possible option, not rezoning the land immediately, but dealing with each landholding on a case by case basis, once the above two conditions have been met.



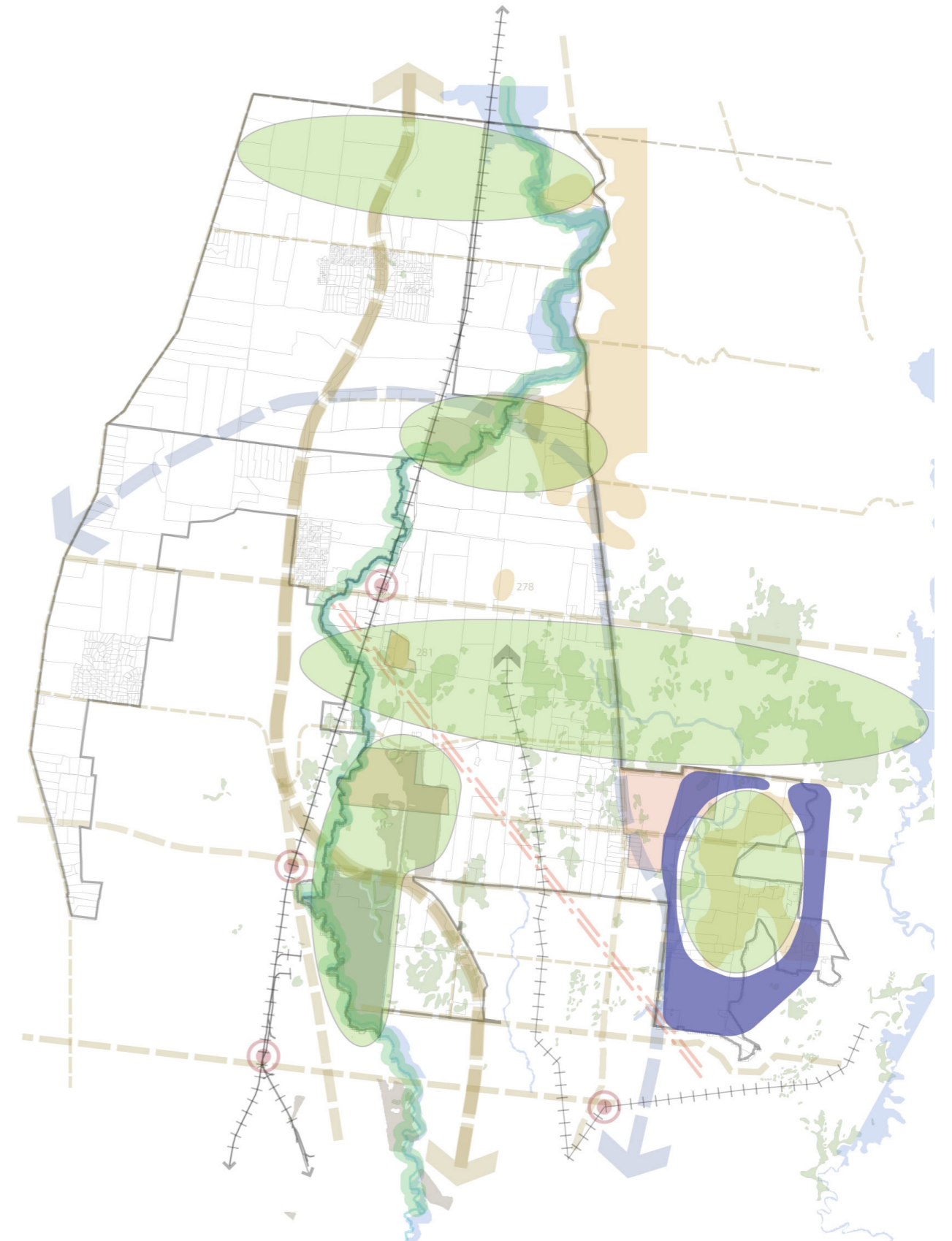
POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PRECINCTS

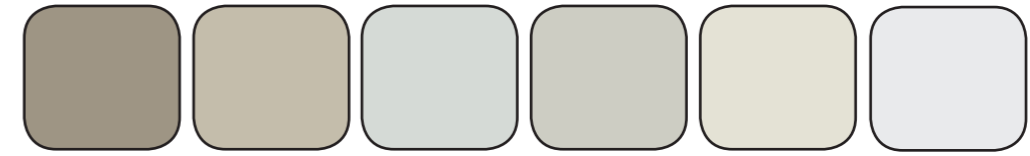
Figure 39: Quarry Hills

In addition, the previously mentioned quarry proposed to be decommissioned is located within this precinct. This quarry, once remediated, presents an opportunity for urban development e.g. a high density residential development set around a lake (the filled quarry void). It has been considered for some time that this development may also generate a requirement for its own local activity centre, given its isolation from other residential areas. Recent advice that the E6 is now planned as a freeway will add further to this separation and may adversely impact on the development potential of the area.

Issues to be considered:

- The Quarry Hills Precinct must be treated differently to the rest of the UGB investigation area
- What planning tools can be utilised as part of the UGB investigation process to ensure that the aim of obtaining a regional parkland of benefit to the wider community of northern Melbourne as envisaged, can be achieved?
- How will the E6 at a freeway standard impact on development potential on land between the E6 and the investigation area, including the quarry site and properties along Bindts Road?





Precinct 3 – Wollert

The land north of the existing Epping North Growth corridor, which currently terminates at Craigieburn Road, is considered to be a logical extension for the UGB.

This area offers the opportunity to maximise use of existing and planned infrastructure from the Epping North corridor. For example:

- Efficient use of services, including the further reticulation of Class A recycled water from the Aurora Treatment Plant
- Extension of the proposed Epping North rail line beyond Craigieburn Road to provide high capacity public transport to the new community
- Convenient access to Epping Central and the Cooper Street Employment Area via the Epping North rail and north-south roads proposed within the Aurora Estate (Edgars Road and Scanlon Drive).

The fragmented woodlands and linear open space links offered by the creeks and easements would provide a high amenity setting for a new residential community, with strong links to existing residential areas to the south and the proposed green break to the north.

A key benefit of this precinct is also the clear 'edges' to development that would be provided by:

- The dense woodland to the north;
- The quarry, grasslands and creek to the west;
- The E6 freeway to the east.

It is considered that this would ensure that development could be planned with a clear definition of the limits to the Epping North growth corridor, and enable a more holistic and certain development outcome.

Notwithstanding the above, it is noted that this precinct has a number of weakness that must also be considered.

Firstly, while Council has noted the ability to maximise use of planned infrastructure, the lack of commitment to the Epping North train line to Aurora, let alone beyond Aurora is of concern. It is considered that no extension of the UGB to the north should occur without first binding commitments to key infrastructure, such as rail, being provided.

Secondly, as noted earlier, Council is currently preparing a Structure Plan for its primary activity centre, Epping Central. This centre (formerly nominated as a Transit City) has the capacity to accommodate an additional 10,000 dwellings should it be developed to what Council sees as its full potential. However, this unfortunately is not likely to be achieved under current land development practices, government investment and planning/building regulatory frameworks. Recently prepared demand figures forecast an anticipated maximum development yield of approximately 4,000 dwellings within Epping Central.

A major additional greenfield land release only 4km north of Epping Central has the potential to undermine dwelling yields within Epping Central. While land releases can be justified at face value on affordability grounds (greenfield land development results in more affordable housing products than activity centre development) the long term affordability of this style of development is unsustainable, as outlined in the earlier Guiding Principles section, and it is Council's submission, should only be considered as a last resort once capacity has been reached in activity centres such as Epping Central, and the current growth areas, such as Epping North, which has substantial developable land supply.

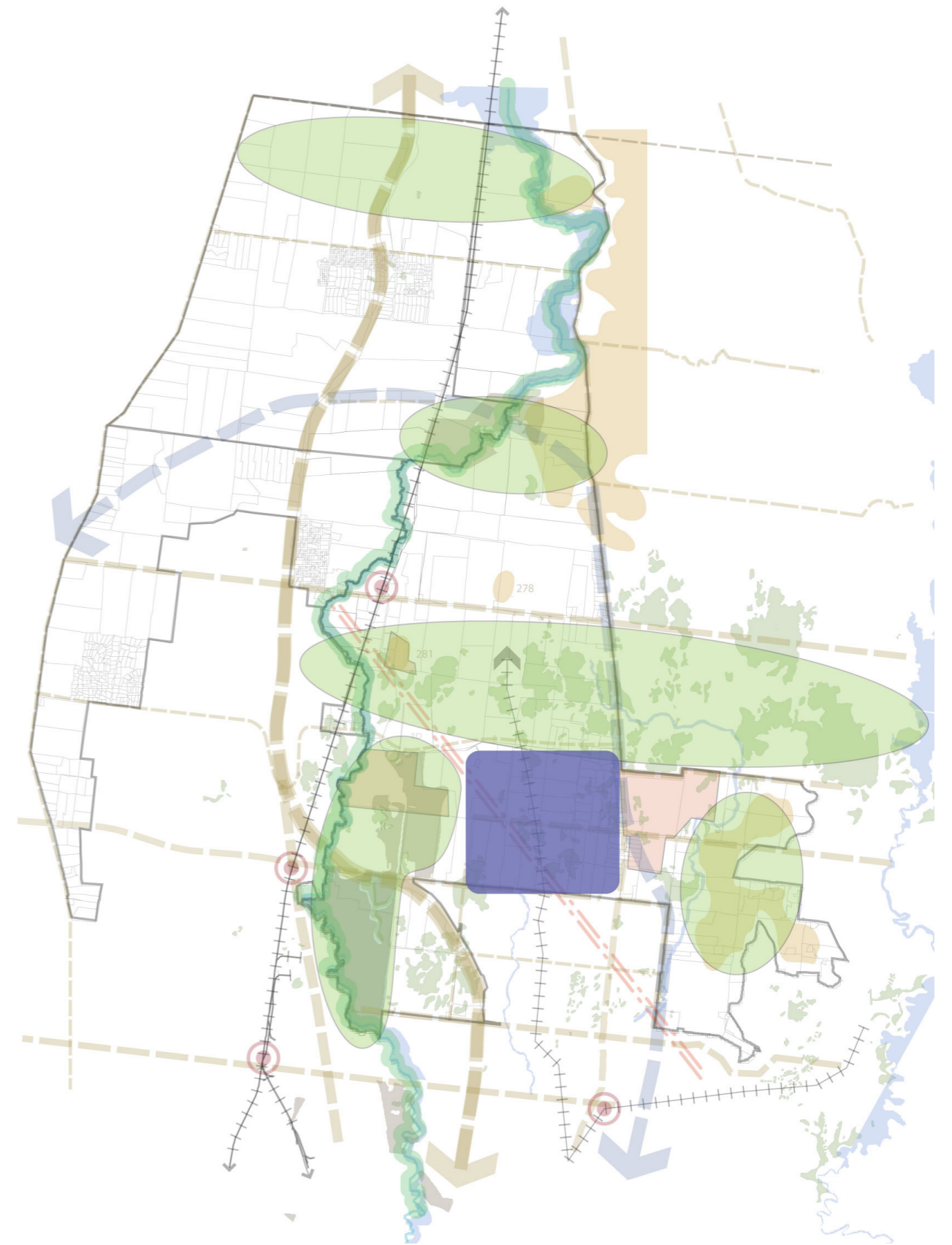


POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PRECINCTS

Figure 40: Wollert

Issues to be considered:

- How will conservation land be treated within a UGB, from both a planning scheme and planning implementation perspective?
- Binding commitment to planned rail (the Epping North rail line) should precede any planned extension to the UGB north of Epping North.
- Space capacity is available within Epping Central for additional dwellings. What impact will greenfield land release in close proximity to Epping Central have on the ability of Council to focus dwelling densification in this activity centre?
- How will out of sequence development be managed, noting that the current Epping North growth area has substantial vacant land supply at present.



POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PRECINCTS

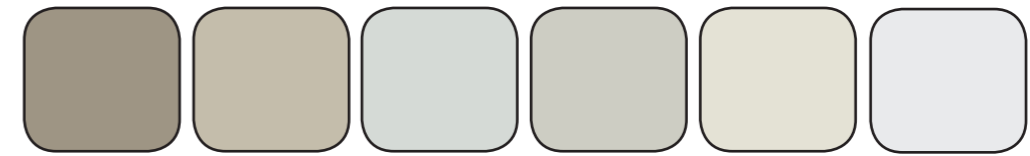
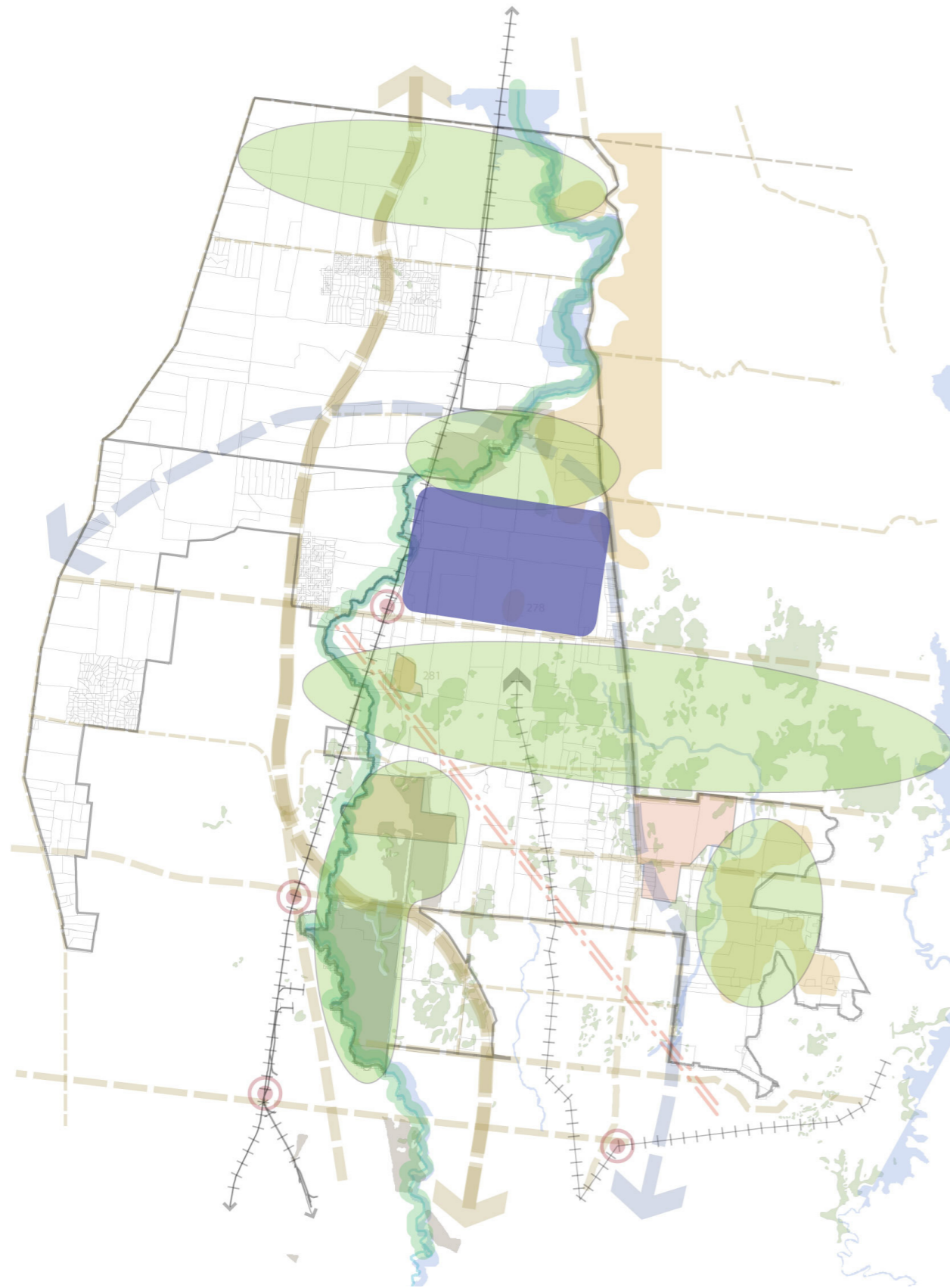


Figure 41: Donnybrook



Precinct 4 - Donnybrook

The land north of the southern green break appears to be relatively unconstrained. It is flat, has less surface rock than areas to the south, and at present, no significant vegetation has been identified (this will require confirmation at a more detailed level).

It is important to note, that should development at Donnybrook proceed, it is not Council's intention for it to be perceived as an extension of the Epping North/Wollert growth corridor. Rather, it should be perceived as an easterly extension of the Hume corridor. To frame development in this way is necessary to minimise development pressure at the southern green break, to "close the gap". This pressure is seen as the primary weakness of this Precinct, however, this weakness may be offset by a number of strengths, such as:

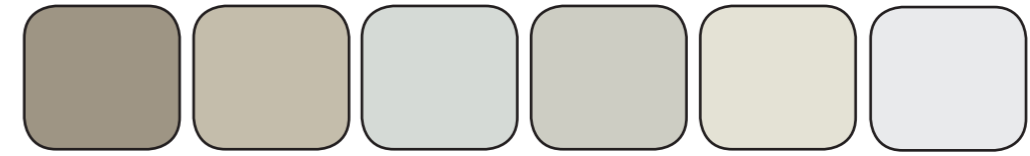
- The existing Donnybrook train station presents a clear opportunity for transit oriented development around an existing train station, as opposed to planned, but as yet, uncommitted train stations within Epping North and Mernda. This opportunity, however, may be limited due to the one-sided catchment to Donnybrook (the western side is constrained by the creek, fragmented landholdings in Kalkallo township and employment land)
- The precinct will have good access to the outer metro ring road, E6 and future freight/employment terminal to be located in Beveridge.
- Except for land within Donnybrook Township itself, land parcels are relatively large, and as such, will be easier to assemble for coordinated development. Donnybrook township, however, is characterised by small parcels and high levels of fragmentation.

Issues to consider:

- Planning tools will need to be carefully considered to ensure that development pressure to "close the gap" between Wollert and Donnybrook does not compromise the green break.
- Can/should Donnybrook be developed as a transit oriented activity centre, with a one-sided catchment?
- How will sequencing of development be managed to prevent development pressure in Donnybrook before the Epping North/Wollert land supply is exhausted?



T H I S P A G E H A S B E E N P U R P O S E L Y L E F T B L A N K



Precinct 5 – Beveridge

Precinct 5 is a relatively isolated precinct that, under normal development circumstances, would be unlikely to be considered for development. However, it is understood from the Freight Futures document, that the area has been identified as suitable for a interstate freight terminal, and associated 'freight village' comprising associated logistics and industrial uses.

This precinct is considered appropriate for this type of facility due to a number of factors, including:

- Its strategic location to the north of the city, to alleviate traffic within the CBD
- Its location at the intersection of the future outer metro ring road, E6 and rail line to provide high quality access for various modes of transport, including rail.
- Its relatively flat topography; required for a rail interchange.

It is understood that the freight terminal itself requires land with dimensions of 7km by 200m. The remaining land in the precinct would then be suitable for associated uses, such as logistics and industrial uses, to establish a 'logistics city'. Given the land requirements, the freight terminal is expected to extend further north, potentially crossing the municipal boundary into Mitchell Shire.

While potential employment numbers are yet to be modelled, it is considered that the freight terminal presents a unique opportunity to create an intensive employment centre to the north of Melbourne, and will contribute to Whittlesea's housing/jobs balance.

Notwithstanding, it would be inappropriate to allow freight planning alone to dictate the shape and form of Melbourne. That is, given the location of the freight terminal at the northernmost point of the investigation area, it follows that all land between the existing UGB and the freight terminal automatically becomes developable land. Careful consideration of the appropriate land uses within the land in between must be given, as well as consideration to how the terminal will interact and interface with surrounding land uses.

With regard to weaknesses of this area, the following issues are raised:

- Environmental values of the Merri Creek headwaters have not been determined to Council's knowledge. The site potentially contains significant grasslands and wetlands/swamps associated with the flood prone land.
- Rural living lots to the east, in the hills will have clear views over the proposed freight terminal and associated freight village.

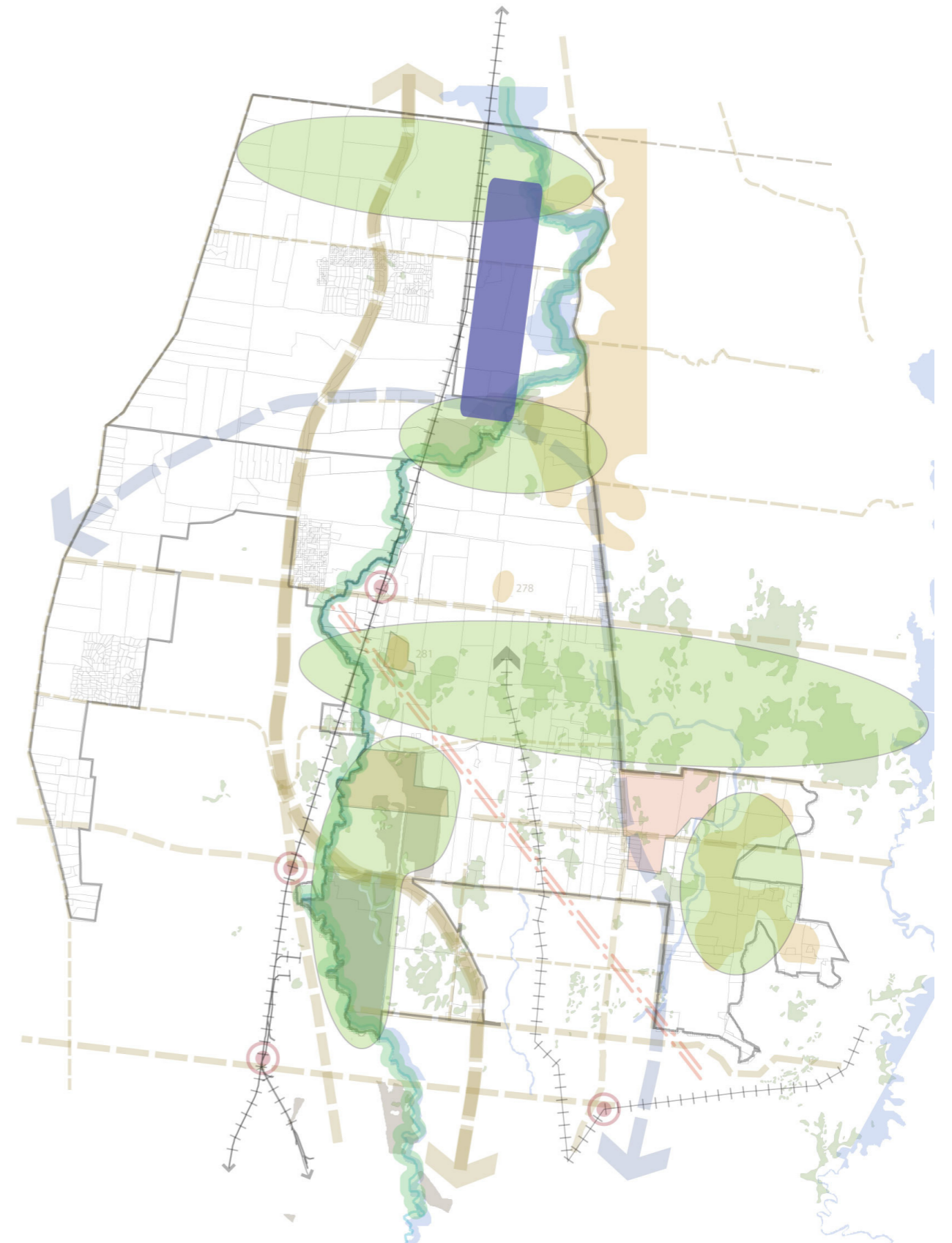


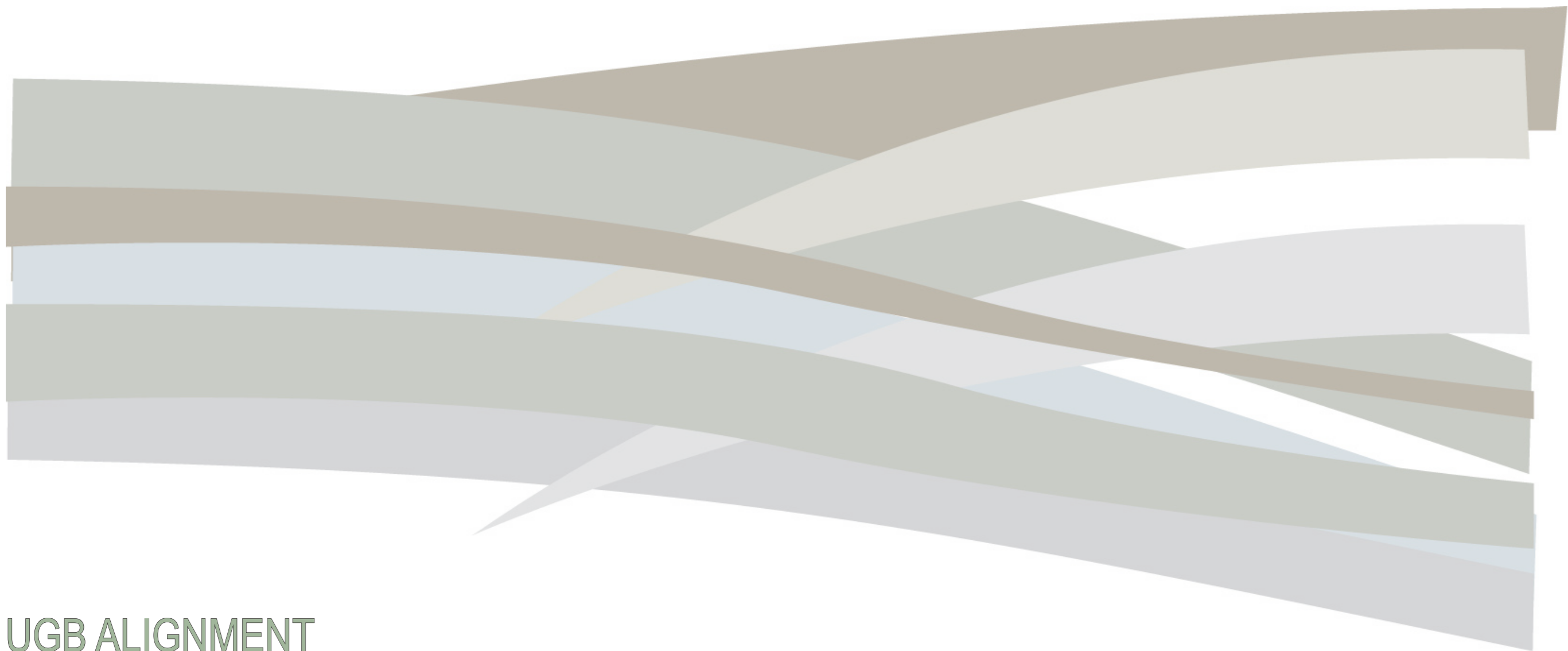
POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PRECINCTS

Figure 42: Beveridge

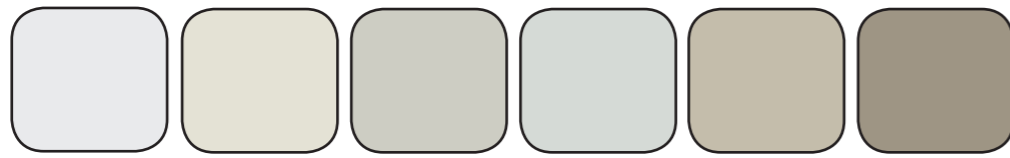
Issues to consider:

- Very limited consultation has been undertaken with Council with respect to the freight terminal, and as such, very limited information has been made available to inform this assessment. Given the significant impact it will have on the UGB alignment, surrounding land uses and infrastructure, it is considered that more detailed information should be provided as soon as possible, to ensure holistic and coordinated planning.
- What governance arrangements will be put in place at the freight terminal, given it potentially spans two municipalities?
- Environmental values in the Merri Creek headwaters must be determined.
- How does the additional employment land in this location impact on employment land further south in the corridor?





UGB ALIGNMENT



Introduction

This chapter provides a preliminary analysis of potential developable areas, based on the precincts defined in the previous chapter, and discusses implications for a potential UGB alignment.

Developable Areas

Based on the site analysis in the previous chapter, five potential development precincts have been identified. A rough estimate of development potential within these precincts is provided in Table 01.

It is noted that these estimates are approximate only, and have been based on the broad level site analysis discussed earlier and general “rules of thumb” for estimating developable hectares.

Advice from DPCD has been that the northern investigation area will be required to accommodate 51,000 new dwellings, and 2,300ha of employment land, with Whittlesea’s share to accommodate approximately 16,000 new dwellings. The dwelling and employment yields identified in this table demonstrate that there is sufficient unconstrained land available within the five precincts to exceed the State Government’s requirements.

Issues to consider:

- More land than is required under *Melbourne @ 5 Million* scenario can be identified within the northern growth area. How will growth be managed to ensure that this land is developed efficiently?

Table 01: Developable Areas

PRECINCT	PRIMARY USE*	GROSS AREA**	DEVELOPABLE AREA^	NO. OF DWELLINGS/ JOBS^^
1. COOPER ST WEST	EMPLOYMENT	228HA	152HA	30400
2. QUARRY HILLS	RESIDENTIAL	471HA	314HA	4710
3. WOLLERT	RESIDENTIAL	1219HA	813HA	12195
4. DONNYBROOK	RESIDENTIAL	1535HA	1023HA	15345
5. BEVERIDGE	EMPLOYMENT	1148HA	765HA	Not known

*Primary use refers to the key characteristic of the area, but does not imply that it is the sole use in the precinct. Other uses, to service the community, will also be required within these precincts.e.g. retail, local employment, commercial etc.

**This is an estimate only, which broadly excludes larger scale site features, such as large areas of environmental significance, quarries and transmission easements.

^Developable area has been estimated as two-thirds of the gross area. This estimate is to establish indicative yields only. Developable areas must be determined based on detailed site analysis at a later date.

^^ Dwelling yields have been based on the State Governments desired figure of 15 dwellings per hectare. Higher densities will be required in appropriate areas. Job yields are based on a general estimate of 200 jobs per hectare. However, job numbers are a factor of the type of employment use, which cannot be accurately determined at this time.

UGB ALIGNMENT

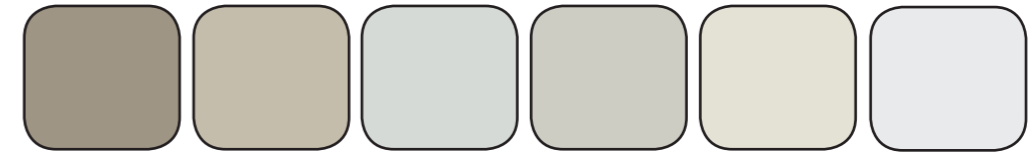
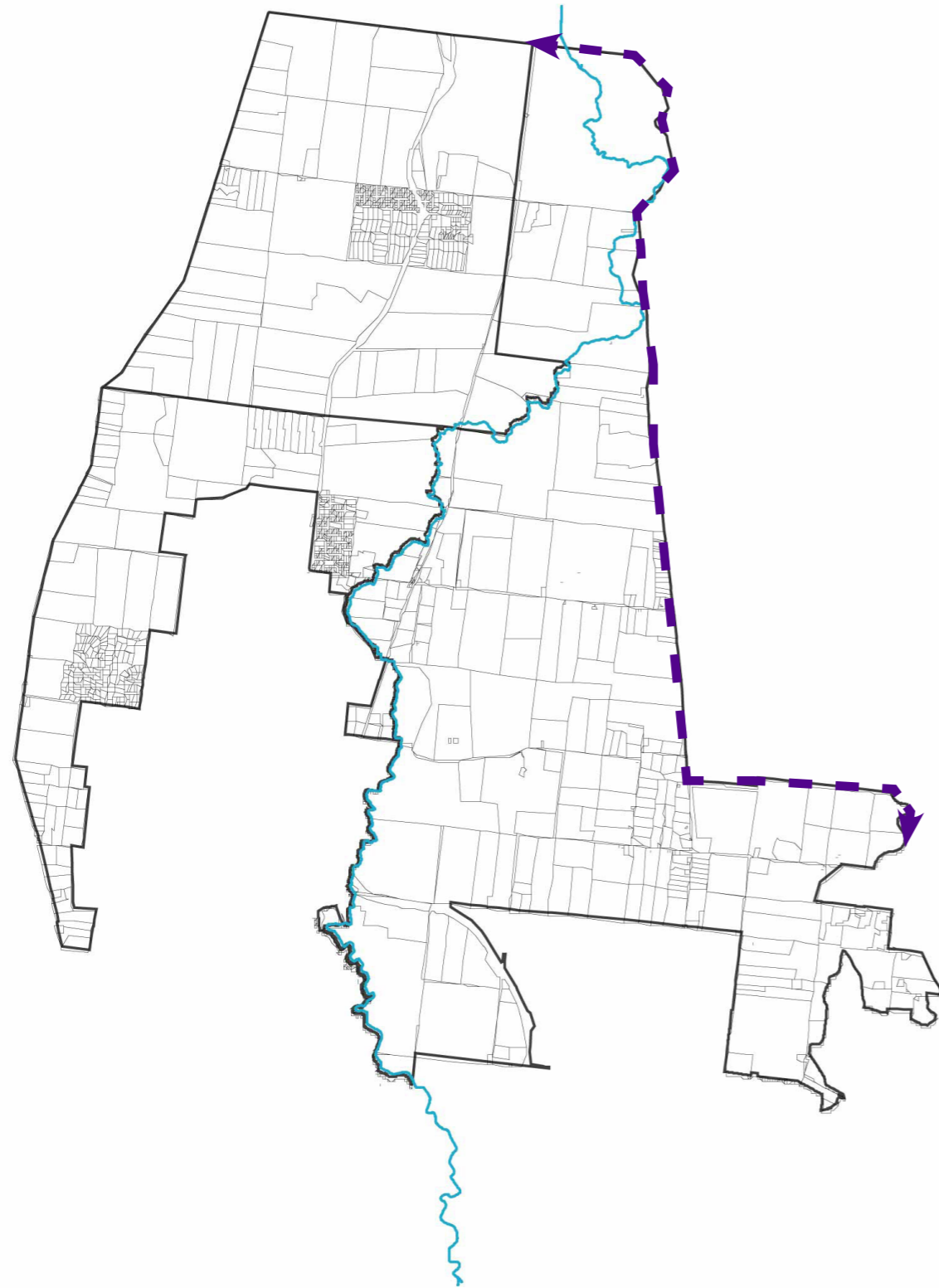


Figure 43: Preferred UGB Alignment



Preferred UGB

It is possible to accommodate the State Government's requirements within Precincts 1, 2 and 3, without the need for Precinct 4. However, the proposal to locate a freight terminal and associate freight village within Precinct 5 will effectively 'drag' development up to the northernmost point of the investigation area.

As such, it appears that most land identified within the investigation area for Whittlesea could be included within the new UGB (see Figure 43). While Council understands that this is the realistic outcome of this investigation, it is considered that the ultimate alignment of the UGB is not the key issue to be resolved. What is considered to be of key importance, is not what land is included within the UGB, but how this land will be managed from a planning perspective once it inside the UGB.

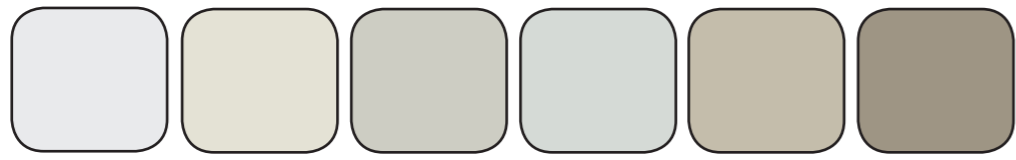
That is, what planning tools will be implemented to:

- Define developable and undevelopable land within the UGB
- Ensure the growth area is holistically planned;
- Ensure growth is appropriately, and tightly, sequenced, and to
- Maintain the Planning Authority's ability to negotiate planning outcomes that will achieve a net community benefit (for example, the Quarry Hills Parkland)

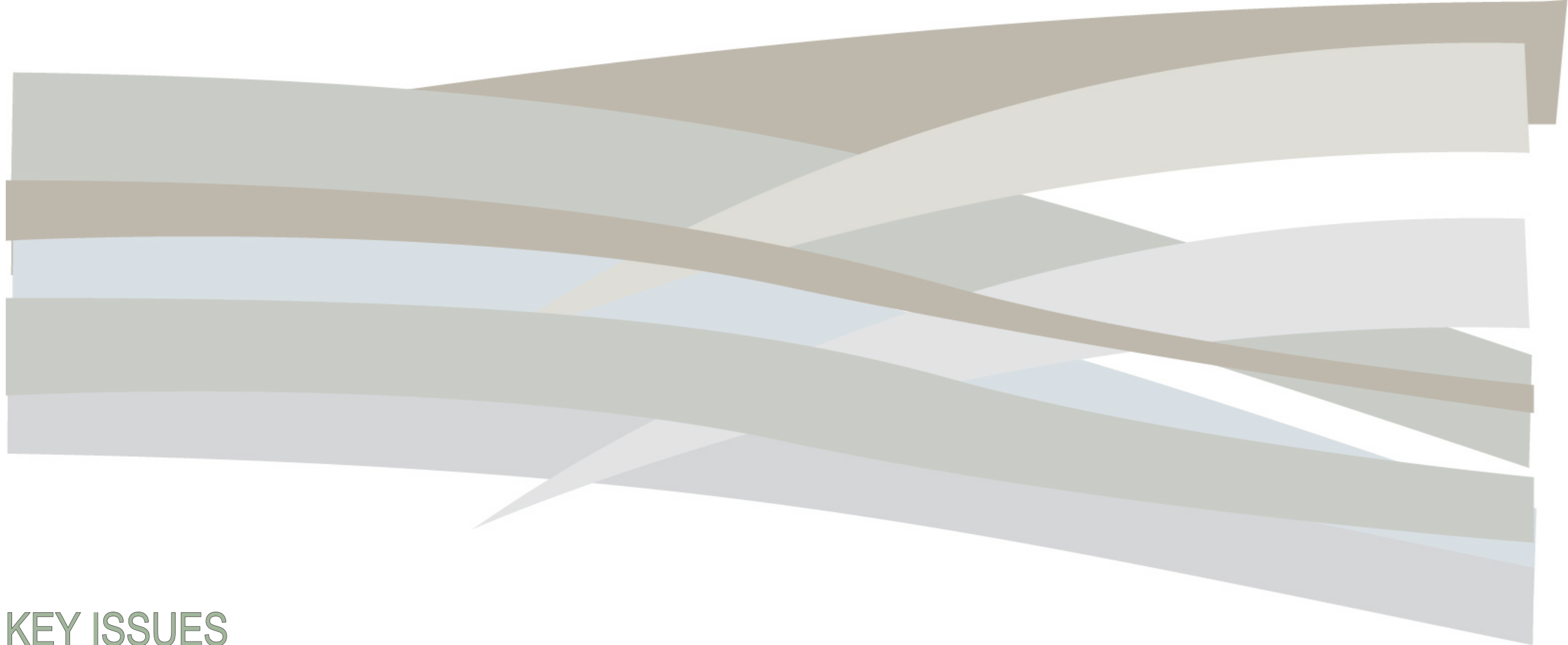
Council

Council stresses the importance of ensuring there is public understanding that not all land located within the new UGB is equally developable. As has been identified in this study, there are significant areas within the investigation area that are considered to be undevelopable. It is Council's recommendation that DPCD highlight very early in the process how undevelopable land within the UGB will be treated, so there is less pressure in later stages for encroachment into these areas.

To this end, it is Council's position that land within the UGB not be rezoned until more detailed and thorough work can be done to understand the features of the new growth areas, and a framework for how they should be appropriately developed is completed.



T H I S P A G E H A S B E E N P U R P O S E L Y L E F T B L A N K



KEY ISSUES



Introduction

A number of key issues have arisen through the analysis that has been undertaken for this submission. These issues are summarised in this chapter.

Inconsistency with Melbourne 2030

It is Council's first position that the principles of *Melbourne 2030* seek to encourage and enable activity centres, such as Epping, to reach their full potential and should be prioritised under a *Melbourne @ 5 Million* scenario. To this end, Council contends that commitment to conditions required for these activity centres to thrive, should be demonstrated before the greenfield land outside the UGB is considered for development. With this in mind, Council urges the Government to provide clear direction on the status of Melbourne 2030 in the context of *Melbourne @ 5 Million*, noting the contradictory nature of these two documents.

Process

While it is acknowledged that the State Government is keen to deliver an urgent response to the projected population increase for Melbourne and the current affordability issues Melbourne faces, it is considered that the timeframes for the *Melbourne @ 5 Million* processes are inappropriate. The matters that must be considered when investigating an expansion to Melbourne's growth areas of this magnitude are incredibly complex, both in terms of detail and their interrelatedness, and require a carefully planned response, at a metropolitan wide scale.

A carefully planned response also requires significant consultation and information exchange at all levels of government, and with key stakeholders. This is particularly so, given *Melbourne @ 5 Million* will substantially change the form of Melbourne as a whole, and in particular, the growth areas. Such change should not proceed without genuine consultation with key stakeholders. Council, given its local knowledge, direct contact with the community and responsibility for implementation, is a key stakeholder that must be involved at all stages of the process. The timeframes and process adopted for the *Melbourne @ 5 Million* project do not allow for this vital consultation process to occur in any meaningful way.

Whittlesea has demonstrated previously, an ongoing commitment to, excellence in growth area planning. As a result, Council can add significant value and expertise to this process.



Implementation

Urban Growth Zone

A common issue noted throughout the submission relates to the proposed implementation process. It is Council's understanding that the Urban Growth Zone (UGZ) will be introduced concurrent with the revised UGB, amongst other things, to trigger payment of the State Infrastructure Levy. Council considers that it is inappropriate for this motivation to in any way be driving the land use planning framework. It is considered that this exposes the planning system to again being led by financial imperatives, rather than proper land use planning imperatives (as is occurring in the current Development Contributions System). It is Council's recommendation that the Growth Areas Infrastructure Levy system be separated from the primary land use planning system (zones), and implemented by other means (possibly, but not ideally, by an overlay).

Introduction of the UGZ ahead of any formal framework planning, or more detailed site investigations is problematic for a number of reasons.

Firstly, a blanket UGZ rezoning without any context (i.e. a framework plan) sends a message that all land is equally developable. This will not be the case. For example, Council wishes to maintain an inter-urban break between the Wollert and Donnybrook areas, which may prove difficult to achieve under a UGZ scenario.

Secondly, a rezoning substantially limits a Planning Authority's ability to negotiate outcomes with developers that are of net community benefit. As noted earlier, this issue is of critical importance in relation to the Quarry Hills Precinct, details of which are again emphasised in the following section.

Thirdly, a blanket rezoning to the UGZ is likely to result in pressure for out of sequence development. As Planning Authority, Council must have the ability to manage the sequence of development, to ensure proper and orderly planning of the growth area and efficient delivery of infrastructure.

Framework Plan

It is understood that a framework planning process will commence upon approval of the UGB. Again, Council emphasises that as a primary stakeholder, it should be closely involved in the process. Framework plans may potentially address some of the issues raised above with a blanket UGZ, however, the framework plans must be clear, enforceable and have State Government and Council support to succeed.

Precinct Structure Plans

Following, the framework plan, Precinct Structure Planning will commence. As detailed in a separate submission by Council, the Draft PSP Guidelines only seek to formalise the current standard of structure planning, and as such, add little value in terms of moving planning forward to achieve higher standards in sustainable development and affordability. As the PSP Guidelines have not yet been finalised by the State Government, it is recommended that the final version of the Guidelines must set innovative standards for development within the new areas, prior to Precinct Structure Planning commencing.



Intermodal Freight Terminal

The proposal to locate a new interstate freight terminal and associated freight village in Beveridge, while welcomed by Whittlesea from an economic development perspective, significantly impacts on the extent and form of urban development in Melbourne's north. Its location at the northern extent of the investigation area renders this initial investigation process redundant, by effectively pre-determining the northern extent of urban growth and the alignment of major infrastructure, such as the outer metro ring road and the E6.

Given the impacts of this proposal, more information should be made available regarding the terminal, and its impacts on land use planning in the northern corridor.

Quarry Hills Regional Parkland

As noted earlier in this submission, of key concern to Council is the treatment of the Quarry Hills Precinct. The primary purpose of the Quarry Hills project is to provide a mechanism for achievement of a regional parkland. In the context of a substantially increased population within Melbourne's north as proposed by *Melbourne @ 5 Million*, high quality public assets such as the Quarry Hills regional parkland will gain greater importance. Therefore, Council's negotiation position must be protected when the UGB is realigned. To this end, Council will continue its work on the Quarry Hills project, and submits that a change to the UGB in the Quarry Hills precinct should not proceed until the project has been completed and a mechanism for the transfer of parkland has been finalised (refer to the two options provided in the previous section).



Transport Infrastructure

It does not appear from the Victorian Transport Plan that there has been any genuine attempt to integrate land use planning and public transport infrastructure delivery. However substantial investment in freeways, including the outer metro ring road and the E6 has been identified. As noted previously, the new growth areas are an opportunity to redefine how growth area planning and implementation is undertaken in Victoria. An emphasis on genuinely sustainable communities, such as, the provision of high speed and high capacity public transport at the beginning of the development process, should no longer be considered an 'optional extra', but an urgent necessity. It is Council's recommendation that the UGB not be realigned until a commitment to public transport infrastructure to service the new areas (in particular, the extension of the Epping North train line) has been articulated.

An additional issue relates to the Quarry Hills Precinct and the proposed E6 freeway. Should the E6 be developed as a freeway instead of an arterial road, the land take required would substantially diminish not only the land available for residential development, but also the viability of the area to the east to of the freeway as a residential neighbourhood. As a consequence, any potential to gain parkland in this location as a result of a land transfer would be eliminated. It is recommended that clearer justification for the proposal to develop the E6 as a freeway be sought, and that Council recommend in the submission that the proposal to develop the E6 as a freeway be carefully considered in the context of surrounding land use implications.

E6 Reservation

The Victorian Transport Plan shows E6 reservation as a 'Transport Corridor Concept' connecting the proposed Outer Metropolitan Ring Road (Princes Freeway at Werribee to Hume Freeway at Beveridge) to the Metropolitan Ring Road.

VicRoads has indicated that the proposed E6 freeway is likely to consist of a 120m wide reservation that is 6 lanes wide with limited interchanges for access and egress. The Department of Transport has indicated that it is considering to include a railway line within the E6, requiring a road / rail reservation of up to 150 m in width. Land acquisition will be necessary south of Findon Road as some sections of the E6 reservation between Mill Park and Thomastown are approximately 85m wide.

The construction of the E6 as a freeway with limited interchanges for access and egress has the potential to restrict the amount of urban development within the municipality, such as that contained within approved Epping North East Development Plan. This Development Plan was prepared in accordance with the Local Structure Plan where it was agreed at the Panel Hearing that the E6 alignment would be an arterial road located on the eastern side of Bindts Road, with cross-road intersections at Harvest Home Road and Craigieburn Road and two left in / left out intersections provided between Craigieburn Road and Harvest Home Road. VicRoads has indicated that no access will be provided from the E6 to Harvest Home Road.

Other interchanges proposed from E6 include access to/from the Epping Road replacement and also to the Intermodal Freight site

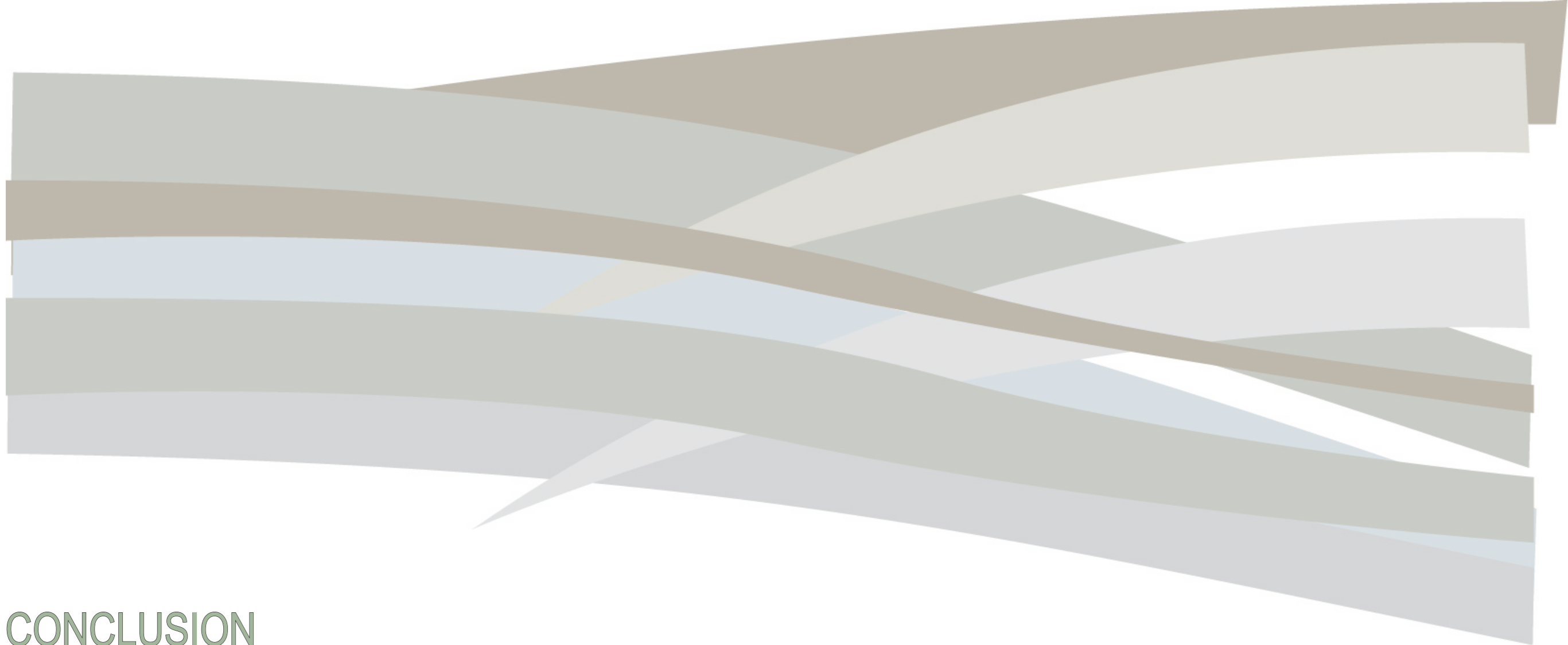
The construction of a freeway in the E6 reservation undermines years of strategic planning by Council (with agreements of State Government departments and agencies). It also dislocates communities and reduces developable land and opportunities for renewal in established areas.

Furthermore, the basis for the E6 transport corridor to be constructed as a freeway in preference to an arterial road has not been explained to Council. It is essential that Council have the opportunity to examine any background investigations and traffic modelling and be closely involved in the development of the E6 (alignment, access and egress etc). Council is particularly concerned that an additional freeway will further add to congestion on the Western Ring Road and will impact on the local road network.

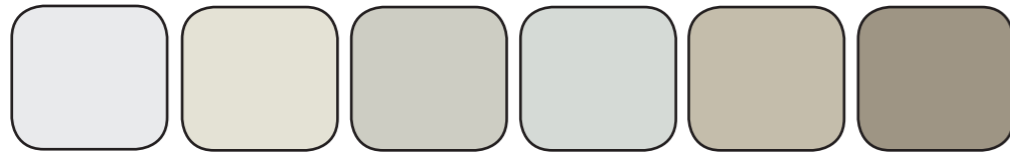


Detailed site assessments and mapping

The site information and analysis provided in this submission is a broad level assessment and has not been ground truthed. Detailed information on the investigation areas is not currently available, but is fundamental to ensuring proper planning of the new growth area. In particular, it is noted that details of ecological significance are not comprehensive, and a substantial amount of work must be undertaken to provide any degree of certainty regarding development constraints in the investigation areas.



CONCLUSION



Recommendations and Conclusion

Melbourne @ 5 Million reflects a substantial change in direction for Melbourne, from the previous metropolitan strategy of *Melbourne 2030*. If this change in direction is to succeed, that is, if a refocussing on growth areas is to accommodate population growth in a sustainable manner, it is strongly considered that changes to the form and process of urban development are required.

Based on Council's site analysis of the investigation area, there appears to be sufficient unconstrained land available to meet DPCDs requirements. However, more importantly, the principles underpinning what form of development should take place in these areas, and the process in which this development is planned and sequenced must be articulated. It is Council's position that should the UGB be extended, that development must not come at the expense of planned strategic projects in the Quarry Hills and Epping Central, and that significant improvements to the standard of sustainable development and infrastructure provision in growth areas must be made.

With this in mind, Council's key recommendations in relation to the UGB component of *Melbourne @ 5 Million* are as outlined below. These recommendations must be considered together, as they individually interact to provide Council's overall position. It is also relevant to note that these recommendations are based on three key assumptions:

Assumptions

- Not all land within the new UGB will be developable
- Council will be able to maintain its negotiation ability regarding the Quarry Hills (based on the ability to rezone land) should it be located within the UGB
- The freight terminal will be located in Beveridge, and will be required to be located within the UGB.

Should these three assumptions not be accepted, then the following recommendations will be altered.

Recommendations

- The UGB should follow the alignment of the investigation area;
- Development within the new UGB growth areas should not be entertained until there is commitment to provision of the Epping North rail extension concurrent with development.
- Rezoning of the land within the UGB should not occur until such time as a clear and enforceable Framework Plan has been prepared in association with the relevant Councils.
- The Framework Plan should be based on detailed site assessments that determine land appropriate for development and appropriate sequencing of development.
- Rezoning of the land within the Quarry Hills Precinct should not occur until agreements have been entered into between landholders and Council regarding transfer of undevelopable land above a certain height (determined by detailed site assessment);
- The Growth Areas Infrastructure Levy should be implemented through other means than the primary land use planning system of zones, to minimise complications between land use planning imperatives and financial imperatives.
- Radically new planning tools are required to achieve the required 'step-change' in urban development practices, to achieve genuinely sustainable, affordable and liveable communities. The Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines in their current form will not be sufficient for this purpose.